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**АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ПУТЕШЕСТВЕННИК РОБЕРТ ШОУ, ВПЕРВЫЕ ПОСЕТИВШИЙ
КАШГАР, И ЕГО ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ В ВОСТОЧНОМ ТУРКЕСТАНЕ**

АНГЛИЯЛЫК САЯКАТЧЫ РОБЕРТ ШОУ, КАШКАРГА БИРИНЧИ ЖОЛУ БАРГАН
ЖАНА АНЫН ЧЫГЫШ ТУРКСТАНДАГЫ ИШМЕРДҮҮЛҮГҮ

ROBERT SHAW, THE FIRST ENGLISH TRAVELLER TO VISIT KASHGAR, AND HIS
ACTIVITIES IN EASTERN TURKESTAN

Собиров Сардорбек Абдусаттор Угли

Собиров Сардорбек Абдусаттор Угли

Sobirov Sardorbek Abdusattor ugli

старший преподаватель кафедры всемирной истории Андижанский государственный университет

Андижан мамлекеттик университетинин дүйнө тарыхы кафедрасынын улук окутуучусу

Senior Lecturer of the Department of World History Andijan State University

sobirov88@adu.uz

ORCID ID: 0009-0009-7437-1529

АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ПУТЕШЕСТВЕННИК РОБЕРТ ШОУ, ВПЕРВЫЕ ПОСЕТИВШИЙ КАШГАР, И ЕГО ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ В ВОСТОЧНОМ ТУРКЕСТАНЕ

Аннотация

В данной статье анализируется деятельность одного из первых английских путешественников, посетивших Кашгар, Роберта Баркли Шоу в Восточном Туркестане, а также его роль во внешней политике государства Йеттишахар. Исследование проведено в контексте геополитической ситуации «Большой игры», сложившейся в Центральной Азии во второй половине XIX века. Раскрывается влияние политических, экономических и географических сведений, собранных Шоу во время его путешествия, на формирование политических решений правительства Британской Индии в отношении Восточного Туркестана. Кроме того, на основе сравнительного анализа показано, что установление Якуб бекем Бадаулетом отношений с Великобританией было направлено на укрепление международного статуса государства Йеттишахар, создание баланса в условиях давления со стороны России, а также на поиск путей получения военно-технических ресурсов. Содержательные различия русско-кашгарского договора 1872 года и англо-кашгарского соглашения 1874 года рассматриваются с точки зрения их дипломатического статуса и политических результатов. Обосновано, что Роберт Баркли Шоу выступал важным посредником в расширении внешних связей государства Йеттишар и в формировании британско-кашгарских отношений.

Ключевые слова: Роберт Баркли Шоу, Якуббек Бадаулет, государство Йеттишар, Британская империя, Российская империя, Большая игра, миссия Форсайта, англо-кашгарский договор

Англиялык саякатчы роберт шоу, кашкарга биринчи жолу барган жана анын чыгыш түркстандагы ишмердүүлүгү

Robert shaw, the first english traveller to visit kashgar, and his activities in eastern turkestan

Аннотация

Бул макалада Кашкарга барган алгачкы англиялык саякатчылардын бири Роберт Баркли Шоунун Чыгыш Түркстандагы ишмердүүлүгү жана Йеттишахар мамлекетинин тышкы саясатындагы ролу талданат. Изилдөө XIX кылымдын экинчи жарымында Борбордук Азияда калыптанган «Улуу оюн» геосаясий кырдаалынын алкагында жүргүзүлгөн. Шоунун саякаты учурунда топтогон саясий, экономикалык жана географиялык маалыматтарынын Чыгыш Түркстанга карата Британ Индиясынын өкмөтүнүн саясий чечимдерин кабыл алуусуна тийгизген таасири ачып көрсөтүлөт. Мындан тышкары, салыштырма талдоонун негизинде Якуб бек Бадаулеттин Улуу Британия менен байланыш түзүүсү Йеттишахар мамлекетинин эл аралык абалын бекемдөөгө, Россия тарабынан болгон кысым шартында тең салмактуулукту сактоого, ошондой эле аскердик-техникалык ресурстарды алуу жолдорун издөөгө багытталгандыгы көрсөтүлөт. 1872-жылдагы орус-кашкар келишими менен 1874-жылдагы англия-кашкар келишиминин мазмундук айырмачылыктары алардын дипломатиялык макамы жана саясий жыйынтыктарынын негизинде каралат. Жыйынтыгында Роберт Баркли Шоунун Йеттишахар мамлекетинин тышкы байланыштарын кеңейтүүдө жана британ-кашкар мамилелерин калыптандырууда маанилүү ортомчу болгондугу негизделет.

