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Ottoman–Turkestan Relations Between the 16th and 20th Centuries in the Light of Archive Documents and Influence of the Caliphate

Abstract

The Ottoman Empire became a major player in the Islamic world, particularly after gaining control of Istanbul in 1453. With the transfer of the Caliphate to the Ottomans in 1517, the Ottomans added the role of religious leadership to their political power. Turkestan, on the other hand, is a region that has been ruled by various Turkic Khanates and is notable for its strong Islamic culture. This region was never directly under Ottoman political rule in history. Nevertheless, Ottoman-Turkestan relations developed around the axes of religion and culture. This study aims to examine the religious, political, and cultural dimensions of the relations established between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkestan Khanates between the 16th and 20th centuries and to determine the influence of the Caliphate during the period in question. Within the scope of this study, the archival documents published by the General Directorate of State Archives of the Republic of Turkey in 2004 were scanned, and the correspondence between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkestan Khanates was identified. Based on these documents, an attempt has been made to reveal the political, economic, religious, and cultural relations between the Ottoman Empire and Turkestan and the influence of the Caliphate in this context.

Keywords: *Ottoman Empire, Turkestan, archival documents, international relations, Caliphate*

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XVI–XX əsrlər arasında Osmanlı–Türküstan münasibətləri: Arxiv sənədləri əsasında və xilafətin təsiri

Xülasə

Osmanlı İmperiyası, xüsusilə 1453-cü ildə İstanbulun fəthindən sonra İslam dünyasında mühüm gücə çevrilmişdir. 1517-ci ildə xilafətin Osmanlılara keçməsi ilə Osmanlılar siyasi hakimiyyətlərinə dini liderlik funksiyasını da əlavə etmişlər. Digər tərəfdən, Türküstan müxtəlif türk xanlıqları tərəfindən idarə olunmuş və güclü İslam mədəniyyəti ilə seçilən bir regiondur. Bu bölgə tarix boyu heç vaxt birbaşa Osmanlı siyasi hakimiyyəti altında olmamışdır. Buna baxmayaraq, Osmanlı–Türküstan münasibətləri əsasən dini və mədəni müstəvidə inkişaf etmişdir.

Bu tədqiqatın məqsədi XVI–XX əsrlər arasında Osmanlı İmperiyası ilə Türkünstan xanlıqları arasında qurulan münasibətlərin dini, siyasi və mədəni aspektlərini araşdırmaq və həmin dövrdə xilafətin təsirini müəyyən etməkdir. Tədqiqat çərçivəsində Türkiyə Respublikası Dövlət Arxivləri Baş İdarəsi tərəfindən 2004-cü ildə nəşr olunmuş arxiv sənədləri araşdırılmış və Osmanlı İmperiyası ilə Türkünstan xanlıqları arasında aparılmış yazışmalar müəyyən edilmişdir. Bu sənədlər əsasında Osmanlı İmperiyası ilə Türkünstan arasındakı siyasi, iqtisadi, dini və mədəni əlaqələr, eləcə də bu kontekstdə xilafətin təsiri üzə çıxarılmışa çalışılmışdır.

Açar sözlər: Osmanlı İmperiyası, Türkünstan, arxiv sənədləri, beynəlxalq münasibətlər, xilafət

Introduction

Relations between the Ottoman Empire and the states of Central Asia have deep historical roots at both the political and cultural levels. Although these relations remained limited due to geographical distance, a centuries-long sphere of interaction developed between Anatolia and Turkestan thanks to shared ethnic origins, religious affiliation, and cultural heritage. Official diplomatic ties between the Ottoman Empire and Turkestan trace their origins to the 16th century, initiated by the strategic alignment of the Ottomans and Muhammad Shaybani Khanate against Safavid hegemony. In the aftermath of the Battle of Chaldiran, Sultan Selim I formally notified his ally of the victory over the Safavids via an imperial correspondence dispatched in 1516 (Karabulut, 2021, p. 1835; Saray, 2017, p. 5). The region known as Turkestan has historically stood out as one of the spiritual centers of the Turkic-Islamic world, exerting particular influence in the fields of Sufism, science, and politics. The Ottoman Empire, meanwhile, represented the political center within the same world, becoming a focal point in the Islamic world from the 16th century onwards thanks to the caliphate it held.

From the 16th century onwards, although direct political relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Khanates of Turkestan remained limited, cultural and religious ties gradually increased. The Safavid threat, Russia's expansionist policies in Central Asia, and Chinese pressure directed the Khanates of Turkestan towards the Ottoman Empire, the center of the Caliphate; this orientation brought with it both religious allegiance and the search for political support. Although the Ottomans could not always respond to this interest and demand in practice, they maintained this interaction through religious unity and cultural ties. In particular, it is evident that the Ottomans made significant efforts to ensure that pilgrims from Turkestan could perform their religious duties and return safely to their homelands (Sarinay, 2010, p. 2).

Based on historical sources and correspondence, it is evident that relations between the Ottoman and Uzbek Khanates began during the reign of Bayezid II, became institutionalized during the reign of Selim I, and reached their peak during the reign of Sultan Suleiman (the Magnificent) (Ülker, 2019, p. 3977). In the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire, as a great empire competing with the Safavids in the east, assumed the role of protector of the Sunni Islamic world. During this period, the Ottoman Empire's interest in Turkestan was more religious and symbolic than direct political or military intervention. Between 1864 and 1875, with the incorporation of the Khanates of Bukhara, Khiva, and Khokand into Russian rule, political relations between the Ottoman Empire and Turkestan diminished further; however, relations continued in the social and cultural context (Budak, 2024, p. 144).

Especially through diplomatic contacts conducted via correspondence and gifts sent between the Ottoman Empire and the Khanates of Bukhara and Khokand, Ottoman sultans acted with a mission to protect and unite the Muslim Khanates in Turkestan in their capacity as caliphs. And from time to time sent “hil'at (honorary caftans)” and valuable gifts to show their spiritual protection of these Khanates. During this period, the Khanates requested weapons and military assistance from the Ottomans, as well as raw materials for the manufacture of cannons, rifles, gunpowder, and bullets, and the craftsmen to process them (Sarinay, 2010, p. 19). From the 16th century onwards, the title of caliph borne by the Ottoman sultans was generally recognized by the Turkestan Khanates. Although this recognition did not entail political dependence, symbolic acts such as having sermons read in the name of the caliph in Istanbul and mentioning the caliph's name in prayers were frequently observed as a means of demonstrating religious allegiance.

2. Purpose, Scope, and Methodology of the Study

This study aims to identify and interpret the religious, political, social, and economic relations established between Anatolia and Turkestan based on correspondence between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkestan Khanates between the 16th and 20th centuries. To this end, correspondence in archival documents held by the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives was examined. Within the scope of the study, 30 separate archival documents covering the diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkestan Khanates were translated and classified according to their subject matter. The examined documents show that, despite geographical distance and pressure from the great powers of the time, such as Russia and China, Ottoman-Turkestan relations continued in the religious, political, social, and economic spheres.

3. Correspondence Between the Ottoman Empire and the Khanates of Turkestan

3.1. Correspondence on Religious Matters

In an archival document dated 1573 AD (Hijri: Zilhicce 980) contains a document stating that the Semerkand scholar Mevlana Muslihuddin Taşkendî and Hafız Hüseyin stopped in Istanbul after their pilgrimage; the Ottoman Sultan presented Molla Taşkendî with a document ensuring the safety of his journey and that of his companion and their livestock so that they could return to their homeland without incident. The content of the document is as follows:

“Südde-i sa‘âdetimden Hân hazretlerine varınca yol üzerinde vâkı‘ olan kâdîlara hüküm ki müşârun-ileyh her kangınızın taht-ı hükûmetine dâhil olursa kendülere ve esbâb u davarlarına ve hem-râhı olan Hâfiz Hüseyinzâde mecdühûya yolda ve izde menâzil ü merâhilde ve ma‘berlerde olan vesâyir kimesnelere dahl ü ta‘arruz itdürmeyüp mahûf u muhâtara olan derbendlerden ta‘zîm ve tekrîmle geçürüp tevkîr u ihtirâmında sa‘y ü ihtimâm eylesiz.” (BOA, 2004, p. 3)

This document demonstrates that the Ottoman Empire maintained relations with the Turks of Turkestan, particularly with the scholarly circles around Samarkand and Tashkent, throughout the 16th century. Within the Islamic world, religious mobility was primarily facilitated through the movement of scholars and pilgrims. The Ottoman Empire, in particular, served as a preeminent center for the transmission and dissemination of Islamic knowledge. Consequently, Istanbul emerged as one of the most significant destinations on the itinerary of pilgrims departing from Turkestan (Ullah, 2025, p. 403). The cities of Bukhara and Samarkand functioned as the gateways for the Turkestan pilgrimage route to Mecca. Entrenched religious traditions enhanced the importance of these urban centers, making them indispensable stops for pilgrims. Concurrently, Tatar commercial activities in Khiva, Samarkand, and Bukhara strengthened inter-Turkic relations across the region. The transmission of pilgrimage experiences from Tatars to Kazakhs in these centers resulted in a significant rise in Kazakh Hajj participation during the 19th century (Osanova & Shorayev, 2025, pp. 353-354).

The privileges granted to Turkestan scholars visiting Istanbul on their return from the Hajj also reveal the Ottoman Empire's leadership in the Islamic world and the sphere of influence of the caliphate. The security of the roads, the protection of pilgrims, and the honors bestowed upon scholars are a fine example of Ottoman diplomatic courtesy and policy. This document also serves as a source that documents the functioning of Ottoman provincial administration, such as road safety, the organization of border posts, and the responsibility of judges for public order (Aköz & Amandyqqyzy, 2025, pp. 153-154). Furthermore, considering the period in which the aforementioned letter was composed, the profound influence of religion across various regions and states becomes explicitly evident. The impact of this religious presence on social life manifested differently depending on the locale: while the Naqshbandi order was predominant in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, a form of Sufism shaped by the Yasawi tradition prevailed in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. In these regions, where Islam had become deeply rooted, archaic Shamanic rituals and Tengrist beliefs persisted to a certain extent not as primary drivers of religious practice, but as enduring cultural fragments. Amidst this vibrant mysticism and Sufi theology, the Hanafî school remained the most dominant legal tradition. Similarly, while the Hanafî school was also predominant in the Ottoman Empire, a significant Shafi'i population existed in certain regions. Thus, the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Turkestan

represent a nuanced and multifaceted issue that necessitates an analytical approach encompassing both macro and micro perspectives (from part to whole and whole to part). Building upon the regional dynamics identified by Bekenova et al., it can be argued that the Ottoman Empire served as the strategic and spiritual 'cornerstone' of this vast geography. While the region was bound by a shared creed, the Empire functioned as a unifying force that facilitated the coexistence of diverse legal schools and social manifestations, creating a cohesive mosaic where distinct cultural identities converged into a multifaceted whole (2025, pp. 4-7).

The document dated 1784 (Hijri: 1198) below is an imperial decree issued by Sultan Abdulhamid I to his vizier. The vizier submitted a request to fulfill the will of Muhammad Zakir's deceased father, who had come to Istanbul for the Hajj, to hang a chandelier made of diamonds, rubies, and emeralds in the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad. Sultan Abdulhamid I responded with the following letter:

“Benüm vezîrüm!.. Ravza-i Mutahhara'ya olan hedâyâsını gönderdim deyü yazmışsınız, zuhûr itmedi, taraf-ı hümayûnuma arz olunan defteri mücebince vusûl sūd, gayri iktizâsınca ne güne mu'âmele iktizâ ider ise öylece idesin. Dârü's-sa'âde agası koynunda sehv etmiş, henüz gördüm, Hazînedâr agadan su'âl etdim, Kisve-i Sa'âdet'in üzerine ta'lîkı münâsibdir deyü haber verdiğinden bildirdim, yine siz bilürsüz.” (BOA, p. 8)

This document is an official palace report concerning the reception of a representative of a delegation from Bukhara to the Ottoman Palace, the acceptance of the gifts presented, and the protocol procedures. It is also a diplomatic situation assessment report. Furthermore, it is an important diplomatic document demonstrating the legitimacy and leadership of the Ottoman Empire in the Islamic world. Despite the geographical distance of the Khanate of Bukhara, its recognition of the Ottoman Empire's spiritual authority and its sending of gifts and petitions to the palace, along with the Ottoman Empire's controlled and cautious handling of this matter, demonstrate the Ottoman Empire's weight and prestige in international relations during this period.

