

Characteristics of the Diplomatic Approach of the Russian Empire Towards The Eastern Turkestan Territory In The 1860s

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Abstract: This article analyzes the political factors that caused the changes in the diplomatic relations of the Russian Empire with the territory of East Turkestan in the 1960s. In particular, the fact that the internal political processes taking place in this region of Central Asia constantly influenced these diplomatic relations is scientifically substantiated based on existing sources and literature.

Keywords: Russian Empire, East Turkestan, Seven-City State, Buzruk Khan, Muhammad Yaqubbek Badavlat, Ottoman Empire, Sino-Manchu Empire.

Introduction: Before discussing the essence of political relations between the Russian Empire and the territories of East Turkestan in the 1960s, it is important to analyze the internal political realities that took place in this region. In general, in the 1960s, independent Uyghur khanates called Kuchin, Kashgar, Khotan and Ili, as well as the Dungan khanates Urumqi, were formed in the region. Later, on the basis of the Kuchin, Khotan and Kashgar khanates, the Seven-City State (1867-1878) was established. The diplomatic relations of the East Turkestan territory as an independent state with neighboring territories and the Russian Empire also occurred during the 11-year reign of Muhammad Yaqubbek. [Isiyev, 1981: 3] That is why the second half of the 19th century is studied separately in the history of diplomacy of this region. Another important issue that von Kaufman had to solve in connection with these processes was the issue of East Turkestan. In this region, in 1864, a Muslim uprising against the Xin dynasty took place. As a result of this uprising, the Manchu troops were destroyed, and the Chinese were subjected to mass massacres. In addition, Russian merchants in the region also suffered from this mass popular movement, in particular, Russian merchants were deprived of their respective trading factories and properties.

In the liberated territories, 4 state-type territorial units with a permanent hostile mood were formed. These

were:

1. Muslim Chinese of Dungan origin;
2. Uyghurs;
3. Kazakhs - Muslims of Turkic origin;
4. Kalmyk Buddhists.

This situation began a new stage of bloodshed, which further worsened the situation in East Turkestan. Because the territorial units formed in the country were hostile to each other in terms of nationality and religion, and the attempts of the Sino-Manchurian empire to re-incorporate this territory were the main factors that turned it into a turbulent region. [Airapetov, 2006: 289]

In this situation, this region became a new focus of geopolitical relations. In this case, the Russian Empire, China, the 4 new units that emerged, and the Kokand Khanate could directly influence the events.

In particular, the political reaction of the Kokand Khanate to the situation was as follows. As early as 1864, Khudoyor Khan sent aid under the leadership of Alimquli to Buzruk Khan, a representative of the local khaja dynasty, who was a claimant to power in Kashgar and had originally participated in the defense of the Akmachyt fortress in 1852. However, a new political force soon began to take power in East Turkestan. This was Muhammad Yakubbek Badavlat, who held a high

position in the Kokand Khanate. He effectively removed Buzruk Khan from power and initially conducted state affairs on his behalf. In 1869, Yakubbek sent Buzruk Khan to Mecca, while Buzruk Khan preferred to remain a refugee in Bukhara. In the meantime, Yakubbek had founded the new Seven-City State and declared himself ruler. Yakubbek did not limit himself to declaring himself the ruler, but achieved international recognition of his state. The Ottoman Sultan Abdul Aziz, who had great influence and the title of Caliph in the Muslim world, recognized him as the ruler and gave Yakubbek the title of Emir. Sources record that the Emirate of Bukhara soon recognized this state and ruler.