Ачкыч сөздөр: Роберт Баркли Шоу, Якуббек Бадаулет, Йеттишахар мамлекети, Британ империясы,

Abstract

This article analyzes the activities of Robert Barkley Shaw, one of the first English travelers to visit Kashgar, in Eastern Turkestan and his role in the foreign policy of the Yettishar state. The study is conducted within the framework of the geopolitical environment of the “Great Game” that emerged in Central Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century. It reveals how the political, economic, and geographical data collected during Shaw’s journey influenced the policy decisions of the Government of British India regarding Eastern Turkestan. The article also provides a comparative analysis of Yakub Beg Badavlat’s efforts to establish relations with Britain in order to strengthen the international status of the Yettishahar state, create a balance against Russian pressure, and gain access to military-technical resources. The substantive differences between the Russo–Kashgar treaty of 1872 and the Anglo–Kashgar treaty of 1874 are examined in terms of diplomatic status and political outcomes. The study substantiates that Robert Barkley Shaw acted as an important intermediary in expanding the external relations of the Yettishar state and in the formation of British–Kashgar relations.

Keywords: Robert Barkley Shaw, Yakub Beg Badaulet, Yettishar state, British Empire, Russian Empire, Great Game, Forsyth mission, Anglo–Kashgar treaty

Россия империясы, Улуу оюн, Форсайт миссиясы,
англо-кашкар келишими

Introduction

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Central Asia became a field of geopolitical rivalry between the Russian and British Empires. This process entered history under the name of the “Great Game,” and one of its key directions was the question of Eastern Turkestan. The establishment of the Yettishar state under the leadership of Yakub Beg Badaulet in this region created a new situation not only in the internal political life of the area but also in the system of international relations. It was during this period that Eastern Turkestan began to attract the attention of Great Britain as a strategically and economically important territory.

The activities of Robert Barkley Shaw, one of the first English travelers to visit Kashgar, represent an important stage in the formation of British–Yettishar relations. The political, economic, and geographical information he collected during his journey had a significant impact on the policy decisions of the British government regarding Eastern Turkestan. Through his observations, Shaw drew important conclusions about the commercial potential of Kashgar and Yarkand, the relative stability established in the region under the rule of Yakub Beg, and the strategic threats associated with the southward expansion of the Russian Empire. As a result, his activities laid the groundwork for the organization of British diplomatic missions and the conclusion of the Anglo–Kashgar trade treaty.

The relevance of the topic lies in the fact that the activities of Robert Barkley Shaw are often mentioned only briefly within the general context of geopolitical processes, whereas his direct diplomatic, commercial, and intelligence-related activities in Eastern Turkestan have not been sufficiently studied as an independent subject of research. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of Shaw’s activities in the region, his role in expanding the international relations of the Yettishar state, and the impact he exerted on British political circles.

The problem posed in the article was studied based on sources and scientific literature such as Hodong Kim's "Holy war in China: the Muslim rebellion and state in Chinese Central Asia, 1864-1877," D.Ch.Boulger's "The life of Yakoob-Beg: Athalik Ghazi and Badaulet, Ameer of Kashgar," D.A.Isiev's "Uyghur State of Yettishar (1864-1877) " and others. In the study of the problem, such methods of analysis as comparative analysis, systematization, principles of objectivity, historical-chronological, analysis and synthesis were used.