The 1820 (Hijri: 1235) archival document is an imperial decree concerning the safe return of the Bukhara ambassador to his homeland, the preparation of religious books, and the dispatch of calligraphic works requested to be placed in the Bahaüddin-i Nakşibend Câmî'i Şerif in Bukhara. The document issued by Sultan Mahmud II to his vizier contains an order to fulfill the requests made in this regard:

“Benüm Vezîrüm!.. Takrîrin me'âli ma'lûm-ı hümayûnum olmuştur. Nâmenin müsveddesi güzeldir. Bu vechile tebyîz olunup mevâdd-ı sâ'irenin cümlesi takrîrin mücebince tanzîm olunsun. Sefîr-i mûmâ-ileyhin istid'â eylediği âsâr-ı kalemimizden birkaç kıt'a elvâh tarafına irsâl iderim. Mûmâ-ileyhe teslîm ve i'tâ eyleyesin.” (BOA, p. 19)

The list of books requested by the Bukhara Khanate is contained in the following archival document. A total of thirty-five book titles are listed, all of which are religious in content.

The historical document, dated 1827 AD (Hijri: 1242), is a palace correspondence regarding scientific and religious cooperation between the Ottoman Empire and the Khanate of Bukhara. The process of procuring the tafsir and fiqh books requested by the ruler of Bukhara from the Ottoman Sultan is recorded in detail. The document is a letter of request and order. The content of the document includes the gifting of religious books to the ruler of Bukhara. The names of these books are specified. Sultan Mahmud II requested that the Enderun Library be consulted for books that could not be found and that the deficiencies be remedied. He also ordered that the cost of the books be paid by the treasurer:

“Benüm Vezîrüm!.. Efendi dâ'imizin tarafına olan tezkiresi ve kütüb defteri manzûr-ı hümayûnum olmuştur. İstirâ olunan kitâbların akçasını defterdârdan alup müşârun-ileyhe teslîm eyleyesin. Defter-i mezkûr nezd-i şâhânemde tevkîf olunmuştur. Bulunmayan kitâbları Enderûn-ı Hümayûnum Kütübhanesinde taharri etdirdeyim. Bulunur ise tarafına gönderirim.” (BOA, p. 25)

This archival document is an important example reflecting the Ottoman Empire's scientific centrality in the Islamic world and its warm and protective relationship with an Islamic city such as Bukhara. The document demonstrates that the Ottomans reinforced their influence in the region not only politically but also religiously and culturally. It is also valuable in that it shows the extent to

which bureaucracy and protocol were decisive and heavily involved even in religious and cultural activities.

Finally, it is essential to emphasize that pilgrims, who played a significant role in Ottoman-Turkestan relations, facilitated the construction of lodges (*tekkes*) in Istanbul as a result of their regular visits. These lodges, which enabled cultural transfer in terms of architecture, maintained active communication between the pilgrims or the elite and the Palace due to their internal structure, while also serving as a frequent destination for visitors and students from Turkestan. The most renowned of these lodges, built in Anatolia and primarily in Istanbul, is the Uzbeks' Lodge (*Özbekler Tekkesi*) located in Üsküdar. Established in the 18th century during the reign of Mahmud I (1752–1753), the lodge was built by the Governor of Maras, Abdullah Pasha, for the dervishes of the Naqshbandi order coming to Istanbul from Central Asia. Notably, the sheikhs of this lodge were consistently of Turkestan origin (Avşar, 2014, p. 162).

3.2. Correspondence on Political Matters

The archival document dated 1573 (Hijri: Zilkade 980) is a state letter sent by Selim II to Abdullah Khan, the ruler of the Khanate of Bukhara. It addresses themes such as the military successes of the Ottoman Empire, Islamic unity, and the welfare of the people. Despite the events of the Zigetvar Campaign and the death of Sultan Suleiman I, the continuity of the state is expressed, emphasizing that even if the sultan dies, the state and the army continue on their path with power. The protection of pilgrimage routes, the safety of merchants and the people, and military victories against Austria are among the main topics of the text. Accompanied by religious references and prayers, the greatness of the Ottoman Empire and the protection of Islam are brought to the fore. Another topic covered in the text is Venice's betrayal and the Cyprus issue. The letter states that Venice appeared to be obedient but secretly helped the Austrian King with soldiers and goods, and in addition, the Ottomans discovered that they were harming merchants and pilgrims on the pilgrimage route from the sea. Due to Venice's failure to abide by the treaty, the Ottomans decided to conquer the island of Cyprus. Cannons and war equipment were prepared, and orders were given for the expedition. The Ottoman army decisively captured the island of Cyprus and other castles, and the resisting population was either killed or taken prisoner. Those who surrendered were taken under Islamic protection. As a result of this event, Cyprus and its surroundings were Islamized, integrated into the Ottoman administrative structure, and the religious freedoms of the people were restricted, establishing the supremacy of Islam. The Ottomans declared that they would respond with justice and force to the betrayals of Venice and its enemies, ensuring the supremacy of Islam. The Ottomans would consolidate Islamic order in the conquered lands, protect the people from corrupt beliefs and enemy influence, and establish order, unity, and prosperity in society. In addition, it was stated that all necessary measures would be taken to ensure the longevity of the established order and prevent the disruption of the Ottoman system:

“... âheng ve âheng-i bî-direnge mübâşeret idüp sedd-i sedîd-i tig u teber ve hadd-i hadîd-i güzr ü şeşper ile ebvâb-ı âmed-südleri sed olunacak kimi tu ‘me-i şîr-i şemşîr-i zafer-te’ sîr ve ehl ü iyâlleri giriftâr u esîr olup ve kimi habl-i metîn-i istîmâna ve urve-i vüskâ-i afv u ihsâna temessükü takdîm ve kılâ ‘ı nevvâb-ı kâm-yâbımıza teslîm eyleyüp bi-inâyetillâhi'l-Meliki'l-Mu ‘în cezîre-i mezbûre ve nice kılâ ‘ u memâlik dahı musahhar-ı nigîn-i pür-temkînimiz olup ibtidâ ‘-i zuhûr-ı dînden ilâ-hâze'l-hîn ma‘âbid-i evsân olan kenâyis-i rehâbinini mesâcid-i ehl-i îmân ve medâris-i ilm-i dîn kılınup beglerbegi ve sancakbegleri nasb u ta ‘yîn olunup ale'l- vechi'l-kâmil havza-i hükümetimize dâhil olmuşdur. El-hâletü hâzihî bu sâl-i ferhunde-fâlde sanâdîd-i melâ ‘în-i mezbûrünün istîsâli için sefâyin-i garâyim-i âliye-i şâhânemiz âmâde ve bâdbân-ı himmet-vâlâ-yı pâdişâhânemiz küşâde ve hidâyet-i beşâret-âyet-i hazret-i mürsilü'r-riyâhî pîsvâ ve tevessül-i mu ‘cizât-ı kesîretü'l-berekât-ı mürsil-i fettâhî reh-nümâ kılup evvel-i bahâr-ı huçeste-âsârda azîm donanma-yı hümayûn-ı zafer-makrûn tedârük ü ihzâr olunmagın unvân-ı nâmede mezkûr olan mü ‘emmel ü emânînin mukaddemât-ı husûlü; “el-umûru merhûnetün bi-evkâtihâ” fehvâsınca muktezîyât-ı kazâ ve takdîr-i bî-tagyîre tefvîz olundu. Gerekdir ki, serâ-perde-i irâdât-ı zi'l-mülki ve'l-melekûtdan suver-i murâdât-ı âlem-i nâsût hüveydâ olunca dâyima nihâd-ı celâlet-âyetinizde muzmer olan celâdet ü sehâmetiniz

muktezâsınca kenef-i himâyetinizde mahmî olan re'âyâyı ri'âyet ve âmmе-i ahâlî-i İslâmı mazarrat-ı akâyid-i fâside vü ilhâd ve fesâd-ı a'dâyı liyâmdan himâyet eyleyüp inân-ı ta'allukât-ı zamâ'ir-i kudsî-serâ'ir ve zimâm-ı teveccühât-ı havâtır-ı feyz-me'seri hullân u ahibbâyla erkân-ı mersûsu'l-bünyân-ı muhâlesat u vidâd ve bünyân-ı kavîyyü'l-erkân-ı muvâlefet ü ittihâd feyz-ı fazl-ı Sübhânî ve avn ü gavs-i Yezdânî birriyle mümevhed ü ber-karâr olmak savbına ma'tûf kılına ki, bu kâ'ide-i marziyye müstahkem ü üstivâr olup ferâğ-ı bâl-i cemâhîr-i ulemâ ve sulehâ ve refâhiyyet-i hâl-i âmmе-i fukarâ ve zu'afâ bir nev'ile nizâm u intizâm ve sebât ü istihkâm üzre ola ki, min-ba'd anun kavâ'id ü zavâbitına ve ma'âkîd ü ravâbitına inkitâ' u inkırâz-ı devrâna degin ihtimâl-i hâle ü fütûr ve sevâ'ib-i naks u kusûr yol bulmaya.” (BOA, pp. 6-7)

The document cited above briefly states that the safety of those who have completed the pilgrimage and are returning to their homelands will be ensured on their journey home, and that the Venetians, who pose a threat to Muslim merchants and engage in piracy, have been stopped in the Mediterranean and Cyprus has been conquered, as reported to the Khan of Bukhara. These statements emphasize the Ottoman Empire's role as protector of the Islamic world and aim to strengthen the friendship between the Ottomans and the Khanate of Bukhara.

The archival document, dated May 5, 1573 (Hijri: 3 Muharrem 981), contains the decree given to the Bey of Kaffa regarding sending a message to the Tatar beys in the Azak region to ensure the safety of the route for the return journey of the Bukhara ambassador and his entourage visiting the Ottoman Sultan. The translation of the document is provided below.

“Keşe begine hüküm ki: Hâlâ Buhara cânibinden Âsîtâne-i sa'âdet-âsiyâneme gelen ilçinin mesâlihi itmâma irişüp girü ol cânibe teveccüh ü azîmete isticâze eylemegin hüsn-i icâzet-i âlî-nehmetime mukârin olup buyurdum ki: Vusûl buldukda Azak cânib[ler]inde olan ümerâdan Yahsı Sâ'at Mirzâ ve İslâm Mirzâ ve Kâdî Mirzâ'ya haber ve âdem gönderüp tenbîh eylesin ki, müşârun-ileyhi ve âdemlerini Âdil suyundan sühûlet ile ubûr itirmek bâbında geregi gibi mu'âvenet ve muzâheret eyleyüp kendüye ve âdemlerine ve esbâb u davarlarına kimesneyi dahl ü ta'arruz itdirmeyüp emîn ve sâlim ulaştırup sen dahî lâzım olan havâyiclerin akçalarıyla tedârük itdüresin.” (BOA, p. 8)

This brief decree reflects the Ottoman Empire's sphere of influence in trade and diplomacy in the northern Black Sea region and its connections with Turkestan. Local lords and commanders were warned to ensure the safety of the Bukhara ambassador during his arrival in Istanbul and his return journey near Azak. This document is a diplomatic correspondence demonstrating the Ottoman Empire's authority in Crimea, Azak, and the northern Black Sea region. Local beys were requested to refrain from actions such as attacks and robberies that would threaten the safety of the ambassador and his delegation, and they were also obliged to provide protection and assistance. This document guaranteed the safety of the ambassador's property, men, and animals, and the Bey of Kefe was tasked with providing for their needs. Such orders demonstrate the great importance the Ottomans attached to the principle of “diplomatic immunity” in their international relations. Furthermore, the Ottomans' establishment of relations with distant Islamic countries such as Bukhara is noteworthy in terms of strengthening their role as the leader of the Islamic world.

