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## THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA, RUSSIA AND MONGOLIA

The Russo-Mongolian Agreement of November 3, 1912, with its protocol; the Russo-Chinese Declaration of November 5, 1913, with the notes exchanged on that date; the Russo-Mongolian Railway Agreement of September 30, 1914, and the Tripartite Agreement between China, Russia, and Mongolia signed on June 7, 1915, together with the declaration of China and Russia, accompanying this last-mentioned document, are all printed in the Supplement to this number of the *JOURNAL* and are deserving of more than a passing notice, for they undertake to define the relations of three great nations and recall historic events of considerable importance.

The Mongols are the same people that once swept in triumph over Asia and southeastern Europe. Their tribal rulers today, in three Khanates at least, claim to be lineal descendants of the great Genghis Khan. Urga, the capital of Outer Mongolia and the holy city of the Mongols, is built beside the sacred mountain where, tradition says, Genghis the conqueror was born.

The Hutukhtu of Urga, elected Emperor of Outer Mongolia, when its independence was declared in 1911, was previous to that time but the religious head of the nation. He is third in rank in the Lamaist hierarchy, his superiors being the Dalai Lama, the Civil Ruler of Tibet at Lhasa, and the Panshen Erdeni Lama, the Ecclesiastical Ruler of Tibet at Tashihlumpo. There are 160 hutukhtus in Tibet, Mongolia and China, each believed to be the reincarnation of his predecessor and, therefore, popularly but incorrectly styled "Living Buddhas." The Hutukhtu of Urga holds jurisdiction over some 25,000 lamas and is reputed to have 150,000 slaves caring for his estates and tending his vast herds and flocks of horses, cattle and sheep.

Mongolia, as a geographical term, denotes all that great stretch of territory lying between the organized provinces of China on the south and Siberia on the north. It covers an area of nearly 1,400,000 square miles, but has a population of no more than 2,000,000. Outer Mongolia,

with which the documents mentioned above are concerned, has a population of about 500,000 Mongols, 200,000 Chinese and some 5,000 Russians. The central portion of Mongolia is a lofty plateau about 4000 feet above sea-level and largely desert. Southern or Inner Mongolia has a fertile soil and Outer Mongolia to the north of the plateau shows great stretches of green pasture lands.

The Mongols are mostly nomads. There are very few towns in the country and the agricultural districts are settled for the most part by Chinese colonists, who are encroaching upon the pastures of the Mongols, to the great annoyance of the latter, at an average rate estimated as a mile a year along a frontier of 1500 miles.

Mongolia is divided into two great divisions, Inner Mongolia, the region lying nearest to China and comprising territories inhabited by the tribes which first acknowledged the over-lordship of the Manchus, and Outer Mongolia embracing the remainder of the country. The Inner Mongols still retain the organization into six leagues adopted by the successors of Genghis Khan when all Asia lay beneath their sway.

Outer Mongolia, whose Government is directly concerned in the tripartite agreement mentioned above, has been tributary to China since 1691 A. D., and has testified its allegiance in the past by the presentation annually to the Manchu Court of eight white horses and one white camel. The Chinese have allowed the Mongols autonomous local government but have kept oversight of affairs by a resident placed at Urga and military governors at Kobdo and Uliassutai.

The introduction of Buddhism in its lamaist form has reduced the once warlike race to a nation of monks. It is estimated that five-eighths of the male population are lamas and celibate.

The principal divisions of Outer Mongolia are the three Khanates of Tushetu, Tsetsen and Dzassaktu, the territories Sain-noin, Urianghai and Kobdo, and the regions inhabited by the Eleuths and Alashan Mongols in the southwest and by the Barga in the northeast. There appears, however, to be some doubt as to the inclusion in "Autonomous Outer Mongolia" of the Eleuths and Alashan Mongols. The northwestern boundary has been a subject of dispute between Russia and China for some years past. This is to be more exactly determined, as provided by the agreement of November 5, 1913, and the notes exchanged that

day by the two governments. Inasmuch as Article XI of the tripartite agreement, which mentions the districts included in "Autonomous Outer Mongolia," omits all reference to Urianghai, it seems not improbable that that district may become incorporated in Asiatic Russia.

The eleventh article of the tripartite agreement moreover specifically excludes from "Autonomous Outer Mongolia" the region lying east of the Great Hingan Mountains known as Kulunpei-erh (Houlon-Bouire). This is a portion of the territory belonging to the Barga Mongols mentioned above. By an agreement between China and Russia signed November 6, 1915, this region was placed under the direct control of the Peking Government which appoints a Military Lieutenant Governor to administer its affairs.