At the initial stage of the study, it can be observed that the principal primary sources on the subject were produced in English and Russian. Among them, D. C. Boulger’s “The Life of Yakoob Beg, Athalik Ghazi and Badaulet, Ameer of Kashgar,” published in 1878, occupies an important place. This work provides detailed information on the personality and political activity of Yakub Beg, the historical factors behind the formation of his state, the socio-economic condition of Kashgar, and the international relations of the Yettishar state.

At the same time, the letters, memoirs, and diplomatic agreements of British representatives who visited Yettishar as merchants, travelers, and envoys also serve as important historical sources. It was precisely on the basis of these materials that a number of scholarly works were produced by European historians and writers. In this regard, the accounts and studies of such travelers and

researchers as R. B. Shaw, G. W. Hayward, T. D. Forsyth, and G. Bellew are of particular significance.

Hodong Kim's "Holy War in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864–1877," produced as the result of many years of research, is regarded as one of the most important studies for illuminating this topic. In this monograph, the political history of Eastern Turkestan during the period in question, the factors that gave rise to the uprising, the process of the formation of Yakub Beg's state, and its domestic and foreign policy are examined in depth on the basis of scholarly literature and archival materials. The author also devotes particular attention to the activities of travelers, envoys, and agents who arrived in the territory of Yettishar. In particular, R. B. Shaw's visit to Kashgar, his relations with Yakub Beg, and the substance of those contacts are presented in detail.

In Russian-language historiography, studies, sources, and scholarly works on the subject are relatively extensive and distinguished by their richness in content. In the work "Уйгурское государство Йэйтишар" by the historian D. A. Isiyev, the establishment of the state, its socio-economic condition, as well as its political relations with the Russian Empire, Great Britain, and the Ottoman Empire are comprehensively examined.

Certain aspects of this topic are also reflected in the works of Uzbek scholars. In particular, the brochure "Muhammad Yoqubbek" by A. Khodjayev and Sh. Kuldoshev provides important information on the biography of Otaliq Ghazi Yakub Beg Badaulet, his political activities, his foreign diplomatic relations, and his descendants. In D. Urakov's monograph "Turkiston general-gubernatorligining qo'shni davlatlar bilan siyosiy va iqtisodiy aloqalari," Yakub Beg's relations with Russia and Great Britain, as well as his contacts with the Ottoman Empire, are analyzed.

By conquering the Kazan Khanate in 1552 and the Astrakhan Khanate in 1556, Ivan the Terrible opened the way for Russia's expansion toward the south. However, expansion in the southern direction proceeded much more slowly than in the east. Only sixty years after the Cossack commander Yermak launched his campaign into Siberia in 1579, a group of Cossacks reached the Sea of Okhotsk in 1639. This represented an unprecedented rate of territorial growth in history: from the mid-sixteenth to the late seventeenth century, Russia annexed an average of 35,000 square kilometers of land per year—an area roughly equivalent to that of the modern Netherlands. The greatest territorial gains of this period were achieved at the expense of Siberia.

Nevertheless, southward expansion was blocked for almost three centuries. When Peter I (1689–1725) attempted to subjugate Khiva in 1717, the expeditionary force was completely annihilated by the Khivans. A decade later, in 1734, a part of the Kazakhs recognized the authority of Empress Anna Ioannovna (1730–1740). In reality, however, this was a calculated agreement aimed at obtaining material benefits from Russia. Only in the first half of the nineteenth century did Russia establish effective control over the Kazakh steppe and, in 1853, succeed in capturing the fortress of Ak-Mechet on the lower Syr Darya. This event marked the beginning of a full-scale and rapid expansion toward Central Asia (Kim, 2004, p. 138).

At the core of British imperial policy in Central Asia lay the question of the security of its Indian colony. From the moment Emperor Paul I (1796–1801) proposed a joint campaign to India to Napoleon, the possibility of a Russian invasion of India began to preoccupy British policymakers. Until the early nineteenth century, however, this threat was not regarded as serious. The danger became more tangible only after Russia crossed the vast Kazakh steppe and advanced into the deserts and oases of Central Asia. From the late 1830s onward, Russophobia intensified in Britain. One of the

main reasons for this was Russia's active support for the Persian Shah Mohammad Shah (1834–1848) during the siege of Herat in 1837.

