

Bukhara Emirate and Russian Empire Between the Treaties Of 1868 And 1873 And Legal Crisis of Emirate Sovereignty

Tilavova Mahbuba Shokirovna

PhD student National University of Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This study analyzes the process of military and political subjugation of the Bukhara Emirate by the Russian Empire in the second half of the 19th century, specifically focusing on the legal consequences of the 1868 and 1873 treaties. The article illuminates the mechanisms of the Emirate's transformation from an independent state into an imperial protectorate, the annexation of the Zarafshan Valley and its hydropolitical implications, as well as the international and local legal aspects of the "vassal" status. The research methodology is based on historical-comparative analysis and the study of archival documents, relying on primary sources, including imperial chancellery correspondence and travelers' diaries. The results demonstrate that the Russian Empire, using not only military force but also economic (water control) and diplomatic (prohibition of foreign policy) instruments, de facto eliminated the sovereignty of Bukhara statehood, turning it into a "quasi-independent" entity.

Keywords: Bukhara Emirate, Russian Empire, protectorate, sovereignty, Zarafshon district, KP Kaufman, 1868 treaty, 1873 treaty, hydropolitics, political agency.

Introduction: The fundamental changes that occurred on the geopolitical map of Central Asia in the second half of the 19th century led to the crisis of traditional state systems in the region and the establishment of a new colonial order. The inclusion of the Bukhara Emirate into the Russian Empire as a "vassal" or "protectorate" as a central link in this process still remains an urgent scientific problem in historiography. The significance of the study is that it is aimed at analyzing the process of the loss of the emirate's independence not only as a series of military defeats, but also as a system of carefully thought-out legal and economic restrictions.

Although the details of the military campaigns are widely covered in the existing scientific literature, the impact of the treaties of 1868 and 1873 on the internal governance system and economic sovereignty of the emirate, in particular the imperial strategy in managing water resources, has not been studied comprehensively enough. The aim of this article is to reveal, based on sources left by eyewitnesses of the period, the stages of the Bukhara

emirate's decline into legal dependence, the transformation of control over the Zarafshan River into a tool of political pressure, and the role of the governor-general's administrative system in limiting the emirate's sovereignty.

Literature Review

The source base on the topic can be conditionally divided into three groups: the works of researchers of the imperial period, Soviet historiography, and modern Western and local scholars.

Authors of the imperial period, in particular L. Simonova (Khokhryakova) [1; p. 131] and K.K.A. Baza [2; p. 168], describe the Russian military campaigns and the capture of Samarkand as a demonstration of imperial power. They emphasized military tactics and the mission of "peacemaking", considering legal aspects as secondary. L. Kostenko [3; p. 422] and N.F. Sitnyakovskiy [4; p. 127], on the other hand, focused on the economic importance of the Zarafshan valley and issues of water distribution, assessing this factor as the key to regional control. DN Logofet in his work

described Bukhara as a “khanate under Russian protectorate” and analyzed the changes in the administrative structure [5; p. 34].

In Soviet historiography, in particular, in the studies of O. A. Sukhareva [6; p. 12] and N. A. Khalfin [7; p. 290], the “dependent” status of Bukhara was studied from the point of view of economic determinism and a class approach. Khalfin made an important contribution to revealing the behind-the-scenes games of K. P. Kaufman's diplomacy and the true colonial nature of the treaties.

Modern Western scholars S. Becker [8; p. 244] and A. Morrison [9; p. 25], by comparing the Bukhara protectorate with the principalities in British India, shed light on the peculiarities of the Russian system of “indirect rule”, in particular, complete dependence under the preserved external signs of legal sovereignty. Local scholars R. Kholikova [10; p. 130] and F. Fayzieva [11; p. 123] have studied in depth the organization of Russian settlements and socio-economic relations based on archival documents.

3. RESEARCH METHODS. In the course of the research, the method of historical-comparative analysis was used to compare the texts of the treaties of 1868 and 1873 and their practical implementation. Through source analysis, documents of the imperial office, international treaties and memoirs of travelers (N. Petrovsky, A. Mikin, R. Kennedy) were studied and their factual accuracy was assessed. Also, using systematic analysis, the use of the Zarafshan River water distribution as a tool of political pressure, that is, aspects of hydropolitics, was studied. The factual basis of the research is the funds of the National Archive of Uzbekistan, diplomatic correspondence and materials of the periodical press.

