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MILITARY EXPANSION OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN PRIIRTYSHKY REGION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

In the beginning of the 18th century the Russian Empire (from 1721 - Z.K.) of the times of the Peter I started open military invasion to new territories due to the enhancement of its foreign policy, reorganization and improvement of the armed forces. "The main reform tool was a deliberate use of violence, and the state that was established in accordance with the latest special and philosophical theories of the time had acquired the militaristic features"¹.

At the end of the war with Sweden and the signing of the Treaty of Nystad in 1721 Russia annexed Latvia, Estonia and got an access to the Baltic Sea². In 1722, Russian troops make trips to the Caucasus and Iran, and entrenched in Baku Reshtome, Astrabad³.

Intensification of the war machine of the Russian Empire took place also in the Upper and Middle Irtysh region where two nomadic states - Kazakh Khanate and Jungaria were in a state of constant and almost incessant wars with each other, often caused by the Russian Empire. This region belonged to the Kazakh Khanate, but the right bank of the Irtysh was temporarily occupied by the Jungar Khanate.

Traders, members of diplomatic missions, travelers from Russia, returning from the Kazakh Khanate and adjacent areas, would spread the rumors about the wealth of this land. In particular, the Russian Tsar Peter I heard rumors that

¹ Derevyanko AP, Shabelnikova NA *History of Russia* (Moscow, 2009), p. 125.

² Ibid., p. 131.

³ Ibid., p. 132.

there was a "gold mine" in the town of Erketi. The Russian Treasury devastated by the prolonged Russian-Swedish war required enormous additional financial resources. Thus it became a pretext for a military-colonization events of the tsarist government.

The first governor of Siberia M.P.Gagarin as early as in 1713 proposed his plan to build a line of military fortifications from Tobolsk to Erketi to Peter I⁴.

Later, the Prince's initiative was supported and a military expedition led by Colonel I.D.Buchholz had been sent to implement the plan. Here is what

A.K.Haines, a famous researcher wrote: "giving great importance to the possession of gold mines by the economic concepts of the time, ... Peter ... decided to seize Yarkand, acting on both sides: from the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea (expedition Bekovich-Cherkassky) and another from southern Siberia to Minor Bukhara, under the command of the Guard Captain Buchholz"⁵.

Leader of the expedition was instructed by Peter I to come to Tobolsk, gather an army and sail with them up the Irtysh to Yamyshevsky lake to establish a new city. In the spring of next year, he was supposed to go to Yarkand. On the way to the golden city the squad had to build a small redoubt for storing provisions and ensure communication with Tobolsk. In Tobolsk the instructions to Buchholz would be given by Siberian

Governor Gagarin: "If the enemy will not let us build fortresses, then we should resist as much as possible with all our people asking help from God"⁶.

The troops consisted of the military, residents of Tomsk, Tyumen, and Tara, a total of 2,800 people. There were captured Swedes among them. In July 1715 expeditionary force began its march on 59 vessels. In October 1715 Yamyshevskaya fortress was built near the mouth of Presnuha river⁷.

⁴ *Russia. Complete geographical description of our fatherland. Desktop and road book for Russian people Kirgiz Region*, 18 (S. Pbg., 1903), p. 151

⁵ Haines A. K. *Historical essay on the spread of Russian domination*. Collection of literary works (Astana, 2007), pp. 17–18.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Construction of the fortress was strongly opposed by the Jungars. So began the long siege of the fortress of 10 thousand Jungarian army led by Prince Cheren-Donduk.

Soon, they captured the enemy horses, and broke into the new fortress. But with rifle and cannon volleys were expelled from there. Cheren Donduk sent a letter to Buchholz demanding to leave the fort to which he received a denial⁸.

Jungars intercepted the caravan with food and salaries for expedition members sent from Tobolsk, which determined the outcome of the armed conflict. Among the defenders developed a famine and accompanying it diseases, such as anthrax, and scurvy, of which died 20-30 people a day.

In the spring of 1716, after the military council meeting, I. Buchholz with the remained 700 persons was forced to go back by the water on the "doschaniki" (large boats, Z.K).

Jungars did not resist to the retreated Russian squad. On the way back, I. Buchholz's squad founded the Omsk fortress on May 20, 1716 after the consultation with Gagarin. Wandering on the site, old Kazakh clans and tribes, Kerei and Kipchaks, were pushed back over the Irtysh. By the way, the Kazakhs of the Omsk still call this region Omby ("a place with a deep loose snow"), and they use the same name for the river, which flows in the Irtysh at the same location⁹.

