

sent to:

H.S. Chao-Zi Yang
Prime Minister
People's Republic of China

15 December 1981

Some time previously, a diplomatic group, headed by His Excellency Sui, of the Chinese Embassy in Ankara, visited me at my home. We had a talk, lasting three and a half hours, with this group on the subject of Eastern Turkistan.

During this conversation, I described the cruelties inflicted on the people of Eastern Turkistan, the injustices committed, and the policy of assimilation practiced by all Chinese administrations, past and present. I pointed out that the basic policy of China during the Manchu, Nationalist China, and Chinese People's Republic regimes remained the same, following as the basic principle the "Chauvenism of the Great Han Nation". I also expressed the feelings of the people of Eastern Turkistan and what they wanted from the new administration.

The visiting group said in reply that they partially agreed with what I told them, and that "it is true that during the time of the Gang of Four, as well as during the time of Nationalist China, injustices were committed towards the people of Eastern Turkistan, and the policy of Great Han Chauvenism was continued". They also said: "Our leaders desire to correct all mistakes, and to place relations with the people of Eastern Turkistan on a sound basis", thus speaking of the attitude of the new policy of the central administration of China in a spirit aiming at giving assurances of good-will.

If these new developments go to the extent of the new Chinese administration being desirous of reaching a solution to the problems of Eastern Turkistan that would be in harmony with the national aspirations of the people, in that case we shall be justified in waiting for more serious steps emanating from your administration, leading to the formation of an atmosphere favorable for negotiations.

A really final and definitive solution to the problem of Eastern Turkistan could only be based on the complete realization of the national aspirations of the people of Eastern Turkistan. The conditions and details of this could be determined through negotiations between representatives of the two nations. For the purpose of determining the ways and means most suitable to reach the above goal, I am prepared to enter into negotiations with any representatives of the Chinese Government.

The placing of relations between the people of Eastern Turkistan and of the Chinese people on a sound basis, can be realized, of course, only through negotiations. But, the Government of China could do certain things immediately, to prove its good intentions, unilaterally and without waiting for the negotiations to start.

As I recounted to the honourable members of the staff of the Chinese Embassy who came on a visit to me, and as they were frank enough to admit the truth of what I was saying, the recent history of Eastern Turkistan is full of the great cruelties and injustices committed by the rulers of China, and their functionaries in Eastern Turkistan, against the people of Eastern Turkistan, and the great sufferings of this people.

During the last 200 years, Eastern Turkistan has been under Chinese occupation for most of the time, each period of liberty being followed by invasion from China. Great cruelties were perpetrated during this period. The Manchur, the Nationalist China and the Chinese People's Republic Governments appear to have vied with each other in committing greater cruelties against the people of Eastern Turkistan. Specially, the cruelties committed during the administration of the Chinese People's Republic, would require volumes to be told in full.

The Chinese, in former times, called Turks, Tibetans, Mongols, and Manchurs who had invaded China, "invaders", "imperialists", "barbarians", and "robbers", and drove them out of their country. The same Chinese nation, after occupying the homelands of these people, had no hesitation in annexing these lands, and claiming that the homelands of these foreign people were historically Chinese territories.

After consolidating Chinese rule in these lands, the Chinese turned cruelty into permanent institution and set up an imperialist administration of which the like was not seen in history.

All other imperialist administrations show a softening and an evolution in the direction of increased humanity, in time. They permit a certain degree of right to breathe to the lands under their rule, there has not been the slightest relaxation in the case of Chinese chauvenism, and in the case of Eastern Turkistan and the other countries that have been turned into colonies of China, the most primitive methods of colonialism have been continuously practised, in spite of all developments elsewhere during the twentieth century, known as the century of liberty.

Even a superficial comparison between the imperialist policies of China and the policies of the imperialist powers of the western world, even including Russia, will suffice to make clear the tragedy of Eastern Turkistan.

In general, the invasions of the Western powers were economic in purpose, but Chinese imperialist policy aimed, in addition to economic gains, at the total annihilation of the nations whose homelands were invaded.