Although the seven-month siege of Herat ended in failure, the event forced the British to reconsider their policy and played a significant role in the decision to launch the British campaign to Afghanistan in 1839. Despite the failure of the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–1842), British concerns about Russian activity in Central Asia persisted. In the late 1840s and 1850s Britain crossed the line of the Indus, annexed Punjab, and advanced nearly a thousand miles into what had previously been considered “disputed territories.” At the same time, Russia captured Ak-Mechet and established the Syr Darya line. As a result, the buffer zone between the two empires was reduced to only a few hundred miles, turning into a narrow belt inhabited by tribes exhausted by internal conflicts or by weakened polities, intersected in all directions by military routes (Rawlinson, 1875, pp. 141–145).

The Russian capture of Tashkent in 1865 was sufficient to revive fears about the “Russian threat” to India. Henry M. Lawrence, who had served as Viceroy of India and had been one of the staunchest advocates of the policy of “masterly inactivity,” was nevertheless compelled in the final years of his career to pursue a more active policy against Russia. Beginning with the viceroyalty of Richard S. B. Mayo (1869–1872), British India adopted the strategy of surrounding its northern frontiers with a “chain of friendly independent states.” The Government of British India sought to bring Afghanistan within its sphere of influence and to eliminate Russian influence from Eastern Turkestan, where the new Muslim state under the leadership of Yakub Beg had emerged (Kim, 2004, p. 139).

The relations between the British Empire and the state of Yettishar did not take the form of a direct alliance or open political cooperation; rather, they developed within a framework of cautious and flexible policy adapted to changing circumstances. These contacts were closely connected with the complex geopolitical situation that emerged in Central Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century. The rise of the Yettishar state was regarded by the British Empire as an event of strategic importance, as it was seen as a significant factor capable of restraining the southward expansion of the Russian Empire through Turkestan. British political circles did not view Yettishar as a fully fledged ally, but rather as a buffer political entity serving to maintain the balance of power between the Russian and Qing empires. The establishment of British relations with Kashgar was largely dependent on the efforts of individual figures such as R. B. Shaw, G. W. Hayward, and W. H. Johnson (Sobirov, 2025, p. 37).

According to Peter Hopkirk, when in the autumn of 1868 the adventurous British traveller Robert Shaw reached the former Chinese territories through the northern mountains, the situation there appeared as follows. He aspired to become the first among his compatriots to set foot in the mysterious cities of Kashgar and Yarkand. Shaw was aware that before him a Russian officer of Kazakh origin had visited the region in the guise of a merchant and had carried away important military and commercial information. However, this had occurred prior to Yakub Beg's seizure of power, and Shaw was convinced that Kashgaria would offer vast trading opportunities for enterprising British merchants. Initially, Robert had taken the entrance examination to the Sandhurst military college at Marlborough with the intention of becoming a regular soldier. Yet during his adolescence he contracted rheumatic fever, and the lasting consequences for his health ultimately forced him to abandon his military ambitions. Nature compensated for his physical weakness with determination. At the age of twenty he moved to India and became the owner of a tea plantation in the foothills of the Himalayas. After conversations with local traders who had travelled to Chinese Turkestan, Shaw became convinced that an untapped market existed there. The interruption of

Chinese imports as a result of Yakub Beg's conquest created favourable conditions for Indian tea to dominate the local markets. The Government in Calcutta did not approve of journeys beyond India, and British officers and other officials were forbidden to undertake such expeditions. The grim lesson of Conolly and Stoddart had not been forgotten. The Viceroy had warned: "If they are killed, we cannot avenge them and we shall lose our prestige." He believed that such individuals caused more harm than benefit, although exceptions were made for Indian agents carrying out special assignments for the government, since they could more easily be disavowed. As Shaw was not a government servant, he considered these restrictions inapplicable to himself. On 20 September 1868 he sent a local messenger ahead to inform Yakub Beg's frontier officials of his arrival and his friendly intentions, and then set out from Leh with a caravan loaded with tea and other goods (Hopkirk, 1990, pp. 323–324).

