

**ANALYSIS OF ARTICLES ON THE OCCUPATION OF THE KHIVA KHANATE
BY THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN THE NEWSPAPER OF THE TURKESTAN
PROVINCE**

D. G'. Mirzayev

Doctor of Philosophy in History

Junior Researcher, Institute of History, Academy of Sciences

Email: dalermirzayev93@gmail.com

Abstract

The “Newspaper of the Turkestan Province” sheds light on the process of the conquest of the Khiva Khanate by the Russian Empire. The articles provide information about the military strategy of the Russian Empire, the political maneuvers of the local rulers, and the diverse reactions of the population. The newspaper is a valuable source that reflects the political and cultural environment of the period. These acts of conquest brought about significant changes in the history of Central Asia.

Keywords: Khiva Khanate, Russian Empire, Central Asia, “Newspaper of the Turkestan Province”, geopolitics, historical analysis, colonialism, military strategy, political maneuvers, attitude of the population.

Introduction

There are a number of archival documents, memoirs, scholarly works, and press sources concerning the occupation of the Central Asian khanates by the Russian Empire. These sources complement one another in revealing the causes of the occupation, the scope of the events, and their consequences. Many studies have been carried out within the scope of this subject. In addition to these sources and studies, the “Newspaper of the Turkestan Province,” published at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, may also be regarded as a valuable source for the examination of this topic. This is because the “Newspaper of the Turkestan Province” was published in Tashkent (1870) during the empire’s advance on the neighboring Khiva Khanate, and it published articles drawing on the views of both state institutions and the public. During this same period, the newspaper also published articles and reports concerning the Russian Empire’s advance on the Khiva Khanate.

Relevance of the topic. By the mid-19th century, the Central Asian khanates had become the principal target of the colonial powers; in particular, the struggle for this region intensified between Great Britain and the Russian Empire¹. Changes in the geopolitical arena accelerated the actions of the Russian Empire directed toward Central Asia². The military operations of the Russian Empire, which began with an attack on the territory of the Kokand Khanate in 1852, reached the borders of the Khiva Khanate in 1872.

¹ Hamid Ziyoyev. Turkistonda Rossiya tajovuzi va hukmronligiga qarshi kurash (XVIII – XIX asr boshlari). Tashkent, 1998, p. 295.

² T. G. Tukhtametov. Rossiya i Khiva v kontse XIX – XX v. Pobeda Khorezmskoy narodnoy revolyutsii. Moscow, 1969, p. 21.

Main part. In the “Newspaper of the Turkestan Province,” the relations between the imperial government and the Khiva Khanate are illuminated from 1872 onward. The first articles in that year’s issues of the newspaper addressed the relations and tensions between the imperial government and the Khiva Khanate. The Russian Empire’s military authorities were seeking pretexts for an advance on the khanate. According to issue 12 of the newspaper, owing to the danger of imperial troops arriving from the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and from the western shore of the Aral Sea, the khan’s government sought to improve its relations with the empire³.

Russia tried to prevent Bukhara and the Kokand Khanate from avoiding these relations. At the demand of the imperial government, captives were to be released, and Russian merchants were to be granted the right to trade freely within the territory of the Khiva Khanate. The aim of the imperial government was to increase the khanate’s dependence by destroying its economic life. The Khan of Khiva, for his part, tried to avoid this.

In the 1870s, the Russian Empire began to seek ways to subjugate the Khiva Khanate and prepared for war. Finally, on 12 December 1872, permission for the conquest of the khanate was granted at a special meeting led by Emperor Alexander.

To advance there, military units set out from three directions — Tashkent, Orenburg, and Krasnovodsk⁴. The Governor-General of Turkestan, von Kaufman, launched the advance on the khanate under the pretext that the demand for the release of 21 Russian prisoners held in the dungeons of the Khiva Khanate had not been met. The “Newspaper of the Turkestan Province” showed great interest in the military movement of the army led by K. P. Kaufman, which set out from Tashkent.