Western imperialist countries, although they exploited the nations under rule to the very marrow of their bones, still did not molest the language, religion, and traditions of such nations and permitted their historical and national monuments to remain intact. Chinese national policy, in contrast, not only ruled the nations and lands occupied with an iron hand, but it also aimed at the total annihilation of the language, religion and national life and traditions of such nations.

Western imperialists did not give new names, in their own language, to the countries they invaded. For example, Czarist Russia, after she invaded Western Turkistan, set up an administration for that country, with its center in Tashkent, and called it the General Governor of Western Turkistan. The Bolsheviki divided Western Turkistan into five parts, but called these nominal "republics" Uzbekistan, Turkhistan, Türkmenistan, Kirghizistan and Tadjikistan, after local tribal names. Chinese chauvenist policy changed the name of Eastern Turkistan and also gave new Chinese names to every city, to the mountains, to everything on the land.

Western imperialist country, not even the Russians, announced the lands they occupied to be an inalienable, integral part of their own country. But imperialist Chinese policy announced Eastern Turkistan to be "an inalienable part" of China, thus distorting both history and geography. Western imperialist powers permitted the nations they invaded and subjugated to have, at the very least, the rights of petition, of criticism, of holding meetings, and of a certain degree of freedom and autonomy in religious, civil and cultural matters, and permitted the people to publish newspapers, magazines, and establish and administer their own printing presses, political parties, and all kinds of societies. Chinese imperialist policy aimed and suppressed all these rights.

Western imperialist powers, brought to the people under their rule the benefits of modern civilization and technology. But Chinese imperialism, turned Eastern Turkistan, which had been a center of culture and civilization in history, into ruin, and kept her people in a state of ignorance and backwardness, away from the benefits of civilization. The British, for example, permitted the emergence in India of such personalities as Caudhi, Tagore, Muhammed Ali Jinnah and Muhammed Ali. Chinese national policy in Eastern Turkistan made it an essential part and the very basis of its policy to eliminate such personalities.

Western Imperialist powers, gradually, during the course of time, started to leave their colonial conquests, and hundreds of nations as a result regained their independence and are now members of the United Nations. But China never showed the slightest sign of intending to leave the lands it invaded and occupied.

Finally, there is this fact: Previously there had been emigrations from Western Turkistan to Eastern Turkistan. The meaning of this was that tens of thousands of Turks who could not bear the excessive oppression and cruelty in Russian Turkistan escaped and took refuge in Eastern Turkistan. These refugees called Western Turkistan a "Living Hell". Now, the flow of refugees is in the other direction. The number of people who escaped from the "living hell" of Eastern Turkistan and took refuge recently in Western Turkistan is about 60,000 according to Chinese official sources and about 210,000 according to the refugees. In addition, many thousands in Eastern Turkistan could not bear any further the cruel treatment and committed suicide, in spite of suicide being forbidden by their religion. This comparison does not remove the odium of imperialism from the Soviet rulers of Western Turkistan, but it is instructive as an indication of the level of cruelty and oppression in Eastern Turkistan, and this criterion could also serve the new Chinese administration in Eastern Turkistan in the future, as an indication of their success, or lack of it, to improve conditions.

The truths I recounted above are certainly the source of much pain and many disappointments to the people of Eastern Turkistan. These bitter memories are still very alive in the thoughts of the people. Therefore, I am sure that you will admit the desire of the people of Eastern Turkistan to see tangible proofs and convincing signs before they believe in a change of policy in intention of your Government, as a natural and reasonable desire. I am appending to this letter a list of requests, which reflect the feelings and desires of all the people of Eastern Turkistan. The Chinese Government is able to grant these immediately and unilaterally. Even assuming a desire for speedy results on both sides, negotiations might take some time. Speedy and unilateral action on these requests, before the negotiations, shall serve to prove your good-will before world opinion, and before the opinion of the people of Eastern Turkistan, and shall also serve to create a good atmosphere for the negotiations.