Another example of the strong continuation of relations between the Ottoman Empire and Turkestan is the fact that the Khans in the region sought the opinion of the Caliphate in the Ottoman Empire regarding their disputes. The document dated 1702 (Hijri: 1113) is an imperial decree sent from the Uzbek Khans to the Khan of Balkh, Sayyid Muhammad Mukim Khan. This document was written to resolve the dispute between Sayyid Muhammad Mukim Khan and his uncle, Sayyid Ubeydullah Khan. The letter sent from the imperial court addressed to Sayyid Muhammad Mukim Khan emphasized that the hostility and animosity between him and Sayyid Abdullah Khan, who ruled in Bukhara, must be ended immediately, otherwise enemies would take advantage of the situation. It also states that this situation is contrary to Allah's will. Although it was Mukim Khan's uncle, Sayyid Abdullah Khan, who initiated the hostility, Mukim Khan is advised to show the necessary understanding and leniency, supported by verses and hadiths. It is stated that action should be taken in accordance with verses 59 and 60 of Surah Hashr (O Lord, leave no rancor in our hearts toward

those who believe!). The fact that the Ottoman Sultan was consulted on this matter, despite being quite distant from the geography of Turkestan, is a sign of loyalty to the caliphate held by the Ottoman Empire.

“...Ancak nâme-i muhâlasat-iktirânınızda rakam-zede-i kilik-i beyân kılındığı üzre dârü'l-mufâhare-i Buhara'da fermân-fermâ olan ammîiniz Seyyid Abdullâh Hân ile beyninizde peydâ olan adâvet ü bagdâ semâtet-i a'dâ ve tehvîn-i rûkn-i rekîn-i şerî'at-i garrâya mü'eddî bir emr-i nâ-savâb ve muhâlif-i rızâ-yı Cenâb-ı Rabbü'l-erbâb olup bu hilâfın yine i'tilâfa tahvîli ve bu sikâkın yine hüsn-i vifâka ircâ' ve tebdîli ehemmi mehâmm-ı dîniyye ve akvem-i merâm-ı dünyevîyyeden idüğü zâhir olmagla ibtidâ tarîk-ı tecâvüze i'tidâ ammîiniz cânibinden vâkı' olmuş ise de meslûk-i mülûk-i sûtûde-sülûk olan mu'âmele-i bi'l-mücâmele kâ'idesi tarafınızdan mürâ'ât ve zuhûr eden münâfesâta musâfât ile mükâfât olunup el-mü'minüne ke'l-bünyâni yesüddü ba'zuhum ba'zan magzâsı üzre beyninizde bünyân-ı vifâkı kuvvet-i ittifâk ile sedd ve râh-ı hilâf-ı sikâkı min-küllil-vücûh sedd idüp nasîhat-i mülûkânemiz ile ihtidâ velâ tec'al fî kulûbinâ gillen li'llezîne âmenû fehvâ-yı serîfine iktifâya bezl-i cidd-i evfâ eylesesiz...” (BOA, p. 72)

The archival document dated July 23, 1789 (Hijri: 23 Shawwal 1203) states that if the Ottoman Empire were at war with Russia, the Khan of Bukhara, Muhammad Khan, would be ready to assist the Ottoman state with his Kazakh and Kyrgyz Tatars. A written order sent from the Ottoman Empire to the Khan of Bukhara states that the Ottomans are at war with Moscow and that fighting the infidels and jihad are obligatory for the entire Islamic community. Upon receiving the written order from the Ottomans, the Khan of Bukhara sent envoys to the Kyrgyz and Kazakh Tatars to explain the gravity of the situation. It was reported that due to the Russians' actions contrary to the agreement made with the Ottomans, the doors of war had been opened on land and sea, and the obligation of jihad had to be fulfilled. The text emphasized that all Muslims had to participate in this war and that this jihad was obligatory for every Muslim. It also stated that the entry of Muscovite merchants into the country had to be prevented and all their trade activities had to be stopped. All this information was reported to the Ottomans by the Bukhara ambassador, Muhammad Bedi Bey. Based on the information provided in the archival document, it is understood that the Ottoman Empire was able to use its influence in Turkestan in the military, commercial, and diplomatic spheres during the war with Russia. This situation demonstrates the extent to which relations between the Ottomans and Turkestan had developed during this period.

“...Buhara'dan ben çıkmazdan beş on gün mukaddem taraf-ı Devlet-i Aliyye'den hân-ı müşârun-ileyhe irsâl buyrulan nâme-i hümayûn vâsil olup mefhûmunda Moskov keferesinin münâfi-i uhûd ve surût vâkı' olan harekâtı takrîbiyle ber-müceb-i fetvâ-yı şerîfe berren ve bahren kefer-i mesfûre üzerine muhârebe kapuları açılıp icrâ-yı farîza-i gazâyâ kıyâm buyrulduğu mûnderic ve mastûr olduğundan derhâl hân-ı müişârun-ileyh nüfus-ı kesîreden ibâret olup taht-ı itâ'atında ve Moskov memleketiyle hem-hudûd olan Kırgız Tatarlarına mahsûs kâğıtlar ve Kazak hânlarına sefirler gönderüp Halîfetü'l-Müslimîn olan Âl-i Osmân Pâdişâhı hazretlerinin Moskov ile seferi var imiş. Küffâr ile muhârebe ve cihâd kâffe-i ehl-i İslâm üzerine farz olmuştur. İçimizde her ne kadar Moskovlu tüccârı var ise cümlesini tard ve def' ve fî mâ ba'd Moskovlunun her bâr ihtiyâclarına mebnî ol taraflardan istirâyâ mecbûr olduğu bârgîr ve koyun ve yapagı vesâir emti'a ve eşyâyı bey' itmeyesiz. Ve muâmele-i ticâreti külliyyen kat' idesiz. Ve Moskovlu memleketlerini her taraftan urup tâht u târâc ve emvâl ve eşyâların igtinâm ve nisâ ve sibyanların esîr iderek gereği gibi ahz-ı intikâm eylesesiz ve Devlet-i Aliyye-i dâimü'l-karârın Moskovlu ile hayırlı ve menfaatli musâlahası tahakkuk itmedikçe onlar ile husûmetden fâriğ olmayasız deyü gereği gibi tavsiye ve te'kid ile Moskovlu memleketleri üzerine zikr olunan Kırgız ve Kazak Tatarlarını sevk ve taslît eyledi. Kırgız ve Kazak tâifesi bî-nihâye olup cümlesi ehl-i İslâmdan ve Hânefiyyü'l-mezheb olmalarıyla muktezâ-yı salâbet-i diniyyeleri üzre hân-ı müşârun-ileyhin emr ü tenbîhi muktezâsınca bilâd-ı küffâra akın idüp bir taraftan memâlik-i a'dâyı tahrîb itmek üzredirler. Bunların egerçi hân-ı müşârun-ileyhe tebe'iyetleri derkârdır. Ancak kendülere muzırr ve icrâsı gayr-ı mümkün olan mâddede hâna itâ'at itmezler. Meselâ bu def'a vâkı' olan emrine imtisâl ile memleket-i a'dâyâ hücum ve mallarını igtinâm idiyorlar. Ba'de'l-musâlaha aldığınız emvâl ve üserâyı yine redd edeceksiz. Böyle kavlı olundu ve

musâlaha bunun üzerinedir denilse bir vechile müfîd olmayup aldıklarından hiç bir sey vermezler. Ve bu bâbda söz dinlemezler.” (BOA, 2004, p. 67)

Another archival document is dated April 7, 1800 (Hijri: 12 Zilkade 1214). This document is a petition requesting passports from the Ottoman Sultan so that Haji Nazar Muhammad, Haji Baba, Haji Kasim, Haji Artuk, Hoca Tahir, and Hoca Abdullah, who had left Bukhara and had been traveling for a long time, could return to their homeland:

“Devletlü inâyetlü merhametlü sultânım hazretleri sag olsun; arz-ı hâl-i dâ‘ileridir ki, bu kulları asıl Buhara'dan olup müddet-i vâfireden beru seyâhatte güzâr olup bu avânda altı nefer kimse beldemize teveccüh itmek murâd eyledikde yedimize bir bâsport [pasaport] kerem [ve] ihsân eyleyüp ve hayır-duâmıza mazhar olunmak bâbında emr u fermân devletlü inâyetlü semâhatlü sultânım hazretlerinindir.” (BOA, p. 10)

This document, dating from the early 19th century, demonstrates that during that period, border and identity control had acquired an institutional character within the Ottoman Empire's diplomacy and bureaucracy. It is noteworthy that the concept of a passport was used at that time in the modern sense as an international travel permit. The fact that those coming from Bukhara had to pray to the Sultan and ask for permission even when passing through Ottoman territories demonstrates that the Ottoman Empire maintained its legitimacy and status as a center of power in the Islamic world. The document also reflects the Ottoman Empire's sensitivity regarding the safety of Muslim merchants, pilgrims, and travelers.

The archival document dated February 14, 1816 (Hijri: 15 Rabi' al-Awwal 1231), which contains information about Turkestan, covers a different subject compared to the others. The Persian document written by Mir Haydar Khan, the ruler of Bukhara, to the Sultan was translated into Ottoman Turkish and presented to the imperial court. In this document, Mir Haydar Khan requests religious books from the Ottoman Sultan. In addition to this request, Haydar Khan asks the Sultan to grant him a government charter, i.e., special permission, to establish authority over the Khanates of Kazan and Khwarezm. He also requests information regarding reports of the Saudis' invasion of Mecca and Medina, the holy lands for Muslims:

“...Buhara Hâkimi tarafından olduğu ve ile'l-ân ol minvâl üzre olup fakat Kazgan ve Hârezm Eyâleti hükkâmı hiffet-i tab‘ ve hadâsetleri cihetiyle gâh itâ‘at ve gâh adem-i itâ‘at ile tarik-i müstakîmden udûl ve inhirâfları meşhûd olduğundan müşârun-ileyh Devlet-i Aliyye'nin mutî‘ ve fermân-ber bendegânından ma‘dûd buyurularak eyâlet-i mezbûrenin hükûmeti mensûruyla ser-efrâz kılınması ve mukaddemâ Su‘ûd-ı nâ-mes‘ûdun Haremeyn-i Muhteremeyn’e istîlâsı mesmû‘ları olarak bâdî-i hüzn ü melâlleri olmuş olduğundan itmînân-ı ehl-i İslâm zımnında Hicâz tarafının keyfiyyet ve ahvâli iş‘âr olunması beyânıyla haddi olmayarak Dîvân Begi Mîrzâ Muhammed Yûsuf ile takdîmine ictirâ eylediği iki cild Delâ‘il-i Şerîf ve bir mikdâr itr hediyyesinin nazar-ı iltifât-ı mülûkâne ile meşmûl buyurulması tazarru‘unda ve mîrzâ-yı mûmâ-ileyhin bir ân akdem i‘âde ve ircâ‘ı husûsuna müsâ‘ade-i seniyye erzân buyurulmasını Hâkim-i müşârun-ileyh Mîr Haydar Hân sâlifü‘z-zikr nâmesinde tahrîr ider.” (BOA, p. 14)

In the above document, the Khan of Bukhara demonstrated clear allegiance to the caliphate held by the Ottomans, thereby supporting the central role of the Ottomans in the Sunni Islamic world. Historically, the populations of Turkestan -particularly within the territories of modern-day Uzbekistan- strictly adhered to the Hanafî madhhab. This commitment was characterized by a rigorous stance toward other schools of law, whereby any legal ruling issued by an authority from a different madhhab was deemed invalid. Hence, the religious affinity toward the Ottoman State was rooted not only in the political prestige of the Caliphate but also in this shared jurisprudential identity (Garipova, 2026, p. 58). The request for Islamic sources and books is an effort to strengthen Bukhara's religious administration. His expectation from the Ottomans regarding the Hijaz reveals that the Ottomans are still seen as the most reliable political and religious authority in the Islamic world against the Saudi threat. The Khan behaved like a vassal of the Ottomans in the region, but at the same time demanded recognition of his local authority. This letter was a sign of prestige for the Ottomans, but it also showed that the Islamic world, from India to Bukhara to Khwarezm, expected

support from the Ottomans. The Ottomans, in turn, used such requests to maintain their religious legitimacy and protect their sphere of influence without direct military intervention.

