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# RUSSIAN MOVES IN CENTRAL ASIA

## 1843—1856

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From roughly 1800 to 1843 there existed two conflicting Russian policies as to how problems involved in the Central Asian situation should be handled.<sup>1)</sup> The first of these policies was that a settlement of political differences with the Central Asians could be achieved through peaceful, diplomatic negotiations, backed by the potential threat of Russian armed force. The opposing policy was that negotiations with the principalities were completely pointless, and that Russia's influence over Central Asia could be asserted only by military action. The dismal failure of the armed expedition commanded by General Vasili Perovskii against Khiva in 1839 had weakened the validity of the view favoring an exclusively military solution of Russian-Central Asian differences. Sentiment in St. Petersburg shifted to the policy of peaceful negotiations, and resulted in the series of Russian diplomatic missions sent to Bukhara and Khiva from 1839 to 1842. After 1843, it became very apparent that the "diplomatic era" also had produced rather barren results. Russian-Bukharan relations following the Butenev mission in 1841 were at an all time low, due to the mission's failure to reach any agreement with the erratic and intransigent Emir Nasrullah. Although Bukhara did not openly engage in actions hostile to Russia, the "neutral feelings" which had characterized relations between the two states in the 1820's and 1830's were replaced by a distinct animosity and distrust.

With regard to Khiva, it appeared for a while that diplomacy had produced favorable results. The openly aggressive attitude of the khanate toward Russia during the 1830's was replaced by the agreement of 1842, in which Khiva renounced its old policies and the two nations promised to become good neighbors and close friends. Nevertheless, this act of agreement had been dictated by the Russians and was never really understood by the Khivans. Their feeling was that Russia now had its treaty and was satisfied. They did not interpret the agreement negotiated by the Russian envoy Colonel Danilevskii as a restriction or limitation to their freedom of action in Central Asia. Khiva was once again making moves inimical to Russian interests in the region as early as 1843. The khanate initiated contact with Central Asian groups opposed to Russia, and supported their cause. It again began to assert influence in territory which Russia claimed was under its protection. The 1842 treaty had theoretically ended the trade in Russian slaves, but after 1842, Khivans continued to

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1) For a contemporary Russian view of the conflict between the two policies see: M. Romanovski, *Notes on the Central Asiatic Question*, Calcutta, 1870, pp. 8-9.

capture Russian citizens and sell them in the markets of Central Asia.<sup>2)</sup> In other words, a treaty had been negotiated and signed, but nothing was really changed. After reaching a peak in the 1830's, commerce between Russia and the Central Asian states showed an overall decline in the early 1840's. Russian trade in Central Asia remained insecure, and lacked any of the guarantees usually associated with reciprocal trade between nations.<sup>3)</sup>

The reaction to these events and situations in Central Asia caused another change in Russian policy. This time the Russian Government shifted from the diplomatic approach toward one of a more militant and aggressive nature. Peaceful negotiations had not substantially increased Russian influence or prestige in the region. Thus after 1843, the empire was ready to use its military might to carry out Russia's "manifest destiny" to control, either directly or indirectly, the lands and seas of Central Asia. The shift of policy was facilitated in the 1840's by conditions in Central Asia itself, and by the international situation in Europe and the Near East. In Central Asia, the bitter hatred of the local nations for one another precluded any thought of a united stand in opposition to a Russian advance into the region. The almost constant altercation between the principalities, and the intestine feuds and struggles within each, succeeded only in weakening their ability to resist Russian penetration. This added greatly to Russia's confidence that a new military campaign into Central Asia would meet with only indecisive and debilitated resistance.

The thinking of the Central Asians, regarding an attack on the region, also worked to the Russian's advantage. Throughout the early nineteenth century, whenever they felt themselves threatened by an outside force, the Central Asians suddenly became very conciliatory and friendly. Once the danger passed, they returned to their normal attitude of self-confidence and disdain for nations and peoples beyond their borders. In 1839 and 1840, the Perovskii expedition and the British advance into northern India and Afghanistan produced fear in Central Asia that the area was in immediate danger of being overrun by massive attacks on the part of either the British, the Russians, or both. This fear did much to explain the willingness of the Central Asian states to enter into peaceful diplomatic negotiations with Russia from 1840 to 1843, and to outwardly agree to Russian demands. Once the danger and threat to their safety had apparently passed, the Central Asians resumed their old posture. Russian envoys found that either they could obtain no agreement at all, or that the agreements reached had little practical meaning. After 1843, the attitude of the Central Asians was that there was no real threat of a Russian attack, and therefore they saw no need of continuing a conciliatory policy toward Russia, or of making any preparations to defend against a Russian advance. This self-deceptive, self-confident, and naive attitude toward the realities of their own position weakened even further the Central Asians' ability to resist Russian encroachment; and at the

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2) Demetrius C. Boulger, *England and Russia in Central Asia*, Vol. I, London, 1879, pp. 150-151.

3) See the section on trade at the end of this paper.

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same time, gave added confidence to those officials in St. Petersburg who advocated a military solution to Russian political problems in the region. This is not to imply that the Russians were not completely confident in their military ability to crush the Central Asian states at any time, regardless of conditions. The Central Asians' attitude of over-estimating their own security simply reinforced that confidence.