Up till today, Chinese governments have approached the question of Eastern Turkistan with a policy of force and violence, which was an outgrowth of the colonialist mentality. This policy gave birth to unending rebellions in Eastern Turkistan, and the death of millions of people from both sides. At the present moment, Soviet Russia is presenting herself to the people of Eastern Turkistan in the role of a liberator, and is awaiting an invitation from a representative source to go into action and intervene in Eastern Turkistan, to save the people of Eastern Turkistan from having to choose between rebellion and inviting the armies of Soviet Russia into the land, as the two sole means of realizing the national aspirations of the people, is possible through negotiations, and it is in your power to open the path to such negotiations. I feel certain that Your Excellency shall realize fully the wisdom of such a course.

I shall be waiting for an early reply from you, and for signs of good-will from your nation and your government to my people.

With sincere greetings.

ISA ALPTEKIN
Former General Secretary
of the Provincial Government
of Eastern Turkistan

List of Requests:

- 1) The claim that "Eastern Turkistan is an inalienable part of China" should be abandoned. Even Soviet Russia, recognizes, on paper, the right of other people seceding from the Soviet Union if they wish to do so.
- 2) The Chinese settlers who have been settled in Eastern Turkistan should be withdrawn, the sending of new settlers stopped, and the compulsion till now exercised to force Turkish girls to marry Chinese settlers should cease.
- 3) The name Sin-Kiang, expressive of the desire to turn Eastern Turkistan into a colony, should be abandoned and the land should be called again by the historical name, "Eastern Turkistan".
- 4) The true number of the Turks of Eastern Turkistan should not be concealed, as has been done in the past, but should be published for the world to know. During the time of Shou Shih-Ta'ai the number of Uighurs in Eastern Turkistan was given as 4,800,000 and of Kazakhs as 500,000. At that time, the number of Chinese was claimed to be 450 million. Now the Chinese Government announces that there are 5,800,000 Uighurs and 800,000 Kazakhs. Against this, the number of Chinese is claimed to be 1,000,000,000. The contrast between the more than doubling of the Chinese population and the practically stationary numbers of the people of Eastern Turkistan is indeed striking. In my opinion, the number of Muslim Turks in Eastern Turkistan is at least 15,000,000.
- 5) All political prisoners should be released.
- 6) Arbitrary imprisonment and executions without trial should cease.
- 7) All judges in Eastern Turkistan should be chosen from among the Turkish population of Eastern Turkistan. The religious courts, which have been abolished, should be reestablished, with jurisdiction over religious cases.
- 8) High ranking officials in Eastern Turkistan, including the Governor, should be appointed from among Muslim Turks. Muslim Turks in Eastern Turkistan should have military service opened up for them, and Muslim Turkish troops should have Muslim Turks as officers, too. For this purpose, a branch of the Officers' School should be opened in Eastern Turkistan for the training of Muslim Turks as Officers.
- 9) In embassies of the People's Republic of China in Muslim countries, Muslim Turkish elements from Eastern Turkistan should be employed in all capacities, including diplomatic posts. A similar procedure is being followed now by Soviet Russia.
- 10) All mosques should be opened up to worship. Mosques in a state of decay or in a ruined state should be repaired and restored. Schools for religious instruction at all levels should be opened. The properties of the religious foundations should be restored for their proper use. Men of religion and teachers in religious schools should be invited from Turkey and other Islamic countries. Large numbers of Quarans should be imported to meet the need and desire of the people.
- 11) Those who have the means to do so should be permitted to go on Hadj.
- 12) The policy of encouraging drink and the use of drugs for the people of Eastern Turkistan, practised till now, should be reversed and the use of alcoholic drinks and habit-forming drugs should be prohibited. Factories established by the government for manufacturing such drugs should be closed.
- 13) Text-books giving information about history and culture of Eastern Turkistan should be permitted. The campaign of defamation against great men in Turkish history should cease. Public libraries should be reestablished in Eastern Turkistan, and books from Turkey and from the West and the Islamic World should

