



SOURCE STUDIES ON THE HISTORY OF RUSSIAN-AFGHAN RELATIONS (BASED ON MATERIALS FROM THE TURKESTAN GOVERNORATE GENERAL)

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 14 th August 2024 Accepted: 6 th September 2024	As a result of international relations that developed in the second half of the 19th century, the Russian Empire began an active phase of its activities to colonize Central Asia. As a result, the tactics of relations with the countries of Central Asia were changed. Strong diplomatic ties and planned military operations contradict the interests of two countries in the region: Great Britain and Russia. This article analyzes source studies on the history of Russian-Afghan relations based on materials from the Chancellery of the Governor-General of Turkestan.

Keywords: Turkestan, governorship, diplomatic affairs, relations, source studies.

INTRODUCTION

There were many negotiations between the two states on the issues of attitude towards India, Afghanistan, Iran. The history of the relationship between the Russian Empire and Afghanistan is one of the most interesting problems of historical research. To study this issue, it is important to use the sources stored in the materials of the "office" of the Turkestan General-Governorate, which are currently concentrated in the funds of the National Archives of Uzbekistan.

MAIN PART

Among the large number of materials on this topic, it should be mentioned that the first Governor-General of Turkestan K.P.Kaufman received from Tsar Alexander II the authority to conduct border affairs on July 17, 1867. The diplomatic affairs of the Governor-General of the region were conducted by the diplomatic part of the chancery until 1899, and after February 13, 1899, the position of diplomatic official at the Turkestan Governor-General's Office was introduced (National Archives of Uzbekistan, Fund – 1-2). These departments have preserved documents concerning relations with Afghanistan.

The main sources for this article were the reports of the military governors of the Transcaspian region, as well as letters and telegrams stored in the materials of the chancery of the Governor-General's Office. For a more in-depth study of the issue, it is recommended to use the materials of the "Russian Imperial Political Agency in Bukhara" (National Archives of Uzbekistan, Fund – 3). From the numerous sources available, the following reports can be cited initially, that as early as 1869, according to the information of the

director of the Asian Department, who in his letter to the Russian ambassador in London reported that the English ambassador G.Buchanan spoke about the difficulties of trading English goods in Turkestan". [1]

To which he received a response that the Russian Empire was interested in developing trade in goods of Russian manufactures in Turkestan. In subsequent years, as a result of negotiations held in 1872-1873 between England and Russia, according to the Minister of Foreign Affairs N.K.Girs, the Russian Empire "promised to refrain" - from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. The information provided, it would seem, does not logically coincide, but a study of the history of this problem suggests that England and Russia, in their problems of developing trade relations in Central Asia, must have taken into account the factor of Afghanistan, since trade routes passed through this state, and they were formed long before the appearance of English and Russian trade missions. [2]

A lot of factual material on this topic is contained in the annual reports of the military governors of the Transcaspian region. For example, the military governor Bogolyubov in his report for 1898 reported that according to the "customs" service of the region, goods worth 4 million 977 thousand rubles were imported from Afghanistan, and, accordingly, goods worth 4 million 742 thousand rubles were sold from Russian Turkestan. In fact, the figures are equal. The report indicates the goods that were in mutual trade. Among the many goods, mainly tea, cotton, wool, dried fruits, textile goods, sugar, rice, paints and varnishes, "were the most purchased." [3]



The report provides some facts regarding the relationship with Afghanistan. Thus, trade relations were weaker compared to Iran. Mainly, residents of the northern regions bordering the Transcaspian region were interested in trade relations with the Turkestan Governorate-General. With the commissioning of the Murghab branch of the Trans-Caspian Railway, trade relations began to develop more intensively.

Further, the military governor gives a number of examples about the relations with Afghanistan. For example, the officials of the Transcaspian region did not interfere with the free import of livestock products through border posts. And vice versa, it is said that the Afghan upper circles hindered the development of mutual trade. According to documents, in subsequent years, the leaders of the Transcaspian region maintained their previous relations with Afghanistan. Reports from subsequent years testify to this. Thus, the military governor of Transcaspia in his report for 1908 reports that during the reporting period, Afghan merchants and hired workers entered the territory of the region without any border obstacles. Internal political events in Afghanistan are cited as the reason. As a result, mutual trade exchange processes fall to 0.2%.