By the mid 1840's, the Russians' confidence in a military solution to the problems of Central Asia was also fortified by their knowledge of the area. The region was no longer the mysterious, *terra incognita* invaded by Bekovich-Cherkasskii in 1715. The cumulative work of envoys and explorers like Murav'ev, Meyendorf, Eversmann, Khanykov, Karelin, Danilevskii, etc. had given Russia a rather complete picture, not only of the political structure of Central Asia, but also of its geography, topography, resources and climate. The Russians were now certain that a move into the region could not be thwarted either by the people or by the land itself. The unfortunate experiences of Bekovich-Cherkasskii in 1715 and of Perovskii in 1839 would not be repeated. Russia would not advance against the unknown, but against an old and familiar adversary.

The second set of circumstances which tended to facilitate a Russian move into Central Asia in the 1840's arose because of the region's position in international affairs generally, and in British-Russian relations in particular. After Tsar Nicholas' visit to England in 1844, the Central Asian states were placed outside the British sphere of influence. The "unwritten agreement" of 1844 implied that rivalry between Russia and England would cease in areas north of Afghanistan. The agreement was part of the improved Anglo-Russian relations in the years immediately following the Straits Convention of July, 1841.<sup>4)</sup> The British never interpreted the understanding on Central Asia as one which gave Russia a free hand in the area, but this was its practical result. In the 1840's, Russian immunity from British opposition in the region was further enhanced by problems and conditions in India which required Britain's attention: problems like the Baluchi War in 1843, the Sikh Wars of 1845 and 1848, the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, the internal reforms of Governor-General Dalhousie from 1848 to 1856, and the consolidation of British control in Afghanistan. During these years, the British had little time to concern themselves with affairs in the Central Asian states and in the steppe land to the north. The British also felt that because of Perovskii's failure in 1839, the outward resistance of the Central Asians to Russia in the 1840's, and the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1844 to cease competition in the region, they no longer had need to fear Russian motives. This

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4) H. Sutherland Edwards claimed that the agreement of 1844 specifically mentioned the Central Asian states. "In 1844... Russia agreed to leave the Khanates of Central Asia as a neutral zone interposed between the two empires, so as to preserve them from dangerous contact." He also claimed that Russia agreed to preserve the principalities' independence, and to take measures in co-operation with England to preserve the peace in Persia. See: H. S. Edwards, *Russian Projects against India*, London, 1885, pp. 154-155. In his discussion of the 1844 agreement on pages 149 to 156, Edwards gave no references for his statements, and it has been impossible to find any sources which will verify his claims regarding Russia's specific commitment.

optimistic and misinformed appraisal of the Central Asian situation worked to the advantage of Russia.<sup>5)</sup> For all practical purposes, after 1844 Russia could move into Central Asia free from worries about the opposition of other outside powers.

The factors discussed above, all combined to support the shift in Russia's general approach to Central Asia from a policy of diplomatic negotiations to one of military campaigns designed to firmly establish Russian influence and prestige over this area of the world. After over twenty-five years of debate, the advocates of a military solution had won the day. It can therefore be said that the failure of the earlier diplomatic missions to solve Russian grievances in Central Asia, in effect, sealed the fate of the region. Once the Russian Government was determined on a military course of action, the final conquest of Central Asia became practically inevitable.<sup>6)</sup>

Russia's "master plan" for expansion into Central Asia was formulated during the mid 1840's. It is believed that General Vasili Perovskii was the chief architect of the plan. His ideas were undoubtedly influenced by similar proposals made as early as 1834, by General Verigin and in 1841, by Generals Annenkov and Hasford.<sup>7)</sup> The plan itself was relatively simple. Essentially it was a "pincers movement" into the steppes. The Orenburg frontier line in the west and the Siberian line in the east would be extended southward, and would then converge in the southern steppe at a point just north of the city of Chimkent. This would expand the frontiers of the empire from the Orenburg, Orsk, Semipalatinsk border southward to the Aral Sea, the Syr-Dar'ia River, and then westward to the borders of Sinkiang. In this operation, most of Kazakhstan would be enclosed within the empire. It would bring the southern boundaries of Russia adjacent to the territories directly controlled by the khanates of Khiva and Kokand. General Dimitri Romanovskii described the purpose of this pincers operation as follows:

In order to pacify the Steppes and alter our position with regards to the Central Asian Khanats, *i. e.* to place ourselves in such a position that instead of being obliged to guard against their invasion it might be the reverse, and that in the event of any hostile designs against us, we might be able to threaten the Khanats with attack...<sup>8)</sup>

The plan for uniting the Orenburg and Siberian lines just north of the Central Asian states did not receive official authorization by the Russian Government until

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5) H. C. Rawlinson specifically mentioned British apathy to Russian moves in Central Asia after 1840, and claimed this apathy was dangerous to British interests. See: Henry C. Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East*, London, 1875 pp. 139-140.

6) For those interested in more detailed information than can be presented here about Russian activities in Central Asia from 1846 to 1856, see: M. A. Terent'ev, *Istoriia zavoevaniia Srednei Azii*, Vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1906, pp. 201-242.

7) Romanovski, *op. cit.*, p. 7. For the historian there is an understandable degree of uncertainty regarding this "master plan" for advancement into Central Asia. The existence of such a plan is unquestionable, but as to the exact date of its formulation and the people involved, the sources are quite silent. This was not the type of subject the Russian Government wished to have publicized.