The troubles which led to the negotiation of the several agreements mentioned in the first paragraph of this paper are directly traceable to two sources, first the desire of Russia to renew the treaty of 1881 with China under which Russians in Mongolia enjoyed valuable privileges, while China on her part desired to terminate the treaty and curtail these privileges; secondly, the attempts of the Chinese Government to interfere with the autonomy of the Mongol chiefs and to introduce reforms which would lead to social and industrial progress and the strengthening of the frontier.

The treaty of 1881 between China and Russia provided for the restitution to China of the district of Kuldja in Turkestan which Russia had occupied ten years before during the Mohammedan rebellion in those regions which had furnished Yakub Beg the opportunity to establish for a brief period an independent state. Russia had occupied Kuldja to preserve peace upon her borders and had announced that the territory would be returned to China as soon as the Chinese recovered control of the rebellious dependency of Ili. General Tso, after one of the most remarkable military exploits in the history of central Asia, reconquered the disaffected region in 1878 and in 1881 China agreed in the treaty above-mentioned to pay Russia nine million roubles for the restitution of the greater part of Kuldja. The treaty, however, gave Russia in addition the right to place consuls in certain cities of Turkestan and Mongolia and later, after agreement with China, if conditions of commerce should make it desirable, to station consuls in certain other towns.

The Russians were also granted the right to trade in Mongolia, and in Turkestan, as far as the Great Wall, free of all duties, but this right was to be abrogated as soon as commercial conditions should make it necessary to establish a customs tariff. Furthermore the Russian merchants were permitted to buy ground and build for themselves houses and shops and warehouses in cities where Russian consulates should be established. In addition to these privileges, a zone was established along the frontier between China and Russia, fifty versts wide on each side of the boundary, that is to say, a zone 100 versts or  $66\frac{2}{3}$  miles in width, within which all imports and exports to or from either country were to be entirely free of duty. Moreover, the imports beyond this zone into China by certain land routes were to be charged only two-thirds of the customs duties provided in the regular tariffs for sea-borne commerce, and the exports to Russia from China by these routes were to pay only the regular export duty. If the half-duty for coast trade levied on goods from other parts of China had been paid when such goods were shipped to Tientsin, the starting point for the Russian over-land trade, such half-duty was to be refunded.

These privileges, as will be recognized by all, were of considerable value to Russia. The treaty was made subject to revision or renewal at the end of ten-year periods, six-months notice being required if renewal were not to be granted. The treaty had been renewed in 1891 and 1901, and was due for renewal or revision on August 20, 1911. China was reported to be considering the advisability of giving the six-months notice required to prevent renewal of the treaty.

Russia in 1910 repeatedly called the attention of the Chinese Foreign Office to alleged infractions of the treaty by Chinese subordinate officers in the frontier districts, and the Chinese Government in its replies showed that the terms of the treaty were not interpreted in the same way by the two governments. China held that the right to appoint additional consuls to reside in Mongolia was to be exercised only when the conditions of commerce were such as to necessitate the establishment of customs by China for the collection of duty. In other words, the taxation of trade by Chinese officials, of which Russia complained as being an infraction of the treaty, was justifiable on the same grounds as the appointment by Russia of additional consuls.

The Chinese, moreover, held that the Russian right to trade in Mongolia and Turkestan meant no more than the right to sell foreign imports in these regions and to buy native goods for export, that it was not intended that Russians should sell Chinese goods in Chinese territories. This was in reply to a complaint of Russia that China had established a tea monopoly and had forbidden Russian merchants who had bought tea in China to sell such tea *en route* to the frontier. Russia rejoined that the establishment of any monopoly was a violation of other treaties with various foreign Powers and insisted upon a literal interpretation of Article XI of the treaty of 1881 which provides that Russians may "make purchases and sales."

No satisfactory adjustment of these difficulties having been made, the Russian Government on February 3rd presented to China a series of demands covering the points in dispute, in which after some delay, China was fain to acquiesce. August came and went, however, without any definite declaration that the treaty of 1881 had been renewed.

In the meantime affairs in Outer Mongolia began to wear a troubled appearance. In July, 1911, a number of Mongol princes and lamas held a meeting in Urga to consider the situation. Chinese colonists were crowding into Mongolia. It was complained that not only was their settlement in Mongolia in violation of the original agreement made with the Manchu Government when acknowledgment of suzerainty was made, but that it was depriving the Mongols of needed pasture lands. Moreover, the Chinese are shrewd traders and it was said that they were loaning money to Mongols at exorbitant rates of interest upon the security of their lands, that the Mongols were unable to repay, and that the Chinese thus obtained possession of much Mongol property. Complaint was made, too, of the attempts of San To, the Chinese Amban at Urga, to introduce administrative changes, interfering with Mongol autonomy, and of the military measures being taken by China.