Later, the czar's government in a state of Kazakh-Jungarian confrontation in Irtysh region has openly begun to build military fortifications. They were intended for colonization of the right bank, as well as the left bank of the river that was occupied by the Kazakhs and Jungars.

One by one, the troops of lieutenants Myatigorov and Stupin were sent to the Yamyshevskiy Lake that were supposed to rebuild the Yamyshevskiy fortress.

Herewith, "no quarrels or defends against the Kalmyks' attacks were allowed, it was only welcomed to try to convince them that the Russians did not

⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

⁹ Bardanes H. Kyrgyz, or Cossack, chorography. *History of Kazakhstan in the Russian sources XVI-XX centuries*, IV (Almaty, 2007), p. 96.

have hostile intentions against “oyrats” and that a fortress intended to defend our limits from Kyrgyz ¹⁰.

In 1717, on the right bank of the Irtysh River, Stupin rebuilt the Yamyshevskiy fortress, which has now become more inaccessible to the nomads.

In the same year, the Tara Boyar P. Svierskiy has built the Zhelezinskiy fortress by the Gagarin’s directions, which is located 200 miles from Omsk and 231 miles from Yamyshevskiy. In 1718, the group led by nobleman V.Cheredov built Semipalatinsk fortress, and for its completion Colonel Stupin was sent.

Neither the Kazakhs nor Jungars could resist to the invading Russian detachment because of the existing military confrontation between the two nomadic powers. Moreover, Jungars were leading bloody and ongoing hostilities with the Chinese armies at the same time. On this occasion, A.K. Gaines wrote, "Gagarin supported the Central Asian nomad contentions and was in frequent touch with Kyrgyz people"¹¹.

But soon, Gagarin was summoned to St. Petersburg, sentenced to two years, and then executed in front of the Senate for "his unprecedented theft"¹².

In the spring of 1720, Peter I ordered an equipped military expedition led by Likharev to build the Ustkamenogorskiy fortress. He was supposed to investigate the Gagarin’s "thieves" case, overtake the new fortress, and complete the work with the Yarkend gold. Soon, the castle was founded; but because of the heightened disease, Likharev was forced to return to St. Petersburg. The completion of the construction was passed to Stupin, and he successfully completed the task. Nevertheless, there were small outposts and redoubts between them later.

Siberian authorities continued to explain to the Jungar rulers the need to protect against attacks Kazakhs, and to Kazakhs - the necessity of defense against militant Jungars.

¹⁰ Haines A. K. *Historical essay on the spread of Russian domination...*, p. 23.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

But in fact these fortresses served as a convenient base for strengthening the position of tsarism in the Irtysh River basin for subsequent annexation of the Kazakh Khanate territories as well as the areas temporarily controlled by Jungarian hontayjee. Famous Russian scientist Nikolai Konshin wrote about this the following: "So there was Irtysh line of fortifications, whose task was to protect the right bank lands from Jungars, and shortly afterwards from Kyrgyz"¹³.

P.A Slovtsov writes the same: "In 1716 in the course of a year Prince Gagarin, in order to correct his mistake, wrote to kontayshi with the centurion Cheredov that the strengthening of Yamyshevskoe had been done to protect it from attacks of the Kirghiz, whom meanwhile he encouraged to attack as well (to attack Jungars - author)¹⁴.

These thoughts are confirmed by the official historian of the Siberian Cossack Army G.E.Katanaev: "On mutual weakening and destruction of the warring nations Gagarin has built the success of his conceived movement in the upper reaches of the Irtysh"¹⁵.

With regard to the attitude of the Kazakh towards the construction of Russian military fortifications along the left bank of the Irtysh, it was clearly negative. Military units of the Middle Horde tried to stop the colonial military advance of the imperial government, in spite of very difficult relationship with Jungars. This situation is highlighted by one of the Russian officers. Andreev, who served in this line: "when establishing he Irtysh line and building fortresses on it, especially Yamyshevskaya, which was established in Siberia, considering the proximity to the salt lake, and during the building of which they (Kazkhs – Z.K.) would attack multiple times ... "¹⁶.

The situation has not improved even in the early years of the "The Great Disaster Years", when Kazakhs were defeated by Jungar hordes. For example, in

¹³ Kabuldinov Z.E *History of Kazakhstan. Astana of modern history* (2006), p. 26.

