

# THE FORMATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN CENTRAL ASIAN KHANATES AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY (IN THE CASE OF THE ALEXANDER BYRNES EMBASSY MISSION)

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**Abstract.** *This article describes the following: the goals of spies, ambassadors and missions sent by the British East India Company to Central Asia in the first half of the 19th century, their geopolitical activities in the region, the form of government, relations with neighboring countries, the topography of Afghanistan, economic, political and social situation of the Afghan people, their customs, traditions, lifestyle, diversity of nationalities, specific features of this period, etc. It was also discussed how the British colony carried out military-political and diplomatic preparations for the invasion of Central Asia at the end of the thirties of the 19th century. It is revealed that they carefully studied the detailed maps of every road in the country, waterways, government officials, any sources, and the political and economic conditions of the regions. The essence of this article is that: the secret service networks of Great Britain go back for many years, their activities are systematically and continuously carried out, and they use any means. The preface of the article was about how the British prepared for the first Anglo-Afghan war (1838-42), and also reflected that the British Empire carefully prepared for this process for many years before conquering any territory.*

**Keywords:** *geopolitical, ambassadors, expeditions spies, Afghanistan, Afghan people, M. Elphinstone, William Moorcroft, A. Burns, Charles Messon, Robert Leach, Kabul, Herat, Kunduz, Lake Wahan, Bamiyan Darasi, East India Company*

It is known that representatives of foreign countries (mainly English, Russian) began to enter the territory of Central Asia from the 16th century. This process will accelerate in the 19th century. We can see that the entry of British ambassadors into the territory of Central Asia was first for trade and economic interests, and then for political purposes. At first, British ambassadors came to take over the Central Asian market. Their goal was, firstly, to bring English products to the Central Asian market, occupy the market and develop trade, and secondly, to displace Russian trade from these regions and discredit them. English ambassadors entered the territory of the Khanate with such goals in mind. But these processes began to change in the 20s and 30s of the 19th century. The British now began to pursue political goals in the territory of Central Asia: to conquer these territories and to launch actions against the Russians, who at that time had good relations with the Khanate.

According to history, between 1821 and 1825, V. Moorcroft, A. Burns and other such ambassadors entered Central Asia. These ambassadors of Great Britain came to Bukhara and Khiva khanates and established contacts with Koshbegi and other officials. These ambassadors carried out not only trade, but also espionage. Together with the Central Asian market, they deeply study the political situation of the khanates. Although V. Moorcroft was successful in the Central Asian khanate, he could not achieve certain goals. On the contrary, A. Byrnes does his job very well and conveys a lot of important information to the British Empire. It is no exaggeration to say

that the ambassadors sent by the British to the Central Asian khanates and their actions helped the next ambassadors to be sent. In the subsequent processes, we can see that the activities of the British ambassadors have become more active.

The city of Bukhara occupies a high place with its ancient history and glory. The Bukhara Emirate was also strong in every way. The territory of the Bukhara Emirate was also distinguished by its strategic location. That is why the British Empire sends several ambassadors to the Emirate of Bukhara. The British used various methods to turn the markets of the Central Asian khanates into a market for the sale of their industrial goods. In particular, they used the method of diverting some Bukhara merchants to their side. In 1854, Isak Yusufov, a Jew from Bukhara who went to Bombay for business, accepted British citizenship with his son Venyamin Isakov. In 1867, while he was in Paris, Benjamin transferred his brother Yaqub Maman to British citizenship. In this way, the British government aimed to strengthen itself in Central Asia and spread the colonial net to this region. A. Burns describes the superiority of Russians over the British in the trade of many products in Bukhara.