8) Romanovski, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

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1854, but the initial phases of the operation were put into effect long before that date.<sup>9)</sup> The government was very careful to emphasize that approval of the plan was not intended as the opening of a general campaign to conquer Central Asia. "The Government resolved to limit itself to the execution of that plan, and was far from harbouring projects of further conquest."<sup>10)</sup> In the light of subsequent action in Central Asia, this statement is interesting and rather ironic. It set the tone for Russian policy during the 1860's, and at no time during these later years did the government approve any advance into Central Asia beyond the plan authorized in 1854. Expansion beyond that was due solely to the initiative of Russian commanders in the field, and was approved by St. Petersburg only after the event.<sup>11)</sup>

As previously stated, the initial steps in the "master plan" were put into operation long before 1854. They were of two types: 1.) the occupation and settlement of certain strategic points in the Kazakh steppe region, and 2.) the sending of various scientific expeditions to explore areas in the steppes and in the vicinity of the Aral Sea. Southeast of Orenburg and Orsk, Russian forces occupied and built forts on the following locations: Irgiz-1845, Turgai-1845, Ulumavskii-1846, and Raim (Aral'skoe)-1847.<sup>12)</sup> The establishment of Fort Raim at the mouth of the Syr-Dar'ia River marked Russia's furthest penetration into Central Asia in the first half of the nineteenth century. In the east, the Siberian frontier was advanced southward from Semipalatinsk. Russian forces occupied Sergiopol (Aiagus) and Kopal in 1847. The stage was set for drawing the two frontier lines together across the southern steppes. The expansion of the frontier during the 1840's was a slow, deliberate process. The method was to capture a site quickly, and then remain inactive for some time while the position taken was consolidated and connected to a more stable base in the rear. In this way, the hostility of local tribes was kept at a minimum and the ultimate

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9) This of course shows that government approval in 1854 was simply a formality. In approving the plan, the government was advised by General Perovskii and by General Hasford, governor-general of Western Siberia. The plan was confirmed by the tsar and a special committee of advisers. "Such a measure was even at that time substantially indispensable, since it was the only one that could secure the object of that advance into the Steppes which was commenced during the first twenty years of the present century, and which the forces of circumstance compelled us to make." By 1850 it was "utterly impossible to confine ourselves to the old line along the Ural and Irtish," and Russia had to move further into the steppes. (Romanovski, *op. cit.*, p. 2) Romanovskii went on to claim that the move was necessary to end the civil wars among the Kirgiz tribes, to protect Russian trade, and to counteract "the influence of the Central Asian Khanats over the Kirghiez, which was hostile towards Russia." (Romanovski, *op. cit.*, p. 4.)

10) Romanovski, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

11) H. C. Rawlinson claimed that Tsar Nicholas I may have felt occupation of the Syr-Dar'ia as "indispensable to the due development of Russian power in Central Asia," but the move followed the traditional creed of Russian Empire building. See: Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 166. The British were justifiably skeptical of Russia's claim that their advances in Asia were necessary in order to bring civilization to the barbarians.

12) In 1846 Khiva reacted to the Russian advances into the steppes by building a strong fort on the Kuvan-Dar'ia, an arm in the delta of the Syr-Dar'ia. The Khivan fort was named Khodzha-Niaz and commanded routes through the Kyzyl-Kum. See: Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

goal of the Russian advance kept in doubt. The Russian Government hoped that this gradual process of absorption would prevent any undue alarm in the Central Asian states, and on the part of the British.

From 1846 to 1852 the second part of the plan's operation was being carried out simultaneously with the military advance. This was the sending of various exploratory groups into sections of Central Asia. General Romanovskii freely admitted that these expeditions were part of Russia's military plan.<sup>13)</sup> They were to obtain scientific data and, at the same time, survey military routes into Central Asia, collect information on the strength of local tribes, and gather any pertinent information helpful to an invading army.

In 1846, a government topographer named B. F. Lemm made extensive investigations along the northeast coast of the Aral Sea and the mouth of the Syr-Dar'ia. The purpose of Lemm's exploration was "for a determination of astronomical points along the shores of the Aral Sea."<sup>14)</sup> The fact that the region explored by Lemm in 1846 was occupied by Russian forces a year later for the construction of Fort Raim is more than a coincidence, and bears out Romanovskii's assertion that the expeditions were all part of Russia's planned advance.<sup>15)</sup> Also in 1846, Mikhail I. Ivanin conducted geological surveys and geographic explorations on the Mangyshlak peninsula. Ivanin drew an excellent map of the peninsula, and gathered information on the climate, population, geological composition, oil and salt deposits, and the Kara-Tai and Ak-Tai mountains.<sup>16)</sup>

While Ivanin was exploring Mangyshlak, a more important Russian expedition was being conducted by A. Neshel' in the Transaral region of the Kara-Kum desert. Neshel' had been dispatched from Orenburg in 1846 to supervise the construction of Fort Raim.<sup>17)</sup> He traveled through the Kirgiz steppe and along the Irgiz River to reach

13) Romanovski, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

14) *Obzor Russkikh puteshestvii i ekspeditsii v Sredniuiu Asiiu*, part I, Tashkent, 1955, p. 64.

