



Amir Shahmurad During Emirate Of Bukhara And Relations With Iran

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Abstract: This article examines the political relations between the Bukhara Emirate and Qajar Iran during the reign of Amir Shahmurad (1785–1800), focusing on the main political, religious, and territorial disputes in the frontier regions of Marv, Khorasan, and northern Afghanistan. The study shows how Amir Shahmurad's consolidation of power in Bukhara coincided with the rise of Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar in Iran, leading to rivalry over strategic trade routes and border territories. Religious differences between Sunni Bukhara and Shia Iran further intensified their competition for regional influence. Despite periods of tension, diplomatic exchanges and negotiations occasionally emerged as both states sought to secure their frontiers and maintain stability. The analysis, based on Persian and Central Asian chronicles, highlights how the disputes over Marv and Khorasan reflected broader geopolitical struggles in Central Asia at the end of the 18th century.

Keywords: Bukhara Emirate, Amir Shahmurad, Qajar dynasty, Agha Muhammad Khan, Fath Ali Shah, Iran, Marv, Khorasan, Herat, diplomacy, territorial disputes.

INTRODUCTION: By the end of the 18th century, Iran's relations with the Central Asian khanates were unstable, and many ongoing military conflicts escalated into open wars. The main source of disagreement was the issue of the Turkmen, whose territory was claimed by Iran, the Afghans, and the Khans of Bukhara and Khiva. The Qajar rulers considered the Turkmen tribes to belong to Iran and repeatedly forced the Turkmen to recognize their rule.[1]

Immediately after Nadir Shah's assassination, his empire began to disintegrate. Afghans in Nadir Shah's service, led by Ahmad Khan Abdali, sacked Nadir's camp and fled to Kandahar. He relied on the Abdali tribe and changed its name to Durrani. Ahmad Khan united a number of Afghan tribes. He soon conquered Herat,

Punjab, and Kashmir and declared himself an independent ruler. After Nadir Shah's death, Afghanistan never became part of Iran [2].

In 1750-1752, Ahmad Shah sent a military force from Herat to subdue the regions inhabited by Tajiks and Uzbeks on the northern bank of the Amu Darya. The Afghan feudal lords managed to temporarily subjugate the rulers of some regions and provinces, such as Balkh, Andkhud, Maimana, Akhchi, Sheberghan, and Kunduz. He established a military camp in Balkh and appointed a governor from among the Afghans. After some time, Badakhshan also came under Afghan political influence.[3]

The province of Merv held a special position in Khorasan, and this city was of great strategic importance during the Safavid period. Shah Tahmasp II granted this region to some members of the Qajar family to rule. Therefore, during the reign of Amir Shah Murad (1785-1800), Bayramali Khan was the ruler of Merv.[4]

There was no other man of comparable lineage to him in the Safavid dynasty at that time. After Amir Shah Murad ascended the throne in 1785/86 (1200), he launched several attacks against the Shiites under the banner of jihad during the year[5]. As a result, many cities were destroyed and plundered.[6]

As a result of the Bukhara emirs' campaigns in Khorasan, a large number of able-bodied people were captured and brought to Bukhara. This situation revived the Bukhara slave market.

If we look at the essence, several reasons can be given. One of them may be that Amir Shah Murad was extremely pious in Sunni Islam and viewed Merv with hostility, or that the power of the Bukhara Emirate was growing day by day after several decades of decline.[7]

Control of Merv provided several strategic advantages, including serving as a base for advancing into Khorasan, recruiting cavalry from Turkmen tribes to the emir's army, and benefiting from the collection of tribute from caravans passing through the oasis from Iran to Bukhara and Khiva [8].

This city was unique in terms of trade and economic relations, especially due to its proximity to Herat, which was of great importance during this period as it was the most developed political, commercial, and cultural center.

In the year 1240 AH (1789-1790 CE), Amir Shahmurad went to the Marv region and fought against its governor Bayram Ali Khan, who had rebelled there. He defeated him, killed Bayram Ali Khan, and deported Haji Muhammad Husayn Khan, the son of Bayram Ali Khan, along with thirty thousand Marv Shiites, to the villages

around Bukhara. He sent his brother Umarbiy as governor of the Marv region. He built a fortress below the city of Marv, that is, at the mouth of the river, and named it Islamabad. Then Aziz Khoja gave that city to his son-in-law. After some time, Umarbiy came with an army against Aziz Khoja, took Islamabad from his hands, and gave it to his brother Rustam Mirza. Abdulaziz Khoja captured his son-in-law and took him to Merv. Hearing this, Amir Shahmurad went to Merv. He did not conquer Merv and Islamabad. He broke the water dam leading to Merv and came to Bukhara. For four years, Merv was devastated by lack of water, and two thousand households used to live in Merv, when one night they rebelled, captured four hundred of Umarbek's men, imprisoned them in one house and did not give them food or water. They all died of hunger. Umarbek moved his brother and his family to the Shakhrisabz region and himself fled to this region[9].

