

Diplomatic Relations of the Khanate of Kokand with China and the Countries of the Muslim East

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Abstract: This article discusses the scientific researches on the diplomatic relations of the Khanate of Kokand with the neighboring Muslim countries, in particular, Turkey, Iran, as well as China and the Russian Empire.

Keywords: Ambassador, diplomacy, etiquette, Kokand, East, authority, merchant, Ferghana, palace, reception.

INTRODUCTION

Diplomatic relationships with the Chinese Empire. Khanate of Kokand carried out cooperation between states in various fields by respecting the international legal norms established by the world community.

For instance, the number of embassies sent to China during the existence of the Kokand Khanate was approximately more than 20, and these embassies were mainly sent to Beijing, the capital of the empire, where the palace of the Manchu emperor was located. Embassies were also sent to the Chinese officials in East Turkestan, a disputed territory between Chinese Empire and Kokand Khahate.

Particularly, some information is provided about the ambassador sent to China during the reign of Erdona Khan. Ambassadors sent to China had to be tall and well-figured. Because the Chinese people were relatively short, it was considered important for the ambassadors to stand out in front of them. This was assumed to make the reputation of the Kokand state as healthy as the appearance of the ambassador. In 1759, Erdona Khan sent people to different parts of the country to choose the ambassador to China and ordered his officials to find the tallest person. After some time, the tallest man of the khanate was brought to him, who was then sent to the Manchurian palace in China.

Two months later, Erdona Khan's ambassador arrived in Beijing. Most of the population of the empire came from his waist. The emperor called him and asked him where he had come from. The Kokand ambassador revealed that he had come from the Khanate of Kokand, and presented him Erdona Khan's message.

MAIN PART

During the meeting, the emperor stated that the ambassador was so tall that anyone who kept looking up at his face would get an ache in his neck. Ambassador of replied, that he is the youngest child among the seven children in his family, mentioned that his older brothers are way taller than him.

Thanks to this ambassador and his embassy service in 1759, that made a great impression on the emperor and his court, warm relations were established between the two countries, although the Manchurian court did not have a certain opinion about the Kokand Khanate and its people. As a result Manchurian army refrained from invading the territory of the Kokand Khanate [22, p.56.].

Based in the records, the political-diplomatic cooperation between the Khanate of Kokand and the Manchurian government can be divided into stages.

In the first stage, the period between 1760-1770, the Kokand government sent ambassadors to Beijing and East Turkestan almost every year. But the Manchurian government did not consider Kokand as officially independent state and therefore did not make concessions to it. Aforementioned, entering into an active relationship started only during the period of Erdona Khan. Government officials, such as Tokhtamhammad, Boymuhammad and others, have visited China more than eight times during Erdona Khan's reign. For instance, the second ambassador, who took a type of thoroughbred horse as a gift from Erdona, travelled to Beijing in September 1760. The Kokand ambassadors were firstly meet by officials in the Koshghar, and after verifying the ambassador's details, they were given an interpreter, some military guards, horses, carts, food and a certain amount of money for supplies on the way. The ambassadors then went from Kashgar to Yorkent. After traveling through the Tarim valley, they were met by other officials in the Kumul city, and only then sent to Beijing to the emperor's palace, provided with second supply-package of horses and food.

In the second stage, that was between 1770 and 1832, ambassadors visited the Chinese emperor's palace less frequently. For example, in 1770, the ruler of Kokand, Norbutabiy, sent an ambassador named Boymat to Beijing. After that, Norbutabiy sent another group of ambassadors, headed by Abdul Qasim, only in 1782-1783. This delegation's mission was to obtain free trades for merchants of Kokand Khanate in the markets of East Turkestan. After mutual negotiations, the Kokand merchant called Abdullah, who was arrested by the Chinese government, was released from the prison in Yorkend.