15) In the case of each of these expeditions in the late 1846's and early 1850's, a bibliography will be supplied in a footnote for those interested in further reading. On the Lemm expedition see:

a.) B. F. Lemm, (Astronomicheskie opredeleniia na beregakh Aral'skogo moria), *Zapiski Voennotopograficheskoe delo*, (St. Petersburg), Vol. XI, (1848), pp. 21-24.

b.) Ia. V. Khanykov, "Poiashnit'naia zapiska k karte Aral'skogo moria ...", *Zapiski Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva*, (St. Petersburg), book V, (1851), pp. 346, 353-355.

c.) L. S. Berg, *Aral'skoe more*, St. Petersburg, 1908, pp. 73 and 112.

16) For information on Ivanin see:

a.) M. I. Ivanin, "Poezdka Ivanina na poluostrov Mangyshlak v 1846 godu," *Zapiski Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva* (St. Petersburg), book II, (1847), p. 267.

b.) Antinov, "O proizvedennykh issledovaniiakh burogo uglia v gorakh Kara-Tau na poluostrove Mangyshlak," *Gornyi zhurnal*, (St. Petersburg), book XI, part 2, (1852), pp. 460-469.

c.) I. V. Mushketov, *Turkestan*, Vol. I, part 1, St. Petersburg, 1886, pp. 141-142.

17) Fort Raim was renamed Fort Aral'skoe in 1851. The fort was located sixty versts inland from the Aral Sea on the Syr-Dar'ia River. Plans to build a fort at the mouth of the Syr were first suggested in 1734 by Kirillov. He claimed then that the fort would give Russia control of the Aral Sea and the river. See: V. V. Bartol'd, *Istoriia izucheniia Vostoka v Evrope i Rossii*, Leningrad, 1925, p. 243.

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the location on which the fort was to be built. Along his route, Neshel' made extensive surveys and gathered a great deal of geological information on the steppes and the Kara-Kum.<sup>18)</sup> In 1847, Russian study of the Aral Sea continued with an expedition to the region near the mouth of the Syr-Dar'ia, which was conducted by a Lieutenant Mertvago. Mertvago made the first Russian survey of the coastal area to the south of the Syr-Dar'ia River, and of the islands along the shore.<sup>19)</sup>

The most extensive Russian explorations of the Aral Sea during this period were made by Lieutenant Alexsei I. Butakov in 1848 and 1849. These expeditions covered all parts of the sea and its islands, but, like their predecessors, concentrated their efforts primarily on the eastern shore and the mouth of the Syr-Dar'ia. The Butakov investigations included a wide variety of subjects; topography of the islands, water levels, astronomical readings, the fish of the sea, salt content of the water, etc.<sup>20)</sup>

Russian explorations were not confined exclusively to the Aral Sea region. In 1851, A. Vlangali led a survey expedition from Semipalatinsk into the eastern Kirgiz steppe, where he investigated the region known as the Semirechie, or the Ili Basin.<sup>21)</sup> During the years 1851-1852, the government topographers Nifant'ev and Bulatov surveyed Lake Balkash and surrounding areas. This was part of the area being enveloped into the empire by the expansion of the Siberian frontier line south from Semipalatinsk.<sup>22)</sup>

From this brief account of Russian expeditions into the Central Asian region from 1846 to 1852, one can see that activity in the area was both extensive and diversified. While making significant contributions to Russian knowledge of Central Asia, these expeditions were carrying out their other function of being the advance survey parties for the gradual Russian penetration.

By the late 1840's, the Russians had consolidated their position at Fort Raim, and the second phase of the planned advance (the extension of the frontier southeast along the Syr-Dar'ia and then eastward to join the Siberian frontier line) was ready

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18) For information on Neshel' see:

- a.) I. V. Mushketov, *Turkestan*, Vol. I, part 1, St. Petersburg, 1886, p. 142.
- b.) V. Lipskii, *Flora Srednei Asii*, Vols. I & III, St. Petersburg, 1902 & 1905.
- c.) L. S. Berg, *Aral'skoe more*, St. Petersburg, 1908, p. 73.

19) For information on Mertvago see: Mertvago, "Nashi pervye shagi na Aral'skom more," *Turkestanskiye vedomosti*, No. 90 & 91, 1897.

20) For a lengthy bibliography on the Butakov expeditions see: *Obzor Russkikh putestestvii i ekspeditsii v Sredniuiu Asiiu*, part 1, Tashkent, 1955, pp. 68-70.

21) For information on Vlangali see:

- a.) A. Vlangali, *Geognosticheskaiia poezdka v vostochnuiu chast' Kirgizskoi stepi v 1849 i 1851 gg.*, parts 1 & 2, St. Petersburg, 1851.
- b.) "Wlangali's Reise der östlichen Kirgisen Steppe übersetzt von Dr. Leove," *Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Russischen Reiches*, (St. Petersburg), Vol. XX, (1856), pp. 1-260.
- c.) I. V. Mushketov, *Turkestan*, Vol. I, part 1, St. Petersburg, 1886, pp. 145-151.