The letter beginning with "To the most noble and honorable ruler of the world, the ruler of Bukhara, in response to the letter received from him, containing the answer and sent as a precious gift, some rare books were sent" (BOA, p. 14) dated April 27-May 6, 1818 (Hijri: Cemaziyelahir 1233), constitutes a response to the requests and information requests mentioned above. The document sent to the Governor of Bukhara, Mir Haydar Shah, contains information that the Hejaz, Mecca, and Medina have been liberated from the Saudi invasion and that some of the requested religious books have been sent. This archival document, which contains the response, does not include information on whether the government decree was given to the Governor of Bukhara.

The imperial decree, written during the reign of Ottoman Sultan Abdülmecid, is dated July 22, 1857 (Hijri: 30 Zilkade 1273). This archival document, which concerns the awarding of the Mecidiye Medal to Sheikh Fethullah of Bukhara for his bravery in the Battle of Silistra, is significant in that it shows that, in accordance with the call of the Caliphate, some Muslim Turks from Turkestan also fought in the Ottoman ranks in certain battles:

"Nişân-ı hümâyûn oldur ki: Saltanat-ı seniyyem hakkında ızhâr-ı gayret ve hamiyet ve sadâkat eden ve menâfi '-i Devlet-i Aliyye 'm için ibrâz-ı âsâr-ı hayr-hâhî ve istikâmet eyleyenlerin ta 'attufât-ı seniyye-i şâhâneme nâ 'iliyyeti şân-ı me 'âlî-üvvân-ı pâdişâhânem iktizâsından bulunduguna ve tarîk-ı dervîşândan Buharalı Şeyh Fethullâh -zîde kadrihû- 'nun Silistre Muhârebesi'nde meşhûd olan hüsn-i hüdmeti ve ibrâz eylediği mesâ 'î-i makkûlesi cihetiyle âtîfet-i seniyyeme kesb-i istihkâk eylediğine binâ 'en bu def 'a Mecîdiye nişân-ı hümâyûnumun beşinci rütbesinden bir küt 'ası kendüsine inâyet ve ihsân kılınmış olmağla işbu berât-ı mekârim-simât-ı şehriyârânem dahı tasdîr ve i 'tâ kılındı." (BOA, pp. 29-30)

The reward given to Sheikh Fethullah of Buhara for his service in the Battle of Silistra reflects the understanding of the period that military achievements and services should be recognized. Loyalty and service were deemed worthy of praise and were rewarded. In such texts, rewarding individuals loyal to the state is an important element in strengthening the empire's power and authority.

The document dated 1839 (Hijri 1254) is a diplomatic letter sent by the Khan of Kokand to the Ottoman Empire and contains the political and military demands conveyed by the Khanate of Kokand to the Ottoman State. Considering its content, this document is significant in that it demonstrates the close relations between Turkestan and the Ottoman Empire. The beginning of the letter assesses the general situation in Turkestan. It states that the Khan of Hokand had no problems in his relations with either China or the Khanate of Bukhara, but that his relations with Russia were not good. The letter states that Russia has drawn some nomadic Khans, particularly among the Kipchaks, to its side, while some continue to pay taxes to the Khanate of Kokand. Some Khans in the region, however, act independently without allegiance to any side. The article also states that the Kipchak population in the region was around eight million, but only a portion of them belonged to the Khanate of Hokand, while another portion belonged to Russia. It is also noted that due to Russia's current policy, they were in conflict with the Khanate of Kokand from time to time. The Khan of Kokand requested military assistance from the Ottoman Empire in order to maintain the military strength of the Khanate. The Khan of Kokand requested infantry, cavalry, and artillery instructors, and if the requested instructors were not sent, he requested that educational books on these subjects be sent. The reason given for this is that the Hokand Khanate's army previously consisted only of cavalry, and the infantry unit was newly established. It is also stated that training in the newly established infantry unit was provided according to the British system. Furthermore, it was requested that military ranks be granted by the Ottoman Empire to some of the military officials in the Khanate and that this be announced to the other Khans in Fergana, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. At the end of the letter, it was requested that the Hokand Khan's twelve-year-old son also be granted the title of Il-i Khan. Due to the important content of the letter, the entire text of this document is reproduced below:

"Hokand Sefîri Zâhid Hâce-i Gilân dâ 'ileriyle olan mükâlemenin sûretidir. Hâk-i pâ-y-i hümâyûn-ı hazret-i mülûkâneye Hokand Hânı Muhammed Hân hazretlerinin bu def 'a takdîm eylediği

nâmesinde ba'zı husûs, zât-ı şerîfinizin şifâhen ifâdesine havâle buyrulduğu muharrer olmagla âna nazaran ifâde ve istid'ânız nedir?" deyü ilçiden sü'âl eyledigimde mûmâ ileyh dahı; "Bizim hânımızın zîr-i hukmünde olan memâlikin bir tarafı Buhara ve bir tarafı Çîn-i Mâçîn ve bir tarafı Rusya Devleti olmagla Buhara ile dâ'imâ sulh üzre olup Çîn-i Mâçîn'in dahı üzerine varılır ise muhârebeye kıyâm idüp varılmadığı hâlde kendü hudûdundan hârice tecâvüz itmemek âdet-i müstemirresidir. Hattâ Kasgar ve Hoten vesâ'ir yedi şehir Çînilerin zabtında iken gavgâ ve nizâ'olonmasun için hâkim-i ser'ler bizim tarafımızdan nasb olunup ve hâkân-ı Çîn beher sene hânımıza def'-i belâ diyerek bir çok akça dahı virir. Ancak Rusya Devleti müddet-i medîdeden berü Deşt-i Kıpçagın konar-göçer töre ve ba'zı hânlarını akça vesâ'ir hîle ile kendü tarafına celb ve ba'zıları bizim hânımıza itâ'at idüp zekâtlarını virirler ve ba'zıları hiç bir tarafa meyl itmeyüp kendü başlarına gezerler." demekle kulunuz dahı "Deşt-i Kıpçagın nüfûsu sekiz milyondur; ne mikdârı hân hazretlerine ve ne kadarı Rusya Devleti'ne tâbi' olup ve ne mikdârı kendü başınadırlar ve beş-on sene mukaddem Hokand'a yirmi günlük mesâfede Bedbaht nâm çölün başında Rusya Devleti bir palanka inşâ idüp hân hazretleri tarafından asker irsâliyle palankasını hedm ve Rusya askeri tard u def' olunmuş idi; şimdi ne hâldedir?" deyü sü'âlimde; "Deşt-i Kıpçagın nüfûs ve hânımız ile Rusya Devleti'ne ne mikdârı tâbi' olup ve ne kadarı kendü başına oldukları ma'lûmum degildir ve zikr olunan palanka mukaddemâ hedm olup, ben bu tarafa azîmetimden iki gün evvel; -Ol mahalle Rusyalu yine palanka inşâ eyledi.- deyü âmed ü süd iden tüccârdan rivâyet olunmagla hânımız tahkîkına âdem göndermiş idi. İşte ma'lûmunuz olan mahzûrâtı def' için esbâbına teşebbüs lâzım geldüğinden ve bizim askerimizin cümlesi süvârî olup piyâdesi olmadığından ve mukâbele-i bi'l-misl şart idüğünden bir kaç seneden berü Hindistân'dan gelen Mu'allim Kerîm Hân vâsita ve delâletiyle Avrupa usûlü üzre piyâde ve topçu ta'lîmine şürû' olunmuş ise de cebren alınmayup el-hâletü hâzihî istekleriyle yazılan piyâde neferi beş yüz ve takımıyla çarha topu on iki kıt'aya resîde olup inşâ'allâhü te'âlâ sâye-i hazret-i şâhânedede ahâlî alışıp gündün güne tezâyüd bulacağı ve askerinin ta'lîmi İngiliz kâ'idesi üzre olup hânımızın iltimâsı evvelen; taraf-ı eşref-i şâhânededen iki piyâde ve iki süvârî ve iki topçu ta'lîmcileri irsâline inâyet buyurulmak ve eger bu mümkün olmaz ise piyâde ve süvârî ve topçu ta'lîmlerine ve sâ'ir harb ü kitâle dâ'ir tab' olunmuş ve olunacak kitâblardan birer nüsha ihsân buyurulması, sâniyen; hânımız ol tarafda zât-ı hümayûn-ı şehin-şâhîlerinin bir ser'askeri olup seyfi nizâmî-i şâhâne ve nişân-ı hümayûn-ı mülûkâneleriyle müftehir ve bendelige kabûl buyrulduğu yedi-sekiz seneye bâlig olup sâ'ir bendegân misillü kat'-ı rütbe ve kesb-i nüfûz itmege iştihkâkı olduğundan nâme-i hümayûn-ı ma'delet-nümûn-ı şâhânelerinde kâffe-i mülk-i Fergana ve Deşt-i Kıpçak-ı Kazâkiyye ve Deşt-i Alây-ı Kırgızıyye, Hânlar Hânı unvânıyla mu'anven buyurulması ve bu vesîle ile hiç bir tarafa itâ'ati olmayup kendü başlarına olan ilât hânlarına nasihat ve üli'l-emre itâ'ate da'vet ile millet-i İslâmiyyeyi ittihâd-ı kulûba ragbete lutf u merhamet-i mülûkâneleri erzânî buyurulması, sâlisen; on iki yasında fakat bir oğlum ve veliyy-i ahdîm olan Muhammed Emîn Hân şehzâdelerine dahı İller Hânı ta'bîr ve unvânıyla mesrûr ve bekâm buyurulmasını istid'â ve iltimâs eylediği" sefir-i mûmâ-ileyhin şifâhen takrîr ve ifâdesinden ma'lûm olmuşdur. Bâkî emr u fermân hazret-i men lehü'l-emrindir." (BOA, pp. 41-42)

This document should be regarded not only as a record of diplomatic relations, but also as an important source that thoroughly examines the strategies pursued by the Ottoman Empire in foreign policy and its military preparations. The content of the document reveals the multi-ethnic structure of the Ottoman Empire, its efforts to modernize its military power, and its claims to leadership in the Islamic world. The document focuses particularly on the situation and relations of the Khanate of Kokand. It contains details describing the border issues of Khan Muhammad Khan of Kokand with major powers such as Russia and China, as well as the military and commercial situation in these lands. At the same time, this type of correspondence can also be read as a guarantee of peace and cooperation between governments. The description of the internal turmoil witnessed in Turkestan during this period and Russia's interventions in Hokand requires evaluation within a broader geopolitical context. A large part of the archival document concerns military training, strategy, and security measures. For example, the shortage of infantry in the Khanate of Hokand, defense plans

against Russia, and the provision of European-style military training by military instructors from India reveal a strategic plan aimed at coping with the great powers.

The writings also demonstrate that military training was taken seriously and that modern military methods were being adopted. At the end of the document, there is also a wish regarding the ruler's family. This is another indication of how important the continuity of the dynasty was in the Ottoman Empire. This section reflects the Ottoman Empire's efforts to maintain a balance of power among its own rulers and heirs.

