

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND TURKESTAN DURING THE REIGNS OF ABDULLAH KHAN II AND UBAYDULLAH KHAN (16TH–19TH CENTURIES)

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Abstract: This article examines the political and cultural relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkestan khanates (Bukhara, Khiva, Kokand) from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Starting with the reign of Abdullah Khan II, Ottoman–Uzbek relations were built upon religious solidarity and pragmatic interests, expressed through diplomatic missions, correspondence, joint military strategies, and religious support. With the rise of Russian and Chinese expansion in the 19th century, these ties weakened, yet the khanates continued to regard the Ottomans mainly as symbolic and spiritual supporters.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Turkestan, Abdullah Khan II, Bukhara Khanate, Khiva Khanate, Kokand Khanate, political relations, Russian expansion, Chinese policy.

СВЯЗИ ОСМАНСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ И ТУРКЕСТАНА ВО ВРЕМЕНА АБДУЛЛАХАНА II И УБАЙДУЛЛАХАНА (XVI–XIX ВВ.)

Аннотация: В статье анализируются политические и культурные связи между Османской империей и ханствами Туркестана (Бухара, Хива, Коканд) в XVI–XIX веках. Начиная с правления Абдуллахана II, османо–узбекские отношения основывались на религиозном единстве и прагматических интересах, проявляясь в обмене посольствами, переписке, военных планах и религиозной поддержке. В XIX веке из-за усиления российской и китайской экспансии эти связи ослабли, однако ханства продолжали воспринимать Османскую империю главным образом как духовного и символического союзника.

Ключевые слова: Османская империя, Туркестан, Абдуллахан II, Бухарское ханство, Хивинское ханство, Кокандское ханство, политические связи, российская экспансия, политика Китая.

Introduction

In the 16th–19th centuries, the political and cultural relations between the Ottoman state and the khanates of Turkestan occupied an important place in the history of Central Asia. This period was full of struggles for internal power, external threats, and political rivalries for control over international

trade routes. Especially from the reign of Abdullah Khan II, attempts were observed to establish military cooperation between the Ottomans and the Uzbek khanates against the Safavids of Iran. In the following centuries, these relations passed through various stages — continuing in the form of exchanges of envoys, alliances based on religious unity and political interests.

Discussion. During the reign of Abdullah Khan II (1583–1598), the idea of forming an alliance between the Ottomans and the Uzbek khanates stemmed from common interests against the Safavids. The Treaty of Istanbul (1590) defined the balance of power among the three states. In the 17th–18th centuries, relations were mainly maintained through diplomatic letters and exchanges of envoys. During the reign of the Bukhara khan Ubaydullah Khan (1703–1711) and Ebu-l-Fayz Khan (1711–1748), messages of friendship and loyalty were regularly sent. Relations with the Khiva Khanate were established later, from the late 17th century, with the main goal of strengthening religious and political ties with the Ottomans. In the 18th century, as a result of Nader Shah's military campaigns, these relations were interrupted. By the 19th century, as Russian invasions intensified, the khans of Turkestan attempted to seek help from the Ottomans. However, due to wars in Europe and fear of Russia, the Ottoman state could not provide direct assistance. Only with Yakub Khan, the ruler of Kashgar, was a unique cooperation established. In 1873, Ottoman officers were sent to train the Kashgar army. In return, Yakub Khan had the Friday sermon (khutba) read in the name of the caliph, minted coins in his name, and ensured that the Ottoman flag flew in Kashgar. Yet this did not last long, as in 1877 Chinese forces captured Kashgar and ended Yakub Khan's rule.

Methods: The article uses historical-analytical, comparative, cause-and-effect, analytical, and chronological approaches.

During these struggles, we see Abdullah Khan II (1583–1598) ascend the throne of the Bukhara Khanate. In fact, Abdullah Khan II had been involved in power struggles since 1560. In 1561, he ensured that his father, Iskandar Khan, ascended the throne of Bukhara. However, real power was in his hands. Finally, after resolving disputes among the dynasty members, he conquered Balkh in 1574, Samarkand in 1578, Tashkent and northern Syr Darya in 1582, and Ferghana in 1583, thus establishing the unity of Turkestan. That same year, after his father's death, he officially ascended the throne (June 22, 1583). While Abdullah Khan II was busy with conquests in Turkestan, the Ottoman state also decided, on January 1, 1578, to launch a major campaign against Iran. This was actually the campaign desired by the Uzbek khan. Indeed, Sultan Murad III of the Ottomans explained the aim of this campaign as follows: after conquering the North Caucasus, “to dominate the Caspian Sea with the fleet, and thereby open the pilgrimage and trade routes coming from Turkestan.” In this way, it would be possible to establish easier contact with the Uzbek khans of Turkestan, and even to send cannons and ammunition. In fact, as early as 1569, the Ottoman state had attempted to open the Don–Volga canal, establish the Azov Sea–Astrakhan trade route, and thus ensure that pilgrims and merchants from Turkestan could freely use the Azov–Istanbul route. Although this initiative failed, opportunities were not completely lost. Such an opportunity arose in September 1578 during the Caucasus campaign of Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha, who was appointed beylerbey and commander of Shirvan. However, in December of that year, Shirvan and Shamakhi, which had been conquered, were recaptured by the Safavids, and Crimean Khan Adil Giray was captured by the Safavids in Shamakhi. Now the time had come to form an Ottoman–Uzbek alliance against the Safavids. In 1586, Piyale Pasha was appointed envoy to negotiate with Abdullah Khan II. This mission was not limited to Iran but also included Ottoman activities along the Lower Volga and links with the planned second Astrakhan campaign. In