Other delegations sent by Norbutabiy, such as the team of Mirza Maim Raim (Muhammad Rahim) and Silibu (Sharif) in 1792-1793, or the team Bobojan and Salibu in 1796-1797, had the similar goal. They tried convince Chinese government to establish a new position, "khudoydo": official representative of Kokand, who would monitor activities of Kokand merchants and their rights in Eastern Turkestan. The holder of this position was also expected to regulate the circulation of Kokand coins in East Turkestan, as they were the official medium of exchange in local markets, albeit East Turkestan was in the territory of Chinese Empire. [9].

There are many other records about the origins of the diplomatic relationships between Central Asian khanates and Chinese Empire. Specifically, a historian named Mir Izzatullo has mentioned many details in this field. He wrote down information about his trip to the Khanate of Kokand in 1812 on the assignment of William Moorcroft, a well-known figure of the British colonial colony in India (East India) [7, p.156.]. Mir Izatullo himself came from the Muslim population of India and served the British Empire. His work is written in Persian language, in the traditional style of trip memory notes of Eastern authors at that time [8, p.20-22.]. The information in his records includes some interesting and important historical ethnographic and geographical data during the beginning of the 19th century. His travelogue was translated into French by G. Claprot (Paris, 1826), and into English by P.D. Henderson (Calcutta, 1872). The Russian translation of the book appeared only in 1956 [12, p.78.].

As well as the political strategies of the Central Asian rulers, Mir Izzatullo recorded important information about the connecting roads of the cities of Koshghar, Kokand, Samarkand, the residents, lifestyle, rulers, and their relations with neighboring states. Particularly, the 34th chapter of the book is called "Road from Koshghar to Kokand", and it contains information about the cities of Osh and Fergana located in the mountainous areas, as well as about the many villages nearby [11, p.428.].

Mir Izzatullo also described some of the central cities of East Turkestan, a region between Kokand Khanate and Chinese Empire. He stated that population living in that region consisted mainly of Kyrgyz nation and that their economic life depended on cattle breeding and coal trade. He notes that, some of these cities were under the rule of Chinese Empire, while other were under the control of the Khanate of Kokand [17, p.60.].

Diplomatic relationships with the Russian Empire. O. Agaeva, in her researches, stated that she believes that the formation of embassy regulations in the Russian Empire began at the beginning of the XVIII century [1, p.8.]. However, the Russian Empire began to "favor" Eastern and Asian diplomatic missions rather than European diplomatic missions. S. Zhukovsky points out that the formation of the embassy service in the Russian Empire is closer to Eastern or Asian traditions than to those of the Europe [4, p. 225.]. Many of those generally accepted traditions and rules of that time were directly affecting the Turkestan (general name for the land of all Central Asian khanates) that had established close trade and diplomatic relations with the Russian states. Furthermore, officials of the government regularly studied the strategic opportunities of other countries by entering those countries as if they are tourists or merchants.

A large part of the collection called "Collection of materials prepared by A.G. Serebrennikov for the publication of documents on the topic "History of the conquest of Turkestan"", which is currently kept in the 715th section of the National Archives of Uzbekistan, covers the records related to diplomatic relations between Central Asian khanates (*these are the Khanate of Khiva, the Khanate of Kokand, and the Emirate of Bukhara*), and other regions like Russia, China, East Turkestan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey in period between 1839-1876.

These documents also include messages about the embassies between the Russian Empire and the Turkestan, official and secret instructions for ambassadors sent to Turkestan, reports of ambassadors, letters from the rulers of Turkestan to the Russian Emperor, letters from the representatives of the imperial government to the high officials of the Khanates, letters from the officials of the Khanates to the local authorities of the empire, concluded peace agreements between the Central Asian Khanates and the Russian Empire.

These documents also show the development of diplomatic relations during the military invasion of Central Asian khanates by the Russian Empire in the 19th century. Through these documents, it is possible to trace the changes in the attitude of the empire towards khanates in Turkestan land: from cooperation in trade to colonialism.