The accounts written by R. B. Shaw following his journey to Kashgar in 1868–1869 had a significant impact on British policy toward Eastern Turkestan. He emphasized the enormous potential of the local market and warned of the risk that this strategically and commercially valuable region might fall under Russian control. Shaw's vivid depiction of prosperity and security in Eastern Turkestan under the rule of Yakub Beg made a strong impression on R. S. B. Mayo, who had assumed office as the new Viceroy of India at the beginning of 1869 (Kim, 2004, p. 143).

Shaw was unaware that a British rival was following in his wake. This was George Hayward, a young former army officer with an intense passion for exploration, whose expedition was financed by the Royal Geographical Society in London. Hayward also enjoyed the close support of Sir Henry Rawlinson, who was soon to become the president of the Society. Formally, the explorer had travelled to the region to study the mountain passes between Ladakh and Kashgaria; however, Rawlinson's keen interest in the journey suggested that political motives also lay behind the expedition. Indeed, at that time exploration and the collection of intelligence were closely intertwined activities, and it was almost impossible to draw a clear line between them. Regardless of the true nature of Hayward's mission, both Englishmen were soon to be drawn, albeit unintentionally, into the arena of the Great Game.

Shaw first learned of his rival when he was informed that an Englishman in Afghan disguise was following him at a distance of several days' march behind his slowly moving caravan. Surprised by this news, Shaw hastily wrote to the unknown traveller asking his identity and demanded that he turn back before endangering the expedition into which he had invested all his resources. Hayward, no less determined than Shaw, rejected this demand. Nevertheless, the two rivals agreed to meet around a campfire at night in order to clarify the situation. In reality, there was no genuine rivalry between them: Shaw's objective was commercial, whereas Hayward's aim was to study the passes and incorporate them into his maps. Hayward had no intention of competing for Kashgar or Yarkand; he merely wished to use these cities as a base for his journey to the then completely unexplored Pamir Mountains. Even so, he granted Shaw a two-week start and then began to investigate the passes and rivers on the Indian side of the Karakoram. Although they were at times separated by little more than a mile and a half, after their meeting on that cold night they did not see each other again for several months. Both were irritated by the fact that they had found themselves in the same region at the same time, and from that moment onward they tried to ignore one another (Hopkirk, 1990, p. 324).

R. B. Shaw arrived in the city of Kashgar, from where the Pamir Mountains were visible to the west and the Taklamakan Desert to the east. After an initially warm reception and a first meeting with Yakub Beg Badaulet, a second audience was scheduled to take place three days later; however,

it was postponed for three months. This delay was not accidental, as Yakub Beg was at that time seeking to consolidate his relations with Russia (Sobirov, 2025, p. 37).

Yakub Beg hoped that the development of trade relations between Russia and Yettishar would become the first step toward broader bilateral dialogue. He showed particular attention to the first Russian merchants who arrived in Kashgar: they were accommodated in the best caravanserai in the city, deliberate interest was displayed in their goods, and Yakub Beg personally purchased many items from them, paying in gold. However, Russia did not respond to Yakub Beg's diplomatic objectives and preferred to limit its involvement to commercial relations alone. For Yakub Beg, the international recognition of Yettishar was of crucial importance. Therefore, he sought to exploit the rivalry between Russia and Great Britain in an attempt to draw one of them into an alliance with Kashgar (Isiyev, 1981, p. 37).

On 5 April 1869, Yakub Beg summoned Robert Shaw to his presence. Shaw sensed that this was a favourable sign, as he had been closely observing Yakub Beg's relations with Russia. The ruler received the British merchant even more warmly than before. At the end of the meeting, Yakub Beg announced his intention to establish active relations with the British Empire and to dispatch his own envoy together with Shaw. At that time, however, Shaw's disliked associate George Hayward and a mysterious figure from the so-called "pandit" school, Mirza Shuja, were being detained by the authorities. They were to be held as hostages until the envoy of the Yettishar state returned safely. Nevertheless, Shaw, taking advantage of Yakub Beg's desire to improve relations with the British, attempted to assist them despite his personal dislike. He immediately sent a letter to one of Yakub Beg's high-ranking officials with whom he maintained good relations. In this message he warned that, if "an Englishman were being held here against his will," Yakub Beg's intention to send an embassy to India in pursuit of friendship with Britain would prove to be a futile undertaking. As a result, not only Hayward but also the enigmatic Mirza Shuja was released and allowed to depart freely (Hopkirk, 1990, pp. 334–335). They returned to India with substantial and valuable information. In particular, on the basis of the data collected through the efforts of Mirza Shuja, the first map was compiled that covered the northern regions of Afghanistan as well as the Pamir mountain system.