This event took place in 1791, when a large part of the local population was taken prisoner and the fortress was destroyed. The dam was located 12 farsakhs from Merv, and the city was left without water. As a result, farming became impossible and famine began. The governor of Merv, Haji Muhammad Husayn, appealed to Timur Shah Durrani for help. Timur Shah sent an army of five thousand men under the command of Lashkar Khan[10].

Afghans offer Marvites to move to Herat. As a result, two thousand families accepted this offer and moved to Herat, and about five thousand families moved to Bukhara. Those who remained in Marv rebelled against the Bukharans. But the uprising was suppressed and the Marvites were forced to accept the Sunni sect [11].

The 19th century was a period of disintegration for the Iranian and Central Asian khanates. During this period, Iran became an object of colonial expansion by European countries. As a result of the Russo-Persian wars of the 19th century, large territories of the Transcaucasian region passed to the Russian Empire. Iran signed a peace treaty with Russia, Turkey, England, and France that was detrimental to itself. Taking advantage of this, the Bukhara emirs launched an attack on the eastern provinces of Iran. The future Bukhara emir Heydar, at the age of 16, marched on Khorasan with an army of 15,000 men on the orders of his father. According to the Russian traveler Poshnev, who was in Bukhara at the beginning of the 19th century, Heydar conquered two cities in Khorasan and offered the population the Sunni faith. The population, who did not have enough strength to resist, was forced to accept the Sunni faith in order to save their lives.[12]

In the year one thousand two hundred and eleven Hijri (1796-1797) he went and tied the bandi sultan and

introduced water to Marv province. Dean appointed Nasirbek, i.e. himself, as governor of his son Marv[13].

The Mervites were forced to wage a long and fierce struggle against the Bukhara people, which ended with the destruction of the Merv oasis and the displacement of a large part of its population to other places at the end of the 18th century[14].

The importance of protecting Marv for the emir of Bukhara was such that he could prevent any progress of the Qajars in this direction. Because during the reign of Amir Shahmurad, Marv became the residence of the Crown Prince of Bukhara Emirate.

In one of his campaigns to Khorasan to capture Mashhad, Shah Murad had 60,000 soldiers and reached Mashhad with them. He used military stratagems during the campaign. Thus, during this campaign, he besieged the city of Mashhad. Then he gathered his commanders and told them about his dream, in which he supposedly saw Imam Reza, the eighth Imam, asking Amir Shah Murad not to destroy the villages and neighborhoods of Mashhad. Therefore, Shah Murad ordered his soldiers not to allow violence against the city of Mashhad, as well as the surrounding villages and neighborhoods. But in other places, he allowed himself to kill and plunder as much as possible. He sent his army in all directions and killed a large number of people who resisted, took some of them prisoner, and returned to Bukhara with a large booty [15].

Amir Shahmurod managed to increase his authority among the Sufis and dervishes to a certain extent, as a result of which they began to obey him and carry out his every order without question. With this new force, formed from the Sufis, he gained his policy and the recognition of the people. Amir Shahmurod's religious initiatives and aspirations for religion were more pronounced than those of the previous khans. This can be seen from the fact that the meaning of the phrase "Amir Masum", which became his nickname, was a sign of his religious affiliation. In order to get rid of the internal crisis and ensure his security from rivals, he managed to create an auxiliary force to achieve the goals of expanding his power. Therefore, with military attacks on Iran, which had plunged into chaos and disorder after the assassination of Karim Khan, he gradually implemented his policy in the eastern regions of Iran. His goals to achieve for he is like this several times from walks used .

Shahmurod during In Bukhara Russian scientist who lived Poshnev like that writes : " Shahmurad. " and Bukhara people every year one or twice of Iran eastern to the territories attack They do . He is the one from places many prisoners and the spoils take came , until 1795 he gathered the army for the second time decision

did and 16 years old son Mirkhaydarni their commander meat appointed ." [16] He sent his son with 15,000 experienced soldiers to attack Khorasan. Amir Haidar headed towards Iran. First, he besieged two major cities and invited them to convert to Sunni Islam. Since those hiding in the city did not have enough strength to resist, they were forced to adopt the Sunni religion and thus save their lives. After that, Amir Haidar and his army went in the other direction, besieging two major cities and one fortress. Leading a select army of Bukhara, he fought a fierce battle, and the two sides fought for several days. In the battle during the siege, more soldiers than the Bukharas were wounded and killed.

Diplomatic relations between the Emirate of Bukhara and Iran from the time of the Qajar dynasty to the Russian conquest of Central Asia were characterized by a focus on political and economic relations. The main focus was on political and military issues. During this period, political relations were revived and the flow of ambassadors intensified.

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