

# The Troops of the Kokand Khanate and the Beginning of the Russian Conquest

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## Abstract

*This article is about the state of the troops of the Kokan Khanate and the Russian conquest*

**Key words:** *central asia, ferghana valley, reformer, kokan khanate, militia, sharia, army, conquest*

## Introduction

As you know, by the time the Russian conquest of Central Asia began, its territory was divided between three states — the Bukhara Emirate, the Kokand and Khiva khanates. The Emirate of Bukhara occupied the southern and southeastern parts of Central Asia - the territory of modern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, partly Turkmenistan. The Kokand Khanate was located on the lands of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, parts of Southern Kazakhstan and the modern Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China. The Khanate of Khiva occupied part of the territory of modern Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan[1].

In the XVI century, the territory of the Ferghana Valley formally remained under the rule of Bukhara, which constantly competed with the Khanate of Khiva. As the power of the emir of Bukhara weakened, caused by the protracted confrontation with Khiva, the bey of the city of Ahsy Ilik Sultan intensified in Ferghana. He established control over the Ferghana Valley and became the de facto independent ruler of the region. The descendants of Ilik Sultan continued to rule Fergana. The city of Kokand appeared on the site of the small villages of Kalvak, Aktepe, Eski Kurgan and Hokand. In 1709 Shahrukh Bai II united the Ferghana Valley under his rule and became the ruler of an independent state — the Kokand Khanate. As in the Bukhara and Khiva states, Uzbek tribes were in power in Kokand, while Uzbeks also made up the bulk of the khanate's population[5,45]. Besides

Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, and Uighurs lived in the Kokand Khanate. As for the armed forces of the Kokand Khanate, there was no regular army in the state until the beginning of the XIX century[2,63]. In the event of the outbreak of hostilities, the Kokand Khan assembled tribal militias, which were a "disorderly horde" devoid of strict military discipline and formal hierarchy. Such a militia was an extremely unreliable army, not only because of the lack of advanced military training and weak weapons, but also because the mood in it was determined by the beks of the tribes, who did not always agree with the position of the khan.

## **LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHOD**

Alimkhan ((1774-1809)), who ruled the Kokand Khanate in 1798-1809, acted as a reformer of the Kokand army. The young Alimkhan, who came from the Uzbek Ming dynasty that ruled in Kokand, began decisive transformations in the state. In particular, Alimkhan annexed the valleys of the Chirchik and Akhangaran rivers, the entire Tashkent khanate, as well as the cities of Shymkent, Turkestan and Sairam to the Kokand Khanate. But in the context of this article, attention should be paid to another important merit of Alimkhan for the Kokand Khanate — the creation of regular armed forces. If earlier Kokand, like Bukhara and Khiva, did not have a regular army, then Alimkhan, seeking to limit the power of the tribal beks and increase the combat capability of the Kokand army, began to create a regular army, for which mountain Tajiks were recruited. Alimkhan believed that Tajik sarbases would be more reliable warriors than the tribal militia of Uzbek tribes, which was heavily dependent on the positions of their beks. Relying on the Tajik sarbases, Alimkhan carried out his conquests, entering the history of the Kokand Khanate as one of its most significant rulers. In addition to the Tajik foot sarbases, the Kokand Khan was subordinate to the mounted Kyrgyz and Uzbek tribal militias, as well as police (kurbashi), who were subordinate to the beks and hakims — the rulers of the administrative-territorial units of the khanate[4,24]. Tashkent was ruled by beklar begi - "bek bekov", who was subordinate to the Kurbashi and Mukhtasib police officers, overseers of compliance with Sharia law. The armament of the Kokand army was weak. Suffice it to say that in 1865, during the capture of Tashkent, two thousand sarbaz were dressed in armor and armor. Most of the Kokand sarbases and horsemen of the tribal militias were armed with edged weapons, primarily sabers, pikes and spears, bows and arrows. Firearms were outdated and represented mainly by matchlock rifles [3,129].