Inspired by the visits of Shaw and Hayward, Yakub Beg sent Sayyid Ahror as an envoy to the court of Lord Mayo and requested that a British officer accompany him on his return to Kashgar. Mayo received this initiative with great satisfaction and immediately dispatched the first official British mission consisting of T. D. Forsyth, G. Henderson, and A. O. Hume; R. B. Shaw joined them at a later stage. However, when they reached Yarkand, they discovered that Yakub Beg had left for the eastern frontier, where he was engaged in intense fighting against the Dungs. Since Mayo had issued strict instructions that the British envoys were not to remain in Kashgaria during the winter, they could not stay long in Yarkand, and as a result the mission ended unsuccessfully.

After returning from the battlefield to Kashgar, Yakub Beg once again sent Sayyid Ahror to India in late 1871. He was to deliver letters addressed to the Governor-General of India and to the Queen of England. The purpose of this embassy was not only to inform the British government of Yakub Beg's recent victory over the Dungs at Urumchi but also to purchase rifles on the Indian market. The growing Russian influence in Kashgaria following the Russo–Kashgar commercial agreement of 1872, together with R. B. Shaw's advocacy in Britain that "Kashgaria might in the future be opened as a great market and would appear to British merchants as a kind of Eldorado," gave a new impetus to the development of Anglo–Kashgar relations (Shaw, 1871, p. 68).

By the beginning of 1873, "the India Office was inundated with petitions and representations from chambers of commerce and other public bodies, all citing Shaw's arguments in favour of

concluding a British commercial treaty with the Atalik Ghazi.” Lord Northbrook, who was appointed Governor-General after Mayo, also considered the establishment of friendly relations with Kashgaria to be expedient (Kim, 2004, p. 144).

Sayyid Yakub Khan, who had been granted full authority by Yakub Beg, invited the British mission to Kashgar and proposed the conclusion of a commercial treaty, offering in return permission for the permanent residence of representatives of both sides. As a result, a British mission of 350 members, headed by T. D. Forsyth, set out for the capital of Kashgar. Sayyid Yakub Khan, who was returning from Istanbul, joined them on the way. The mission arrived in Kashgar in early December 1873. The commercial treaty was signed on 2 February 1874 and was subsequently ratified and formally approved on 13 April by the Governor-General of India, Lord Northbrook (Boulger, 1878, pp. 322–329).

There was a significant difference between the Russo–Kashgar treaty of 1872 and the Anglo–Kashgar agreement of 1874. Although both were devoted to commercial issues, the agreement concluded with Russia provided only for the appointment of caravan-bashis by the two sides, and their legal status did not go beyond that of “trade representatives.” In contrast, the treaty signed with Britain stipulated the appointment of official representatives and commercial agents and recognized for them diplomatic status and privileges comparable to those of envoys and consuls. This considerably strengthened the political standing of the Kashgar state in the international arena. At the same time, the British traveller and researcher Robert Barkley Shaw was appointed as a special representative in Kashgar and served under the title “Officer on Special Duty, Kashghar” until his return to India in June 1875 (Kim, 2004, p. 145).