We can also observe this situation in the system of titles used by representatives of the Russian Empire government in diplomatic correspondence with the rulers of Central Asian Khanates. Political terminology reflects the relations formed in a certain society, in a certain period. In particular, the titles applied to the rulers meant their political position in diplomatic relations in their time. In the official records of the Russian Empire prepared during In the XVI-XVII centuries, the rulers of Central Asian Khanates were referred as "khan" or "king". However, in documents collected in the XVIII century, the term "khan" was replaced with "owner of the land" (original: *владелец*) [16, p.5,20.]. Hence, they were regarded as inferior to the Russian emperors in the international hierarchy.

Such attitude can also be observed in the documents of the first half of the 19th century. Particularly in the letters of the Russian emperor sent to the monarchs of Central Asian khanates, they were referred as:

"Owner of the lands of Bukhara" (original: "*обладатель Бухарии*") – letter sent on March 6, 1841 to Emir of Bukhara Emirate; [13, p.35.]

"Ruler of Kokand" (original: "*владелец Коканда*") – letter sent in 1842 to Khan of Kokand Khanate; [19, p.15-16.]

"Owner of the lands of Khiva" (original: "*обладатель Хивы*") or **"Your Highness"** (original: "*высокостепенный*") – letter sent to Khan of Khiva Khanate [20, p.36,52.].

The title "Высокостепенный", or "высокостепенный и высокостепенный" [3, p.528.] was applied to the khans and muftis. Sometimes heads of the districts in the territory of the Russian Empire were also honored by the local people with this title [2, p.552.]. In diplomatic correspondence, not only the rulers of Central Asian Khanates, but also their high-ranking officials, including the "*Kushbegi*" (Prime minister) of Bukhara, were addressed with this title

[18, p.114.].

Diplomatic relationships with the Ottoman Empire. Istanbul was also an important center of foreign policy for the Khans of Kokand. Especially, rulers, such as Muhammadali Khan, Khudoyar Khan, Mallakhan, or the heads of the Kokand army, such as Alimkuli Amirlashkar, sent numerous special envoys to receive material and moral support from the Ottoman sultans.

For example, in the spring of 1837, Khan of Kokand, Muhammad Alikhan (1822-1842), sent his ambassador Zahid Khoja to Istanbul asking the Ottomans for a military expert and military-training equipment for tactical training of the army [10, p.70.]. Negotiations with Zahid Khoja were held by one of the advisors of Ottoman sultan. While discussing the political situation in Central Asia, Zahid Khoja informs that Russian Empire had started building a fortress in the border areas of the Khanate of Kokand. The ambassador also informs about the lack of infantry in the army of his country. He describes the requests of Muhammad Ali Khan for the further improvement of the khan's troops in following way: "*Our khan ordered me to deliver the following requests to the sultan: two specialists for training infantry, two specialists for training cavalry and two specialists for training artillery troops. If this is not possible, he has gently asked if you can send him some books on the training of these fragments of our army*" [14, p. 37.].

During the reign of Muhammad Ali, another person named Khan Mohammad Hakim Khan (a historian, scientist and traveler) went to Istanbul too. His trip took place via the Black Sea. He has been in cities like Sinop, Kaysari, Angor (Ankara), Lakatiya [23, p.13.].

Later in November 1846, Khudoyor Khan (another khan of Kokand Khanate) also sent a delegation to Istanbul, which was headed by Haji Rozibek. The ambassadors handed over the following letter of the khan: "*There are gold, silver, emerald, copper and other natural resources in our territory. We had to disturb you because we don't have any master of these works. We are aware of your help to my late brother Muhammad Ali Khan. We ask you to send a master who will help us dig underground resources*" [14, p. 38.].