Von Kaufman also recruited soldiers from the Syr Darya Province for this operation. In addition, the Emir of Bukhara provided both military and economic support for the campaign. In particular, while the Governor-General’s army was at Suvlikuduk, the Emir sent his own representative and supplied von Kaufman with 68 camel-loads of provisions⁵. The Emir also sent 100 tanga (10 so‘m) to cover the travel expenses of these soldiers and of the troops gathered from the Syr Darya Province⁶.

During the campaign, like the Emir of Bukhara, the Khan of Kokand also continually sought to maintain good relations with the Governor-General. To this end, the Khan of Kokand sent his envoy, Mirzo Hakim Parvonachi, with a letter, requesting that the envoy take part throughout the entire campaign⁷. The said envoy accompanied the Governor-General as far as Khiva⁸.

During the campaign, the responsibility for supplying the soldiers with food and medicine was assigned to the wealthy men of the city of Tashkent. In addition to medicine, they sent the troops 560 packages⁹ of tea and 1,100 packages of sugar.

³ “Turkiston viloyatining gazeti.” 31 May 1872.

⁴ T. G. Tukhtametov. *Rossiia i Khiva v kontse XIX – XX v. Pobeda Khorezmskoy narodnoy revolyutsii*. Moscow, 1969, p. 25.

⁵ “Turkiston viloyatining gazeti.” 27 April 1873.

⁶ “Turkiston viloyatining gazeti.” 27 April 1873.

⁷ “Turkiston viloyatining gazeti.” 27 April 1873.

⁸ “Turkiston viloyatining gazeti.” 10 May 1873.

⁹ Packages (Qadoq) — an old unit of weight. In value it was equivalent to 1 pound. Its weight is 409.5 grams.

The main clash between the imperial army and the khanate's forces began in the region of Sardoba Lake. Khiva's army of 3,500 men, with 2 cannons, confronted the Governor-General's army under the command of Muhammadniyoz Devonbegi and Muhammadmurod Devonbegi. They were also joined by General Siddiq¹⁰. The Khivan soldiers who opposed the entry of Russian troops to Sardoba Lake were generally armed with swords and with simple single-barreled and double-barreled rifles; the army was not fully equipped and was fighting with poor weapons¹¹. Despite the fire from the cannons, it was not possible to stop the Russian troops. Taking advantage of this superiority, von Kaufman's army concluded the engagement in its own favor¹². According to the information published in the newspaper, it was reported that the Russian army suffered no losses following this clash.

On 11 May 1873, von Kaufman's army passed through Sardoba Lake and reached the Amu Darya, and on 13 May it occupied the city of Shorhan, belonging to the Khiva Khanate and situated on the bank of the Amu Darya¹³. On 15–16 May 1873, the imperial army succeeded in crossing the Amu Darya. Although the khanate's army put up fierce resistance against them, they lost the engagement because the superiority in military technology lay with the Governor-General's army¹⁴. During these clashes, Kolokoltsov (Kolavachov), who commanded the Governor-General's army, killed many Khivans after the battle. After the forces under Kolokoltsov's command targeted the Khivans on the riverbank with cannon fire, the river water turned red. As a result of the fire from the cannons, several hundred people lost their lives. On 18 May, von Kaufman's army succeeded in crossing the entire river. On 23 May 1873, the Governor-General's army captured the city of Hazorasp. On the same day, the imperial army, which had set out from the Orenburg and Caucasus provinces, reached the city of New Urgench. The warships advancing along the river also began to approach Khiva¹⁵.

On 29 May 1873, the Governor-General's army attacked and entered the city of Khiva. When the invaders entered the city, the Khan of Khiva, Sayyid Muhammad Rahim Khan, left the city and withdrew to Imukchir, near Ilyali, where the Yomut tribe was settled¹⁶.

It must also be emphasized that, although the press did not give space to the heroism of the Khivan army, it can be inferred that they offered serious resistance to the imperial army and forced it to remain cautious. Otherwise, when von Kaufman captured Khiva, he would not have stationed part of his soldiers on the city walls and deployed the remaining Orenburg, Circassian (Caucasian), and Turkestan troops outside the city¹⁷.

The Khan of Khiva, Sayyid Muhammad Rahim Khan¹⁸, returned to Khiva in early June 1873, at the invitation of the Governor-General, accompanied by Sayyid Muhammad Tora and Muhammadmurod Devonbegi while among the Turkmens, and met with von Kaufman¹⁹. The

¹⁰ "Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi." 6 June 1873.