According to the archival-based research of the historian D. Urakov, in 1873 the Forsyth mission was sent to Eastern Turkestan on the instructions of the Anglo-Indian government. Although the embassy was officially presented as aiming to establish trade relations, its primary objectives were to study the Russo–Kashgar frontier, to persuade Yaquzbek to accept military assistance in the form of arms supplies, and thereby to weaken the influence of the Russian Empire in the Fergana Valley. The mission consisted of about 300 members and carried with it letters from Queen Victoria and the Viceroy of India. Despite its declared commercial purpose, the composition of the mission was largely made up of intelligence officers and topographers. Having reached Kashgar in December 1873, the British representatives held several meetings with Yaquzbek. As a result, in February 1874 a trade treaty was concluded between Britain and the state of Yettishar. This agreement created broad opportunities for Britain in the region and enabled it to take a more active role in the affairs of Western China. At the same time, the British provided the amir’s troops with arms and military equipment (Uraikov, 2021, pp. 66–67).

Yaquzbek derived substantial benefits from the treaty concluded with British India. In addition to securing the recognition of his authority by the British government, he succeeded in strengthening the security of his state against the Russian threat. Any Russian military campaign against Kashgar could have led to a serious deterioration in Anglo-Russian relations. Furthermore, the establishment of friendly ties with Britain enabled Yaquzbek to gain access to sources of arms procurement. Although the Government of British India never acted as an official supplier of weapons, it granted licenses to private firms to transport arms to Kashgar. In 1875, as a gesture of goodwill, the Indian administration even covered the transportation costs of two hundred cases of weapons sent from Bombay to Lahore and intended for Yarkand. However, Yaquzbek did not confine his foreign policy solely to relations with his immediate neighbours. He also sought to strengthen the

legitimacy of his rule within the wider Muslim world, and it was precisely this need that prompted him to establish diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire.

The article analyzes Robert Barkley Shaw's first visit to Kashgar and his activities in Eastern Turkestan in close connection with the geopolitical context of the "Great Game" that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. The results of the study demonstrate that Shaw's journey was not merely a private expedition or a commercial initiative; rather, it served as an important source of information for the political circles of British India regarding Eastern Turkestan. His observations on the commercial potential of Kashgar and Yarkand, the relative political stability of the region, the actual strength of Yaqubbek's authority, and the possible consequences of Russian expansion subsequently stimulated Britain's diplomatic activism.

It has been established that Yaqubbek Badavlat's foreign policy-particularly his efforts to establish relations with Britain-pursued two main objectives. First, it aimed to strengthen the international status of the Yettishar state and to expand the scope of its de facto recognition; second, it sought to reinforce security guarantees in the face of Russian pressure and to gain access to military-technical resources. In this sense, Shaw and the subsequent missions became for Yaqubbek not only a channel for trade but also an instrument for achieving diplomatic legitimacy.

A comparative analysis of the 1872 Russo-Kashgar treaty and the 1874 Anglo-Kashgar agreement demonstrates that the British treaty created broader political and diplomatic opportunities. While the agreement with Russia was largely confined to trade and the status of the representatives did not exceed that of "commercial agents," the treaty with Britain provided for the appointment of official representatives and trade agents and recognized for them diplomatic privileges equivalent to those of envoys and consuls. This significantly elevated the international standing of the Yettishar state and brought Kashgar's external relations closer to an institutionalized form.

The Forsyth mission and Shaw's activity in Kashgar as an "Officer on Special Duty" confirm that Anglo-Yettishar relations had entered a practical stage. In this process, Britain's cautious policy-avoiding a direct alliance while strengthening its influence in the region-interacted with Yaqubbek's pragmatic diplomacy, which sought to create a balance by exploiting the rivalry of the great powers. Despite the absence of official arms supplies, the existence of delivery mechanisms through private firms indicates that Yaqubbek also expected military benefits from his relations with Britain.

Overall, through his personal initiative and observations, Robert Barkley Shaw emerged as an intermediary figure in shaping Britain's policy toward Eastern Turkestan. His journeys, the information he gathered, and his diplomatic mediation opened a new stage in the external relations of the Yettishar state and directly contributed to the acceleration of Anglo-Kashgar relations in the early 1870s. At the same time, it was revealed that Yaqubbek's diplomatic strategy was not limited to relations with Britain and Russia; the need to consolidate his legitimacy within the wider Muslim world also led him to establish contacts with the Ottoman Empire. In general, Robert Barkley Shaw proved to be an important mediator in expanding the foreign relations of the Yettishar state and integrating it into the system of international relations.

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