By the 1870s, under Yakubbek's rule, all the territories of East Turkestan, except for the Ili region, occupied by the Russians in 1871, and the eastern border regions under the influence of the Sin Empire, Barkul and Ham, were united, and their total area was 1.5 million km². These indicators indicate that the Seven Cities State was located in a fairly large area. [Исиев, 1981: 25]

However, despite such indicators, the foreign policy of Muhammad Yaqubbek during the existence of the Seven Cities State was complicated. This is explained, first of all, by the increasing interest of several large empires in this region for various reasons. For example, the Manchu Empire in China claimed this region in order to restore its former influence, the victorious end of military operations against the Central Asian khanates led to the activation of the Russian Empire, and the capture of the Punjab region in the 40s of the 19th century opened the way for England to the territories of Central Asia and East Turkestan. It is even emphasized that the most acute point of the emerging Russian-English rivalry was the territory of East Turkestan. Also, the Ottoman Empire, using its influence in the Islamic world, tried to intervene in the processes in East Turkestan, and the Kokand Khanate became a participant in this rivalry due to its direct territorial border. Due to the above factors, Yakubbek Badavlat was entrusted with the task of conducting a foreign policy based on high-level clear plans.

From the first years of his reign, Muhammed Yakubbek tried to get closer to the Russian Empire. In addition to the reception of the embassy led by V.A. Poltoraskov in the summer of 1867 and the establishment of friendly relations between the two countries in negotiations, the sending of his secretary Tora Akhun to the city of Verniy in response to this embassy is a vivid example of this. It should also be emphasized that by the end of the 1860s, the Russian Empire did not have a clear concept in diplomatic relations with East Turkestan. Because, dissatisfied with the results of the Tora Akhun embassy, the ruler of the Seven Cities sent an embassy led by

Shodi Mirzo to Governor-General P. Kaufman in 1868, who directed the members of the embassy to the capital of the empire. Later, he explained this action by the fact that he was not in Tashkent and that if the ambassadors were sent back to their country without official negotiations, a sharp turn in relations with the Seven Cities could occur. It is clear from this that, although the importance of the territory of Eastern Turkestan was emphasized in the foreign policy of the Russian Empire during this period, no clear concept was formed in the diplomatic relations between them. This was considered a specific feature of the diplomatic relations of the Russian Empire with other Central Asian states and East Turkestan. The fact that the Russian Empire's officials were interested only in trade relations with the Seven Cities in the subsequent period led Yaqubbek Badavlat to approach another powerful state in order to gain international recognition. The sending of Shadi Mirza to the Viceroy of India in the fall of 1868 indicates that a new stage has now begun in Russian-Seven Cities diplomatic relations. [Исиев, 1981: 37] This process of rapprochement is also visible in the process of sending various professionals to East Turkestan by the British government. This situation was covered in the Russian press of that time. Shaw, a Punjabi tea planter who was considered the first Englishman to visit the Seven Cities State, while talking about his reception at the palace of Yakubbek, notes that the ruler emphasized to him that this meeting would bring good things. [Русский инвалид, No. 59, 1870: 4] Yakubbek's activity in this process was evidence of the policy of rapprochement of the entire Seven Cities State with England. In addition, the activation of Turkey's plan to unite all Muslim peoples and strike at the Russian Empire at this time also had an impact on political relations between East Turkestan and St. Petersburg.

Soon, Yakubbek began to threaten Russian possessions in Central Asia. The Petersburg government's proposal not to attack each other was left unanswered. After such relations of Yakubbek, the Empire had to take concrete practical actions. In 1871, by order of the Governor-General of Turkestan, Kaufman, Russian troops were sent to Ili Oka, the sultan was captured and sent to the city of Verniy. [Айпанетов, 2006: 294]

After these events, the administration of the Russian Empire was established in this territory inhabited by people of different nationalities and religions. The main reason for this was the need for sufficient military forces to maintain peace in the region. In October 1871, Beijing sent a request to the Chinese administration about the possibility of establishing a Chinese administration in the region. P. Kaufman, while expressing his personal agreement with Beijing's

request, also emphasizes that the Chinese government cannot send enough troops to ensure peace in the region. As a result, the parties agree that the Russian administration and army will remain in the region and will not have to pay financial compensation for this. In return, it will also have the opportunity to trade freely with China. It is said that the issue of the return of the occupied territories depends on the ability of the Chinese government to mobilize forces capable of maintaining peace in this region.

