

November 22, 1945

Ivanov and Prikhodov Report on the Mongolian Referendum

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Summary:

Report on a 1945 plebiscite to affirm the independence of the Mongolian People's Republic. The plebiscite was held as part of the terms of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, in which the nationalist Republic of China recognized the MPR in exchange for control of the province of Inner Mongolia, which had been occupied by Soviet and Mongolian troops during WWII.

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Secret

To Deputy People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs

Cde. LOZOVSKII S.A.

On October 20, 1945 MPR [Mongolian People's Republic] held a plebiscite on the question of the state independence of the Mongolian People's Republic.

The plebiscite became a serious test of political sentiments of the people of the MPR, of their political activism and consciousness, and also a serious test of the authority of the People's Revolutionary Party and the government of the MPR among the broad masses of the people, a test of the ability of the party to organize such a campaign, the equal of which in terms of its mass reach had not yet been seen in the MPRP [Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party] practice.

It is therefore not uninteresting to analyze the results of this campaign.

The exchange of notes between comrades [Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav] Molotov and [Chinese Foreign Minister] Wang Shijie on the question of the independence of the MPR, from which stemmed the necessity of holding the plebiscite, became known in the MPR during the war with Japan and caused, first on the part of [Mongolian leader Khorloogiin] Choibalsan and the leaders of the MPR, and later among a certain part of the aktiv, a degree of disappointment that the Soviet Union agreed to recognize the independence of the MPR within its existing borders. This disappointment stemmed from the conviction on the part of Choibalsan and the leading aktiv of the MPR in that the MPR's participation in the war with Japan will lead to the unification of the MPR with Inner Mongolia and Barga.

A confirmation of these sentiments, for example, is the fact that Choibalsan, secretary of the CC [Central Committee] [Sukhbaataryn] Yanjmaa and others tried to find a difference with the Chinese viewpoint in cde. Molotov's statement that the Soviet Union will respect the territorial integrity of the MPR.

This difference, in their opinion, was in the fact that the Chinese government speaks about "existing borders," and the Soviet government - about "territorial integrity," without specifying borders.

Explanatory talks with the leadership introduced clarity into the question and sentiments changed. The solution of the question about the MPR borders with China in accordance with the notes [exchanged] has been accepted as a necessary but a temporary step, while the question about the desirable borders is being "kept in mind."

This is confirmed by the fact that during the discussion of the text of the note to the Chinese government on the results of the plebiscite, Choibalsan stubbornly insisted on introducing into the note an excerpt from the response note of cde. Molotov to Wang Shijie with the reference to respect for "territorial integrity" of the MPR. And only after lengthy discussions did Choibalsan state that this place, in his opinion, should make it known to the Chinese government that the question of the existing borders of the MPR is still subject to discussion, as these borders do not include the full actual territory of Mongolia.

Until the end of war the leadership of the MPR did not pay due attention to the plebiscite and understood neither the importance of holding it, nor the difficulties of organizing it, and only the statement of the Chinese government about the desirability of holding the plebiscite on October 10 forced the Mongolian leadership to get going [spokhvatit'sya].

On the MPRP initiative preparatory work for the plebiscite unfolded from the end of September. On 20 September 1945 the CC MPRP Politburo adopted an extensive resolution on the preparation and the conduct of the plebiscite, which became the basis for the resolution of the Presidium of the Small Khural dated 21 September 1945.

To conduct preparatory work for the plebiscite and the plebiscite itself, commissions were created: the Central [commission], aimag and city [commissions], soum and khoroo [commissions], and бага and khorin [commissions].

Considering that the main responsibility for the organization and the conduct of the plebiscite was supposed to be assumed by party organizations, the leadership of the commissions was bestowed, mainly, on the leading party cadres.

The Central commission consisted of three secretaries of the CC MPRP and all first secretaries of the aimag and city committees, who were also the chairmen of the aimag and city commissions. In the majority of cases in local commissions, which consisted of the secretaries of the [party] cells, the latter were also the heads of these commissions. So, for instance, from the 345 chairmen of the soum and khoroo commissions, 265 commissions were chaired by secretaries of the party cells. In all, 3304 local commissions were created, comprising 20138 people.

In order to improve the organization of the preparatory work special seminars of the commission chairmen were conducted. On October 1 such a seminar was conducted in Ulaanbaatar, in which all aimags participated, with the exception of the 6 westernmost aimags (Zavkhan, Govi-Altai, Bayan-Hongor, Khovd, Uvs, and Bayan-Ulgii), for the instruction of which hands-on seminars were conducted (in Tsagaan-Olom and Khovd).

At the seminars commissions were instructed in detail on the questions of the forms and the substance of the organizational and the mass-instructional preparatory work and the techniques for conducting the plebiscite. Such seminars were also conducted in the aimags by the local commissions.

From October 3 there unfolded a wide organizational preparatory and mass-instructional work at the localities.

In all aimags, cities and soums there were meetings of the party aktiv and general open party meetings, at which explanations were given concerning the significance of the plebiscite, and the order of its conduct, as well as the tasks of the party organizations.

In all, there were 593 meetings of the party cells, attended by 15799 party members and candidate members, 409 meetings of the revsomol [revolutionary youth union], attended by 9466 revsomolets, and 295 meetings of the party aktiv, attended by 9466 people.

