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RUSSIAN-CHINESE RELATIONS IN THE 20TH CENTURY.

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As early as the 1960s, academic Sinologists at the RAS Institute for Far Eastern Studies set themselves the grandiose task of recreating a realistic picture of the almost 400-year history of relations between two of the largest countries in the world – Russia and China – on the basis of original documents and facts. This undertaking was greatly assisted by the opening up of previously closed Soviet archives in the 1990s, thus giving the researchers access to a wealth of hitherto unpublicized information. Guided by the principles of scientific objectivity and historical authenticity, between 1969 and 1995 the group of IFES scientists prepared and published seven large volumes of documents and data, much of which was previously unknown, on the history of Russian-Chinese relations in the 17th-20th centuries.¹ Acquaintance with this invaluable information and new documental evidence promotes a deeper understanding and worthy assessment of the long process of awareness, mutual understanding, and rapprochement of the peoples of Russia and China.

Publication of this series of documents on the history of Russian-Chinese relations in the 20th century began in 2000 with Volume 4 “Soviet-Sino Relations. 1937-1945” comprising of two books of a total of 1,754 pages. This fundamental work was highly appraised in academic and diplomatic circles.² Publication of the fifth volume in 2005 (also in two books) coincided with the 60th anniversary of three historical events at once: victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War, the victorious routing by the Soviet Army of the Japanese invaders in the East and Japan’s capitulation, and, finally, the end of the Second World War.

The contents of the fifth volume encompass two stages: Book One is devoted to relations between the U.S.S.R. and the Chinese Republic during the years of the civil war in China (1946-1949), and Book Two to the relations between the U.S.S.R. and the People's Republic of China, proclaimed in existence on 1 October, 1949 (including the signing on 14 February, 1950 of the Treaty on Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance between the U.S.S.R. and the PRC).

At the end of 1945-beginning of 1946, the military-political situation in China was rapidly changing and the outcome of the civil war was still unpredictable. As numerous documents testify, the Soviet leadership closely followed and responded with understanding to what was going on in China, being interested primarily in having a friendly state on its borders. The Soviet Union continued to officially maintain diplomatic relations with the Chinese Republic, with which a Treaty on Friendship and Alliance was signed on 14 August, 1945. At the same time, the Soviet leadership made no attempt to hide the fact that it was rendering active assistance to the CPC in strengthening its position in Manchuria and building up military forces to fight against its irreconcilable enemy – Chiang Kai-shek.

In the documents and information of the well-designed fifth volume published by Monuments of Historical Thought Publishers, researcher-historians, diplomats, and students, as well as all interested readers can find answers and explanations to many questions about the intricate interrelations between the Soviet Union and China during the crucial time of the Chinese people's struggle for unification of the country and establishment of the PRC. The two large books of this volume contain 583 documents kept in the Archive of Russian Foreign Policy and the Archive of the Russian President. Many of the documents being published are coming into academic circulation in the Russian Federation for the first time. Here it is possible to find the texts of treaties and agreements, the records of talks and cryptocorrespondence between Joseph Stalin, Anastas Mikoyan, and Soviet representatives of various ranks and Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and other leaders and members of the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau, the reports and informational statements of diplomats, and so on. The multitude of facts and details recorded in these documents help the reader to comprehend the gist of Soviet policy aimed at comprehensive support to the Chinese people in their struggle for liberation from external and internal enemies. During the crucial and fateful period for China between 1946 and 1950, Moscow's strategy and tactics were aimed at rendering every possible kind of military, economic, and other assistance to the Communist Party of China and its armed forces in its struggle against Chiang Kai-shek's armies without letting the civil war in China become the continuation of the Second World War with the participation of the great powers.

The documents being published for the first time in Book One shed additional light on the nature of relations between the Soviet Union and the Chinese Republic in the last years of the Chinese civil war (1946-1949), which ended in the formation of a new state on 1 October, 1949 – the People's Republic of China. Book Two of Volume 5 shows the truly historical importance of the first steps to bring the Soviet Union and the PRC closer together on a new basis, which led to the Treaty on Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance, signed by the sides on 14 February, 1950.

