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TUVA'S PROMOTION AND CARTOGRAPHIC EXPANSIONISM

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Introduction

According to a Reuter message from Moscow (October 10, 1961) the Tuva Autonomous Oblast, which is on the Siberian-Mongolian border and has a population of only 172,000, has been proclaimed an Autonomous Soviet Republic. Tuva was a Russian protectorate from 1912-1921, when it was declared "independent" as the Tannu-Tuva Republic, but it remained under Soviet protection until it was incorporated as an Autonomous Oblast of the RSFSR in 1944.

The interest of yesterday's promotion for Tuva lies in the fact that historically it was part of the Chinese empire, under the name of the Uryankhai territory. Secondly it is noteworthy that its population is far too small to be a wholly convincing explanation for the change in its status. All the other autonomous republics of the RSFSR, with the sole exception of the Kalmyk ASSR, have a population of more than double that of Tuva. (The Kalmyk ASSR's population was forcibly reduced by an estimated 10% or 13,000 people<sup>1</sup> during the deportation and purges carried out under Stalin in 1943, i.e., shortly before Tuva was "incorporated" into the RSFSR. For 14 years thereafter the Kalmyks became an "unpeople", never mentioned in the Soviet press.)

Bashkir ASSR	3,342,000	Mari ASSR	648,000
Buryat ASSR	373,000	Mordovian ASSR	1,000,000
Dagestan ASSR	1,063,000	N. Ossetian ASSR	451,000
Kabardin-Balkar ASSR	420,000	Tatar ASSR	2,850,000
Kalmyk ASSR	185,000	Udmurt ASSR	1,337,000
Komi	806,000	Chechen-Ingush ASSR	710,000
Chuvash	1,098,000	Yakut ASSR	488,000

n.b. All these figures are from the 1959 census.

Tuva has a livestock and grain farming economy, but there are also reported to be deposits of gold, asbestos and copper. However,

<sup>1</sup>These estimates are from R. Conquest, The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities, Macmillan & Co., London, 1960, p. 54.

the gold deposits are of a minor nature, and therefore the mineral wealth of the area does not seem to constitute any more adequate an explanation for its new status than the population data.

But the whole of the Chinese frontier with the Mongolian People's Republic is marked as undemarcated on current Chinese maps, although their contemporary Soviet equivalents show no sign of doubt about it. Mao has always claimed that China is determined to unite all Tibetans and Mongols as part of the Chinese nation, and has never suggested that this does not apply to the Mongols of Tannu-Tuva, as much as to those of the MPR and Buryat Mongolia.

Thus it is at least a possibility that Tuva owes its otherwise inexplicable rise in status to a feeling in the Kremlin that the inhabitants should be given some tangible evidence of the USSR's appreciation of their importance. At a time when Chinese maps are so ill-defined, a reinforcement of Soviet-Tuvan relations in this way is perhaps a logical anticipatory but essentially defensive move. Looked at from the windows of Peking, it seems most unlikely to improve the climate of Sino-Soviet relations on the border issues which are now outstanding.

r.r.g.



## CHINESE TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA

September 13, 1961

Once again history is being used to resuscitate claims on lost territory. Just as in the case of Tibet the CPG produced historical justification for the incorporation of Tibet into the Chinese People's Republic, now Peking is preparing claims on territory in Eastern Siberia.

As usual the Chinese have some reason for their attitude, as China ceded the Ussuri Provinces to Russia in 1860. The Chinese claim to have been the first colonizers of these provinces and their claim is supported by Russia's first explorer in these parts, Przhevalsky, who maintained that Chinese colonization dated from the middle of the seventeenth century. There is ample evidence that the Chinese were well established in the Soviet Far East by 1830, some 30 years before the cession of the Ussuri Provinces to the USSR on November 2, 1860.

The Chinese colonizers were divided into a sedentary agricultural population which had developed agriculture to a high degree of perfection and variety - growing beans, maize, oats, wheat, melon, red peppers, tobacco, cabbages, garlic and onions; and a fishing/hunting element. In addition, it is believed that, traditional to Chinese society, there were quite a number of bandit groups also.

The main areas in which Chinese influence was very strong were Nikolsk Ussuriysky, Khabarovsk and Vladivostock.

There are other clues to support the idea that China is seeking to expand into Russian territory. Certain parts of China's border with the Central Asian Republics of Tadjikistan and Kirghistan are undemarcated on all recently produced CPR maps though there is full delineation of these frontiers on contemporary Soviet maps. In view of the wealth of mineral and other resources in these Republics the Chinese attitude could be viewed as suspicious.

In the past the Russians have shown themselves to be very sensitive to historical reminders of Mongol and Chinese greatness. Mongol efforts to keep alive the memory of Genghiz Khan, who conquered so much territory in Asia and Eastern Europe have been firmly resisted and condemned by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Encyclopaedia (2nd ed., Vol. 47, 1957, p. 380) said: "Genghiz Khan's predatory campaigns of conquest in neighboring countries were of a profoundly reactionary character." It is likely therefore that Chinese resuscitation of claims to lands in Eastern Siberia will be met with equal disfavor.

(Other Chinese aims in Central Asia may be inferred from the fact that the whole of the Chinese frontier with the Mongolian People's Republic is marked as undemarcated on current CPR produced maps, though no such doubt appears in contemporary Soviet maps. It will be remembered, Mao has always asserted China's determination to unite all Tibetans and Mongols as part of the Chinese nation. Tibet has already been acquired by the CPR. Presumably, it is only a matter of time before the CPR acquires the MPR. This means also eventually that the Mongols of Buryat Mongolia and Tannu-Tuva will have to be assimilated. Then, logically all the Kazakhs, Kirghiz and Tadzhiks will have to be united with their Chinese cousins in Sinkiang and the other Western provinces of China.)