After that, a number of meetings of trade union organizations, and of women delegates [zhendelegatok], and others, were held, which covered about 60 thousand people.

The central and local press was widely used for instructional work, and also special materials were published for the talkers [besedchikov] and reporters concerning the achievements of the MPR in the [last] 25 years, about the rights of MPR citizens, about the right-less life of the MPR workers before the revolution and of the Mongolian people in Inner Mongolia and Barga, liberated from the Japanese aggressors [,] [about] the aims and the tasks of the plebiscite, about the technique of holding the plebiscite, etc.

In the course of preparatory work there were occasional facts of misunderstanding of the significance of the plebiscite and negative sentiments. For instance, a number of citizens expressed puzzlement concerning the plebiscite, saying that Mongolia has been de facto independent for 25 years and there is no need to consider the Chinese pretensions. Some said that Mongolia, as a weak and backward country, will not even be able to exist independently without the support of a stronger state, and that therefore Mongolia must choose between China and the Soviet Union. Many believed that the plebiscite will solve the question not of Mongolia's independence within existing borders but of the unification of Inner Mongolia and Barga with the MPR.

In some places there were provocative attacks, which took the form of statements that the plebiscite is being held on the initiative of the Soviet Union with the aim of subsequent annexation of Mongolia, or that the plebiscite will solve the question of Mongolia's departure from the influence of the Soviet Union.

However, all these facts were just occasional phenomena. On the whole, organizational and mass-instructional work to prepare for the plebiscite clearly showed that political sentiments of the people of Mongolia are healthy, that the people understand the significance of the plebiscite and display high [degree of] political activism in the struggle for their independence and for the people-revolutionary order [regime] that exists in the country.

During the meetings and demonstrations there were hundreds of statements expressing gratitude to the Soviet Union for its selfless aid to Mongolia, expressing gratitude and best wishes to comrade Stalin, as teacher, leader and friend of the Mongolian people.

The day of voting was set for 20 October. The Central Commission allowed to hold voting beforehand (from 16 to 19 October) only at remote border posts and in army units, which were on the march in Inner Mongolia, so that the results of the voting could be delivered by local commissions by the 20th.

The day of the voting turned into a spontaneous, genuinely all-people festivity. From early morning the voters in large groups set out for the polling stations. The majority dressed up in festive clothes. Having arrived at polling stations, [they] presented the [referendum] commissions with letters, statements, greetings, well wishes, and also with valuable gifts. There were more than 85 thousand letters and statements of this type. Many of the polling stations witnessed spontaneous mass demonstrations, and the voters arrived at the stations with flags, banners, and portraits of comrade Stalin and the leaders of the MPR. After the voting many bagas and soums witnessed spontaneous people's festivities, which saw horse racing, archery and wrestling competitions, etc.

The best horses and horsemen were selected to deliver the results of the voting to soums and aimags. The delivery of the voting registers was considered to be an honored task and every messenger considered it a matter of honor to arrive earlier than the others.

Among the shortcomings of the organization and the conduct of the campaign one should list the irresponsibility in the exact implementation of the instruction and the resolutions on the conduct of the plebiscite and on the formalization of the plebiscite documents, which was in evidence at localities and which is generally characteristic of the Mongolian apparat.

So, for instance, in a number of instances, the number of members of the local commissions did not correspond to the instruction and, in some cases, contrary to the instruction, commissions were not created at all, and the organization of the plebiscite was carried out by individual persons tasked by the soum administration. There were cases of eyewashing, when local commissions, desiring to show their "good" work, without asking the voters, marked their opinions in the voting lists and even faked signatures to prove the "hundred percent" participation of the voters in the plebiscite.

Documents of the plebiscite in the majority of cases were formalized carelessly with the breach of the established rules. Even in the Central commission there were efforts to write up the protocol on the results of the plebiscite without checking any documents, on the basis of merely the results from the aimags. The chairperson of the Central commission Bum-Tsend did not care about documents at all, and the deputy chair, secretary of the CC Surenjav, attempted to mislead, stating that the numbers on the results of the plebiscite were arrived at on the basis of the checking of documents, and only a thorough check of the documents, conducted after repeated and insistent advice, showed the real state of the matter.

When documents were checked, it was determined that the register erroneously duplicated 1551 people and omitted 2437 people; that contrary to the instruction and the guidance of the Small Khural, 98 foreigners, who were not MPR citizens, took part in the voting. The results of the vote included non-participants in the voting, including several dead people; there were two facts of blatant refusal to participate in the plebiscite and a whole range of other shortcomings.

All of these facts were noted in a special protocol of the Central commission and reviewed at its meeting, after which the final results of the plebiscite were confirmed, which were published in a separate protocol of the Central commission, as an official document on the results of the plebiscite.

The plebiscite clearly confirmed healthy political sentiments of the population of the MPR, the strength of the MPRP and government authority among the wide masses of the people. The plebiscite showed also that the party organizations grew up and are capable, with the due organization, to succeed in any political campaign.

Attached:

Protocol of the check of the documents of the plebiscite and the protocol of the Central commission on the results of the plebiscite [crossed out in the original].

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Ambassador of the USSR in the MPR (IVANOV) [Signed]

Adviser to the CC MPRP (PRIKHODOV) [Signed]

22 November 1945

Ulaanbaatar