In 1946-1949, Soviet-Sino relations were subjected to a serious test under the influence of external and internal forces. On the one hand, the destruction by the Soviet

Army of the powerful Japanese military formation in Manchuria, Japan's capitulation, and withdrawal of the Soviet troops from China testified to the end of the Second World War. But on the other hand, the long power struggle in the country between the ruling Kuomintang Party and the Communist Party of China in active opposition to it, with the participation of large armed forces on both sides, dramatically intensified, and the civil war assumed widespread proportions and encompassed the entire country. At the same time, the entire international situation also became aggravated due to the contradictions which arose between the Soviet Union and the U.S., including the one with respect to China's destiny. The Soviet Union was the main obstacle in the U.S.'s way, which developed weapons of mass destruction at the end of the war – the nuclear bomb – and was striving to establish its world supremacy. China became the main theater for playing out the Cold War on the Asian front, where the Soviet Union acted on the side of the Communist Party of China, and the U.S. rendered all kinds of support to the Kuomintang government headed by Chiang Kai-shek.

After the Soviet Army destroyed the powerful Japanese military formation in Manchuria and Japan capitulated, the U.S. decided to use the fruits of this victory to its advantage by carrying out large-scale deployment of its troops in China in September-October 1945 under the pretext of rendering assistance to the Kuomintang government in disarming and removing Japanese troops from China. It became obvious that the U.S. government intended to help Chiang Kai-shek to destroy the armed forces of the CPC and establish its supremacy throughout China. In an attempt to prevent this development of events, the Soviet Union took steps in response with the aim of a compromise solution to the problem. At the meeting of Soviet, American, and British foreign ministers held in December 1945 in Moscow, the Soviet government proposed reviewing the situation in China and the questions of Soviet-American relations related to it, including the presence of Soviet and American troops on Chinese territory. The Soviet government proposed adopting a decision on the need to unify and democratize China and on putting an end to the civil war. The Soviet and American ministers reached an agreement on withdrawing Soviet and American armed forces from China as quickly as possible. In compliance with this agreement, the Soviet troops were withdrawn from China by May 1946. Only a small military contingent remained at the naval base in Port Arthur at the request of the Chinese Republic government in order to protect China from foreign aggressors.

At the end of 1945-beginning of 1946, Moscow helped the CPC to form a Unified Democratic Army (UDA). The UDA troops were given the trophy weapons and military-technical hardware of the destroyed Japanese army. A Northeast Regional Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, and later the People's Government of Northeast China headed by Gao Gang were established with the help of the Soviet Union. In order to help streamline the military, economic, and political structures in this region, a large group of party, military, and economic employees was sent in advance from Yanang to Manchuria at the request of the CPC Central Committee leadership. Thanks to the active support of the Soviet Union, a support base of the Chinese revolution was formed in the northeast of the country, as well as a guiding center for the CPC's fight against the Kuomintang forces headed by Chiang Kai-shek, which were supported by the United States. As the compilers of the collection of documents note, the Soviet Union's growing assistance made it possible for the CPC to recover from the serious defeats it suffered at the first stage of the civil war and move into the counterattack. By the end of 1947, the People's

Liberation Army (PLA) of China had taken control over territory on which 32% of the Chinese population lived, and it had more than 2,200,000 soldiers. At the same time, the Kuomintang army was reduced to 2,560,000 men.

In the summer and fall of 1948, Chiang Kai-shek was dealt several crushing blows by the Chinese PLA forces. Three large-scale military campaigns led to the liberation of the entire northeast and a large part of Eastern and Central China, including the cities of Tianjin and Beijing. At the beginning of 1949, CPC troops forming a broad front reached the northern banks of the Yangtze River, thus posing a direct threat to Nanjing and Shanghai. In January 1949, Chiang Kai-shek appealed to the CPC once more to stop the civil war and hold peace talks. At that time, the Kuomintang government also asked the Soviet, U.S., U.K. and French governments to mediate in peaceful settlement of the Chinese question. This was not the first time the Chinese Republic government had made such a request. As early as January 1946, Jiang Jingguo, Chiang Kai-shek's son, came to Moscow as his personal representative in order to persuade Stalin to act as a mediator in regulating relations between the leaders of the Kuomintang and the CPC and impel the CPC leadership to stop the armed struggle against the Kuomintang. At that time, Stalin refrained from giving any promises, saying that this question should be resolved by the opposing sides themselves, and that Moscow could not influence the policy of the CPC. Stalin discussed Chiang Kai-shek's new proposal on reconciliation with Mao Zedong during an intensive exchange of coded telegrams in January 1949, expressing his thoughts about the possible ways to resolve this problem.