this context, Abdullah Khan II wrote to Sultan Murad III, stating that envoy Piyale Pasha was encouraging them to invade the land of the Qizilbash and sparking their interest. Clearly, Piyale Pasha's efforts were effective. Although Shah Abbas I of Iran campaigned against Khorasan in May 1588, due to the Uzbeks' superiority in Herat and the Ottomans' campaigns in Hamadan and Karabakh, he could not achieve success. Finally, the Safavids agreed to a peace treaty to avoid being caught between the Ottomans and the Uzbeks. The Treaty of Istanbul, signed on March 21, 1590, between the Ottoman state and the Safavids, was a turning point in Ottoman–Safavid–Uzbek political relations. First of all, this treaty ended the Ottoman–Iranian war. More importantly, due to the “Ottoman factor,” the Safavids could not object to the territories that the Uzbeks had taken from Iran. However, after the treaty was observed for three years, from 1593 Shah Abbas began to reclaim the lost territories. In this matter, we see that he had also reached an agreement with the Uzbeks of Khwarezm. Furthermore, the Ottomans, who were occupied with wars against Austria, and the Kazakh sultans, who had rebelled with Abdullah Khan II's son Abdulmumin, also influenced this process. Taking advantage of this situation, Shah Abbas managed to retake Mashhad, Merv, and Herat. But the one who suffered the most from these events was Abdullah Khan II. Although he appealed to the Ottoman state for help, the Ottomans, occupied with wars in Austria, rejected it with the reasoning that they “should live peacefully with Iran.” Already unable to endure the rebellion of his son and significant territorial losses, Abdullah Khan II died in 1597. Soon after, his son Abdulmumin was also killed, marking the end of the Shaybanid period. In 1599, from the Janibekid line, Baki Muhammad, the brother of Abdullah Khan II's wet nurse, ascended the Uzbek throne.

It is evident that Ottoman–Uzbek political relations were pragmatically conducted within the framework of religious and sectarian brotherhood, based on the principle of “religion and state, ghazi and jihad,” and continued as long as they served this purpose. Later, the form of relations changed. For example, in 1642, the Ottoman state mediated in the struggle for the throne between Nazar Muhammad Khan and his son Abdulaziz Khan. In this process, Nazar Khan sent a letter through Sayyid Abdulmennon to Istanbul, describing how there was no longer authority in Transoxiana, oppression prevailed everywhere, and madrasas had fallen into ruin. After that, due to his son's opposition, he abdicated and passed the throne to Abdulaziz Khan. Thus, Abdulaziz Khan became the sole ruler of the country. From that day until the end of the 17th century, Ottoman–Uzbek political relations were limited only to the exchange of envoys and messages of mutual friendship they brought. Nevertheless, this situation did not change in the 18th century. In 1703, Ubaydullah Khan (1703–1711), from the Astrakhanid (Janibekid) dynasty, who became khan of Bukhara, first subdued the Kalmyk tribes roaming freely in Kazakhstan, Karakalpak, and the Dasht-i Qipchaq, and expanded his political power in Transoxiana northward. The most important result of this campaign was the mass conversion of the Kazakhs to Islam. Ubaydullah Khan informed Ottoman Sultan Ahmed III of these events through a letter sent in March 1706 by Haji Muhammad Amin Efendi, and the Sultan responded the same year with a letter expressing satisfaction. During that time, Ubaydullah Khan also fought for the throne with his brother, Muhammad Muqim, the governor of Balkh. Claiming that Ubaydullah Khan had ascended the throne with the support of the Bukhara amirs and because he was in Balkh far from Bukhara, Muhammad Muqim tried to contest his rule. To inform the Ottoman Sultan of this matter, an envoy named Abdubogiq was sent to Istanbul on May 6, 1706. However, in the reply from the Ottoman Sultan, he was advised to reconcile with his brother. Meanwhile, Ubaydullah Khan marched to Balkh, defeated his brother Muhammad Muqim, conquered Balkh, and became the sole ruler of the region. As usual, he informed Istanbul of this victory through an envoy named Mir Muhammad Nasir in 1709. After Ubaydullah Khan's death in 1711, Ebu-l-Fayz Sayyid Muhammad Khan (1711–1748) ascended