Results

The course of military operations in 1868 exposed deep logistical and communication gaps in the management system of the Bukhara Emirate. The strategic mistakes of Emir Muzaffar are clearly visible during the siege and subsequent capture of Samarkand. The fact that the Emir was not directly in the center of military operations, but in his residence in Karmana, sharply limited his ability to establish rapid communication with the beks and army commanders in Samarkand. This distance led to a loss of time and increased impatience and panic among the local population and soldiers [1; p. 131].

Emir Muzaffar tried to defuse the situation diplomatically, sending envoys to General K.P. Kaufman with a proposal for peace and trying to convince the population that Russian troops would not pass through Tashkent [31, p. 561-571].

However, these attempts could not stop the imperial military operations. On the contrary, after the capture of Samarkand, the political will of the emir was so broken that he was forced to reward those who helped the Russian garrison during the siege of the Samarkand fortress or showed sympathy for them. According to sources, the emir, recognizing the “courage and fortitude” of the Russian soldiers, sent cash rewards of three soums to ordinary soldiers and five soums to cavaliers [13; p. 149]. This fact shows that the emir was not only defeated militarily, but also lost his political sovereignty morally by entering into a forced alliance with the invaders against his own citizens (the rebels).

decisive defeat in the Battle of Zirabulak, the peace treaty signed on June 23, 1868, dealt the first and most serious blow to the statehood of the Bukhara Emirate. This legal document weakened the emirate in three ways. First, according to the terms of the treaty, the border line was determined along a strategic point in the Zarafshan River basin - the Shirinhotin Bridge [14; p. 38]. This was not just a territorial division; through it, the emirate lost control over its most fertile lands - the Samarkand and Kattakurgan sections, as well as the upper and middle reaches of the Zarafshan River. Second, the defeated emirate was imposed a huge military contribution of 500 thousand rubles (125 thousand gold coins) [15; p. 86]. This payment drained the emirate's treasury and deepened the economic crisis. Third, the secret and open clauses of the treaty granted Russian merchants the right to move freely within the emirate, to open trade missions, and to build caravanserais. Most importantly, customs duties on Russian goods were equalized to the rate in Turkestan, and were set at 2.5 percent [8; p. 244]. This left local producers defenseless and led to the flooding of the emirate market with cheap Russian goods.

The most decisive, but often overlooked, factor in the loss of Bukhara's sovereignty was hydropolitical pressure. The fact that the upper reaches of the Zarafshan River remained in the Samarkand section under the control of the Russian Empire placed the life and death of Bukhara in the hands of the imperial administration. The Russian administration ruthlessly exploited this advantage. According to sources, after the Zarafshan water was distributed to the cultivated lands of Samarkand and Kattakurgan, only the “residual” water of the river or the flow granted with special permission reached Bukhara.

According to the researcher N.F. Sitnyakovsky, the imperial administration, in order to achieve its political goals, completely stopped the water supply at certain periods, which led to the fields of the

Bukhara oasis drying up and becoming barren [4; p. 127]. This was not just a natural phenomenon, but a controlled process. Amir Muzaffar and his deputy Muhammad Shah were forced to send official letters to the Governor-General of Turkestan several times, asking for water [16; p. 194]. According to L. N. Sobolev, the issue of water distribution served as a "bridle" to keep the Bukhara government in constant obedience and suppress any political opposition [17; p. 190]. The fact that even during the mission of Colonel A. S. Nosov in 1870, there were sharp protests and negotiations over water distribution confirms that the economy of Bukhara was completely dependent on the empire [16; p. 197].

If the 1868 treaty was a document of military surrender, the "Treaty of Friendship" signed in Shahrissabz on September 28, 1873 completely terminated the legal status of Bukhara as an independent state and turned it into a protectorate. This document, consisting of 18 articles, introduced the following restrictions. First, the emir was strictly forbidden to establish direct diplomatic relations with neighboring khanates and states, conclude trade or political agreements [8; pp. 245–250]. Any communication of Bukhara with the outside world was to be carried out only through the mediation of the Governor-General of Turkestan. Second, any military campaigns were prohibited without the highest permission of Russia. Third, the treaty gave Russian citizens the right not only to trade, but also to purchase real estate (houses, gardens, warehouses) on the territory of the emirate. Additional protocols of 1888 further specified this right, stipulating that land should be allocated from 750 to 1,500 square sazhen for industrial facilities and from 300 to 750 square sazhen for residential purposes [11; p. 10]. Fourth, the Russian government appointed its permanent Political Agent (later resident) in Bukhara. This official became, in practice, not an advisor to the emir, but a supervisor who supervised his activities.