The texts of these telegrams presented in Volume 5 show that the conjectures and fabrications which subsequently appeared in China about the supposedly skeptical and indifferent attitude of the Soviet leadership toward the CPC and its leaders, and even that the Soviet Union was supposedly against the PLA troops crossing the Yangtze River and liberating the whole of China, are absolutely unfounded. In a telegram of 14 January, 1949, Stalin asked Mao, keeping in mind the situation, to carefully think over and discuss possible responses to Chiang Kai-shek's proposal, on the basis of CPC's interests. "We are asking you," wrote Stalin, "to consider our advice precisely as advice, with no strings attached and to be accepted or rejected. You can be sure that rejecting our advice will not affect our relations and we will remain your friends just as before." He went on to write: "As for our response to the Nanjing proposal about mediation, it will be made in the spirit of your wishes."³ After coordinating its viewpoint with Mao Zedong, the Soviet government refused to mediate for the Kuomintang government at the talks between the Kuomintang and the CPC, which, although they were held in Beijing, did not lead to any agreement between the sides, since the conditions put forward by the CPC essentially meant capitulation of the Kuomintang and were rejected by Chiang Kai-shek.

As a result, on 21 January, 1949, Chiang Kai-shek retired as president of the Chinese Republic, and the Kuomintang government decided to move to Canton (Guangzhou), where the Soviet ambassador, observing diplomatic protocol, also went with the diplomatic corps. After becoming a member of the CPC Central Committee at Mao Zedong's request and with Stalin's consent, Anastas Mikoyan, the Soviet government representative, explained this by saying that Ambassador N.V. Roshchin moving to Canton along with the Chinese government "is not detrimental to our common cause, but, on the contrary, will help it." The volume contains a whole set of documents

and records of Mikoyan's talks in January-February 1949 with the Chinese leaders on all the problems important to the CPC.

On 24 April, 1949, the Chinese Rubicon was crossed. The troops of the 3rd CPLA field army under the command of Liu Bocheng and Deng Xiaoping crossed the Yangtze and entered Nanjing, which was the Chinese capital at that time. But the civil war continued. The Kuomintang, which retreated to Taiwan, took its revenge by bombing large cities of continental China from airplanes and combat ships and threatening an armed intervention with U.S. support. In this arduous situation for China, a delegation of the CPC Central Committee headed by Political Bureau member Liu Shaoqi was sent to Moscow in the summer of 1949 to request help. The delegation included Political Bureau member and Chairman of the Northeast China Government Gao Gang and Central Committee member Wang Jiaxiang. For more than a month, from 26 June to 2 August, the delegation held talks with Stalin and other Soviet leaders on the most important issues relating to ending the civil war, reinforcing victory, and ensuring the country's economic restoration.

The documents and data contained in the collection, many of which are being published for the first time, are astounding in the broad range of questions discussed and settled through the Soviet-Sino talks and active correspondence between the leaders of the two countries. For example, during its visit to Moscow in the summer of 1950, Liu Shaoqi's delegation asked the Soviet leadership to urgently send air defense guns and military personnel, as well as air defense force specialists to China, to render assistance in de-mining the ports and Chinese coast, to organize deliveries of petroleum products, and so on. The Soviet government agreed to satisfy all of these requests. What is more, agreements were reached on sending a large group of Soviet specialists to China to assist in restoring the national economy, as well as on sending equipment to China and on training technical and military specialists. A secret agreement was also signed on granting the CPC, which had still not officially come to power, Soviet credit resources amounting to \$300 million, which aroused a protest from the Kuomintang government with which the Soviet Union still had official relations. It should be noted that in the Soviet Union similar decisions on rendering different kinds of assistance to the CPC were adopted by the Soviet Council of Ministers without the consent of the Chinese Republic government in the past as well.