22) For information on Nifant'ev and Bulatov see:

- a.) Babkov, "O khode topograficheskikh issledovaniu ozera Balkhasha i ego pribrezhii," *Zapiski Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva*, (St. Petersburg), Vol. I, (1867), pp. 329-347.
- b.) L. F. Kostenko, *Turkestanskii krai*, Vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1880, p. 165.
- c.) I. V. Mushketov, *Turkestan*, Vol. I, part 1, St. Petersburg, 1886, p. 152.

to be put into operation.<sup>23)</sup> Early in 1847, Russian shipbuilders under the direction of General Obruchev had constructed three boats in Orenburg.<sup>24)</sup> In 1847–1848, the ships were carried overland in sections, reassembled at Raim, and launched in the Aral Sea. Christened the *Nikolai*, *Mikhail*, and *Konstantine*, these ships were the empire's first naval force on the Aral. In 1852, the fleet was enlarged with two steamers, the *Perovskii* and *Obruchev*. The steamships were constructed in Sweden and brought in sections to Central Asia via Nizhni Novgorod and Orenburg; an incredibly difficult and laborious job of transportation.<sup>25)</sup>

As the Russians became more and more active along the Syr-Dar'ia, the khan of Kokand grew seriously alarmed. He justly felt that the Russians were now encroaching on lands belonging to his khanate, and therefore he sent word to the inhabitants of the area encouraging them to resist the invaders and to raid Russian positions. The khan had no desire to relinquish Kokandian control over the nomads in the lower Kirgiz steppe. A large Kokandian army was dispatched to the Syr-Dar'ia Valley under the command of the famous Yakub-Bek.<sup>26)</sup> Yakub-Bek set up his headquarters at the Kokandian fort of Ak-Mechet on the Syr-Dar'ia.<sup>27)</sup> He was ordered by the khan to conduct forays against Russian strongholds along the river. At this point, Kokand's policy of opposition was quite unwise, because it gave the Russians any excuse they might have needed for further advances.<sup>28)</sup> Khiva was also becoming alarmed at the Russian advance, but the khanate did not feel that it was in a position to offer much assistance to the Kokandians.

On April 16, 1852, a Russian survey crew working near Ak-Mechet was captured by the Kokandians. General Perovskii immediately denounced the action "as a piece of intolerable interference."<sup>29)</sup> Russia now had the perfect excuse for a further move up the Syr-Dar'ia. Perovskii dispatched a force commanded by General Ivan F. Blaramberg to capture the Kokandian fort.<sup>30)</sup> Blaramberg's orders from General Perovskii read as follows:

23) For a more detailed coverage of the 1852–1853 campaigns see: Terent'ev, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 218–228.

24) Terent'ev, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 204

25) Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 169. Skrine and Ross pointed out that the nomadic people along the Syr-Dar'ia were amazed at the sight of the Russian steamships, but that "the amazement excited in the nomads by the spectacle soon died away." See: F. H. Skrine and E. D. Ross, *The Heart of Asia*, London, 1899 p. 246.

26) For information on the career of Yakub-Bek see: Demetrius C. Boulger, *The Life of Yakoob Beg: Athalik Ghazi, and Badaulet: Ameer of Kashgar*, London, 1878.

27) Ak-Mechet was located on the Syr-Dar'ia two hundred and eighty miles southeast of Fort Aral'skoe. It is the present day city of Kzyl-Orda. Rawlinson said that the real name of the Kokandian fort was *Ak-Mesjed* (White Mosque). He claimed the Russians mistakenly called the fort *Ak-Mechet* (Place of Martydom), and the latter name became fixed in all maps and books.

28) "An Indian Officer," *Russia's March towards India*, Vol. I, London, 1894, p. 152.

29) *Ibid.*, p. 153.

30) Blaramberg's army consisted of 420 soldiers, 12 officers, 36 irregular troops, and 2 cannons.

- 1.) To survey the right bank of the Syr Daria as far as Ak-Mechet.
- 2.) In the event of an encounter with the Khokandians, *or in case they should make any uncalled-for demands*, to attack them immediately.
- 3.) Without touching at any fortifications lying nearer to Aralek, to proceed direct to Ak-Mechet, and there act as circumstances might require. If Ak-Mechet lies within Russian limits, to endeavor to raze it; but, *under all circumstances, to notify the Khokandians that the fort must not remain on its actual site.*<sup>31)</sup>

On July 19, 1853, Blaramberg's force unsuccessfully attacked Ak-Mechet. Kokandian resistance, which was directed by Batyr-Basy,<sup>32)</sup> was surprisingly strong, and finally forced the Russians to retreat.

Blaramberg's defeat came as a shock to General Perovskii, and in the spring of 1853 he left Orenburg to take personal command of Russian forces along the Syr-Dar'ia. The general brought with him reinforcements of 2,168 men and twelve cannons. Preparations began immediately for a new assault on Ak-Mechet.<sup>33)</sup> Late in June, 1853, a Russian army of 1,500 infantry soldiers, 250 cavalry, 10 cannons, 780 wagons, and 1,150 camels left Fort Aral'skoe under Perovskii's command. Upon arriving before Ak-Mechet, the general sent an officer to the fort, under white flag, in order to ask Yakub-Bek to surrender. The Kokandians opened fire on the flag of truce. Perovskii was furious and on July 13, 1853, sent the following ultimatum to Yakub-Bek. The ultimatum was carried by a Kokandian prisoner taken by the Russians.

By order of my Sovereign, the Emperor of All the Russias, I have come to take At-Mechet, erected by the Kokandians on Russian territory for the purpose of oppressing the Kirgiz subjects of His Imperial Majesty.

