



## **DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DURING THE ERA OF AMIR TEMUR**

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### **Abstract**

The political processes that took place in the territory of Central Asia in the second half of the 14th century and the early 15th century hold an important place in world history. This period is directly associated with the great commander and statesman Amir Timur. Amir Timur effectively used diplomacy as a means to strengthen the state, reduce external threats, and develop economic relations. He paid great attention not only to military power but also to political negotiations, diplomatic relations, and strategic alliances. For this reason, during the Timurid era, the system of international relations reached a new level. This article provides necessary information about Amir Timur's diplomatic relations and their significance on the international scale.

**Keywords:** Diplomacy, Great Silk Road, foreign trade, political life, envoy, China, Egypt.

### **Introduction**

The founder of the Great Empire, Amir Temur, keenly understood that the economic prosperity of such a state could not be ensured solely by military campaigns leading to victories. Choosing Samarkand, strategically located in the center of Mawarannahr, as the capital, he believed that this city, situated on the Great Silk Road and connecting the Far East with the Muslim world and Europe, should astonish visitors with its magnificent buildings, splendid palaces, and the ceremonial attire of the palace staff. Moreover, Samarkand had long been a center of science and enlightenment.

During the Mongol era, the city's scientific and cultural traditions had been disrupted. For this reason, the ruler resolved to achieve his goal by restoring those traditions. This could only be accomplished by turning Mawarannahr into the center of economic and political life. To do so, it was necessary to revive and enliven the main caravan routes that historically existed between Western countries and China.



Before Amir Temur's time, due to conflicts among feudal lords and frequent invasions from outside, the caravan routes leading from the Golden Horde to Eastern countries had fallen into decline. Stretching from the shores of the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas to the borders of China, and from the Dasht-i Kipchak to the Arabian Sea, Amir Temur first protected the caravan paths of the Great Silk Road from raider attacks by establishing a vast empire. Raiders were especially numerous in Western Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Eastern Anatolia. Because the roads passing through these countries had been dangerous, not only trade caravans but also the pilgrimage to Mecca, which is obligatory for Muslims, had become impossible.

Thanks to Amir Temur, the caravan routes of the Great Silk Road, which had been closed, were restored, and investments and goods began to flow into Mawarannahr from various countries. Merchants from Samarkand, Bukhara, Aksikent, Andijan, and other cities of Mawarannahr actively participated in this.

Our country's merchants could be seen at the ports of capital cities in China, India, Crimea, Asia Minor, and North Africa. The rapid development of trade greatly accelerated the progress of this region. The treasury began to fill. Amir Temur created favorable conditions for both domestic and foreign trade as much as possible.

In the Middle Ages, trade and diplomacy had become intertwined. To expand trade and diplomatic relations, Amir Temur improved the caravan routes. He built destinations and caravanserais. He demanded that conditions be created for the uninterrupted movement of merchants and envoys traveling to the capital or military camp. For this purpose, the postal service (carriage service) introduced on the caravan routes was subject to military discipline. For example, every few kilometers, a courier (carriage driver) with several fresh horses was stationed.

According to the testimony of Klavikhon, if for some reason fresh horses were not available, the envoy had the right to take the horse of any traveler, even a state official. This evidence shows that the postal service was well organized throughout Amir Temur's state and that communication routes were reliable and safe: "They (the Castilian envoys) were given new horses every day for fast travel, because, by the order of the great lord (Amir Temur), places were prepared along the daily route where horses were kept — in one place a hundred, in another two hundred, and all the roads in his country up to Samarkand were arranged in this way. If the ruler sent someone somewhere or if someone was coming to him, they had to use these horses and the horses had to gallop day and night. Horses were ready even on deserted roads



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and in densely populated areas. In uninhabited places, the lord had large caravanserais built so that the inhabitants of nearby towns and villages could bring horses and food. There were special people to take care of the horses. The wide route (yomchi) was used. Thus, the horses of the messengers who brought news to the king were unbridled from their saddles and harnesses and replaced with other horses that were resting. When the messengers were leaving, one or two people would accompany their horses. When they reached the next station where the king's horses were kept, they would take back their previously exchanged horses and another wide route would accompany the traveler. Nevertheless, if any horse suddenly became lame on the road, they would force another traveler they met to dismount and take their horse, leaving the king's horses to rest. Their custom was such that if a horseman was traveling on the road, he was obliged to give his horse to the envoy (the great) going to the lord, because he was going to the lord or carrying out his order.

