

RUSSIA

SECRET SINO-RUSSIAN TREATY OF 1896

His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of China and His Imperial Majesty the Tsar of Russia, desiring to maintain the present situation of peace in the Far East, and to prevent future aggression by other powers upon the territory of Asia, have determined to conclude a treaty of mutual assistance. Therefore, His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of China has specially appointed His Excellency Li hung-chang, Imperial Commissioner and Plenipotentiary of the first class, Grand Tutor of the Heir Apparent, Grand Secretary of the Wen-hua Place, Stern-and-resolute Earl of the first rank, and Superintendent of Trade for the northern Ports; and His Imperial Majesty the Tsar of Russia has specially appointed Prince Lobanov, Imperial Commissioner and Plenipotentiary, Finance Minister, member of the Cabinet and of the Imperial Council and Privy Councillor, as their respective plenipotentiaries, who, having exchanged and examined their credentials and found them in proper form, agree to the following stipulations:

ARTICLE I.

In the event of a Japanese invasion of the territory of Russia in Eastern Asia, or the territory of China, or the territory of Korea, the present treaty shall be considered as having been involved, and measures shall be taken according to the treaty. In such an event both contracting powers promise to dispatch all the military and naval forces that can be mobilized for mutual assistance; they shall also supply each other with munitions and provisions as far as possible.

ARTICLE II.

Having entered into the present treaty of mutual defense, neither contracting power can conclude a separate peace agreement with the enemy without mutual consultation.

ARTICLE III.

Should an emergency arise during the war, Russian warships shall be allowed to enter all ports on the coast of China; incase of need, the local authorities shall give aid to the best of their ability.

ARTICLE IV.

In order in the future to facilitate the rapid and safe transportation of Russian troops for opposing the enemy, and for the supply of munitions and provisions, the Chinese Government agrees to let Russia construct a railway through the territory of Heilungkiang and Kirin to connect with Vladivostok. However, the construction of this railway is not to be used as a pretext for the infringement of Chinese territory, or for encroachment on the lawful rights and privileges of H.I.M. the Emperor of China. The Chinese Government will entrust the Russo-Chinese Bank with the management of the (railway) matter. The Chinese

Minister to Russia and the Bank shall consult on the spot and decide upon the terms of the contract.

ARTICLE V.

When Russia is engaged in the defensive measures against the enemy provided for in Article I, she may use the railway as provided in Article IV for the transportation of troops, provisions, and munitions. In peacetime, Russia may also use this railway for troops and provisions in transit. Apart from temporary stops due to changes of trains, they shall not be allowed to stop over for any other reason.

ARTICLE VI.

The agreement shall be effective for fifteen years, beginning with the date on which the contract mentioned in Article IV shall have been ratified and put into effect. Six months before the expiration of this treaty, the two contracting powers shall negotiate for its extension.

SPECIAL PROVISION:

The plenipotentiaries of both contracting parties agree that the Sino-Russian treaty concluded on this day shall be rendered into the Chinese and French languages in duplicate copies, to be signed and have seals affixed. The Chinese and French copies have been compared and found to be without error. In case of dispute the French text shall be the decisive version.

Concluded on the 22nd day, 4th month, and 22nd year of Kuang-hsü, which is May 22nd, 1896 (o.s.) [June 3, 1896], at Moscow.