

**THE ORGANIZATION OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE'S ARROW FLOTILIA IN
CENTRAL ASIA AND ITS ACTIVITIES****Akhmadov Akhmadjon**

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and Social Sciences, Doctor of Philosophy, (PhD)**Abstract**

This article examines the scientific analysis of the formation of the Aral Flotilla and the history of its activities after the conquest of the Central Asian khanates by the Russian Empire.

Keywords

Central Asia, Raim, Aral, flotilla, Syr Darya, Amu Darya, steamer, boat, military fortress, waterway.

Since the beginning of the conquest of the Central Asian khanates by the Russian Empire, special importance has been attached to the development of water and river routes, along with land routes. With the construction of the Raim fortress in 1847, Russia began practical work on the formation of a naval force in the Aral Sea region. It was in this year that small-sized schooners appeared in the Aral Sea. An important stage in this process was the arrival of the schooner "Nikolai", built in Orenburg, to the Syrdarya. In addition, barges, dinghies, plashkoots and dinghies also appeared, which laid the foundation for the formation of the Aral flotilla.

In 1848, a second schooner, "Konstantin", built in Orenburg, was also brought to the Aral Sea. Since these ships were powered by a steam engine, saxaul was mainly used as fuel. As a result of research conducted in the Aral Sea region between 1848 and 1851, a coal deposit was discovered on Borsakelmas Island. This expanded the capabilities of the flotilla and led to the emergence of larger steamships. Although the steamers "Perovsky" and "Obruchev", built to order at Swedish factories, were ready in 1850, they arrived in the Aral Sea in the fall of 1852 and began operating in 1853. The development of the Aral Sea region was carried out with the participation of Russian commercial and industrial enterprises, along with the military. In particular, as early as 1847, the schooner "Mikhail" belonging to the fishing company and several boats began fishing in the Aral Sea [1].

At the time of its creation, the Aral Flotilla had a purely military significance, its main task was to ensure communication between the Russian military fortresses on the Syr Darya and to provide the troops with all possible assistance during military operations. They operated between the Aral and Chinaz. However, with the advent of large steamships, the suitability of the Kara-Uzak delta of the Syr Darya for steamships was repeatedly studied. This idea was first tried to be substantiated by engineer Colonel Gennerikh in 1859, and in the early 60s, Captain 1st Class Butakov, who was the head of the Aral Flotilla, also supported it. Only Captain 1st Class Shkot, who became the head of the flotilla in 1864, opposed these ideas[1].

The Aral Flotilla was of great importance in the exploration of the lower reaches of the Syr Darya, Aral and Amu Darya. In particular, the expeditions of the Aral Flotilla in 1847-53 were described above. The Russian authorities, due to the war with Kokand and Khiva, had not established trade relations with Bukhara, and the Amir was convinced that the Aral Flotilla could be used to facilitate Russian trade on the Amu Darya, believing that the military capabilities of the flotilla would be sufficient for this. According to the Russian magazine "Morskoy sbornik"



(Sea Collection) of 1862, the flotilla included 1 iron steamer "Perovsky" of 40 horsepower, 1 barge "Obruchev" of 12 horsepower, 1 more "Orol" of 40 horsepower and 1 "Syrdarya" of 20 horsepower, which were gathering in the lower reaches of the Syrdarya River, as well as several sailing ships, 3 iron barges, 2 wooden schooners, 2 iron and 4 wooden ferries, 22 oared ships (2 and 6 oars, as well as dinghies)[2].

From the time of its formation, the Aral Flotilla began to try to sail into the lower reaches of the Amu Darya. This was fully consistent with the policy of conquest. From 1848-1849, Fort No. 1 (later Kazalinsk) became the main base, and the flotilla examined five channels of the river delta to study the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, determining the depth and speed of the water in them. In the studies of the 1950s, the steamer "Perovsky" stopped after 34 versts in the Kuvonch-Zharma, which was considered the most watery of the studied channels. However, the relatively smaller "Obruchev" was able to continue on its way. The steamer "Perovsky" sailed to Kungirt in 1859 through Kulden, a tributary of the Ulukun River, a tributary of the Amu Darya delta[3].

The Aral Flotilla was supposed to be a demonstration of Russian military power in Central Asia. The invaders began to enter the Amu Darya more and more often in order to demonstrate the power of the Russian armed forces to the local population. Even in 1858-1858, during the embassy of Colonel (later Count) Ignatiev, the ambassadors decided to go to Khiva on steamers. Captain 1st Class Butakov of the Aral Flotilla, together with the steamer "Perovsky" and 2 barges, went along the Ulukun Riverbed to Kungirat, but was forced to turn back due to the poor knowledge of this part of the river and the shallow water[4].

It can be said that the Khiva people understood the purpose of the frequent entry of Russian steamers into the Amu Darya. Therefore, they began to build various dams and barriers in the places of the river where ships could sail. It seems that the entry of Russian steamers in 1859 especially made the Khiva people more vigilant. In the same year, the Khiva people created a similar barrier near the fortress of Bent. During the 1873 military expedition aimed at subjugating the Khiva Khanate, the Aral Flotilla was also intended to take an active part in the hostilities. The flotilla left Kazalinsk and followed the route taken by Butakov in 1859. Two steamers "Samarkand" and "Perovsky", three barges, and a total of 268 soldiers of the flotilla fought at the White Fortress and could not overcome the barrier near Bent. The flotilla reached the middle reaches of the Amu Darya delta to a place called Kushkhonakul and was forced to retreat back to Kazalinsk[5]. However, in later periods, the Aral Flotilla served as the main tool for studying the Amu Darya and the importance of the waterways of Central Asia. As early as 1874, the press began to promote the importance of the Amu Darya and the navigation of warships on it for Russia. In one of the articles in the Turkestan collection, a correspondent of the newspaper "Golos" wrote on July 25, 1874 that the steamer "Perovsky" arrived in Nukus via the Yangi Suv River, Lake Davkara, and the Kuvanch-Jarma River. It was planned that the steamer would sail to Mashakli, which was considered the border of Bukhara. The Russian garrison joyfully celebrated the steamer's arrival in Nukus with musical sounds and cannon fire. The reason for their joy was that the local population was not obeying the administration, which demonstrated the power of the Russian armed forces. Therefore, it was necessary to establish a flotilla between Nukus and Kazalinsk, entrust the supply of oil to a company for the flotilla, and that 20 thousand rubles per year were needed for this, and at least force the local population to gather saxaul at the necessary locations[6].

In conclusion, in the policy of the Russian Empire to conquer Central Asia, waterways, in particular the Amu Darya and the Aral Sea, were of particular strategic importance. The creation and activities of the Aral Flotilla served not only to support military campaigns, but also to



deeply study and economically develop the territory.

The barriers built on the river by the Khiva Khanate indicate that local forces showed a certain degree of resistance to the colonial policy. However, as a result of technical superiority and consistent actions, the Russian Empire gradually strengthened control over the waterways.

As a result, the Amu Darya and the adjacent territories became a military-strategic base for Russia, and the Aral Flotilla served as one of the main tools in this process. At the same time, this situation led to a deepening of political, economic and social changes in the region.

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