the throne, and during his reign, Ottoman–Uzbek relations continued through exchanges of envoys and messages of friendship. The first of these visits was in July 1712, when an envoy named Muhammad Abdussamiy Yasovul arrived in Istanbul. The purpose was to express friendship and loyalty. The second visit was after the Prut War, when Shaykh Nimatullah Efendi came to Istanbul with a letter in August 1713. Notably, during the reign of Ebu-l-Fayz Khan, relations continued in this way, and these visits were welcomed in the Ottoman capital. After that, the Bukhara Khanate entered an unstable period and was conquered by Nader Shah in 1740. The death of Nader Shah in 1747, followed the same year by the death of Ebu-l-Fayz Khan and in 1756 the murder of the last khan Ubaydullah, brought an end to the Astrakhanid dynasty in Bukhara, and the Manghit dynasty (1756–1920) began. One of the Uzbek khanates that established rule in the Khwarezm region, one of the ancient lands of Turkestan, was the Khiva Khanate. This territory, which had experienced the rule of Chinggis Khan and Timur, passed into the hands of the Shaybanids in 1500. However, after Shaybani Khan was defeated by Shah Ismail in 1510, it fell under Safavid control. The Uzbeks of the city of Vezir, who did not want Shia rule in the region, revolted in 1511 under Qozikalon Umar and Shaykh Husamiddin Qattol. As a result, Ilbars Khan, a descendant of Chinggis, became the leader of the Khwarezm Uzbeks. Perhaps because of the sharp and constant struggles for power in Khwarezm, which frequently changed hands, the Ottoman state mainly established relations with the khanates of Bukhara and Samarkand in Turkestan. For this reason, relations between the Ottoman state and the Khiva Khanate were established only by the end of the 17th century. These relations began in 1688, when Bahadir, son of Anusha Khan (Enusha Khan) of Khwarezm, sent an envoy named Bahadir with a letter to Istanbul. In his letter, the Khwarezm khan expressed his wish to help the Ottoman state in the Austrian wars that began in 1683 and were still ongoing. This offer of help was gladly accepted by the Ottoman Sultan. As a result, in the reply letter sent in 1689, the Ottoman Sultan expressed his gratitude and additionally asked for help in resisting Russian attacks, since the Crimean Khan was occupied. Similarly, in 1694 Ernak Khan sent an envoy with gifts to congratulate the accession of Sultan Ahmed II. Two years later, in 1696, he also expressed his loyalty by sending a letter along with Khwaja Nurullah, who was on pilgrimage. In reply, Sultan Mustafa II requested spiritual support “for the destruction of infidelity.” Likewise, as an envoy of friendship and congratulations, Muhammad Riza Bek arrived in Istanbul in August 1703 and congratulated the accession of Sultan Ahmed III on behalf of the Khwarezm ruler Bahadir Shahbakht Khan. After that, no envoy was recorded until 1728. However, from the 1730s, although rare, the arrival of envoys and exchanges of letters resumed. The first of this process was in August 1732, when Yar Muhammad, as envoy of Khiva Khan Muhammad Ilbars Khan, delivered a congratulatory letter to Istanbul on the accession of Sultan Mahmud I. In addition to congratulations, the letter reported that 31 Ottoman soldiers captured in the Battle of Hamadan had been brought to Khiva. Naturally, the Ottoman Sultan did not leave the good treatment of Ottoman soldiers unanswered and sent a letter of thanks to the Khwarezm khan. But relations between the Ottoman state and the Khwarezm khans were cut off due to Nader Shah, who ascended the throne of Iran. After becoming ruler, Nader Shah’s aggressive policy toward Turkestan worried the Uzbek khans. Therefore, the activities of Nader Shah in the region were complained of by the Khwarezm khans to the Ottoman Sultan. In reply to this complaint, in his 1737 letter the Ottoman Sultan told Ilbars Khan of Khwarezm that since a peace treaty had been signed with Iran and Nader Shah had adopted the Sunni creed with the decision of the council of scholars, they also wished that friendship would be established with Iran. However, despite this positive attitude, in 1740 Nader Shah successively conquered Bukhara and Khwarezm, thus completing the conquest of Western Turkestan. Particularly, the Khiva Khanate could not recover until 1804, when Iltuzar Khan of the Qungrat tribe ascended the throne. Thus began the Qungrat period in the Khiva Khanate, which continued until 1920.