The conference decided to send a deputation to St. Petersburg to ask for Russian protection or assistance. Russia agreed, it is said, to use her good offices with China. At any rate, in August the Russian Minister at Peking represented to the Chinese Foreign Office that the measures being taken by China were likely to affect the peace of the border. China replied, appreciating Russia's neighborliness and saying that

the reforms being introduced were for the benefit of the Mongols, but that instructions had been sent to the Resident at Urga to proceed with caution and to consult the feelings of the people. In the following month the revolution broke out in the province of Szechuen and matters in Mongolia were put aside by the Peking Government.

To the Mongols, however, the revolution came as a golden opportunity. In the Tenth Moon (November-December) of that year a second conference of Mongol princes was held, and Outer Mongolia formally declared its independence of China. The Hutukhtu of Urga was chosen Emperor and crowned with great ceremony on December 28th.

On the 12th of February following the Manchu Emperor abdicated and Yuan Shih-kai was commissioned to establish a republic. A month later he was inaugurated Provisional President of the Republic of China. Conversations between Russia and China were resumed, and on April 26th the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs explained to the Duma Russia's desire and purpose in these negotiations, which was declared to be not the annexation of any portion of Mongolia, but simply in the interest of peace and good order to mediate between China and Mongolia and thus protect the autonomy of Mongolia and the commercial interests of Russia.

Discussion between Russia and China of a revision of the treaty of 1881 still went on without definite result. China was disposed to abolish the free trade zone along the frontier. Finally on September 17, 1912, Russia announced that China having failed to give the notice required for a termination of the treaty, Russia was compelled to regard it as still in force, but that in order to meet China's wishes as expressed in August 1911, the zone of free trade on the Russian side of the frontier would be abolished from January 1, 1913. China, however, did not respond at once. It was not until May 6, 1914, that a notice was issued by the Maritime Customs authorities that the free trade zone on the Chinese side of the frontier would be abolished from June 1st of that year.

Mongolia's declaration of independence had found no recognition abroad, but in Tibet, like Mongolia, a dependency of China and struggling to free itself from that bond, the coveted recognition was found.

Dordjieff, a Buriat and a lama, but a subject of Russia, visited Urga in July, 1912, as the accredited representative of the Dalai Lama at Lhassa and represented to the Hutukhtu that as Tibet and Mongolia were both Buddhist countries it would be advisable to enter into a convention for mutual support against the aggressions of China. This was done, and on December 24, 1912, a treaty between the two Powers was signed in which each recognized the other as an independent state and agreed to take measures for the protection of the Buddhist faith and for mutual defence against all dangers internal or external.

In the meantime the situation at Urga began to occupy more and more the attention of Russia and China. On November 3, 1912, the agreement between Russia and Mongolia was signed in which Russia pledges her assistance to maintain Mongolia's autonomy and her right to have her own army and to admit neither the presence of Chinese troops on her soil nor the colonization of her lands by Chinese. In return for this Mongolia grants to Russian subjects the possession of certain rights and privileges, enumerated in the protocol attached to the treaty, among which are the right of free trade, of leasing and owning real property, of engaging in mining, fishing and lumbering, establishing postal facilities, and navigating streams that flow into Russian territory. It is further provided that should any treaty be made subsequently with China, these rights shall not be infringed.

President Yuan during 1912 made strenuous efforts to induce the Hutukhtu to rescind his declaration of independence. Many telegrams were sent to Urga, but brought no response until November 21, 1912, that is, some days after the above-mentioned agreement had been signed. On November 21st the Premier of Mongolia sent a telegram to President Yuan, saying that because of the ill-treatment which Mongolia had received at the hands of the Manchu rulers of China, they had declared their independence and, on December 28, 1911, had crowned the Hutukhtu as their ruler; that subsequently they had learned of the abdication of the Manchus and the establishment of self-government of the Chinese people and were greatly rejoiced. They felt, however, that as the customs of Chinese and Mongols were so diverse and the Mongols were so ignorant, it was better they should not try to live together in the same house.



A few days later, November 25th, a similar telegram from the Hutukhtu himself was received by the President. President Yuan had reminded the Mongolian ruler that his country was weak and that the course she was taking would be likely to end for her in a fate similar to that of Korea and Formosa. He replied that he realized the weakness of Mongolia, but that China was a long way off and her whip, however long, could scarcely reach to Outer Mongolia to drive off Mongolia's enemies. He begs the President not to take a severe course lest he drive the Mongols to desperate measures.

The President replied in a conciliatory telegram, calling attention to the fact that many of the Chinese provinces had in 1911 declared their independence, but that all had reunited and were working together, and that it was the aim of the Republic to unite the five races, destroy all racial prejudice and seek to promote the welfare of each and all. He informed the Hutukhtu that he was sending a special envoy to Urga to discuss matters with him.

The Hutukhtu replied promptly on November 26th that it would be better not to send an envoy, but to use the mediation of their common neighbor—Russia. Having failed in his efforts to deal directly with the Government of Outer Mongolia, President Yuan on March 8, 1913, turned once more to Russia.