M. Saraylı, who wrote a comprehensive study on the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Turkestan, attributed the Ottoman Empire's failure to achieve its goal of providing military aid to Turkestan to the following reasons:

“...Ne var ki Türkistan devletleri ile Osmanlı Devleti arasında, şii İran'ın geçit vermez bir set gibi bulunması ve Kafkasların Ruslar tarafından işgal edilmiş olması gibi sebeplerle, istenen askerî malzemeyi gönderecek bir yol bulunamamıştır. Silah yardımı haricinde istenen askerî yardım ise hiç mümkün olmamıştır. Zira bu yardımların istendiği devirlerde Osmanlı Devleti'nin hem Rusya ile sulh halinde olması ve hem de Rusya'dan çekinmesi dolayısıyla, asker yardımı mümkün olmamıştır. Bu istekte bulunan ülkelerin temsilcilerine gönüllü toplama tavsiyesinde bulunulmuş bundan da istenen netice alınamamıştır” (Saray, 2000, p. 19).

Following this document, the Ottoman Sultan awarded the title of Khan of the Provinces to Seyyid Muhammed Khan, son of the Khan of Hokand, with his imperial insignia.

“...avâtf-ı aliyeye-i sâhânemden seref-yâfte-i sudûr olan irâde-i mevhîbet-âde-i pâdisâhânem mücebince pederi müsârun-ileyhin zîr-i idâresinde kâ'in mahallerin _ller Hânlığı unvânı müfevvaz-ı uhde-i dirâyet ü necâbeti kılınmagla isbu mensûr-ı lâmi 'u'n-nûr-i fâ'izu's-süruru virdim ve buyurdum ki:

Bundan böyle hân-ı müsârun-ileyh her bir husûsda peder-i âlî-güheri müsârun-ileyh cenâblarının emr ü re'yi üzre hareketle ibrâz-ı me'âsir-i rızâ-cûyî ve mütâbe'at ve müteferri'ât-ı umûru olan mevâdda kemâ-yenbagî icrâ-yı muktezâ-yı fetânet-kârî ve revîyyete bezl-i cell-i miknet eyleye; söyle bileler; alâmet-i serîfe i 'timâd kılalar.” (BOA, p. 44)

The document dated July 21-30, 1849 (Hijri: Ramadan/1265) is a response to a letter sent by Muhammad Emin Bahadır Khan, the ruler of Khwarezm, one of the Turkestan Khanates, requesting that Russia be prevented from attacking his territories. The reply letter indicates that Bahadır Khan's letter requesting assistance from the Ottoman Empire stated that the security and peace of the Khwarezm people would be ensured under Ottoman protection, and that the Ottoman-Khwarezm alliance was considered very important. It was stated that the necessary support and all kinds of assistance would be provided for the consolidation of the state's power and the continuation of its prosperity against Russia's cross-border violations. Furthermore, it was stated that the Khwarezmian ruler appreciated the support and assistance he received from the Ottoman Empire, and a strong statement was made that strengthening friendly relations was in the interests of both states. In this context, it was expressed that both countries would continue to cooperate against such possible external threats and were determined to maintain their friendly relations.

“...ta'arruzât-ı vâkı'anın indifâ'mı kalben ve kavlen temennî ve istid'âdan hâlî olmayacağımızdan ol bâbda Rusya Devlet-i fahîmesi tarafına ifâdât-ı lâzime-i dostâne icrâ olunmuş ve hükûmet-i fahîmâneleriyle dostâne ve muhibbâne mu'âmelâtda bulunmak kendülerinin dahî dil-hâhları olduğu beyân kılınmış ve tarafımızdan her dürlü mesâ'î-i mümkinenin sarfında tecvîz-i müsâmaha olunmayacağından inşâ'illâhü'l-Kerîm husûl-i matâlib-i hamîyyet-kârîleri eltâf-ı lâhiyyeden kavîyyen me'mûl bulunmuşdur. Cenâb-ı sûtûde-elkâblarının mütehâllik u mevsûf oldukları hilye-i hasene-i diyânet-kârî ve hamîyyet iktizâsınca dâhil-i dâ'ire-i hükûmetleri bulunan mahâll ü memâlikde sâkin ü mutavattın kâffe-i ahâlî ve re'âyâ ve berâyânın vikâye-i emn ü âsâyîşine bezl-i mâ-hasal ikdâm ü ihtimâm buyuracakları bî-istibâh olduğu misillü devlet-i müsârun-ileyhâ ile hükûmet-i Kaanîleri beyninde mün'akid olan uhûd ü surûta dahî dikkat ü ri'âyet olunarak her hâlde levâzım-ı müsâlemet-kârî ve musâfâta i'tinâ ve himmet buyruldukca bi't-tab' ser-rişte-i tahattiyât mündefi' olacağına istibâh olmamağın bu husûslar üzerine dostâne ve hâlisâne olarak icrâ-yı

ihârât ile dikkat-i behiyyelerinin celbi lâzime-i zimmet-i yek-cihetî vü dostî add olunmuş olduğu beyânıyla tesyîd-i bünyân-ı hullet ve temhîd-i erkân-ı hubb ü muhâlesat zımında işbu cevâb-nâme-i hümayûnumuz terkîm ve tahrîr ve sefir-i mûmâ-ileyhimâya tevdî'an taraf-ı şerîflerine ba's ü tesyîr kılındı. İnsâa'llâhü te'âlâ lede'-sa'di'l vusûl ma'lûm-ı necâbet-melzûmları buyruldukda bundan böyle cânib-i seniyyü'l-cevânib-i mülûkânemiz âsâr-ı tevâdd ü müvâlât-ı Kaanîleriyle meşmûl ve her hâlde; 'Esra'u'd-du'â icâbeten du'â'ü'l-gâ'ibi li'l-gâ'ib' tarîka-i müstahsenesine himem-i behiyyeleri masrûf buyurulması tevakku'-gerde-i hâlisânemizdir. Bâkî hemîşe ravâbit-ı müvâlât mü'eyyed ve zavâbit-ı musâfât mü'ebbed ve mebânî-i hullet ü mu'âhât mümevhed ü müseyyed bâd; bi'n-nebiyyi ve âlihi'l-emcâd." (BOA, p. 59)

On September 30, 1861 (Hijri: 25 Rabi' al-Awwal 1278), a diplomatic archive document requested assistance from the Ottoman Empire against Russia, which sought to seize Uzbekistan and the Hokand region. In this document presented by the Hokand ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, it is stated that although the Hokand Khanate appeared to be capable of governing itself militarily, economically, and administratively, the mines could not be operated due to the lack of regular training, and the military structure was in disarray. The document also stated that the people of Hokand took pride in their religious affiliation with the Ottomans and therefore needed Ottoman protection under all circumstances. The ambassador was tasked with requesting the Ottoman Empire's assistance to prevent Russian intervention. The letter also states that the people of Mâverâünnehir and its surroundings have deep respect and affection for the Ottomans.

"...Ancak bir müddetden berü Rusya Devleti'nin havâlî-i Özbekistân'a aralıkda hücum iderek ba'zı hudûdu tecâvüz itmek ve envâ'î desâyis ile Hokand ve ol havâlîyi zabt idüp almak efkâr-ı sahîhinde bulduğuna ve ol havâlî ahâlîsi ise Devlet-i Aliyye'nin bir du'â-gûy-ı kadîmleri olduğuna ve her ne kadar asker ve mühimmât ve ma'deniyât ve sâ'irece idâre-i mülküne iktidâr hâlinde ise de taht-ı terbiyede olmadıkları cihetle ma'denleri metrûk ve askerleri nizâmsız bir hâl ve hey'etde bulunup ahâlî-i Hokand, Devlet-i Aliyye-i Ebed-müddet'e kadîmden berü min-cihet'l-mezhebiyye tâbi'iyet şerefiyle müftehir oldukları cihetle herhâlde himâye ve sahâbet-i saltanat-ı seniyyeye muhtac bulunduğuna..." (BOA, p. 52)

The document cited above states that the people of Hokand and its surroundings were religiously affiliated with the Ottoman Empire and needed its protection. This reinforced the Ottoman Empire's sovereignty in the region and its power in the struggle against such regional powers. The people of Hokand expressed their allegiance to the state and requested its assistance. Such diplomatic texts emphasize that aid and support must be provided on the basis of mutual understanding. Here, too, the request for "protection" demonstrates the Ottoman Empire's intention to maintain its regional sovereignty and protection. The document also mentions requests for military aid and training. The state's desire to modernize its military power is also evident here. The military and strategic aspects of the document provide important information about the Ottoman Empire's strategies for ensuring regional security, protecting its borders, and using military force. In short, this document shows the Ottoman Empire's diplomatic relations, particularly the tensions with Russia and China along its borders, and its approach to internal and external threats. At the same time, this document reveals that the Ottoman Empire used it as an opportunity to demonstrate its power and reinforce its leadership claims, especially in regions with Muslim populations. This document provides highly significant information about the Ottoman Empire's outward-looking strategies and its understanding of regional sovereignty.

An archival document containing a letter written by Grand Vizier Mehmed Rüşdi Pasha during the reign of Ottoman Sultan Abdülaziz on January 10, 1867 (Ramadan 4, 1283 AH) was addressed to the Governor of Bukhara for the appointment of Tashkent Hanzade Sultan Khan to a suitable position.

"Sehâmetlü, fahâmetlü, nebâhatlü hân-ı celilü'l-ünvân hazretleri;

Devlet-i Aliyye ile hükûmet-i fahîmâneleri beyninde mevcûd ve müterakkî olan ravâbit-ı ma'neviyye-i ittihâdiyye ve meveddet-i kâmile-i hakîkiyyenin icâb-ı tabî'isinden olmak üzere âsitân-ı fahâmet-ünvân-ı hükümdârilerinden hâcet-mend olanlar bu taraftan vesâtat-ı tahrîriyyeye

mürâca'ati medâr-ı husûl-i matlab bildikleri cihetle, Taşkend hânzâdelerinden olup bu kerre pâ-y-i taht-ı hükümdârîlerine âzim olan Sultân Hân Efendi dâ'îlerinin asâlet ve necâbet-i zâtıyyesine taraf-ı müstecmi'u-ş-şeref-i fahîmânelerinden ibrâz-ı hürmet ve merhamet buyrulacağı ümîd- varlığı ile kendüsünün oraca hâline münâsib bir hüdmetde istihdâmiyla hâ'iz-i nisâb-ı mefâharet olmaklığı emrinde...” (BOA, 2004, p. 34)

The report dated March 21, 1872 (Hijri: 10 Jumada al-Ula 1289) is a petition submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Hacı Osman, a merchant from Bukhara. According to the memorandum submitted by Hacı Osman of Bukhara, Russia is implementing a plan to encircle the Ottoman Empire. According to this plan, Russia, the old enemy of the Sublime Porte, is resorting to all kinds of tricks to achieve its goal; it is acting on misguided ideas such as threatening England via India and encircling Ottoman territories by invading Iran through the Turkmenistan valley. In this vein, it first occupied many parts of the Khanate of Bukhara, then destroyed the Khanates of Khiva and Khokand, and inflicted unspeakable cruelty on the Muslim people living in these regions. Considering what the Russians have done in the past, it is clear what evil they will do in the future. It is the clear duty of the Ottoman Empire to protect all believers on earth and to remove the oppression of the enemies that afflict them. This truth is known and accepted by everyone. The glory and power of the Sublime Porte, its victory over its enemies, will increase in proportion to the number of Muslim peoples under its protection. For this reason, Hacı Osman requests assistance from the Ottoman Empire and states that the more than fifteen million Muslims of Turkestan are ready to come under Ottoman protection if support is provided. Hacı Osman offered some practical solutions to the Ottoman Empire so that this sacred and beneficial goal could be achieved as soon as possible. These solutions are as follows:

- The Afghan people are an extremely brave and combative nation. As of today, they have the power to deploy over 100,000 trained soldiers equipped with modern weapons. If officers and soldiers are sent from Afghanistan to Bukhara as trainers, the currently disorganized Bukhara army can be brought under discipline in a short time. This would enable the creation of a regular army of 100,000 from Bukhara's population of over two million.

