

THE FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL REPORT
ON THE CHANGKUFENG INCIDENT

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CHAPTER III. MATTERS CONCERNING BORDERS

Section 1. Changkufeng (Saiyusan) and Shatsporong Incidents

Sub-section 1. Progress of the Incidents

Paragraph 1. The Changkufeng Incident

At about noon on July 11th, more than ten Soviet troops appeared on the hill of Changkufeng, Manchoukuo territory, and, advancing on to the side of the hill facing Manchoukuo, began to dig trenches. Their number gradually increased to forty on the 14th, and they apparently intended to continue the illicit occupation of the territory. At 9 p.m. on the 14th, therefore, an instruction was wired from Foreign Minister Utsuki to Mr. Nishi, Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow, to demand urgent withdrawal of the Soviet troops.

Under this instruction, Chargé d'Affaires Nishi visited Mr. Stomoniakov, Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, at noon on the 15th, and tendered him our demand. Mr. Stomoniakov replied that he had no knowledge of the incident, that he considered the statement as if Soviet troops had crossed the border to have been based on inaccurate reports, but that he would make prompt inquiry in this matter.

At 11 p.m. on the same day, Mr. Stomoniakov requested Chargé d'Affaires Nishi to visit him. During the interview, Mr. Stomoniakov insisted that the spot where the incident occurred was clearly Soviet territory, and produced a map alleged to have been appended to the Hunchun Border Protocol. Thereupon the Chargé d'Affaires explained the reason to the contrary, and demanded withdrawal of the Soviet troops. Mr. Stomoniakov refused to accede, insisting that the Soviet side was in no position to withdraw its troops from its own territory on demand from any other Power. The interview lasted four hours without coming to any conclusion.

The border-line in this region is stipulated in the Peking Treaty of 1860 and the Hunchun Border Protocol of 1886 which is supplementary to the former. The stipulations, however, in both treaties are so simple that the running course of the border-line between border-marks is thereby only very indistinctly indicated. Consequently, there has been no agreement of opinions between Manchoukuo, which is assumed to have inherited these international contracts, and the Soviet Union. The Manchoukuo Authorities understand that, (1) according to a map prepared by the Russian General

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Staff in 1911, the border-line runs from north to south to the east of the Changchi (Lake Hasang), which lies on the eastern side of Changkufeng, and (2) even according to the Hunchun Border Protocol, 1886, it runs along the western side of Changchi at the foot of the hill of Changkufeng. The Soviet Authorities, on the other hand, insist that, according to the Hunchun Border Protocol, the border-line runs on the western side of Changchi, including Changkufeng within Soviet territory.

Acting on their own opinion in this regard, the Manchoukuo Authorities instructed Mr. Shimomura, Special Commissioner for Foreign Affairs at Harbin, to protest against the Consul-General of the Soviet Union at Harbin. This he did by telephone on the night of the 14th, and by visiting the Consul-General on the evening of the 18th.

The reason why Japan has demanded withdrawal of the Soviet troops which have been occupying Changkufeng lies in the principle of joint defense of Japan and Manchoukuo, as any and all acts of menace to the territory and order of Manchoukuo manifestly constitute, at the same time, menace to the tranquility and existence of Japan, especially in view of the geographical position of the area in question.

Late in the night on July 17th, an instruction was again wired to Chargé d'Affaires Nishi to fully explain the Japanese standpoint and demand retreat of the Soviet troops back to the line which they had occupied before July 11th, to wit, recovery of the status quo ante. In view of the gravity of the situation, a telegraphic order was also given to Ambassador Shigemitsu, who was at that time on an official business tour in Europe, to return immediately to Moscow. He arrived at his post on the 18th.

During the time, it happened on the spot that several members of the gendarme station at Riukon (Korea), who went towards the evening of the 15th to Changkufeng for reconnoitering, were fired at by Soviet troops, and one of them, Corporal Matsushima, was missing. On the night of the 17th, a Japanese detachment on the first line despatched two Koreans as emissaries to the Soviet side. Even after the 20th they did not return. On the other hand, transportation by trucks grew suddenly active after the 20th in the interior of the Soviet territory, especially between Poshiet and Novokievsk, as well as Novokievsk - Hensi - Siangshantung. This made reinforcements and strict vigilance on the Japanese part inevitable, and thus both sides stood vis-à-vis.

At 2 p.m. on July 20th Mr. Shigemitsu, Ambassador to the Soviet Union, interviewed with Mr. Litvinov, under the instruction wired to him on the 17th, and demanded recovery of the status quo ante on the basis of our insistence, stating at the same time that the whole responsibility for whatever might otherwise happen would be on the Soviet side. To this Mr. Litvinov replied that no threat would be effective in Moscow, and the interview bore no fruit.