Volume 5 under review contains complete records of Mikoyan's talks with Mao Zedong and other CPC leaders at the beginning of 1949 in China, the contents of the talks with Shaoqi's delegation in Moscow in July-August 1949, and of Stalin's and other Soviet leaders' talks with Mao Zedong in December 1949-February 1959. All of these documents clearly show the broad scope of the trustful and comradely exchange of opinions about China's problems and the high ranks of the representatives on both sides at the talks. The U.S.S.R.'s diverse and specific assistance – political, military, economic, and financial – was timely and invaluable. “If we had not had assistance from the Soviet Union,” said Mao Zedong in a conversation with Anastas Mikoyan on 4 February, 1949, “it is unlikely we could have achieved our present victories. This does not mean that we should not rely on our own strengths. But we cannot ignore the fact that the military help of the Soviet Union in Manchuria, which was an integral part of your assistance to us, is playing an extremely significant role.”⁴

Book Two of Volume Five contains many documents and information related to the drawing up and signing of the Treaty on Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance between the Soviet Union and PRC concluded in Moscow on 14 February, 1950. In addition to this major political treaty, the book also publishes the full texts of a previously unpublished additional secret agreement as well as separate agreements on the Chinese-Changchun Railroad, Port Arthur, and Dalny, on granting credit to the PRC, and several other important documents relating to the signing of the 1950 Treaty.

Readers will also be extremely interested in the appendix to Volume 5, which contains systemized documents on ten topics, including Soviet-Sino high-level contacts, the Soviet state, and the Russian Spiritual Mission in China, the economy of the North-Eastern provinces of China and Soviet assistance in its restoration and development, and so on. The appendix also contains the records of Stalin's last talks with Zhou Enlai in Moscow in August-September 1952, marking the end of the meetings and contacts of the Soviet leader with high-ranking leaders of the PRC and CPC. During these talks, the results of the Soviet Union's assistance to China in resolving its historical problems were discussed and analyzed. The 1950s went on to see an upswing in friendship and cooperation between the Soviet and Chinese people.

Summing up their vast analytical work, the compilers of Volume 5, A.M. Ledovsky and R. A. Mirovitskaya conclude that the documents and information on Soviet-Sino relations during 1946-1950 show the invariably friendly attitude of the Soviet leadership and people toward the Chinese people, and the Soviet Union's real support in China's liberation struggle, which was crowned by the proclamation of the People's Republic of China. The Treaty on Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance between the Soviet Union and the PRC signed on 14 February, 1950 became a solid foundation for building practical friendly relations between the two great neighboring countries for some time to come. The dramatic split in Soviet-Sino relations which lasted for almost thirty years from 1960 to 1989 was an unnatural anomaly in their development and was not only extremely detrimental to the peoples of both countries, but also seriously undermined the world socialistic system.

All the same, Russia and China managed to learn a lesson from this tragedy, acting in the interests of restoring good-neighborly relations, friendship, and cooperation between the two countries. Analyzing the history of Soviet-Sino relations from the newly available documents and information, we are increasingly convinced of the indisputability and legitimacy of the striving of the peoples of the two countries for peace, development, friendship, and cooperation, keeping in mind mutual interests. This positive development trend in bilateral relations has been noted more than once in the works of well-known Russian academic Sinologists.⁵

After concluding the Treaty on Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation in 2001, Russia and China are stepping confidently into the future along the path of peace and development under the slogan of strategic partnership. The publication of this collection of documents and information on Soviet-Sino relations during 1946-1950 prepared by the academic Sinologists of the IFES on the eve of 2006 – the Year of Russia in China – is an impressive contribution by these scholars to the reinforcing of mutual understanding, traditional friendship, and practical mutually advantageous cooperation between the two great nations of Russia and China.