¹¹ T. G. Tukhtametov. *Rossiya i Khiva v kontse XIX – XX v. Pobeda Khorezmskoy narodnoy revolyutsii*. Moscow, 1969, p. 25.

¹² "Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi." 19 June 1873.

¹³ "Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi." 6 June 1873.

¹⁴ "Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi." 19 June 1873.

¹⁵ "Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi." 19 June 1873.

¹⁶ J. A. MacGahan. *Campaigning on the Oxus, and the Fall of Khiva*. New York, 1874, p. 163.

¹⁷ "Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi." 19 June 1873.

¹⁸ Sayyid Muhammad Rahim Khan — also known among the people by the name Madrahim Khan.

¹⁹ J. A. MacGahan. *Campaigning on the Oxus, and the Fall of Khiva*. New York, 1874, p. 273.

Khan did not return to Khiva merely on the invitation. Kaufman wrote a letter to the Khan, stating that if he returned to Khiva and surrendered, he would be shown all the respect and honor due to a ruler. However, if he rejected this offer, Kaufman wrote that he was considering making someone else khan in his place²⁰. Kaufman regarded the Khan's younger brother, Otajon Tora, as the most suitable candidate for the throne. Sayyid Muhammad Rahim Bahodir Khan, who returned to Khiva at Kaufman's offer, would be compelled to make peace with him. However, whether Sayyid Muhammad Rahim Bahodir Khan would remain in his place as khan depended on the decision to be made by the troops near the city of Khiva. The Khan managed to meet with them and obtain their approval. In addition, warnings were issued to the Turkmens, who refused to submit to the imperial government. They were informed that if they did not submit of their own will, they would be subjugated by force of arms, and that even the Khan of Khiva himself would be used against them²¹.

Here it must also be noted that it was observed how, in order to protect their lives and their power from the colonial states, both the Emir of Bukhara and the Khan of Kokand adopted attitudes such as sending congratulations and gifts to the Governor-General in order to present themselves favorably. In particular, after the campaign against the Khiva Khanate was completed in victory, the Emir of Bukhara's envoy, Mirohur Isomiddin, was sent to von Kaufman's camp and congratulated the Governor-General on behalf of his own ruler. Along with the gifts, the envoy captured Otatillov — who had killed 11 Russian sailors at Qo'ng'irov and was hiding in Bukhara — and presented him to von Kaufman as a gift. Shortly afterward, an envoy from Kokand also arrived on a visit with the same congratulatory message²². From this it can be concluded that the "divide and rule" policy carried out among the khanates produced favorable results for the imperial army. However, the freedom fighters of Turkestan, its courageous sons, and its people suffered greatly from this.

On the lands taken from the Khiva Khanate, the Amu Darya District was established. As its center, a new fortress was built on the right bank of the Amu Darya, near Shorahon, under the name Petro-Aleksandrovska²³. At first, the Khan of Khiva, at the demand of the Governor-General, freed all the slaves in Khiva and sent them back to their own lands. On 20 August, the governor of the Amu Darya District, Colonel Ivanov, wrote a letter providing information on this matter. According to the letter, 1,796 slaves had come to Khiva, of whom 1,360 were men and 436 were women and children. They were sent back to their own lands — that is, to the Qizilbash region — by way of the Sarykamysh route, under the leadership of Mullah Husayn and Jahangir Noyon, with 363 camels, 250 horses, and 3 donkeys²⁴. This shows that the imperial government aimed to improve its relations with Iran. At the same time, it may be said that the imperial government sought to soften Iran's attitude toward the occupation of the Khiva Khanate.

In the 19th chapter of his memoirs entitled "*The Campaign to Khiva (of the Caucasian Detachments)*", M. Alikhanov-Avaresky provides the following information about the peace

²⁰ J. A. MacGahan. Campaigning on the Oxus, and the Fall of Khiva. New York, 1874, p. 278.

²¹ "Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi." 20 October 1873.

²² "Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi." 20 October 1873.

²³ "Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi." 2 October 1873.