Describing the market of Bukhara, Wolff writes that the basis of the goods sold in the market of Bukhara is Russian goods, and despite the fact that there are about 300 Indian merchants in Bukhara, the main trade is related to Russia. Based on the above, even though the actions of the British in the 30s and 40s of the 19th century, forcing them to enter the markets of Central Asia with their industrial goods, caused unrest among the Russian ruling circles and Russian merchants. but it can be concluded that the general state of trade between Russia and Central Asia, including the Bukhara Khanate, was not affected. The British colonists, in order to establish their influence in the Bukhara Khanate, while entering there economically, also strengthened their preparations from the political side. In the 20s and 30s of the 19th century, the Central Asian khanates began to be studied very carefully by special missions sent through British India. At this time, the main tasks of the British expeditions sent to the Central Asian khanates were: firstly, to study the country's geography, economic situation, and the general situation in trade, and secondly, to strengthen the country's political influence there. It was to get close to the people who had a great influence in his life and to conclude a trade agreement. In the 20s and 30s of the 19th century, the British mainly aimed to bring the Central Asian markets under the influence of England and to dislodge Russia from there. Tried to establish their political full rule and to form a coalition of three khanates against Russia. One of the important stages of such a campaign begins in 1831-1833 when Alexander Burns, an agent of British-Indian military and political intelligence, was sent from India to Kabul and Bukhara. A. Burns was assigned to collect military and geographical information and establish trade and diplomatic relations with Kabul and Bukhara governorships. Alexander Burns, the lieutenant of the East India Company, comes from India to Afghanistan, and from there to Bukhara as a tourist. The evidence and personal observations collected as a result of this trip formed the basis of a three-volume book called "Travel to Bukhara". At this point, A. Burns' 33 comments about the Uzbek people are noteworthy: "Uzbeks are humble and sincere in their dealings. Since they didn't know who I was, they didn't hesitate to talk about everything, from their rulers and politics to the situation in the market." Captain Sir Alexander Byrnes (May 16, 1805 - November 2, 1841) belonged to the Scottish nationality and was born in Montrose (Scotland). At the age of 16, he joined the military service in the East India Company. During his service in India, he learned Hindi and Persian languages perfectly. In 1822, he was appointed as a translator in the city of Surat. In 1826, he was sent to Kutch as an assistant to the political agent. He studied the history of the neighboring countries of India (in particular, Bukhara and Khiva), which had not yet been well explored by the British. In 1829 he traveled to the Indus River. On January 21, 1831, he was sent by Sir Charles Metcalfe and Lord Ellenborough to Lahore to bring

back to Maharaja Ranjit Singh the horses which had been sent as a gift from King William IV. After all, Burns knew Persian, Arabic, Indian and local small languages in India at that time. The British ordered him to be loaded onto a ship on the Sind River because the horses were not suitable for a long journey. After arriving in Lahore, Raja Ranjit Singh saw the noble horses and gifts and allowed Britain to trade through his territory to Afghanistan and Turkestan. "Dealing with reason and negotiating" - that's what Byrnes called the two main achievements of his diplomacy. Alexander Burns wants to go to Afghanistan first, then to the Indian Kush through there, and from there to Bukhara. However, the government of the Whig Party, which took power in Britain at that time, was of the opinion that Upper Asia could not be saved from Russian pressure. Nevertheless, Sir William Bentick allows Byrnes to be an ambassador. A. Burns was assigned to collect military and geographical information and establish trade and diplomatic relations with the ruling circles of Kabul and Bukhara. A. Burns was assigned the following tasks: Strengthening trade relations with Central Asia, opening a new trade route from India to Central Asia to attract Central Asian merchants from Russian influence to British influence, determining the most convenient place to open a trade point similar to the Nizhegorod Fair of Russia. An English doctor: James Gerrard and two Indians: Muhammad Ali and Mohan Lal are prepared for the trip. Two days before Christmas, he was provided with a passport in Delhi.

On March 17, 1832, while passing through Punjab and entering Afghanistan, Burns and his team entered the second form. They change all their clothes into Afghan clothes. After all, at that time there should not have been any rumors about the arrival of foreign travelers and it should not have been looted by robbers. Burns, as he wrote, even wore jewelry on his hands like Asians. Burns tied the documents and letters that he was a representative of the East India Company in his hand, and the gold in his belt. Even Dr. Gerrard was ordered not to use any medicine in public, not to wear any sign of Christianity, not to perform religious ceremonies and not to eat pork in Afghanistan, where religious fanaticism is high. On April 30, when they entered Kabul and stayed at the hotel, their luggage was checked. However, those who examined Burns' sextant and the doctor's drugs failed to notice that they were modern technology. When they are in Kabul, they will be in the reception of Dostmuhammad Khan. The Afghan emir offers Burns 55 to unite to fight against his enemy, Ranjit Singh. However, Burns said that Ranjit Singh is a friend of Britain today. Dostmuhammad Khan asked him about European countries and their defense. He even asked if Britain has a claim to Afghanistan. Byrnes assured Dostmuhammad Khan that Britain has no aggression towards Afghanistan. When his friend heard that Burns was going to Bukhara, he said that the Balkh regions were the most dangerous roads. Byrnes was well aware of the fate of Moorcroft, who died in this area a year ago. Byrnes wrote that Moorcroft and Trebek were plastered over one of the walls at Balkh. Burns' team easily reached Amudarya from Balkh. He sent a letter to the British authorities in India about the navigability of the Amudarya. Burns also touched on the strategic potential of Amudarya in his diary and said: "The river is very convenient for fleet movement, it flows in the direction it was formed, there are no rocks and eddies." In addition, Burns also provided information about the deepest places of the river, its delta and the island.

After Bukhara, Burns had to go to Iran through Khiva and from there to Istanbul, or return back the way he came, or after Khiva to cross into Russian territory. He provided stronger security. He writes: "To prevent robbers from robbing me, I put on clothes worth one pound in total. When I was accepted, I deliberately bought the cheapest dress. I am in Bukhara dress and I have grown my hair and beard just like Persian poets. I eat food with my hand, not with a fork. I often sleep under a tree. If someone invites me to their home, I can speak Persian like my mother tongue and no one will notice that I am European. I even learned the prayers of Islam and I can perform them.