- Modern weapons could be brought in via Afghanistan.

- If the Emirate of Kashgar also joins this alliance, it too has the capacity to deploy 100,000 soldiers. This would create a very powerful alliance.

- Russia currently has only about 20,000 troops in Khokand, Tashkent, Samarkand, and Khiva. Therefore, thanks to this powerful Islamic alliance, Russian troops can be easily removed from these regions, and their castles, outposts, and trenches can be destroyed.

- Furthermore, the Emirate of Baluchistan is a small but independent state on the coast of the Indian Ocean. It is hoped that it will comply with the orders of the Caliphate in every respect.

- If an agreement is reached with Baluchistan, weapons and ammunition can be shipped through a port on its coast. Using this route would facilitate the transport of weapons to the regions mentioned above.

If Hacı Osman Bey's proposed solutions are accepted, regions such as Hokand, Tashkent, and Samarkand could be annexed to Bukhara, while the lands of Khiva and the warrior Turkmen tribes could be annexed to Afghanistan. Three large emirates could be established, including Kashgar, and placed under Ottoman protection. If the Ottoman Empire oversees the military and administrative development of these units, they will grow stronger day by day. If necessary, military operations could be carried out in the Caucasus, Dagestan, and Circassia regions, bringing a large part of the Black Sea back under Ottoman control. In this way, the Ottoman Empire would both be protected from Russia's schemes and become a deterrent force against Russia. The original content of the archival document is provided below:

“...Afganistan ahâlîsi fevka'l-hadd gayûr ve cesur ceng-âver oldukları gibi Afgan Emâreti'nin bu günkü günde esliha-i cedîde ile mücehhez yüz binden ziyâde asâkir-i mu'alleme sevkına iktidârı olduğundan ma'a havâli-i Buhara ahâlîsinin tebe'iyeti ve Afgan'dan Buhara'ya mu'allim ve zâbit irsâliyle pek az müddet zarfında Buhara'nın asâkir-i gayr-ı muntazaması dahı taht-ı intizama

alınarak iki milyondan ziyâde olan Buhara ahâlîsinden dahı yüz bine karîb asâkir-i muntazama tertîb ve Afgan tarîkiyla esliha-i cedîde celb edilebilir. Bu ittifâka Kaşgar Emâreti dahı dâhil olduğu sûretde emâret-i müşârun-ileyhâ dahı yüz bin asker sevkına muktedir olduğundan bir kuvve-i kesîre hâsıl olarak Rusya'nın ise simdiye kadar yed-i istilâsına aldığı Taşkend ve Hokand ve Semerkand ve Hive memâlikinde ancak yirmi bin askeri bulunabildiğinden Rusya asâkirini memâlik-i mezkûreden kolaylıkla tard ve teb'îd ve çöllere vesâir mevâkı'a yapmış olduğu kuyu ve istihkâm ve karakol-hâneleri hedm ve tahrîb ile fî mâ ba'd memâlik-i mezkûre Rusya'nın istilâsından te'min edilmiş olur. Bir ciheti Afgan ve bir ciheti İran'a müntehî olan Belûcistan Emâreti, Bahr-i Muhît-i Hindî sâhilinde bir hükûmet-i sagîre-i müstakille olup evâmir-i seniyye-i Hilâfet-penâhîlerine ez her cihet inkıyâd edeceđi cihetle te'yîd-i esâs-ı dîn-dest ve te'yîd-i bünyân-ı Hilâfet ve devlet niyyet-i hâlisasıyla teşebbüs edilecek tedâbir lisân-ı münâsib ile tefhîm olunarak lede'l-îcâb taraf-ı saltanat-ı seniyyeden hükûmet-i mezkûre sevâhilinden bir iskele zabtıyla mahâll-i sâlifetü'z-zikre sâhilden bir tarik küşâdına hükûmet-i mezkûre muvâfakat edeceğini ve bu cihetle emâret-i mezkûreye esliha ve mühimmât-ı sâire kolaylıkla celb olunabileceđini kavîyyen ümid iderim. Bundan sonra Hokand ve Taşkend ve Semerkand ve havâlisi kemâ fî's-sâbık Buhara'ya ve Hive memâliki ile gayet ceng-âver ve seci' olan Türkmen asâyiri Afganistan'a ilâve olunarak Kaşgar ile üç büyük emâret teşkiliyle emârât-ı mezkûre zîr-i tebe'îyyet ve himâyet-i Saltanat-ı seniyyede bulunur ve cânib-i seniyyü'l-cevânib-i Devlet-i Aliyye'den dâima bunların ittihâd ve ittifâkına ve umûr-ı mülkiye ve askeriyece terakkîlerine nezâret buyurulur ise günden güne kesb-i kuvvet ve lede'l-îcâb Kafkasya ve Dagistan ve Çerkesistan taraflarına hücum iderek Karadeniz'in ekser sevâhili Devlet-i Aliyye'nin yed-i zabtına geçmek suhûlet kesb edeceğinden Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmâniyye her vechile Rusya desâyisinden emin ve dâima Rusya aleyhine tehdîdini ikâ'a muktedir olur..." (BOA, p. 121)

The above document is directly related to the Pan-Islamism policy pursued by the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The Ottoman Empire, particularly during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II, pursued a policy of uniting Muslims in Central Asia, India, and Africa under the umbrella of the ummah and achieving unity against colonialism. This document provides clear support for that policy from the field and, in addition, offers a highly feasible strategic plan. It can also be seen as an attempt to establish an alternative Islamic union in response to the geopolitical balance of the time, particularly Russia's advance in Asia.

The archival document dated June 24, 1910 (Hijri: 15 Jumada al-Thani 1328) is a military correspondence. The document addresses a letter from the Petersburg Military Attaché regarding the admission of a young man named Taş Polat Bey, a Fergana native from the Hokand region in the Tashkent province, to one of the Ottoman military schools. The fact that a Fergana youth sought admission to an Ottoman military school at the beginning of the 20th century is significant in that it demonstrates the continued admiration for the Ottoman Empire even during this period. The members of the Ottoman Council of Ministers deemed this application appropriate and decided that the government would cover the necessary expenses until Taş Polat Bey completed his education. The original content of the archival document, which includes this decision, is as follows:

"Mûmâ-ileyhin is'âf-ı istid'âsıyla Der-sa'âdet mekâtib-i askeriyyesinden birine kabûlü muvâfik-ı hikmet ve maslahat olacağından ana göre îcâbının icrâsıyla ikmâl-i tahsîl idinceye kadar muktezî masârîfinin muhassasât-ı mukannene miyânında deverân itdirilerek tesviye olunması ve mürâca'ât-ı mümâsile vukû'unda her def'ası için Bâb-ı Âlî'ye iş'âr-ı keyfiyetle teblîg idilecek karâra göre mu'âmele îfâsı lâzım geleceğinin Nezâret-i müşârun-ileyhâya cevaben teblîgi tezekkür kıldı." (BOA, p. 54)

As can be understood from the content of the above archival documents, the relations established between the Ottoman Empire and Turkestan from the 16th century until the early 20th century did not reach the desired level in the political sphere, but showed a certain degree of development. Three main factors can be cited as reasons for this: geographical distance, regional power balances, and the fronts prioritized by the Ottoman Empire during the relevant period. The Ottoman Empire's political influence over Turkestan was shaped indirectly through the caliphate and Islamic unity, rather than through military power. In practice, this influence did not reach a level that would shape regional

policies or limit the spheres of influence of the powers operating in the region. However, it should be emphasized that the Ottoman Empire did not ignore requests for assistance from Turkestan and endeavored to respond to them in a reasonable and desirable manner.

3.3. Correspondence on Social and Economic Issues

The vast majority of the documents examined in this section encompass the 1800s. During this century, the Ottoman Empire having lost its former power and attempting to implement internal reforms strove to maintain its relations with Turkestan despite experiencing significant fractures in its international authority. Aiming to establish a permanent embassy to strengthen ties with the Porte, the Emir of Bukhara declared his allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan. Emir Haydar (1800–1826) dispatched envoys to Istanbul in 1816, followed by another delegation led by Khoja Mahmoud Sharif in 1819. These political visits demonstrate that the Ottoman Empire was the authority consulted for the restoration of order and the resolution of regional turmoil. However, the burgeoning Russian influence in the region compelled certain khanates to avoid antagonizing Russia to protect their own interests; consequently, while Ottoman influence in Turkestan was not entirely dismantled, it was substantially weakened (Urakov, 2018, pp. 176-177).

Social relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkestan region were mostly based on religion, and in the second phase, they extended to the fields of culture and education. However, these relations were limited and indirect due to the economic crisis, geographical barriers, regional competition, and the intervention of great powers. At the social level, the Ottoman Empire's role as caliphate and its religious and cultural appeal had a powerful influence on the people and rulers of Turkestan.

A document dated March/1568 (Hijri: Ramadan/975) written in the 16th century is significant in that it demonstrates the power and sphere of influence of the Ottoman Empire at that time. In response to a letter written by the Khan of Samarkand, Abu Said, requesting the construction of a mausoleum for the tomb of Sheikh Hussein Harezmi in Damascus, a royal decree was issued along the following lines:

“... *hengâm-ı adâlet-bünyânımızda hayâtlarında mezîd-i inâyet-i şâhâne ve re'fet-i husrevânemüzdün dâyimâ mer'î vü müreffehü'l-ahvâl olmaları âdet-i hasene-i cihân-bânîmüz olduğu gibi memâtlarında dahı eger ervâh-ı tayyibeleri için ba'zı hasenât ve mezâr-ı şerîflerinin ta'mîr ü tathîri bâbında ihtimâm olunmak kâ'ide-i marziyyemüz olmagın müteveffâ-yı müşârun-ileyhün ol zamânda mezârları üzre kubbe binâ olunup evlâd ü fukarâsına istih[k]âklarına göre Beytü'l-mâl'den vazîfe ta'yîn olunmuş imis.*” (BOA, p. 56)

This text clearly reveals the Ottoman administration's perspective on religious leaders, Sufi orders, and sheikhs. Sufi figures such as Sheikh Hüseyin-i Harezmî were seen not only as religious figures but also as leading personalities who ensured the moral and political unity of society. The state supported such individuals during their lifetimes through patronage and, after their deaths, through commemoration and charitable deeds. This was defined as an activity that strengthened the state's religious legitimacy and its bond with the people. The original content of the archive document is as follows:

“... *hengâm-ı adâlet-bünyânımızda hayâtlarında mezîd-i inâyet-i şâhâne ve re'fet-i husrevânemüzdün dâyimâ mer'î vü müreffehü'l-ahvâl olmaları âdet-i hasene-i cihân-bânîmüz olduğu gibi memâtlarında dahı eger ervâh-ı tayyibeleri için ba'zı hasenât ve mezâr-ı şerîflerinin ta'mîr ü tathîri bâbında ihtimâm olunmak kâ'ide-i marziyyemüz olmagın müteveffâ-yı müşârun-ileyhün ol zamânda mezârları üzre kubbe binâ olunup evlâd ü fukarâsına istih[k]âklarına göre Beytü'l-mâl'den vazîfe ta'yîn olunmuş imiş.*” (BOA, pp. 56-57)

The document dated 1839 (Hijri: 1254) is a distribution ledger containing a list of gifts sent from the Khanate of Kokand to the Ottoman Sultan. It is also a material expression of obedience, respect, and allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan. Among the gifts sent, the Holy Quran conveys a message of religious allegiance to the sultan; musk, silk, works of art, fabrics, wealth, and cultural interaction are indicators; and Kokand fabrics reflect geographical and cultural identity. The letter begins with the

words, “This is the list of items to be presented to the blessed feet of our glorious, powerful, and majestic sultan, the protector of the world,” and contains a list of the following gifts:

Holy Quran (Kur'an-ı Kerim) 1 piece; Shawl 7 pieces; Sevâî (silk fabric type) 7 rolls; Chinese-style black seylan (patterned black fabric) 5 rolls; Chinese-style blue and purple 2 rolls, Tehvâr wrapped (striped silk fabric) 2 rolls; Hokand-kari red headband (Hokand-made red headband or sash) 27 rolls; esp (probably a type of fabric or weave) 7 pieces; Chinese paintings and pictures (Chinese-made paintings and pictures) 75 pieces; Hoten musk (musk scent from the Hoten region) 3 pieces; Tenevvuh-ı Hitâyî (various items of Chinese origin) 3 pieces.