- 1) be permitted for reading in these libraries. The Turkish dialect of Turkey, the Arabic language, Urdu, Western languages should be permissible subjects for teaching in schools. Teachers from Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Europe and America should be invited and permitted to teach. Students for advanced learning in religious and cultural subjects should be sent to these countries. The policy of condemning Eastern Turkistan, a country which gave rise to great scholars and has been major center of learning, to artificially created ignorance, should cease.
- 2) The policy of discrimination practised till now against students whose parents are suspected of holding opinions unfavourable to the regime, should cease. Hundreds of thousands of children have till now been denied the chance of receiving any education whatsoever, because their parents were accused or denounced as anti-revolutionary, rich, farmers, nationalist, Pan-Islamist, etc. Apart from the artificial and ridiculous nature of the accusations leveled against their parents, the children themselves are certainly innocent.
- 3) Teaching at the Universities should be in Turkish. More Universities should be opened in Eastern Turkistan, and the original inhabitants of Eastern Turkistan should be given priority for admission.
- 4) The attempt to introduce Chinese words into the Turkish language and make the use of such words compulsory should be abandoned. The official language in government departments and the language in schools in Eastern Turkistan should be Turkish. Chinese should be taught only as a secondary language, and this should start at the secondary schools, and not as at present in primary schools.
- 5) The truth that the Uighur, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Uzbek and Tatar Turks of Eastern Turkistan are part of the same nation, the Turkish nation, and are merely talking different dialects of the same language, Turkish, should be officially admitted, and the forcible distortion of the truth by the government to present these as separate "nations" and separate "languages" should be abandoned.
- 6) Government orders and regulations forbidding the use of the ancient and common literary language of the Turks of Eastern Turkistan should be repealed and the use of this language should be free and acceptable to the government.
- 7) Greater freedom of the press should be granted. Government published newspapers, (Now a monopoly of the press is exercised by the government), should be liberalized, more space allotted to local culture and to varied opinions. Private newspapers and magazines, too, should be permitted. Radio, TV and cinemas should also be more liberal and should contain more material dealing with local culture and should employ local artists.
- 8) Permission should be granted to the Turks of Eastern Turkistan to form a Center for studying and collecting material on the history, culture, folklore, popular literature, songs, epics, etc. of Eastern Turkistan and to import books from the outside world dealing with these subjects.
- 9) Permission should also be granted to the Turks of Eastern Turkistan to prepare books, albums of photographs and films describing and illustrating the cultural monuments and natural features of Eastern Turkistan, to be published in Turkish, Arabic, Urdu and Western languages, and exported to the outside world.
- 10) The folklore of Eastern Turkistan should be made known to the world. Folklore groups, which have so far visited Syria, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Pakistan, should extend their tours to Turkey and to other countries in the world.
- 11) Antiquities, precious books, manuscripts, etc. which have been purloined from Eastern Turkistan and taken into other countries should be brought back where possible, and if this should not be possible, copies should be made and put into museums in Eastern Turkistan.

- 1) The mausoleum of Sultan Satuk Bughra Han, now left to be ruined, and also the tombs of other great men and religious leaders and saints, many of which were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, should be repaired or restored.
- 2) Full freedom of press, of speech and the right to organize and form societies should be granted.
- 3) People should not be compelled to join the Communist Party.
- 4) Freedom to travel outside the country should be granted.
- 5) Lands and property that have been confiscated should be returned to their rightful owners.
- 6) The repair and rebuilding of the country, which has been turned to a ruin, should be started. Even a fraction of the profits from the rich mines and agricultural products of the country, all of which now go to China, would be enough to meet the costs.
- 7) Unemployed Muslims in the country should be given work in factories, which now employ almost exclusively Chinese.
- 8) Coupon restrictions in the consumption of food and clothing should be lifted. Present amounts given are way below subsistence level, no meat or fats whatsoever are given to villages, and clothing quotas are restricted to 8 meters of cotton cloth and 1/2 kg. of cotton per person per year for the Muslim population.