Despite these indicators, residents of the border Afghan territories engaged in agriculture and trade received a net profit of 3 million rubles from fruit trade alone. Commenting on this situation, the head of the department of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Empire proposed, in connection with the existing need for Russian manufactured goods in Afghanistan and in connection with the current political situation, "it is advisable to deliver goods from the territory of Iran, in particular, through the cities of Mashhad and Turbeti-Haidar." [4]

Judging by the report, the Russian Empire, joining the Entente in 1907, received guarantees from England for the development of trade with Afghanistan. In 1908, the domestic political situation in Afghanistan changed. Thus, the "Zhemshedi" tribes, dissatisfied with the political situation in the country, namely 10,000 representatives of the tribe, asked for a place of residence in the Transcaspian region. With the highest permission, regional officials placed 7,000 people from the "Zhemshedi" tribe in the "Chamani-Bida" area, for which they spent 15,000 rubles. [5]

There is also information about relations with Afghanistan in the materials of the "Imperial Political Agency in Bukhara". Thus, the political agency on April 7, 1909, in its message number 96, sent to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, provides the following facts: employees of the political agency talked with an Afghan

cattle breeder. He reported on the situation of the residents between Kabul and Herat, where the unfavorable situation complicated the trade in livestock products. As a result, many of them would like to conduct trade relations with the Transcaspian region. In particular, the detainee himself drove 4,000 sheep to the Merv oasis. [6]

In this regard, regarding the events carried out by the leadership of the Transcaspian region, one can cite as evidence the reports of the head of the Merv district, Colonel Von-Fahler, who on September 19, 1909, in his report to the regional military governor (this report was recorded under number 14076 in the office of the Transcaspian military governor) – cites the following facts "on the collection of taxes", for example, cattle breeders of Afghanistan and Iran paid 5 kopecks for each sheep, and 10 kopecks of tax per head of cattle. [7]

The presented factual materials allow us to conclude that the Russian Empire, through the Turkestan Governorate-General, did not interfere with relations with Afghanistan, but on the contrary, was interested in developing trade with the northern regions. This was facilitated by some domestic political events in which the Turkestan Governorate-General also took direct part. The following facts speak for themselves: Afghanistan is a multinational state in which there were disagreements between tribes. These factors led to an aggravation of the domestic political situation in the country.

In 1863, after the death of the Afghan Emir Dust-Mohammed Khan, a struggle for the throne began. Sheralikhan, the son of the former Emir, won. Among those who lost the struggle for the Afghan throne was the nephew of the Emir - Sheralikhan - Abdurakhmankhan. In early 1870, with the permission of the Emperor of Russia, Abdurakhmankhan was granted a place of residence in Turkestan. Initially, Abdurakhmankhan and his entourage were settled in Samarkand. The place where they settled was called by the local population "Kavarzor" after the name of the mahalla, and the place where the Afghans lived was called "bogi afghani" (Afghan garden). According to sources, with the permission of the tsarist government, Abdurakhmankhan began to receive a government "pension" of 25,000 rubles per year from the treasury of the Turkestan Governorate General. [8]

After the British invasion of 1878 and the conclusion of the "Gandamak" agreement (1879), which was enslaving for Afghanistan, as well as the death of Sheralikhan, tensions in the country increased. The tsarist government, using this situation to strengthen its position, according to the "Kaufman Collection",



"initiated" Abdurakhmankhan's flight to his homeland. Soon he took control of Kabul and was proclaimed emir of Afghanistan. [9]

Abdurakhmankhan, being the emir of Afghanistan for more than 20 years, pursued a policy of neutrality. Some facts speak of Abdurakhmankhan's activities to weaken England's sphere of activity. For example, he sympathized with the struggle of the peoples of northwestern India against the English and provided them with assistance. Abdurakhmankhan dismissed the Englishman Salter Pine from the post of director of the arms factory. Afghanistan under Abdurakhmankhan was a centralized, independent state that did not allow the wide penetration of either English or Russian influence. This policy suited the Russian Empire quite well. Therefore, in the reports of the military governors of the Transcaspian region, there are facts of non-resistance on the part of the administration to the "invasion" of the Afghan population into the region. [10]

Subsequent political events in Afghanistan also influenced the relationship with the Turkestan Governorate-General. Abdurakhmankhan's cousin, Ishakhan, the ruler of the Four region, rebelled against him. But Ishakhan's rebellion, which was not supported by the people, failed. He fled to the territory of the Turkestan Governorate-General with his relatives and confidants. [11]

On September 22, 1888, the Minister of War P.Vannovsky in his telegram to the Turkestan Governor-General offered the possibility of providing Ishakhan with "asylum in Russia". Ishakhan, along with his family and confidants, was offered to settle in the city of Samarkand with an annual subsidy of 10 thousand rubles. [12] Ishakhan gave an obligation to the tsarist government to refrain from any political activity. Ishakhan's further fate until his death was connected with Samarkand. [13] Numerous archival materials from the chancery of the Turkestan Governorate-General testify to Ishakhan's life in Samarkand. [14]

CONCLUSION

Archival materials prove that the Russian Empire had a special attitude towards its southern borders. Therefore, it demanded assistance and strict execution of instructions on establishing peaceful coexistence between the two states from the administration of the Turkestan Governorate-General. Diplomatic activity made it possible to fully comply with the main line in relations with multinational Afghanistan. Subsequently, the use of a wider volume of archival materials could reveal interesting aspects of the relations of the Turkestan Governorate-General with its southern neighbor.

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