This document can be regarded as a product of diplomatic contact and mutual respect between the Ottoman Empire and the Khanates of Turkestan. The exchange of gifts was not only a sign of friendship; it was also a kind of demonstration of loyalty and a symbolic expression of the will to unite around the Caliphate.

The document dated January 16, 1846 (Hijri: 18 Muharrem 1262) is a typical example of an official petition or memorandum from the Ottoman period. Written in the high bureaucratic language of the period, this text essentially requests the reinstatement of a person named Rahmet Efendi from Bukhara, who had previously been dismissed from his position, to the Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Şahâne (Imperial Medical School). This document is also important as it provides an example of the Ottoman education system. Buharalı Rahmet Efendi, who was reinstated to his previous position as a Persian language teacher with a salary of two hundred and fifty kuruş, was required to teach two students daily. This document is also valuable in that it shows a bureaucratic initiative for the reemployment of a civil servant in the Ottoman Empire. Rahmet Efendi of Bukhara's request, which was submitted directly to the Sultan, was deemed appropriate by the relevant persons and resulted in final approval.

“...Ma ‘rûz-ı çâker-i musâdat-güsterleridir ki, Hâme-pîrâ-yı tevkîr olan işbu tezkire-i sâmiye-i âsafâneleri manzûr-ı me‘âlî-mevfûr-ı hazret-i pâdişâhî buyurulmuş ve mezkûr hâfiz-ı kütüblük me‘mûriyyetinden sarf-ı nazarla şehriyye iki yüz elli guruş müceddeden ma‘âş ve ol mikdâr ta‘yînât tahsîsıyla efendi-i mûmâ-ileyhin Fârisî hâceligine me‘mûriyyeti şeref-rîz-i sünûh ve sudûr buyurulan irâde-i seniyye-i cenâb-ı cihân-bânî iktizâ-yı âlisinden bulunmuş olmagla ol bâbda emr u fermân hazret-i veliyyü'l-emrindir.” (BOA, p. 27)

The letter dated December 25, 1847 (Hijri: 17 Muharrem 1264) contains the request of Hokand and Deşt-i Kıpçak Ruler Hüdâyar Hân for the Ottoman Empire to send mining experts to extract minerals from the lands under his rule. The letter also describes the conflict between the Khanate of Hokand and the Khanate of Bukhara. It highlights that upon the death of Hüdâyar Khan's brother, Muhammad Ali Khan, the Khan of Bukhara seized the opportunity to attack the Fergana region; however, with the help of allies and the Kipchaks, Hüdâyar Khan recaptured his territories as far as Tashkent, Ispicab, Osrad, Deşt-i Kıpçak, and Turkestan. Hüdâyar Khan reports that there are abundant mineral resources such as gold, silver, rubies, turquoise, copper, and tin in the mountains under his control, and even that a market called “lekkan” has been established in Hokand under the name of the mineral market. He then states that there are no experts who know how to extract and process minerals. Help is requested from the Ottoman Empire in this regard. He now requests from the supreme caliphate the same favor that Sultan Mahmud Khan had previously shown to his brother Muhammad Ali Khan. The original content of the document is as follows:

“Zir-i idâre-i âcizânemde bulunan memâlikde vâkı‘ cibâlde altun ve gümüş ve yâkût ve firûze ve nühâs ve kalay ve sâ‘ir bu misillü şeylerin ma‘denleri pek çok olup hattâ Hokand şehrinde “lekkân” demek ile ma‘rûf ve meşhûrdur. Fakat bu taraflarda ma‘âdin fennini bilür ve tefrik ve ihrâcına muktedir ma‘denciler olmadıgından hâk-i pâ-yi hümayûn-ı şâhâneyi tasdî‘a cesâret olundu. Vâlid-i mâcid-i hazret-i Pâdişâhî cennet-mekân, rıdvân-âşiyân Sultân Mahmûd Hân -tâbe serâhu ve ce‘ale'l-cennete meşvâhu- hazretlerinin birâderim müteveffâ Muhammed Ali Hân hakkında lütf u âtifet-i seniyye-i şâhâneleri bî-dirîg buyrulduđu misillü zât-ı merâhim-simât-ı şehin-şâhîlerinin hakk-ı âcizânemde dahı enzâr-ı merâhim-nisâr-ı Hilâfet-penâhîleri şâyân buyrularak iki üç nefer ma‘âdin fennini bilür üstâdın bu cânibe ta‘yîn ve i‘zâmına müsâ‘ade-i seniyye-i şehin-şâhîleri erzânî buyrulması müsted‘â-yı âcizânemdir.” (BOA, s. 47)

In the mid-19th century, the Khanates of Hokand, Bukhara, and Khiva in Turkestan occasionally fought each other. During these conflicts, they requested assistance from the Ottoman Empire, which they regarded as the legitimate leader of the Islamic world, and sometimes asked the Ottoman Empire to mediate in order to make peace with each other. In this text, Hudayar Khan demonstrates both religious allegiance and requests technical assistance. This situation is noteworthy in terms of revealing the Ottoman Empire's sphere of influence. Furthermore, the request for assistance from the Ottomans in the extraction and processing of minerals is significant in that it demonstrates the Turkestan Khanates' demand for economic cooperation.

The Grand Vizier's Office (equivalent to the Prime Minister's Office today) submitted the imperial decree to the sultan for the preparation of the miners requested in the above document. However, due to the timing coinciding with the month of Ramadan, it was decided that the envoy from Hokand would be hosted as a guest during Ramadan and provided with financial assistance. The content of the archival document containing the response to this decision is as follows:

"...mezkûr ma'dencilerin tedârik ve irsâli husûsu müşârun-ileyh Ser'asker Paşa hazretleriyle dahi bi'l-müzâkere icrâ-yı iktizâsına bakılacağı musammem olduğundan istîzân-ı âlî-i Âsafâneleri vechile ilç-i mûmâ-ileyhe atıyye-i mahsûsa-i cenâb-ı mülûkâne olmak ve Ramazân harçlığı itmek üzere on bin gurus i'tâ kılınması müte'allik ve şeref-sünûh buyrulan emr ü irâde-i seniyye-i cenâb-ı pâdişâhî icâb-ı âlisinden bulunmuş ve evrâk-ı mezkûre yine savb-ı sâmi-i Âsafilerine i'âde ve tisyâr kılınmış olmakla ol bâbda emr ü fermân hazret-i veliyyü'l-emrindir." (BOA, p. 49)

The archival document dated July 27, 1848 (Hijri: 25 Sha'ban 126) provides a highly detailed reflection of the diplomatic and economic relations and symbolic ties between the Ottoman Empire and the Khanate of Kokand. The arrival of the Hokand envoy in Istanbul, the acceptance of gifts, the content of the discussions, and requests for rewards and assistance involve a multi-layered cooperation. An envoy (sefir) sent by Hokand Khan Hudayar Khan arrived at the Ottoman palace, bringing a letter, a Mushaf-ı Şerif, a prayer rug, a piece of fabric, and a sal and horse as gifts for the Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs (in today's terms, the Minister of Foreign Affairs). A copy of the letter written by the Khan of Kokand was also presented. The envoy was scheduled to be received at the palace at five o'clock on Saturday. It was decided that during the meeting, the gifts would be accepted, the envoy would stay in Istanbul during Ramadan, and a mining expert would be sent to Kokand.

The ambassador had previously been given 7,500 kuruş, but it was deemed appropriate to give him an additional 10,000 kuruş as Ramadan allowance and a special gift. Hüdâyar Hân had previously stated in his letter that he was unable to work the mines in his region and requested that mining experts be sent from the Ottoman Empire. It was decided that this request would be discussed with Serasker Pasha and evaluated. It was anticipated that the mining experts would be prepared before the ambassador's return. When the archive document is evaluated as a whole, we see a profile of the Ottoman Empire establishing diplomacy with Turkestan through technical assistance and cultural channels. All these documents were resubmitted to the Grand Vizier's office, and it was expected that action would be taken in accordance with the order to be issued by the Sultan:

"...Ma'rûz-ı çâker-i kemîneleridir ki, Esâbi'-zîb-i tefhîm olan işbu tezkire-i sâmiye-i Sadâret-penâhileriyle evrâk-ı ma'rûza meşmûl-i nigâh-ı şevket-iktinâh-ı hazret-i Hilâfet-penâhî buyurulmuşdur. Nâzır-ı müşârun-ileyh hazretleri birlikde bulunduğu hâlde Sefîr-i mûmâ-ileyhin bi-mennihî te'âlâ işbu Cum'a irtesi sâ'at beş karârlarında Mâbeyn-i hümâyûn-ı şâhâne taraf-ı eşrefine i'zâm olunması ve ber-vech-i muharrer virilmiş olan hedâyânın kabûlüyle mezkûr ma'dencilerin tedârik ve irsâli husûsu müşârun-ileyh Ser'asker Paşa hazretleriyle dahi bi'l-müzâkere icrâ-yı iktizâsına bakılacağı musammem olduğundan istîzân-ı âlî-i Âsafâneleri vechile ilç-i mûmâ-ileyhe atıyye-i mahsûsa-i cenâb-ı mülûkâne olmak ve Ramazân harçlığı itmek üzere on bin gurus i'tâ kılınması müte'allik ve şeref-sünûh buyrulan emr ü irâde-i seniyye-i cenâb-ı pâdişâhî icâb-ı âlisinden bulunmuş ve evrâk-ı mezkûre yine savb-ı sâmi-i Âsafilerine i'âde ve tisyâr kılınmış olmagla ol bâbda emr u fermân hazret-i veliyyü'l-emrindir." (BOA, p. 50)

Archival document dated October 12, 1875 (Hijri: 12 Ramadan 1292) concerning the payment, under a special arrangement, of thirty-three thousand seven hundred and one and a half kuruş for the rent of the house previously rented in Istanbul and the thirty-three thousand seven hundred and one and a half kuruş spent on food and other necessities during his stay there be paid under a special arrangement. This letter was submitted to the Grand Vizier's Office (the office of the Prime Minister). The Grand Vizier also presented this request to the Sultan. After the Sultan approved, it was decided that the payment procedures would be referred to the Ministry of Finance. The original content of the document is as follows:

“Resîde-i dest-i ta ‘zîm olan işbu tezkire-i sâmiye-i âsafâneleriyle zikr olunan takrîr manzûr-ı âlî-i hazret-i pâdişâhî buyurulmuş ve sûret-i ma ‘rûzanın bermûceb-i istîzân îfâ-yı muktezâsının nezâret-i müşârunileyhâya havâlesi müte‘allik ve şeref-sudûr buyurulan emr ü irâde-i seniyye-i hazret-i şehinşâhî mantûk-ı münîfînden olarak mezkûr takrîr yine savb-ı sâmi-i Sâdaret-penâhîleri’ne i‘âde kılınmış olmagla ol bâbda emr u fermân hazret-i veliyyü'l-emrindir.” (BOA, p. 63)

This document is significant in that it demonstrates the hospitality and humility shown by the Ottoman Empire in its diplomatic relations with the Khanates of Turkestan. Relations were maintained with the Khanate of Khiva and other Muslim Khanates within the framework of religion-based diplomatic and cultural ties. The fact that the Ottoman Empire covered the expenses of a figure at the level of crown prince can be interpreted as an effort to maintain its influence and preserve its prestige in the region.