²⁴ "Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi." 2 October 1873.

treaty between the khanate and Russia: “Over the course of 10 years, an indemnity of 10 million rubles would be paid to Russia, and ultimately the lands on the right bank of the Amu Darya would be ceded; some districts of these lands would be given to Bukhara on account of the assistance provided by the Russian government during the campaign”²⁵. Here, the “Newspaper of the Turkestan Province” also contains information on this matter, and it further clarifies the ideas set out above.

In particular, on 12 August 1873, an 18-article treaty was signed between Sayyid Muhammad Rahim Khan and von Kaufman in the Gandimiyaon garden near Khiva. This treaty was humiliating for the khan. The terms of this treaty were set out in issue 21 of the “Newspaper of the Turkestan Province” for the year 1873. The first article of the treaty states: “Sayyid Muhammad Rahim Bahodir Khan acknowledges himself to be a faithful servant of the Russian Emperor and will not undertake any action in internal and external politics or in economic relations without the permission of the imperial government”²⁶.

On close examination of the treaty, it was determined that 100,000 manat would be paid in the first two years. For the following two years — that is, in 1875 and 1876 — 125,000 manat; in 1877 and 1878, 150,000 manat; from 1879, 170,000 manat every two years; and after 1881, 200,000 manat each year until the term expired²⁷. In general, even taking the lowest amounts into account, a total indemnity of 3,420,000 manat was imposed on the Khivans. The above calculation can be seen in the table below.

Years	1873– 1874	1875– 1876	1877– 1878	1879– 1881	1882– 1892	Total
Amount to be paid	200,000	250,000	300,000	470,000	2,200,000	3,420,000

According to the treaty, the indemnity payment could be made either in Khiva’s existing currency or in imperial paper money. A deadline was given to pay the first 100,000 manat by December of that year. The indemnity money was sent to the imperial treasury through the commander of the Amu Darya District²⁸.

Owing to the loss of territory in the Khiva Khanate, the population of this region was also forced to come under imperial citizenship. This situation also affected the tax revenues of 1873. As a result, in order to make the indemnity payments, it became necessary to impose more taxes on the population.

The tax was set as an amount to be paid each year by 1 November. After the final 200,000 manat was paid on 1 November 1892, a further total of 73,557 manat — at an interest rate of 70.054% — had to be paid by 1 November 1893²⁹. At the end of the treaty, it was emphasized how important the timing of the payment was. That is, the treaty states that if less interest is to be paid, payments must be made in higher amounts each year.

²⁵ Alikhanov-Avasky M. Pokhod v Khivu (Kavkazskikh otryadov) 1873. St. Petersburg, 1899, p. 280.

²⁶ “Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi.” 20 October 1873.

²⁷ “Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi.” 20 October 1873.

²⁸ “Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi.” 20 October 1873.

²⁹ “Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi.” 20 October 1873.

As a result of this treaty, the Khiva Khanate became a state dependent on the Russian Empire. The Khan's affairs would be regularly supervised by the military governor of the Amu Darya District.

On 6 September 1873, the Governor-General of Turkestan, von Kaufman, returned to Tashkent by way of Jizzakh³⁰. After the subjugation of the Khiva Khanate, those who had taken part in the campaign were rewarded. Articles on this matter were published in the press. According to these, first of all, the physicians who served in various military units were rewarded with medals and decorations of various degrees³¹. This information shows that the reports claiming that the imperial army suffered no losses during the campaign and that no one was wounded are not true. If that had been the case, the physicians would not have been rewarded first. From this, it can be understood that there was work for the physicians as well in the clashes with the Khivan soldiers. Afterward, the soldiers were rewarded³².

Analysis of the results obtained

The conquest of the Khiva Khanate was a colonial war. However, the world claimed that the imperial government presented it as a campaign carried out for the purpose of freeing slaves. The pages of the press were also widely used to spread this aim. For example, in 1874, at a meeting held in London, the capital of England, on the theme of "freeing all the slaves and captives in the world," the news that Russia's soldiers had gone to Khiva and freed the slaves was received with joy, and on 25 November they expressed their gratitude in a letter written to the emperor; this news appeared on the pages of the newspaper³³.