Apart from the khans, Alikuli Amirlashkar (head of the king's security service and army) also sent ambassadors to countries like the Ottoman Empire, the British, Kabul and Kandahar, Kashmir and Chinese Empire, warning them about the current state of the Kokand Khanate and the need for military assistance in the fight against the Russian Empire, and tried to establish relations with them and receive military support [6, p.59.]. However, when that delegation, headed by Muhammad Yunus Taib – a historian and khanate's chief minister, returned to Kokand, Alikuli Amirlashkar tells them that it is too late and already started to invade Turkestan. Taking into account the fact that invasion Turkestan by Russia started in the June of 1864, it can be assumed that Yunus Taib's embassy trips took place in between February and June of 1864.

The Russian Emperor's government, being informed about these embassies, took great interest and anxiety in their conduct and results, and tried not to lose sight of all the details. This information, written by the Russian authorities, is proof that the Russian officials were not indifferent to the diplomacy of the Khanate of Kokand: "*We were informed that ambassadors were sent to the Emir of Kabul asking for help for Kokand. Also, influential ambassadors were sent to Khiva, Afghanistan and Constantinople. We suppose that Mulla Aliquli is trying to create a diplomatic and military alliance between the Muslim countries for the benefit of Kokand and against us (the Russian Empire). Based on his words about bringing 5,000 rifles to Tashkent, it is obvious that he made an agreement with Kabul or Peshawar on the issue of weapons' delivery*" [21, p. 141.].

At the beginning of 1865, not losing the hope, another group of ambassadors were sent to Istanbul under the leadership of Said Yaqubkhan Tura, asking Turkey for help in the fight against the further colonialism of the Russian Empire. These ambassadors passed through Khanate of Khiva and Iran and arrived in Istanbul in the spring of 1865 [5, p.123.]. Said Yaqub Khan Tura informed that more and more territories were being occupied by the Russian Empire,

asking military assistance from the Sultan in the fight against the invaders. The government of the Ottoman Empire promises not to be indifferent to this issue and to consider it in the "Special Assembly" [15, p. 35.]. However, while discussions about helping the Kokand Khanate were taking place, Ottoman Sultan receives a message that the main head of the Kokand's Army – Alikuli Amirlashkar was killed, and that Tashkent, one of the biggest cities and most important geological centers, was lost to the troops of the Russian Empire. [15, p.35.].

The death of Alikuli, who kept the main state management system in the Khanate, and the occupation of one of the largest cities in Central Asia by the Russian Empire's military did not leave the Turkish government indifferent, and the Cabinet of the Ottoman State prepared information about the current situation to the Sultan: [6, p.60.]

"The distances between the Khanate of Kokand and the Ottoman state are very long, and there are other countries between our countries. The caliph should write a letter to the emir of Bukhara, urging the khans of Central Asia to fight together against the Empire of Russia. We should give 75,000 kuras to the ambassadors for travel expenses. It is up to our king to give orders. The eighth day of Ramadan 1282 (August 31, 1865)" [15, p. 35.].

The author of the above information, M.Saray, in his second work, also states that the ambassador of the Kokand Khanate, Said Yaqub Khan, participated in the Divan (Meeting of the Ottoman Empire's government officials) on the 18th day of Rabi ul-Awwal, 1282 A.H. and had a conversation with the Sultan Abdulaziz, telling him that it is extremely important for both countries to save the warm relationships between Ottoman Empire and Kokand Khanate. He also emphasizes that Muslims of Central Asian Khanates respect the orders of the sultan with great respect. Said Yaqubkhan asks the sultan to give him four pieces of cannons, pistols, and one piece of military uniform from the Turkish army [14, p.74.].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the classification of the documents stored in the Ottoman archive for research analysis shows that by the beginning of the 19th century, the diplomatic and mutual relations of the Kokand Khanate with the Ottoman state were accelerated and they were carried out with certain goals in mind for both countries. The following can also be cited as reasons for the Khanate of Kokand's rapprochement with the Ottomans: firstly, because of the emerging external threat, the Khanate of Kokand became close to the Ottoman state as an ally; secondly, for the purpose of promoting Hajj for the citizens of Kokand through this country, these contacts were conducted regularly.

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