An archival document detailing the payment of thirty-three thousand seven hundred and one and a half kuruş for the rent of the house leased for Seyyid Ahmed, the brother and heir apparent of Hive Khan Muhammad Rahim Khan, who had previously come to Istanbul, as well as for his food, drink, and other necessities during his stay, demonstrates both the Ottoman Empire's hospitality towards the Muslim and Turkish-origin population in the region and its tendency to always maintain its prestige in diplomatic relations. The original content of this document is as follows:

“Atûfetlü Efendim Hazretleri,

Hive Hânı Muhammed Rahîm Hân'ın birâder ve veliyy-i ahdi olup mukaddemâ Der-sa‘âdet’e gelmiş olan Seyyid Ahmed için istîcâr olunan hâne icâresiyle müddet-i ikâmetinde me‘kûlât ve mâlzeme-i sâ‘iresine sarf edilen otuz üç bin yedi yüz bir buçuk guruşun tertîb-i mahsusundan tesviye ve i‘tâsı istîzânına dâ‘ir Mâliye Nezâret-i Celîlesi’nin vürûd iden takrîri leffen arz u takdîm kılınmış olmagla muvâfik-ı irâde-i seniyye-i cenâb-ı pâdişâhî buyurulur ise ber-mûceb-i iş‘âr îfâ-yı muktezâsı nezâret-i müşârun-ileyhâya havâle olunacağı beyânıyla tezkire-i senâverî terkîm olundu efendim.” (BOA, p. 62)

The archival document dated 1895 addresses the settlement of a group of 76 migrants from Bukhara in the Zor Sanjak (present-day northern Iraq) within the framework of the Ottoman Empire's migration and settlement policies. The involvement of high-level state departments such as the Ministry of the Interior (today's Ministry of Internal Affairs) and the Grand Vizier's Office indicates that the settlement of this group of migrants was directly coordinated by the state. The group from Bukhara who came to the Zor Sanjak and wished to settle there applied to be resettled. These individuals needed to be settled in suitable locations within the Zor Sanjak, provided with 25,000 kuruş in aid for seeds and farm animals, and supplied with the necessary daily provisions (food expenses) to support themselves until they could harvest crops. According to the document, all these expenses were covered by the general allocation set aside for migrants from the Hazine-i Celile (the Imperial Treasury).

“... Atûfetlü Efendim Hazretleri,

Buhara ahâlîsinden olup Zor sancagına gelerek orada iskânlarını istid‘â eden yetmiş altı nüfusun livâ-i mezkûr dâhilinde emr-i iskânlarının icrâsıyla tohumluk ve çift hayvânâtı bedeli olarak yirmi bes bin guruşun ve mahsûle dest-res olununcaya kadar i‘âşeleri-y-çün iktizâ eden yevmiyenin Hazîne-i Celîle’ce muhâcirîn tahsîsât-ı umûmiyesinden mahsûbu icrâ olunmak üzere mahallî mal sandığından i‘tâsı hakkında Dâhiliye Nezâret-i Celîlesi’nden meb‘ûs tezkire üzerine Meclis-i Mahsûs-ı Vükelâ’dan kaleme alınan mazbata melfûfâtıyla arz ve takdîm kılınmış olmagla ol bâbda her ne

vechile irâde-i seniyye-i hazret-i Hilâfet-penâhî şeref-müte'allik buyurulur ise mantûk-ı âlîsi infâz edilecegi beyânıyla tezkire-i senâverî terkîm kılındı efendim... ” (BOA, p. 30)

The archival document above is an important document that clearly shows the implementation of the Ottoman Empire's immigrant settlement policy in the 19th century and the mechanism established for this purpose. In particular, it provides information about the Ottoman Empire's resettlement policy at that time, including the acceptance of Muslim immigrants from Turkestan, their settlement in strategic regions such as the “Zor Sancağı,” and the provision of livelihood and production support to immigrants. The document is also important in that it shows the decision-making process within the administrative-central structure.

During the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II, an archival document from 1899 concerning a declaration of loyalty and assistance from Bukhara states that Muhammad Abbas, the son of the Bukhara Gulkuşbeği (a high-ranking bureaucrat in the Bukhara Khanate), sent 3,000 rubles to support the Ottoman military institutions. The document also mentions that the individual requested that gifts such as carpets and prayer rugs be presented to the sultan. This aid, symbolic and meaningful given the financial conditions of the period, demonstrates support for the military institutions and emphasizes the loyalty expressed to the Ottoman Sultan. The original content of the document is as follows:

“Yıldız Sarây-ı Hümâyûnu Başkitâbet Dâiresi,

Buhara Gülkuşbeği ibn-i Muhammed Abbâs'a tahrîrât sûreti.

Atebe-i seniyye-i hazret-i Hilâfet-penâhîye arz-ı ta'zîmât-ı ubûdiyyet-kârâneyi ve te'sîsât-ı askeriyye i'ânesi için üç bin ruble irsâl kılındığını hâvî arz-ı behiyyeleri manzûr-ı âlî buyurularak Halîfe-i Müslimîn pâdişâhımız efendimiz hazretlerine bu sûretle te'yîd-i ravâbıt-ı sadâkat-mendî olunması mücib-i mahzûziyyet-i seniyye-i mülûkâne olduğunun ve zikr olunan üç bin rublenin Te'sîsât-ı Askeriyye İ'âne Komisyonu'na tevdi' olunarak alınan makbûz senedinin cânib-i vâlâlarına irsâl kılındığının ve ol tarafın ma'mûlât-ı dâhiliyyesinden halı ve seccâde gibi gönderilen şeyler dahı arz-ı huzûr-ı âlî kılınup istilzâm-ı memnûniyyet-i seniyye-i hazret-i Hilâfet-penâhî eylediginin şeref-sudûr buyurulan emr u fermân-ı hümâyûn-ı hazret-i Hilâfet-penâhî mantûk-ı âlîsine tevfiķan teblîg ve iş'ârına ibtidâr idilmiş olmagın ol bâbda... ” (BOA, p. 31)

The Council of Ministers' resolution dated March 31, 1912 (Hijri: 12 Rabi' al-Awwal 1330); It addresses the fact that Muslims coming from the Bukhara and China regions for the pilgrimage ran out of money in Ottoman territories, and that the expenses for these people to reach Jeddah or return to their homeland, Andijan, should be covered from the “masârif-i gayr-ı melhûza” item in the state budget, meaning “unforeseen expenses.” There was a separate payment item for such expenses in the Ottoman Empire. However, the amount remaining in the aforementioned payment item was insufficient to transport the stranded Muslims to Mecca, and the issue was resolved by creating an additional budget for the pilgrims with the signatures of the members of the Council of Ministers. The original content of the document is as follows:

“Buhara ve Çin ahâlîsinden olup edâ-yı hacc-ı şerîf için memâlik-i Osmâniye'ye gelerek fakr u zarûretlerinden sokak ortalarında kalan hacıların Cidde'ye ya Odesa tarîkıyla Andican'a sevkleri için masârif-i gayr-ı melhûza tertîbinden muhassas otuz bin guruşdan yirmi bin guruşu geçen üç yüz yirmi yedi senesinde sarf edilerek bakıyyesi sene-i cedîdenin hulûlüne binâ'en nezâret mu'temedinin tesviyeyi hesâb itmesi zımında Hazîne-i Mâliyyeye iâde edilmesi ve huccâc-ı merkûmeden çoğu hâl-i sefâlet ve perişânîde kaldığından mebleg-ı mezbûrun tekrar verilmesi taleb olunmuş ise de bu husûsda ayrıca tahsîsât alınması lüzûmu beyân edildiği ve el-yevm Der-sa'âdet'de ve yolda bulunan fukarâ-yı huccâcın masârif-i sevkîyyesine zikr olunan on bin guruşun da kifâyetsizliği cihetle bunların sevkleri için müceddeden yirmi bin guruşun Mâliyyeye masârif-i gayr-ı melhûza tertîbinden Dâhiliye Nezâreti'nde müteşekkîl komisyona i'tâsı hakkında nezâret-i müşârûn-ileyhânın 7 Rebi'ü'l-âhîr, sene [1]330 ve 13 Mart sene [1]328 târihli tezkîresi okundu. Son def'a olmak üzere onbeş bin guruşun bervech-i iş'âr masârif-i gayr-ı melhûza tertîbinden mezbûr komisyona tesviyesi husûsunun Maliye ve ba'de-ez-în bu husûsda icâb eden tahsîsâtın bütçeye vaz'ı lüzûmunun Evkâf-ı Hümâyûn Nezâretleri'ne tebliği ve Dâhiliye Nezâreti'ne ma'lûmât i'tâsı tezekkür kılındı.” (BOA, p. 106)

The document cited above demonstrates the Ottoman Empire's efforts to ensure that Muslims coming from outside the country for the pilgrimage were not left unattended during their journey, as well as the economic and bureaucratic aspects of protecting Muslims within the Ottoman Empire's borders who wished to reach the Kaaba. Muslims from regions such as Andican and Bukhara were protected by the Ottoman Empire from the moment they entered Ottoman territory for the pilgrimage, and utmost care was taken regarding their personal and property safety. The Ottoman Empire's stance and sensitivity in this regard strengthened the religious ties between the Muslims of Turkestan and the Ottoman Empire and increased the loyalty of Muslims living outside the country's borders to the Caliphate.

Conclusion

This study aims to make an original contribution to researches in this field by drawing on document-based inferences to understand the position of the Ottoman Empire in the Islamic world between the 16th and 20th centuries and how the Turkestan Khanates perceived the Ottoman Empire and the Caliphate. Based on the archival documents examined in this study, the findings regarding the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Turkestan during this period can be briefly summarized as follows:

The archival documents examined within the scope of this study reveal that mutual interaction was intensively maintained within the framework of practices such as the reception of envoys arriving from Turkestan to the Ottoman Empire, the presentation of gifts, the dispatch of pilgrims and ensuring the safety of the pilgrimage route, requests for religious books, requests for military aid, and requests for passports. The Ottoman Empire assumed a central role in this geography through cultural leadership and diplomatic representation, as it was unable to establish direct political sovereignty for various reasons, such as geographical distance and the hegemony of other powerful states in the region. In addition, the caliphate office, which the Ottoman Empire held until the first quarter of the 20th century, appears to be an important factor in terms of the Ottomans' influence in this region. Due to the influence of the caliphate, despite geographical distance and various negative factors, the Turkestan Khanates viewed the Ottomans as a religious and administrative center and a means of protection until the early 20th century, requesting assistance from the Ottoman Empire in the face of regional threats.

Ottoman–Turkestan relations did not take the form of a classic center-periphery or colonial-colony relationship, but rather emerged as a multidimensional network of relations based on Islamic unity, cultural affinity, and mutual religious ties. These relations, which developed particularly from the 16th century onwards, deepened through religious solidarity and connections, scientific cooperation, and symbolic diplomacy rather than political contacts. The fact that the Ottoman sultans bore the title of “caliph” ensured that they were recognized as religious authorities by khanates such as Bukhara, Khiva, and Khokand; this was concretely reflected in caliphate-centered diplomatic correspondence, gift exchanges, and the granting of insignia and titles.

Within this framework, Ottoman-Turkestan relations during the period mentioned should be understood not merely as historical ties and ethnic kinship, but as a manifestation of processes of mutual commitment, solidarity, and the construction of a shared identity within the Islamic world. These relations, which were interrupted during the Soviet era, should be seen as an important reference point today in the process of uncovering historical memory and rebuilding relations.

Abbreviations

Nu. : Number.

BOA : Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives).

p. : Page.

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