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On the borders, on the other hand, not only Soviet troops on the scene in question were reinforced rapidly, but also border-crossing from the Soviet side was repeated on the land as well as in the air near Manchuli, Suifenho and Hulin, between the 22nd and the 25th.

In view of the gravity of the situation, the Foreign Office despatched Mr. Niura, Secretary of the Foreign Office, to the spot. He arrived at Hunchun via Hsingking on the 23rd. As to the two emissaries sent to the Soviet side, the Soviet Government proposed, through the Japanese Consul-General at Vladivostok, to return them as trespassers. They were handed over to our detachment on the first line at a place near the border-mark No. 8 (at Chonglingtzu) at 1.45 p.m. on the 26th.

Such being the circumstance, the Japanese Government wired on the 27th to the Ambassador to the Soviet Union that, for the time being, the Government would keep attentive silence and watch Soviet attitude.

Paragraph 2. The Shatsaofeng Incident

At 9.30 a.m. on the 29th, about ten Soviet troops crossed the line, which formed the border if the Hunchun Border Protocol, insisted upon by the Soviet Government, was to be called for authority, at a place to the south of Shatsaofeng, north of Chengkufeng, trespassed on Manchoukuoan territory, and began to dig trenches. Thereupon at 2.30 p.m. our border patrol detachment drove the Soviet troops away, and retreated to a height to the west (about 2 kilometers south of Yangkwanping) in order to avoid any further clash. At 4.30 p.m. the Soviet troops, having presumably judged our retreat as weakening of attitude, attacked, with several tanks and under cover of the artillery, the Japanese troops which had retreated as mentioned above and was on vigilance. Our troops which had been restraining themselves took up the challenge for their self-defense. Soviet reinforcements were continually increased, and so were ours, thus bringing both troops face to face. The 30th passed in that situation. That night, at 1.40 a.m. of the 31st, the Soviet troops, together with the troops occupying Chengkufeng, and under cover of the artillery situated southeast of Changchi, began a large-scale attack on the Japanese troops. They were, therefore, obliged to resort to a resolute counter-attack and completely repulsed the Soviet troops, occupying at 6 a.m. that day a height in the south of Shatsaofeng, and at 5.10 a.m. Chengkufeng itself. In this clash the Japanese troops captured 10 Soviet light tanks and many rifles and ammunition.

The Soviet troops having, however, apparently resolved to recover the Chengkufeng area occupied by the Japanese troops, persistently repeated counter-attacks, namely, against Suilungfeng at 4 a.m. on August 1st, and on the afternoon of August 2nd against the positions on Chengkufeng and a height in the south of Shatsaofeng with over ten aeroplanes,

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and again with scores of aeroplanes in a formation. Then Soviet aeroplanes bombed Manchoukuoan territory, as well as Keiko, Koyu, Miuken and other towns in Korea. Such bombing beyond the border was continued almost every day until the conclusion of truce. Also attacks by land forces against the whole Changkufeng area were repeated every night. In spite of all this, the Japanese troops refrained themselves strictly from crossing the border under the fundamental policy of localizing the clash. They maintained their positions without using even one aeroplane.

On August 3rd, Mr. Ando, Secretary of the Foreign Office, departed for Seoul (Korea).

Paragraph 3. Main Diplomatic Negotiations.

Diplomatic negotiations on the Shatsufeng incident after July 29th were conducted in the following manner:

On the 30th, Mr. Smetanin, Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Tokyo, visited the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, and made a protest against the alleged border-crossing of Japanese troops. On August 1st, on our side, Mr. Miyakawa, First Secretary of Embassy in the Soviet Union, visited the Chief of the Japanese Section (in the absence of the Director of the Far Eastern Bureau), and protested against the Shatsufeng incident under the instructions of the Foreign Minister of August 1st. On the 2nd he visited the Director of the Far Eastern Bureau, and protested against the unwarranted acts of violence of Soviet aeroplanes. On the same day Mr. Smetanin, Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Tokyo, repeated the Soviet protest in a written form to the Foreign Minister. During the time counter-measures were being discussed in the Foreign Office in close co-operation with the Army and the Navy. In the afternoon on August 3rd, an instruction was given to Ambassador Shimomitsu by telegram to make the following proposal:

"In view of the very tense situation on the scene of the incident, we deem it necessary to propose an immediate cessation of fighting, and are, at the time of writing (9 p.m.), inviting the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires to the Foreign Office. As the matter, however, needs attention in utmost urgency, we request you, on your part, to discuss as soon as possible with the Foreign Commissariat Authorities, and propose to stop fighting now and immediately. If the Soviet Government agrees thereto, we are ready to confer on concrete measures."