The writer was in Peking in 1911, 1912, and 1913, and had opportunity therefore to note the keen interest in this question taken by the Chinese people. Their feeling against Mongolia and Russia grew very bitter during 1913. The Chinese newspapers were particularly active in trying to arouse a warlike sentiment. The situation indeed in Inner Mongolia near the Chinese border became quite serious. Additional troops were sent there by the Chinese Government and a number of encounters with bands of armed Mongols occurred but without any noticeable advantage to either side.

This feeling of hostility towards Russia was no doubt due in great measure to a misunderstanding of terms. The word "autonomy" was taken to mean "independence." When, therefore, on November 5, 1913, a little more than a year after the signing of the Russo-Mongolian Convention, an agreement between China and Russia was signed, in the first article of which Russia acknowledges the suzerainty of China

over Outer Mongolia, this feeling was very much allayed. Russia had never denied China's suzerainty over Mongolia, but this express acknowledgment of it at once silenced the false report that Russia had asked China to recognize the independence of Outer Mongolia.

China on her part acknowledged the autonomy of Outer Mongolia. This, too, was no more than a recognition of the *status quo ante*, but it served to reassure the Mongols, since it guaranteed that there would be no interference by China with the internal administration of the country and pledged China not to send troops into Outer Mongolia and not to colonize there. The Mongols, however, were somewhat disappointed by this agreement, since they, too, had been under the impression that their "autonomy" meant "independence."

Russia could not but be gratified, since the convention expressly agrees to the principles set forth in the Russo-Mongolian Agreement of 1912 and assents to all the stipulations regarding Russian commercial privileges contained in the protocol to that agreement.

The notes accompanying this agreement bind both Russia and China to hold a conference, in which Outer Mongolia shall participate, for the settlement of questions of a political and territorial nature.

Before that conference was held, Russia entered into another agreement with Mongolia, dated September 30, 1914, which practically gave to the former control of the railway policy of the latter. This was a matter of considerable importance to Russia, since it still further safeguarded her frontier. By this agreement Russia obtained the right to advise Outer Mongolia in deciding what railway lines to build and the method of procedure, which was required to be beneficial to both parties. Since the gauge of the Russian railways is different from that adopted in China, this practically assures the building of lines that can connect with Russian rather than Chinese railways. Russia recognizes Mongolia's right to build the railways within its own boundaries if the funds can be raised there, but Mongolia is pledged to consult Russia before making concessions for railway construction to other nationals.

Russia having thus come into agreement separately with China and with Mongolia, representatives of the three Powers met in conference and entered into the tripartite agreement of June 7, 1915, which is the

keystone to the whole arrangement. In it Outer Mongolia is made to recognize the Sino-Russian Convention of 1913, which establishes China's suzerainty over Outer Mongolia, and expressly agrees not to negotiate treaties with foreign Powers respecting political and territorial matters, although treaties respecting commercial and industrial matters are permissible. Both China and Russia agree to abstain from all interference with the internal administration of Outer Mongolia. Chinese imports into Outer Mongolia are to be free of all duties, and goods of foreign origin are to be imported into China from Outer Mongolia on payment of the reduced tariff provided in the treaty of 1881. Thus Russia's right to free trade in Outer Mongolia is confirmed, the customs stations being removed from the Siberian frontier to that between China and Outer Mongolia.

Chinese jurisdiction over Chinese residents of Outer Mongolia is retained, but Chinese-Mongol mixed cases are to be adjudicated by Chinese and Mongol authorities acting conjointly. In Russo-Chinese mixed cases the Russian authorities take part in deciding and in drafting the judgment, even in actions heard in the Chinese court and in which a Chinese is defendant. The Chinese authorities also have the right to be present in Russian courts when Chinese are plaintiffs and Russians are defendants, but do not appear to be allowed to participate in the judgment.

The Ruler of "Autonomous Outer Mongolia" is confirmed in his title by Article IV, which provides that the President of China shall confer such title upon the Hutukhtu.

All the provisions of the several agreements between Russia and Mongolia and between Russia and China are ratified by Article XXI of the tripartite convention, and thus become incorporated in the tripartite convention.

One of the most significant articles is the third, the second paragraph of which binds China, in accordance with Article II of the notes exchanged between China and Russia on November 5, 1913, to consult Russia and Outer Mongolia in regard to all questions of a political or territorial nature. Thus, while China nominally is acknowledged as suzerain, practically Outer Mongolia is under the joint protection of Russia and China.

These agreements, then, have considerably increased the political and commercial rights of Russia in Mongolia, and they thus tend to restore, if not to enhance, Russian prestige in the Far East which had been somewhat lessened by the result of the Russo-Japanese War.

E. T. WILLIAMS.