After all, when I entered the company (South India), I took an oath with my hand on my heart. Local people call me Sekundar (Iskander), the eastern name of Alexander.

On June 27, 1832, Burns joined a caravan and arrived at the gates of Bukhara. Burns, who knew Muslim and Eastern traditions, got off his horse and entered on foot in the Bukhara Arch. One of the tasks assigned to A. Burns, who was in Bukhara under the guise of an Armenian merchant, was to obtain permission from the government of Bukhara to open a trading house of the British East India Company here. Political interests were hidden behind the company's efforts to open a trading house in Bukhara. The activity of the trading house was to send the spies of the company to Central Asia and thereby subjugate the economic and then political dependence of the region to British interests.

He was greeted by a Bukhara bird. Kushbegi talked to Burns about his religious outlook and told him: "You are better than the Russians." Why do Christians eat pork? To the question about the taste of pork, Byrnes replied "just like sheep". Byrnes gave gifts to Kushbegi. The intimacy established with Kushbegi gives Burns the opportunity to walk freely in the city of Bukhara.

A. Burns uses various promises to successfully fulfill the tasks set before him, and when the time comes, "openly" sharing gold. He collects all kinds of economic, political and military information needed to subjugate the khanate to the British rule in Bukhara. In Bukhara, he collects various information about Central Asian trade, trade routes and centers, and the main goods exported and imported. He was especially interested in the industrial goods brought to Central Asia from Russia. He even received a list of Russian industrial goods brought to Bukhara markets. From these evidences, it is known that the British first of all studied the situation in those markets in order to completely squeeze Russia out of the Central Asian markets. Because, in order to compete with Russia in these markets, first of all, it was necessary to know the Russian goods coming here and their prices. A. Burns, in order to attract the merchants of Central Asia from Nizhegorod fair of Russia, decided the place of Deragazi Khan in the middle of the Indus river for the upcoming English fair. Thus, A. Burns conducted a very deep intelligence in Bukhara and in Central Asia in general, and provided the British government with the necessary information for the British to invade the innermost regions of Central Asia and carry out their plans to enslave the peoples of Central Asia. Burns toured Bukhara's buildings, hangings, slaves, and bazaars. He studied the history of the Emirate.

A. Byrnes, in his three-volume book "Travel to Bukhara..." for the first time in world historiography, covers the details of the death of Amir Husayn and says that the amir died as a result of poisoning from poison added to food by Hakim Koshbegi. Burns devotes a separate chapter to the military power of the Bukhara Emirate in his diaries. He said: "Amir established the strictest rules among Muslim countries. It regularly receives ambassadors from Turkey, China, Russia and Afghanistan. He strengthened his absolute capabilities by relying on mullahs and such priests. The Bukhara army is gathered from the regions, there is no strict discipline. It consists of a total of 20,000 horse and 4,000 infantries. There are also 41 pieces of artillery. In addition, there is also a police force named "Eljar". 20,000 troops will be brought from Balkh. Another 10,000 troops will be gathered from the regions south of Amudarya. In addition, there is a possibility to collect troops from the Turkmens. But this army obeys only its commander. The payment is paid by giving land to their commander and grain to the soldiers. They were mainly armed with swords. Uzbeks have very few firearms. Unlike Indians and Afghans, Uzbeks always wear knives in their sheaths. They are not afraid of enemies, but are very brave and courageous. But in the army, it is difficult. There is no artillery specialist. Balls are separated from their means of movement. In his diary, Burns also gave a table about the number of troops in each province. Burns also collected

information about Bukhara's diplomatic relations. He said that Bukhara has a bad relationship with the neighboring Khanates of Khiva and Kokand, that they are serious rivals. He noted that in the markets of Bukhara, mainly English and Russian goods compete among goods brought from Europe, Uzbek women are aware of English goods, but Russian goods are sold much cheaper than English goods due to their duty-free arrival, and because of this, Russians are the leaders in trade. Alexander Byrnes' comments about the Uzbek people are noteworthy here: "The Uzbeks are humble and sincere in their dealings. They did not hesitate to talk about everything, from their rulers and politics to the market situation, even though they did not know who I was." Kushbegi said that Amir could not meet him. When Byrnes was leaving, he told Kushbegi about his desire to go to Khiva Khanate, but Qushbegi told him that Khiva Khanate was too dangerous for foreigners and turned him away. As a result, Burns went to Iran through Marv and Astrobod. On January 18, 1833, he arrived in Bombay through the Persian Gulf, and on February 20, he arrived in Calcutta, and talked about his experiences. His travel diary, published in England in 1834, became famous and was published by the London and Paris Geographical Societies. After returning to India in 1835, he was sent as ambassador to Kabul in 1836. In 1839, he served as a regular political agent in Kabul. He was killed by local Afghans in 1841.

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