(These concrete measures consisted in the Soviet troops retreating to the line connecting the heights east of Changchi, and the Japanese troops to the line connecting the height to the west of Changkufeng with the height to the southwest of a nameless lake lying on the western side of Shatsufeng, i.e. the position which the Japanese troops occupied on July 30th). On the morning of August 4th, Mr. Horinouchi, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, invited Mr. Smetanin,

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Soviet Chargé d'Affairs, to the Foreign Office, and requested him to inform his home Government of the above-mentioned truce proposal and give its reply. The Ambassador to the Soviet Union was informed of the details of this interview by telegram, and was instructed to pursue concrete negotiations in Moscow.

I. The First Interview between Shigemitsu and Litvinov

In an interview from 1 till 3.30 p.m. on August 4th, the Ambassador made a proposal as instructed on the 3rd, to cease fighting on both sides. Mr. Litvinov replied that if the Japanese troops withdrew beyond the line stipulated in the Hunchun Border Protocol and stopped attacking Soviet territory, the Soviet Government would promise to stop fighting, but that until then it was unable to promise anything.

II. Protest against the question concerning the Japanese Consulates at Khabarovsk and Blagoveshchensk

During the pendency of settlement of this incident, the Soviet Authorities resorted to several compulsory measures, such as to demand, respectively on the 3rd and the 4th, evacuation within 48 hours of the Japanese Consulates at Khabarovsk and Blagoveshchensk. At noon on the 5th, Vice-Minister Horinouchi invited Mr. Smetanin, Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, to the Foreign Office, and made a protest against this matter. Mr. Smetanin retorted that the Soviet Authorities considered closure of the Japanese Consulates to be a matter already settled. The Vice-Minister thereupon requested the Chargé d'Affaires to inform his home Government that we would be compelled to resort to measures of retaliation, if the Soviet Authorities would take unwarranted steps in regard to freedom and safety of Japanese Consuls. On that occasion the Vice-Minister protested against the fact that, in spite of the Japanese proposal to cease fighting, Soviet troops were all the same continuing artillery fire and bombing.

III. The Second Interview between Shigemitsu and Litvinov

As it was surmised from the first interview on the 4th that the Soviet side had a disposition to cease fighting, provided that conditions were satisfactory, studies were made in the Foreign Office, and an instruction was given by telegram on the 6th to negotiate with Mr. Litvinov, tendering him the following concrete conditions:

1. As a concrete step to stop fighting, the lines of retreat for both troops shall be in accordance with either of the two following proposals:

The first proposal. The Soviet troops shall retreat to the line east of Changchi, and the Japanese troops to that connecting the height to the west of Changkufeng with the height to the south west of a nameless lake lying on the western side of Shitsaofeng. Both troops refrain from entering the zone between the lines until the conflict will be settled.

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The second proposal. The Japanese troops shall retreat to the line mentioned in the first proposal, and both sides shall not enter the zone in between until the settlement of the conflict, on condition that Soviet troops do not find themselves west of Changchi.

2. Negotiations on demarcation of the border on and about the scene of the incident shall, after cessation of fighting, be entered into on the following conditions:

(a) We have no objection to taking the Hunchun Border Protocol as the basis for negotiations.

(b) The border to be demarcated will be that stretch between the border-mark T and the border-mark No.1.

(c) The border shall be demarcated by a joint investigation on the spot, consulting materials in the possession of both Manchoukuoan and Soviet Authorities. The direct parties concerned are the Manchoukuoan and Soviet authorities, and the Japanese will be present.

Under this instruction, Ambassador Shigemitsu interviewed with Mr. Litvinov from 5.30 till 9 p.m. on August 7th, and endeavored to induce him to change his mind. Mr. Litvinov persisted in the border-line on the map appended to the Hunchun Border Protocol, and stated that the previous condition was withdrawal of the Japanese troops beyond that line. The Ambassador made a compromising proposal, but was not successful in prevailing upon Mr. Litvinov, who, however, stated that materials in the possession of both Soviet and Japanese-Manchoukuoan Authorities should be accepted as bases of negotiations for border demarcation, and that a demarcation commission should be formed, consisting of two Soviet delegates on the one hand, and one delegate each for Japan and Manchoukuo on the other.