By order of the Governor-General of Turkestan, a state council was established in Khiva in 1874. This council was initially formed in order to discuss methods of collecting and gathering money to pay the war indemnity, but later all the affairs of the Khan of Khiva were to be managed through this council³⁴. Among the members of the council, under the chairmanship of the Khan of Khiva, Muhammad Rahim Bahodir Khan, several devonbegis, Colonel Ivanov, Major Haroshkin, and the Kazakh Oltiboybi from Tashkent were appointed³⁵. The Khan of Khiva, by decision of the council, freed the Iranian slaves. Thereupon, the ruler of Iran rewarded the Governor-General of Turkestan, von Kaufman, and the military governor of the Syr Darya, Lieutenant-General Kolpakov, and Major-General Trotsky with first-degree; Colonel Ivanov and Colonel Frida with second-degree; Colonel Haroshkin with third-degree; and the Kazakh Oltiboybi from Tashkent with fourth-degree medals adorned with figures of the sun and lion, called "Shir-u Khurshid"³⁶.

After the Governor-General's army entered the city of Khiva, the palace was plundered. The valuable items, rare books, and manuscript documents in the palace were taken. The American journalist MacGahan, who was present in Khiva, wrote that the campaign's orientalist, Mr. Kuhn, had stated that most of the books were quite interesting and valuable. All of these books

³⁰ "Turkiston viloyatining gazeti." 2 October 1873.

³¹ "Turkiston viloyatining gazeti." 8 January 1874.

³² "Turkiston viloyatining gazeti." 10 February 1874.

³³ "Turkiston viloyatining gazeti." 21 January 1874.

³⁴ J. A. MacGahan. Campaigning on the Oxus, and the Fall of Khiva. New York, 1874, p. 245.

³⁵ "Turkiston viloyatining gazeti." 16 May 1874.

³⁶ "Turkiston viloyatining gazeti." 16 May 1874.

were manuscripts, bound in leather or parchment. It was stated that among them were books written on world history and on the history of Khiva from the earliest times to the present, and that all of these books were sent to the Imperial Library in St. Petersburg³⁷.

In conclusion, the military campaign of the imperial government's army against the Khiva Khanate was regularly addressed in many issues of the Newspaper of the Turkestan Province, in articles of both large and small size under the heading "News from Khiva." Its most important aspect is that during this campaign the newspaper's editor-in-chief, Shohimardon Ibrohimov, took part directly and reported what he saw and experienced by sending it to the newspaper's editorial office in the form of letters. The information that Sh. Ibrohimov sent to the newspaper offers valuable data about the Khiva campaign. However, it can be seen that the information given by Sh. Ibrohimov is incomplete and that some elements were overlooked. In particular, the invaders' lack of water in the deserts, their shortage of food, their struggle with various diseases, and several fierce clashes with the Khivans along the way were almost entirely ignored. It should also be noted that the information given by Sh. Ibrohimov was treated from the standpoint of the interests of the imperial government. Because the khanate's army did not possess weapons modern for its time, because the country's geographical location could not be used correctly for defensive purposes, and thanks to the intelligence information gathered over several decades, the imperial army — although small in number — was able to achieve victory over the khanate's army. However, it should also be noted that the articles in the press disclosed no information whatsoever about the heroism of the khanate's army.

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9. "Turkiston viloyatining gazet." 6 June 1873.
10. "Turkiston viloyatining gazet." 19 June 1873.
11. "Turkiston viloyatining gazet." 9 July 1873.
12. "Turkiston viloyatining gazet." 20 October 1873.
13. "Turkiston viloyatining gazet." 2 October 1873.

³⁷ J. A. MacGahan. Campaigning on the Oxus, and the Fall of Khiva. New York, 1874, p. 250.

14. “Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi.” 8 January 1874.
15. “Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi.” 10 February 1874.
16. “Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi.” 21 January 1874.
17. “Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi.” 16 May 1874.
18. Sayyid Muhammad Rahim Khan — also known among the people by the name Madrahim Khan.
19. Qadoq — an old unit of weight. In value it was equivalent to 1 pound. Its weight is 409.5 grams.
20. Teva — camel; here, camel caravans are meant.