During the Tashkent campaign, Alimkhan was killed by the men of his younger brother Umar Khan (1787-1822). Umar Khan, who established himself on the throne of Kokand, became famous as a patron of culture and science. During the reign of Umar Khan, the Kokand Khanate maintained diplomatic relations with the Russian Empire, the Emirate of Bukhara, the Khanate of Khiva and the Ottoman Empire. In the following decades, the situation in the Kokand Khanate was characterized by a constant internecine struggle for power. The main opposing sides were the settled Sarts and nomadic Kipchaks. Each side, having won a temporary victory, brutally dealt with the defeated. Naturally, the socio-economic and political situation of the Kokand Khanate suffered greatly from civil strife. The situation was aggravated by constant conflicts with the Russian Empire. As you know, the Kokand Khanate claimed power in the Kazakh steppes, but the Kyrgyz and Kazakh tribes preferred to become subjects of the Russian Empire, which contributed to an even greater aggravation of bilateral relations. In the middle of the XIX century, at the request of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz clans who became Russian citizens, the Russian Empire began military campaigns on the territory of the Kokand Khanate in order to weaken the Kokand positions and destroy fortresses that threatened the Kazakh steppes. By

1865, Russian troops captured Tashkent, after which the Turkestan region was formed with a Russian military governor at its head.

In 1868, the Khan of Kokand Khudoyar was forced to sign a commercial agreement proposed to him by Adjutant General Kaufman, which gave the right of free stay and travel to both Russians in the territory of the Kokand Khanate and Kokand residents in the territory of the Russian Empire. The treaty actually established the dependence of the Kokand Khanate on the Russian Empire, which could not please the Kokand elite. Meanwhile, the socio-economic situation in the Kokand Khanate itself has seriously deteriorated. Under Khudoyar Khan, new taxes were imposed on residents who were already suffering from Khan's oppression. Among the new taxes there were even taxes on reeds, on steppe thorns, on leeches. The Khan did not even seek to maintain his own army — the sarbaz were not paid salaries, which encouraged them to look for food on their own, that is, in fact, to engage in robberies and robberies. As historians note, "Khudoyar Khan not only did not moderate the cruelty in his administration, but, on the contrary, took advantage of purely oriental cunning, his new position as a friendly neighbor of the Russians for his despotic purposes. The powerful patronage of the Russians served him as a guard against the constant claims of Bukhara, on the one hand, and on the other as one of the means of intimidating his recalcitrant subjects, especially the Kyrgyz." [5,44]

## **DISCUSSION**

Khudoyar's policy turned even his closest associates, led by Crown Prince Nasruddin, against the khan. The four thousandth army sent by the khan to pacify the Kyrgyz tribes went over to the side of the rebels. On July 22, 1874, the rebels besieged Kokand, and Khan Khudoyar, who was accompanied by Russian envoys, including General Mikhail Skobelev, fled to the territory of the Russian Empire — to Tashkent, which was already under Russian rule at that time. The khan's throne in Kokand was occupied by Nasrudin, who condoned the anti-Russian policy of the Kokand aristocracy and clergy. A real anti-Russian hysteria began in the Kokand Khanate, accompanied by pogroms of postal stations. On August 8, 1875, the 10,000-strong Kokand army approached Khojent, which was part of the Russian Empire. Gradually, the number of Kokand residents gathered at Khojent increased to 50 thousand. Due to the fact that the khan declared gazavat — "holy war", crowds of fanatically minded residents of the Kokand Khanate, armed with anything, rushed to Khojent. On August 22, a general battle took place, in which the Kokand people lost fifteen hundred people killed, while only six soldiers died on the Russian side. Fifty thousand Kokand troops, commanded by Abdurrahman Avtobachi, fled. On August 26, Russian troops under the command of General Kaufman approached Kokand. Realizing the hopelessness of his situation, Khan Nasruddin rode out to meet the Russian troops with a request for surrender. On September 23, General Kaufman and Khan Nasreddin signed a peace treaty, according to which the Kokand Khanate refused to pursue an independent foreign policy and conclude treaties with any state other than the Russian Empire.

## **RESULTS**

However, the leader of the anti-Russian resistance, Abdurrahman Avtobachi, did not recognize the agreement concluded by Khan and continued fighting. His troops retreated to Andijan, and on September 25, the rebels proclaimed Kirghiz Pulat-bek as the new khan, whose candidacy was supported by the all-powerful Autobachi. Meanwhile, in January 1876, it was decided to liquidate the Kokand Khanate and annex it to Russia. The resistance of the rebels, led by Autobachi and Pulat bek, was gradually suppressed. Soon, Abdurrahman Avtobachi was arrested and sent to settle in Russia. As for Pulat bek, who is known for extreme cruelty towards

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