Ak-Mechet is already taken, although you are inside it, and you can not fail to perceive that without losing any of my men, I am in a position to destroy every one of you.

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The Russians have come here, not for a day, not for a year, but forever; they will not retire. If you wish to live, ask for mercy; should you prefer to die in Ak-Mechet, you can do so: I am not pressed for time, and do not intend to hurry you. I here repeat that I do not come to offer you combat, but to thrash you until you open your gate. All this I would have told you on the first day of my arrival, when I approached the walls of your fort unarmed, had you not traitorously opened fire on me, which is not customary among honorable soldiers.<sup>34)</sup>

The Kokandians chose to ignore Perovskii's warning to answer his ultimatum

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31) "An Indian Officer," *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 154.

32) Yakub-Bek was in Kokand at the time of the Russian attack. See: Terent'ev, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 216.

33) "An Indian Officer," *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 156.

34) Terent'ev, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 222-223.

by evening, and so at three-thirty in the morning of July 14, 1853 the Russians began to bombard Ak-Mechet. The land forces were supported by the steamer *Perovskii* which had sailed up the Syr-Dar'ia to a position near the fort.<sup>35)</sup> Before dawn (at 4:30 AM), Ak-Mechet had fallen to the Russian army. Its commander Yakub-Bek had escaped earlier during the siege. From a force of three hundred men, the Kokandians lost two hundred and thirty. Russian losses were thirteen soldiers killed, plus eight officers and fifty-two men wounded.<sup>36)</sup> The fall of Ak-Mechet did not mean the immediate end of Kokandian resistance. In November and December of 1853, a large Kokandian army of thirteen thousand troops under Yakub-Bek attacked along the Syr-Dar'ia and besieged Ak-Mechet. The campaign proved to be a major disaster. On December 14, 1853, a Russian force of between five and six hundred men under Colonel Ogarev inflicted a crushing defeat to the Kokandians near the fort. Over two thousand Kokandians were killed, while Russian losses were only eighteen dead and forty-nine wounded.<sup>37)</sup> Kokandian resistance in the Syr-Dar'ia Valley was finally broken by this Russian victory.<sup>38)</sup>

The Russians now set about consolidating their new position along the Syr-Dar'ia. They first built a large fort at Kazalinsk, just south of Fort Aral'skoe. Aral'skoe became known as Fort No. 1 and Kazalinsk as Fort No. 2. Ak-Mechet was renamed Fort Perovskii in 1853, and became Fort No. 4. Fort No. 3, established at Kumush-Kurgan between Kazalinsk and Perovskii, was later abandoned in 1855. Other Kokandian forts at Chim Kurgan and Dzhulek were razed. "The taking of Ak-Mechet and the destruction of the Kokandian forts saved the Syr-Dar'ia Kazakhs from a heavy yolk and from the plundering raids of the Kokandian khan."<sup>39)</sup>

While this consolidation was taking place along the Syr-Dar'ia, Russian military activity began along the Siberian line in the east. In accordance with the planned "pincers movement," forces under General Obruchev marched south from Kopal into the region of the Ili Basin (Semirechie) in 1854. They crossed the Ili River and established Fort Vernyi on the Alma-Ata River just north of Lake Issyk-Kul.<sup>40)</sup> Soon after its establishment, Vernyi was settled by four to five thousand Cossack colonists.<sup>41)</sup> Russian forces in the east were now in a position to begin advancing westward to join up with their comrades on the western frontier line, thus encircling Kazakhstan and parts of the Kirgiz steppe. It was at this time that the Russian

35) "An Indian Officer" claimed that Perovskii was anxious to conclude the operation at Ak-Mechet as soon as possible for he feared the possibility of a Kirgiz revolt to his rear. These were the same Kirgiz he claimed the Russians had come to protect against Kokandian oppression. See: "An Indian Officer," *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 156.

36) "An Indian Officer," *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 160.

37) *Ibid.*, p. 161. Also see: Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

38) Kokandian resistance to the Russians was further weakened by the fact that the khanate was torn and divided by civil war throughout the 1852-1853 period.

39) B. B. Bekmakhanov, *Prisoedinenie Kazakhstana k Rossii*, Moscow, 1957, p. 136.

40) Vernyi is the present day city of Alma-Ata, capital of the Kazakh S. S. R.

41) Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 174. As Romanovskii indicated, the Siberian frontier line was settled by "whole brigades of Cossacks" during 1854 and 1855. See: Romanovski, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Government gave its official "approval" to the operations in Central Asia.

In the spring of 1854, Russian activity in Central Asia came to a sudden halt. The Crimean War had exploded in the Near East, and Russian military forces had to be concentrated on that conflict. The war necessitated the withdrawal of all available units to European Russia. Only a token force was left to maintain the outposts at Kazalinsk, Perovskii, and Vernyi. Further advance into Central Asia at that time was impossible. With the outbreak of the Crimean War, the second phase of Russia's planned penetration into Central Asia ended. The third phase of joining the frontier lines was not undertaken until the 1860's and became, in effect, the initial operation in what was to be the final conquest and occupation of the Central Asian states. As such, it lies beyond the subject limits of this paper.