Sultan Selim III, not stopping there, also recommended to the Bukhara khan that if they made peace with Russia, they too should make peace with the Russians. After the death of Muhammad Ma'sum Khan in 1800, Haydar Khan ascended the throne, and to express his loyalty, he sent an embassy consisting of Divanbegi Ish Muhammad and Qorujaboshi Mirzo Muhammad Yusuf to Istanbul. But on the way, this delegation was attacked, and only Mirzo Muhammad Yusuf reached Istanbul. Thirteen years later, in 1813, Mirzo Muhammad again went to Istanbul as envoy. Interestingly, the demand of Haydar Khan of Bukhara at that time was not related to war. According to the envoy, due to famine in the country, many people, including scholars, had left, and as a result, books of jurisprudence had been lost. The Bukhara khan explained that this situation was weakening religious and scientific education and requested the jurisprudence books, whose list he provided, to be sent. Evidently, due to socio-economic reasons, the Bukhara Khanate was not in a good condition in terms of scientific progress and education. According to existing documents, the requested books were provided by Mahmud II and sent to Bukhara in 1827. Although during the reign of Nasrullah Khan (1827–1860), who ascended the throne in 1827, these crises in Bukhara were partly resolved, after 1860 the Bukhara Khanate could not escape falling under Russian domination. One of the most important relations established with the Ottoman state during this period occurred when the British, seeking the release of the officers Charles Stoddard and Arthur Conolly, who had been arrested in Bukhara in 1838, appealed for help. In response to this request, Sultan Abdulmecid sent a letter to Amir Nasrullah, but it had no effect, and in 1842 the two British officers were executed. It must be said that the most important factor enabling the advance of the Russians in Turkestan was their military power. In addition, Kazakh khans such as Jantora (1805–1811) and Shirgazi (1812–1824) also contributed to the spread of Russian influence in Turkestan, with the only exception being Sultan Kenesary. While the struggle against the Russians continued from the 1820s to the 1850s, the khanates of Turkestan, such as Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand, were engaged in internal struggles for the throne. For example, Amir Nasrullah of Bukhara (1826–1860) was a ruler who fought against the khans of Khiva and Kokand. Ultimately, the Russians captured Tashkent in June 1865 and Bukhara in 1868, putting an end to the Bukhara Khanate. In 1873, they also captured Khiva and annexed its lands. Finally, in 1875, they entered Kashgar and ended the Kokand Khanate. Thus, most of Turkestan fell under Russian rule. It should also be noted that when the Russian invasion began, envoys came to Istanbul both from Kokand and from Bukhara. In April 1865, Sayyid Yakub Khan Tura, envoy of Ya'qub Khan of Kokand, in September 1868, Muhammad Parsa Efendi, envoy of Bukhara Amir Muzaffar al-Din Khan, and on April 4, 1871, Sayyid Mir Abdulhay Efendi, another envoy of the Bukhara Amir, arrived in Istanbul. The common demand of these envoys was to request help from the Ottoman state against the Russian invasion. But the Ottoman state was in no position to provide help in any direction. Most importantly, it feared Russia. Therefore, the only advice the Ottoman Sultan gave to the khans of Turkestan was to form alliances among themselves and maintain good relations with Russia. However, we see that in 1867 the Ottoman state adopted an exceptional attitude toward Yakub Khan, the khan of Kashgar. The reason was that the enemy was not Russia but China. Moreover, the British were also encouraging the Ottomans to support Kashgar. Finally, in 1873 the Ottoman state provided the military assistance requested by Yakub Khan and sent officers to train the Kashgar army. In return, Yakub Khan had the Friday sermon read in the name of the caliph, minted coins in his name, and ensured that the Ottoman flag waved in Kashgar. With this action, Yakub Khan intended to show that he recognized Ottoman authority. However, this situation did not last long: as a result of the Chinese offensives that began in the autumn of 1876, on December 16, 1877, they captured Kashgar and brought an end to the rule of Ya'qub Khan. Thus, after Western Turkestan had been occupied by the Russians, Eastern Turkestan also came under Chinese domination.

Conclusion

Ottoman–Turkestan relations were formed over the centuries on the basis of religious brotherhood and political interests. Although they often emerged as alliances against external enemies, due to internal conflicts, foreign invasions, and the Ottoman Empire’s own problems, they could not turn into permanent cooperation. Nevertheless, these relations strengthened communication within the Muslim world and occupied an important place in historical memory as a symbol of solidarity based on the principles of “religion and state.”

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