If the traveler objected, he would answer with his head, for that was the lord's order. If necessary, even the soldiers' horses would be taken. These (Castilian) envoys themselves and their people several times had their horses taken, forcing them to follow behind to retrieve their horses. It is said that if necessary, not only ordinary people's horses but even the lord's eldest son's horse could be taken. The envoys were told that there was once an incident: envoys going to the great lord forced his eldest son to dismount from his horse. Not only this road but all the roads in his entire country were supplied with such horses, so that due to such rapid travel, the king could be informed about all his possessions and surroundings within a few days. In all regions of Amir Timur's state, a strict and fast communication service was established with strict discipline. It can be said without exaggeration that such a service led to the rapid development of Amir Timur and the Timurid state. Merchants coming along caravan routes from distant countries brought not only goods but also new information about the economic situation, lifestyle, customs, and religion of other countries. They were also cultural transmitters, as they brought manuscript books, paper, and told stories, legends, and tales they had heard from other peoples. In turn, local merchants who had been to distant lands expanded their geographical knowledge and, upon returning from their journeys, told stories about their work and adventures, which were recorded by scribes. Trade thus encouraged the development of culture and literature. Amir Timur conducted his military campaigns alongside active diplomatic relations with distant and nearby countries. In general, he used war



as a means to achieve foreign diplomatic goals only when all peaceful diplomatic efforts had failed. Amir Timur's political relations with the Mamluks of Egypt are very instructive from a diplomatic point of view. Due to a certain international situation that arose at the end of the 14th century, the Ottoman Turkey, Amir Timur's state, the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt, and the Golden Horde emerged as the most powerful states in Asia, partly Africa, and Europe, entering the political arena. By the last decade of the 14th century, Amir Temur completely subjugated Jetani (Moghulistan). As a symbol of this subjugation, Amir Temur married To'kal Khanim, the daughter of Jetani Khan Khizr Khoja. This great victory over Moghulistan allowed Amir Temur's state to establish trade and diplomatic relations with China, since the trade route passed through Moghulistan.

Amir Temur paid special attention to the development of trade relations because they helped to enhance both the economic and political power of Mawarannahr. Previously, in the 70s and 80s, the complex political situation in China and Moghulistan hindered the development of trade and diplomatic relations. Regarding Amir Temur's military campaigns to the West, we have already discussed this matter from a military perspective. As Temur's army advanced westward, direct diplomatic relations were established with the Anatolian emirates and the Ottoman Turks. These relations began in the 1380s. The Anatolian emirs, having suffered losses and been separated from their lands by the Turkish sultan, pledged allegiance to Amir Temur and urged him to fight against Yildirim Bayezid. Among them, the emir of Erzincan, Tahurtan, and the ruler of Konya, Aladdinbek Karakhan, responded positively to Amir Temur's request for obedience. Amir Temur skillfully used this situation in his subsequent relations with the Turkish sultanate, as it provided him with a very favorable military position and a pretext to challenge the Turkish sultan. Correspondence with European kings shows that Amir Temur's reputation as the ruler of a powerful and vast empire was very high in the West. European monarchs respectfully called him "the most gracious and victorious king Temurbek." After Amir Temur's death, the Timurid state's relations with European countries changed. There is no information about the Timurids having diplomatic relations with any Western country. Some of Amir Temur's envoys were killed while performing their duties. However, Amir Temur himself always emphasized the inviolability of envoys. Even if an envoy came from an enemy side, he always treated them with respect. Amir Temur worked to ensure the safety of caravan routes and constantly sought to establish diplomatic relations



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with both nearby and distant countries. He united vast territories and many countries into one state, striving to establish close economic ties among them.

Efforts to ensure the safety and security of trade caravans connecting various countries, especially the restoration of the Great Silk Road's fame, were of great importance. As a result, diplomatic, trade, and commercial relations between East and West, South and North strengthened, playing a decisive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of Timur's state. As a skilled diplomat, Amir Timur, whenever he sought to establish relations with a country, first aimed to resolve every issue and problem between the two parties peacefully and through negotiations without war, inviting other rulers to do the same. Military actions were only permitted in unavoidable circumstances. In particular, the initial dialogues and correspondence that Sohirkiron conducted with rulers such as Tokhtamysh Khan of the Golden Horde and Sultan Bayezid Yildirim of Turkey testify to this.

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