Russia's position in Central Asia was seriously weakened during the years of the Crimean War. This was due not only to the fact that most of its forces had to be transferred to Europe, but also to the Kirgiz revolt led by Iset Kutebar.<sup>42)</sup> The Kirgiz, like other Central Asians, had not been at all pleased with the extension of the Russian frontier to the Syr-Dar'ia. Agreeing with the Kokandians, the Kirgiz felt that the Russian penetration was a direct threat to their "independence" and way of life.<sup>43)</sup> With Russian garrisons in the area reduced to a skeleton force in 1854, the Kirgiz saw their opportunity to rebel. The uprising immediately gained assistance and encouragement from the Kokandians, Khivans, and Turkmen.<sup>44)</sup> Led by Iset Kutebar, the revolt spread quickly across the steppes of the Syr-Dar'ia Valley, and the entire Central Asian region was soon in ferment. The small Russian units were helpless to quell or, in many cases, even resist, the raiding parties of Kutebar. The Kirgiz captured a number of Russian positions in Kazakhstan, but were unable to take the principal advance posts at Kazalinsk, Perovskii, and Vernyi. The revolt of Iset Kutebar continued through the years of the Crimean War and as late as 1858. The "Indian Officer" in his book, *Russia's March towards India*, claimed that if Britain had given a little aid to the Kirgiz during the war, Russia could have been driven out of Central Asia entirely. England failed to do this, he wrote, because of French suspicions and a possible rupture between the allies.<sup>45)</sup> Given the locale of the Kirgiz rebellion, it is a little difficult to see what the British could have done to help, except grant the Kirgiz their moral support and best wishes, which they undoubtedly did anyway.

Khan Muhammed-Emin of Khiva attempted to give direct assistance to Iset Ku-

42) For those interested in further details on the revolt of Iset Kutebar, see: Terent'ev, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 234-241

43) It is questionable just how independent the Kirgiz tribes were, but many of them at least felt themselves to be independent.

44) H. S. Edwards quoted an anonymous Russian general as saying that the Russians themselves provoked the Kirgiz revolt by stealing Kirgiz children and selling them as slaves. This sort of statement is extremely doubtful, and is mainly an example of British propaganda about Russia, typical of the war period. See: Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-255.

45) "An Indian Officer," *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 172-173.

tebar. From the start, Khiva had sympathized with the Kirgiz and had done all it could to encourage their struggle with the Russians. In 1855 the khan dispatched part of his army along the eastern coast of the Aral Sea in order to make contact with Kutebar and cut off the Russian forts of Aral'skoe and Kazalinsk. The Khivan move failed because of the khan's sudden death while leading another section of his army into battle against Turkmen tribes south of Khiva. The army sent to the Syr-Dar'ia returned to Khiva, and the khanate made no further attempts to strike a blow against the weakened Russian position.<sup>46)</sup>

On March 30, 1856, The Treaty of Paris was signed ending the Crimean War. Having withdrawn from Asia to concentrate on European problems, Russia, in 1856, was again free to turn its attention to the situation in Central Asia. On March 2, 1855, Tsar Nicholas I died and was succeeded by Alexander II. Although Tsar Alexander differed from his father in many ways, they thought alike on the subject of Central Asia. The new tsar believed that, as soon as it was feasible, the Central Asian problem should be firmly settled once and for all. The plan for uniting the Orenburg and Siberian frontier lines was to be fulfilled. The policy of military advance and penetration continued to dominate Russian thinking. Nevertheless, in order to complete these plans, the Russians needed time to rebuild the position in the region which they had attained by 1854, and which had become so badly disrupted by 1856.

Further advance in Central Asia was impossible until the Russian outposts along the Syr-Dar'ia and at Vernyi were strengthened and reinforced. There was also the problem of the Kirgiz rebellion which continued to agitate the steppe regions. Iset Kutebar would have to be suppressed before Russia dared to extend its frontier beyond Perovskii and Vernyi. Under these circumstances, a few years of consolidation and rebuilding were absolutely necessary.

News that the Crimean War had ended brought alarm to the rulers of Central Asia. With Russian forces no longer tied down in the West, they logically anticipated a new period of activity in Central Asia. This expectation was especially true because of the deterioration of Russia's position in Central Asia after 1854. The Central Asian rulers expected this position to be rebuilt, and were fearful that Russia would now dispatch large armies to the region, in order to subdue the Kirgiz and possibly seek revenge on the principalities for their support of the Kutebar revolt, and of other recent activities hostile to Russia. Hopeful of preventing events such as this, both Khiva and Bukhara sent envoys to Orenburg in 1857. There they asked permission to visit St. Petersburg in order to congratulate the new tsar on his coronation, and to discuss differences. The sudden desire to renew friendly relations with Russia was typical of the Central Asians' approach to foreign policy. In 1856 and 1857 they felt there was immediate danger; therefore their reaction was friendly, conciliatory, and in direct contrast to the attitude shown during the Crimean War.

Thus in the period from 1856 to 1859 there was a lull in Russia's penetration of Central Asia. There was also a temporary return to the policy of dealing with

46) Arminius Vámbéry, *Travels in Central Asia*, New York, 1865, pp. 408-409.