¹⁴ Slovtsov P.A About multiplying state wealth, *Historical Survey of Siberia* (St. Petersburg, 1886), p. 225.

¹⁵ Katanaev G.E. Historical information about when and how the city of Omsk has been built, *Priirtyshsk Kazakhs and Cossacks: history, economy and way of life* (Astana, 2007), p. 163.

¹⁶ Andreev I.G. Description of the Middle Horde Kirghiz Kaysaks (Alma-Ata, 1998), p. 113.

1724 a premomoriya (message-ZK) from the city of Tobolsk to Turinsk was received that "Cossack horde roams in the vicinity of border settlements and ravages and takes away all"¹⁷.

It was not like an exhausted enemy: when the fate of their ancestral lands was being decided, the lands that now found on the "inside" as a result of tzarism's military colonization acts, Kazakhs fought for every inch of his native land.

In the spring of 1731 a battle between Kazakhs and the local military garrison took place in Omsk. There were many such facts "¹⁸.

This indicated that the part of the Kazakhs were desperate to stop the military expansion of the Russian colonization of the empire. But the confrontation with militant Dzhungars stopped Kazakhs from actively opposing military advance of the Russian Empire.

But after the defeat of Jungars Kazakh sultans and petty officers actively tried to move onto the right bank of Irtysh river. But faced with open opposition of regional authorities. In 1755, the tzar government banned the Kazakhs of the Middle Horde shift to the right bank of the Irtysh. In 1762, the Kazakhs were ordered not to approach fortresses closer than 10 versts.

In 1765, Lieutenant-General J. Springer, commander of the Siberian lines, ordered the demarcation of the 10-verst strip on the Kazakh steppe side. Kazakhs were strictly forbidden to appear within this zone. Now, it was forbidden to approach the Russian fortress least 30 miles. Any unauthorized crossings of Kazakhs on the right bank of the Irtysh ended in forced evictions involving the military.

Raids of Kazakh troops persisted almost until the late 18th century, when in order to stop Kazakh invasion the places with the most seen cases of invasion were ordered to block with redoubts by Tzar's decree of April 24th, 1798¹⁹.

¹⁷ record sources on the history of Russia and Siberia 16-18 centuries in the collections of GF Miller. Inventory of copy books (in two volumes). Vol. 1. *History of Siberia. Primary Sources* (Novosibirsk, 1993), p. 171.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Kraft II *Collection of Laws about the Kirghiz of steppe areas* (Orenburg, 1898), p. 139.

Thus, in the period from 1716 to 1720 the line of military fortifications was built on the right bank of the Irtysh, which later served as a base for military colonization actions of the Russian Empire in the territory of Kazakhstan. New border line was based around without permission and any prior consultation with the Kazakh rulers.

Reduction of grazing land, the nomadic lifestyle ban has led to substantial undermining of the foundations of the nomadic and semi-nomadic economy of the Kazakhs. During famine Kazakh population has lost the opportunity to freely migrate to the border line and the right bank of Irtysh river to rescue cattle. As a result of military colonization of the right bank of the Irtysh, Kazakhs has lost not only free access to it for a long period of time, but also for a long time not only free access to it, but over time 10 versts strip land on the left bank of the Irtysh had been taken from them for good.

By the way, November 7, 1866 just a year before the complete elimination of the privileges of the Sultan class, all senior sultans of the "Siberian Kirghiz Areas" made an appeal to the tzar with the request to return the land: "Despite the tributaries feed and triple duty in the army, do not leave their ancestral places where lie the bones of their ancestors and fathers ... We ask to return 10 versts strip back to the Kirghiz"²⁰.

But the Russian empire was deaf to the requests of Genghis Khan's descendants: in 1868 administrative reforms began, which almost equated Sultans to "second grade citizens", and moreover, in 1905 the so-called "10-verst" strip of Irtysh lands on the left bank of the river completely were passed over in perpetuity to Siberian Cossack troops in return for participation in the Russian-Japanese war.

This article analyzes the expansion of tsarism in Kazakh lands near the Irtysh in the 1716-1720. This article was prepared on the basis of written sources and scientific literature of modern and contemporary periods.

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²⁰ Kabuldinov Z.E. *History of Kazakhstan. Chrestomathy.*(Almaty, 2012), pp. 118–119.