It should be noted that Muhammad Yaqubbek, who was honored with the titles of Badavlat and Ataqliq Ghazi, achieved the status of an independent ruler in the Muslim world after being officially recognized as an Emir by the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Aziz, and now his state began to act as an independent actor in diplomatic relations. However, despite this, the events in the Ili region played an important role in softening Yaqubbek's fighting spirit and stabilizing the situation. [Isiyev, 1981: 25] The signing of the agreement regulating relations with the embassy sent by P. Kaufman is a vivid example of this. In particular, according to the agreement signed in May 1872, Yaqubbek undertook obligations such as liberating the property belonging to Russian merchants and consuls and not exceeding 2.5% of customs duties.

Diplomatic, trade and political relations between the Russian Empire and the theocratic state of the Seven Cities in the 19th century 60-70s The relations between the empire and Central Asia are one of the least studied aspects of history. The formation of a Muslim state in the territory of East Turkestan, which was considered a sphere of interest for the three great empires - Russia, Britain and China, led to an increase in the political importance of this region. [Котюкова, 2016: 67]

Now the Russian Empire had to come to a clear conclusion on the issue of East Turkestan for the further course of its strategic actions towards Central Asia. Because this decision directly determined its further relations with the Chinese state. In this situation, Russia initially chose a position of neutrality on the issue of China and East Turkestan. However, the increasing instability of the existing political situation did not allow the empire to follow the path of neutrality. This influenced Russia to accelerate its approach to the China-Kashgar issue. Thus, the political and trade relations between the Russian Empire and the state founded by Yakubbek Badavlat were clearly reflected in the trade agreement signed in 1872. [Моисеев, 2019: 75]

In fact, the formation of a number of Muslim states in Xinjiang since the 1860s poses a number of problems for the territories occupied by the Russian Empire in

Central Asia. First, long-standing trade relations with Western China, as well as the central provinces of the Xin Empire, almost cease. Secondly, such political processes, coupled with the activation of the British government in India, the main competitors of the Russians in this region, also showed that the Petersburg government should take the issue seriously. In order to study the political, economic and military situation of the region and take action based on the information gathered, Britain sends several missions to East Turkestan in order to seriously deal a blow to the Russian influence in the region. In addition, the current situation also led to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire's sphere of interest. This meant that four empires - China, Russia, Britain and the Ottomans - now had political views in this region. At a time when Russian-Turkish rivalry for the Balkans and other eastern European territories was already intensifying, dominance in East Turkestan became more important than ever for St. Petersburg. As noted above, on June 22, 1871, the Russian Empire occupied the Ili region.

On June 21, 1871, the Governor-General of Turkestan, in his address to the Minister of War of the Empire, stated that for Russian-Kashgar relations and further strategic actions, it was necessary to restore mutual relations first of all. Moreover, according to the governor, if the existing problems on the border issue were to be resolved, then the stalled trade relations should first be restored. In this situation, Yakubbek Badavlat initially tried to emphasize mutual relations with the rulers of Kokand and Bukhara. [Моисеев, 2019: 77] That is, his attempts to form an alliance with these Central Asian states and thereby act on the basis of the anti-Russian bloc were not justified.

Analyzing the events that took place in East Turkestan in the 1860s, it can be said that during this period, this part of Central Asia, along with gaining its new foreign policy patronage, had become a region where the interests of several powerful states clashed. In such a situation, Yakubbek felt the need to enter into dialogue with the wealthy Russian Empire. There were, of course, several reasons for this. Firstly, the ruler of the Seven Cities could not govern the country through a closed policy. Secondly, the population living in the territories under his rule was not entirely satisfied with his rule. Thirdly, in such a situation, establishing close relations with one or more of the 4 empires mentioned above was considered a requirement of the existing geopolitical situation.

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