During this interview, Mr. Litvinov referred to an affair that, at 00.30 on August 7th, the Kwantung Army attacked and forced back Soviet troops which had on August 5th begun to build entrenchments at a height beyond the border, about 4 kilometers south of the border-mark No.18 on the Soviet-Manchoukuoan border, and expressed a warning to the Ambassador that the Soviet authorities would possibly retaliate actions of this kind with aeroplanes or guns. The Ambassador, on his part, presented our protest on this affair.

IV. The Third Interview between Shigemitsu and Litvinov

As it was disclosed at the second interview that the Soviet Authorities had a disposition to conclude truce on more concrete conditions, an instruction was wired on August 9th to the Ambassador, adding a third proposal to the two former ones contained in the instruction of the 6th, namely:

(a) The Japanese Government agrees that both troops shall be detached at a certain distance, for instance one

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kilometer on each side of the border, taking as the boundary the line of the Hunchun Border Protocol, on which the Soviet Government insists, i.e., the line connecting the tops of a height in the south of Shatsaofang, Changkufang and Height 52.

(b) Border demarcation shall be conducted by a joint investigation on the spot, consulting materials in the possession of both Manchoukuo and Soviet Authorities.

(c) A Border Demarcation Commission shall be formed consisting of two delegates each for Manchoukuo and the Soviet Union, while a Japanese representative will join it merely as an observer. The instructions aimed at achieving item (a) mentioned above, and left (b) and (c) to the Ambassador's discretion to change, if need be, in order to make terms. Further, another instruction was wired on the 10th with a proposal apparently more acceptable to the Soviet Government, though in substance not much different from the third proposal, namely, the Japanese troops should retreat to the line of July 29th, as proposed by the Soviet Government, and both Japanese and Soviet troops should not enter a zone to be made at a certain distance (for instance, one kilometer's each) on both sides of the line of the Hunchun Border Protocol, on which the Soviet Government insisted, until demarcation of the border shall have been finished by the Border Demarcation Commission.

Under these instructions, Ambassador Shigemitsu had an interview with Mr. Litvinov from 7 till 9.30 p.m. on August 10th, and showed first the whole concrete conditions for truce. After deep deliberations, Mr. Litvinov, on his part, made counter-proposals, and they provisionally agreed upon the following terms. The Ambassador returned to his Embassy pending final settlement, and at past 11 p.m. he sent Mr. Miyakawa, Secretary of the Embassy, to confirm our agreement to the terms.

1. At noon (Maritime Province time) on the 11th, both troops shall cease firing.

2. The Japanese troops shall retreat one kilometer from the line which they occupied at 12 o'clock (Maritime Province time) on the night of the 10th (i.e., before the time of the truce). The Soviet troops shall maintain the positions they occupied at the same time.

3. This agreement shall be put into practice by representatives of both troops on the scene (once fighting is stopped, the representatives will be able to meet immediately).

Mr. Litvinov, however, proposed to Secretary Miyakawa that "both Soviet and Japanese troops remain on the lines they occupy at 12 o'clock on the night of August 10th, 11th," on the ground that it would be fair not to demand the

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unilateral retreat of the Japanese troops. Expressing his belief that the Ambassador would no doubt approve this, Secretary Miyakawa stated that he would once return to the Embassy and give a definite reply of the Ambassador by telephone. Thus taking leave, he later communicated this approval by telephone. Mr. Litvinov then again requested Ambassador Shigemitsu to visit him, and producing the agreement in a written form prepared beforehand, confirmed whether the Ambassador had any objection, and reiterated at the same time his insistence upon the composition of the Border Demarcation Commission (namely, two Soviet delegates, one delegate each from Japan and Manchoukuo, with one delegate of a non-party nation), and upon the materials to be used as bases for the investigation. The Ambassador repeated the Japanese contention, and this led to no agreement of opinion in regard to the demarcation of the border. But the agreement on truce was concluded on the above-mentioned conditions.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, HAYASHI, Keoru, Chief of the Archives Section of the Japanese Foreign Office, hereby certify that the document hereto attached in the Japanese language, consisting of 13 pages and entitled:

The Foreign Office Report on the
Changkufeng Incident

is an exact and true copy of an official document of the Japanese Foreign Office.

Certified at Tokyo,
on this 12th day of April, 1947.

Witness:

/s/ K. Hayashi

/s/ K. Urabe

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, MIURA, Kazuichi, hereby certify that I can read, write and speak the Japanese and the English languages, and that I have done the English translation of

The Foreign Office Official Report on
the Changkufeng Incident

accurately and faithfully.

/s/ K. Miura

Tokyo, January 10th, 1947.