Central Asia through negotiations. This last period of Russian diplomacy in Central Asia began with the sending of the Bukharan and Khivan envoys to St. Petersburg. It ended with the famous Ignat'ev mission to the principalities in 1858. After the Ignat'ev mission's failure to satisfy Russia's needs, one no longer speaks of Russian diplomacy in Central Asia. Conquest and occupation became the hallmarks of policy for the 1860's.

*RUSSIAN TRADE IN CENTRAL ASIA, 1840-1850*

Russian-Central Asian commerce reached its peak volume in the years 1836 and 1837.<sup>47)</sup> During the 1840's, trade with Central Asia never equalled the gross value of the 1830's, but it did maintain a per annum stability not evidenced in the earlier years. The lack of balance of the Central Asian trade remained a problem for Russia, but did not become as serious in the 1840's as it had been in the 1830's. The discussion here will not attempt to present any exhaustive coverage of the trade situation in the 1840's because this subject has already been investigated by Pavel Nebol'sin in his remarkable essay, "Ocherki torgovli Rossii s Srednei Aziei," published by the Russian Geographic Society in 1855.<sup>48)</sup> Nebol'sin's essay is a brilliant and detailed study of every conceivable aspect of Russian-Central Asian trade in the 1840's, and is the basic source for anyone interested in further information on this topic. Among the many items covered by Nebol'sin, the following are of special interest: 1.) Descriptions and charts on all caravan routes from the Orenburg frontier to the Central Asian states. These show all major sites along the routes, the distances between stops, location of water supplies, etc. 2.) Descriptions, charts, and tables on the amount of commerce with each principality, for each year (1840-1850), and for each item of trade. 3.) An essay on the major trade routes into Central Asia from the Siberian frontier line. 4.) An excellent map of the Central Asian states drawn by Nikolai Khanykov in 1854.

In order to round off the subject of Russian trade with Central Asia, a brief summary of statistics based on the Nebol'sin study is included here. Nebol'sin's essay dealt only with trade conducted by Russia along the Orenburg frontier. As this area handled the bulk of the Central Asian commerce, Nebol'sin's figures would be only

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47) While advising the Russian Government in connection with the Danilevskii mission to Khiva, General Vasili Perovskii sent a report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the subject of Russian commerce with Central Asia. This report was actually an essay on the development of the Central Asian trade and on the various problems associated with it. The emphasis in Perovskii's essay is on commerce during the 1830's, and on the general's ideas as to measures which might be taken to improve the trade and alleviate some of the difficulties surrounding it; especially the serious Russian trade balance and the flow of hard money from the empire to the Central Asian states. For those interested in further study of this trade question in the 1830's, the full text of the Perovskii report may be found in the notes to Zalesov's article on the Danilevskii mission. See: Nikolai Zalesov, "Posol'stvo v Khivu podpolkovnika Danilevskago v 1842 godu," *Voennyi sbornik*, (St. Petersburg), Vol. XLIX, (1866), pp. 58-69.

48) Pavel Ivanovich Nebol'sin, "Ocherki torgovli Rossii s Srednei Aziei," *Zapiski Russkago geograficheskago obshchestva*, (St. Petersburg), book X, (1855), pp. 1-435.

slightly augmented by commerce conducted along the Siberian frontier.

TRADE BETWEEN THE ORENBURG FRONTIER AND CENTRAL ASIA  
(1840-1850)

Exports from Russia to the states of Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand

Gold and silver money	1,530,360 rubles
Copper	331,170
Iron, cast iron, other metals and their products	682,916
Cotton goods	1,487,863
Silk and semi-silk goods	102,805
Woolen goods	522,081
Leather goods	825,556
Chests	65,875
Ornaments, cochineal, and others	438,211
Other goods	<u>776,635</u>
total	6,763,635 rubles

Imports from the states of Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand to Russia

Raw cotton, raw silk, woolen yarn	2,747,668 rubles
Fruit	298,770
Valuable stones and pearls	123,727
Cotton goods, pieces and manufactured articles	4,012,028
Silk, semi-silk goods, and manufactured articles	137,945
Woolen goods	12,022
Furs, lamb skins, and down	1,075,702
Shawls	161,616
Other goods	<u>402,103</u>
total	8,971,675 rubles

Hard cash exported to Central Asia

1827-1837	112,851 rubles
1837-1847	1,617,426

Imports from Central Asia

1827-1837	6,951,254 rubles
1837-1847	8,944,355

Exports to Central Asia

1827-1837	4,575,120 rubles
1837-1847	5,027,243

RUSSIAN MOVES IN CENTRAL ASIA, 1843-1856

Trade with Bukhara, 1840-1850

exports	5,225,287 rubles
imports	7,309,248

Trade with Khiva, 1840-1850

exports	1,334,198 rubles
imports	1,396,189

Trade with Kokand, 1840-1850

exports	204,150 rubles
imports	266,237

本稿の筆者ジョン・W・ストロング氏は、カナダのカールトン大学（Carleton University）の歴史学の助教授であり、同国の著名なスラヴ研究誌 *Canadian Slavonic Papers* の編集にたずさわっている。氏の研究対象は、19世紀の中央アジア事情および中ソ関係であるが、その研究成果の一端である本稿は、国際学界において注目されるべき高水準の内容をもつものであり、わが国の中央アジア近・現代史研究にとって貴重な参考資料になると思われるので、未発表の本稿を筆者の同意をえて、ここに掲載することとした。

（文責——百瀬）