Imperial control did not remain only on paper, but also penetrated deeply into everyday life. A strict control regime was introduced for any foreigner, especially European travelers, entering the territory of the emirate. While in 1896 travelers were allowed to enter relatively freely, by 1902 every foreigner was required to have a special permit from the office in Tashkent [27; p. 273]. The emir himself, when traveling through the territories of the empire, was obliged to move according to the instructions called "Order" and the document "Open List" [25; p. 27]. These documents limited the emir's right to move at his own discretion and placed him under the surveillance of imperial officials.

Discussion

The results of the study show that the concept of "independent internal governance" applied to the Bukhara Emirate in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century is relative. Foreign observers, including R. Kennedy, used the term "quasi-independence" to describe the state of the emirate [19; p. 3]. This term refers to "false" or "appearing" independence, indicating that the emirate's status as a subject of international law was completely lost, but the internal administrative apparatus (tax collection, Sharia courts, etc.) was preserved.

Why did Russia not completely destroy Bukhara? Analysis suggests that this was due to financial and strategic pragmatism. Maintaining the traditional emirate system of governance allowed the empire to save the enormous administrative and military costs of directly governing the territory. The emir, as a "humble vassal" [19; p. 78], took on the task of collecting taxes from the population and ensuring peace, while the empire controlled strategic resources and foreign policy.

of the Governor-General of Turkestan, K. P. Kaufman, was decisive in the limitation of Bukhara sovereignty. The authority granted to him by the emperor to "solve independent political, trade and border issues with neighboring states" [20; p. 12] made him practically the absolute ruler ("semi-tsar") of the region. The fact that K. P. Kaufman concealed from the emir the fact that the 1868 treaty had not been ratified in Petersburg and used diplomatic manipulation [7; p. 290] shows that the imperial administration relied not on legal norms, but on the "right of force". The fact that the 1873 treaty was called "friendship" was also a political euphemism, and in fact it was a unilateral dictate. The correspondence between the Governor-General and the emir, the fact that copies of the emperor's letters were first sent to Tashkent [25; p. 23] formed a strict protocol of hierarchical subordination.

As a result of the treaties, a dual legal and economic space emerged in Bukhara. On the one hand, traditional Sharia law and a heavy tax burden remained for the local population. On the other hand, Russian citizens and merchants enjoyed imperial laws, a preferential customs regime, and the protection of the Political Agency. The fact that Russian citizens were not subject to the emir's court, but were under the jurisdiction of the Russian consular court, is a classic example of the principle of extraterritoriality. Economically, the opening of the emirate's customs borders to Russian goods and the

construction of a railway turned Bukhara into a raw material base (cotton) and a market for finished products for Russian industry. The loss of income from transit trade and the abolition of customs autonomy completely destroyed the emirate's economic immunity [39; p. 291].

A. Morrison's comparison of the Bukhara protectorate with the Princely States in British India is scientifically justified [9; p. 19]. In both cases, the system of "indirect rule" was used. However, the peculiarity of the Russian model was that the modernization processes (education, health care, judicial reform) in Bukhara took place much more slowly than in India and only within the framework of Russian settlements. Russia was interested in preserving the internal conservatism of the emirate, thereby gaining the opportunity to discredit the emir's power in the eyes of the people and present the imperial rule as a "civilizing" force.

Conclusion

The transformation of the Emirate of Bukhara from a sovereign state to a vassal of the Russian Empire from the late 1860s was not simply the result of military defeat, but the product of a well-thought-out legal, economic and hydropolitical strategy. While the 1868 treaty violated the territorial integrity of the emirate and made it subordinate in terms of water resources, the 1873 treaty officially put an end to its existence as a subject of international law. The transfer of the Zarafshan water to Russian control became the most effective "lever" for keeping the emirate in political submission, and this factor had a stronger effect than any military force. The contractual system introduced by Russia cut off Bukhara from the outside world and left its internal market vulnerable to imperial capital. The administration, carried out through the political agency and the governor-general's office, reduced the emir to a mere executive level and reduced state sovereignty to the level of "quasi-sovereignty." Thus, by the beginning of the 20th century, the Bukhara Emirate, although legally existing, remained de facto a dependent state of the Russian Empire.

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