

The Umayyad Foreign Policy Toward The Byzantines: A Study Of The Balance Between War And Diplomacy

Author

Abstract

The study focuses on the Umayyad foreign policy toward the Byzantine Empire, and how the balance between war and diplomacy was maintained from the mid-7th to the early 8th century. Significant military operations discussed are Mu'āwiyah's naval expeditions and Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik's siege of Constantinople, while significant diplomatic practices are tribute agreements, prisoner exchanges, and envoys.

An evaluation of the descriptive-analytical approach used in the study reveals that the Umayyad policy was a fluctuating one, which included military actions to both secure the border and enlarge the sphere of influence, as well as diplomacy to ease the tensions. This dual strategy was the foundation of the subsequent Islamic-Byzantine relations.

Keywords: *Umayyad State, Byzantine Empire, Foreign Policy, Military Campaigns, Diplomacy, Constantinople, 7th–8th Century, Islamic-Byzantine Relations*

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I. Introduction

The first hereditary dynasty in the history of Islam, the Umayyad State (661-750 CE) became a period of change in terms of political, administrative, and territorial organization of the early Muslim community. After the assassination of Caliph 'Uthman ibn affan and the subsequent civil war that followed under the reign of Ali ibn Abi Talib Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan came to power and founded the Umayyad dynasty which had its capital at Damascus. This shift brought a centralized and bureaucratically structured form of government that centralized the political power and brought the stability throughout the new territories that had been enlarged by the Islam religion.

Within this time frame, the Islamic empire was growing at an expeditious speed and reached the Indian subcontinent including its Iberian Peninsula, thus necessitating advanced administration and military structure. The Umayyads established a highly organized provincial government headed by appointed officials, enhanced the fiscal policy by enacted taxation, and had a powerful position in the army of the Arab tribal troops and non-Arab groups. Succession, tribal relations, and institutional governance reforms strengthened central authority and culturally, this was a time of the emergence of an early Islamic identity based on interactions among Arabs, Persians, Berber and other local communities. These internal structures were the basis of coping with the complicated external relationships, the most important being with the Byzantine Empire.

The Umayyad-Byzantine frontier was a geopolitical terrain that was a challenge. Since Byzantium was an old and strong state of the Late Antiquity, relations with it were inevitable. The Umayyads had the double mission of protecting their boundaries in the north as well as extending influence. Enhanced frontier areas, called al-thughur, acted as fortification of bulwarks against Byzantine invasions and therefore military and diplomatic intercourse with Byzantium were the main subjects of the Umayyad policy.

The eastern Mediterranean was important economically as the trade and revenue, and the Byzantine naval power threatened the Umayyad ambitions. Mastery over the coastal cities and sea channels was the key to the stability of the economy and this resulted in frequent naval battles and rivalry over trade routes. Politically, the military victories over Byzantium helped to strengthen the caliph whereas diplomatic practices, such as tribute agreements, exchange of prisoners, and envoys, demonstrated the realism of Umayyad leaders. Such a fluctuating policy of violence and diplomacy shows the versatility with which the dynasty reacted to the changing political and military situations.

Interactions with Byzantium were symbolically important, religiously and ideologically. Being the heart of Eastern Christian thinkers, the resistance of Byzantines had religious context, which enabled the Umayyad rulers to present military conquests as God approval, which strengthened their position as the protectors of Muslim people. However, the two empires realized that they had to coexist, setting the rules of diplomacy which shaped the relationships until centuries.

In short, the relationship between the Umayyads and the Byzantines was complex and influenced the military policy, They impacted and shaped the concept of political legitimacy, a stable economy and politics, and the idea of identity. The Umayyads combined fierce military actions to keep their borders secure and to have control over the influence with a wise diplomacy to limit the anger which made the Islamic-Byzantine relationship a pattern that lasted for a very long time.

This double strategy not only set the relation of power in the area but also formed the everlasting principles of the first Islamic foreign policy and the adaptability and complex character of the Umayyad reign when they were confronted with such a powerful neighboring empire.

Problem Statement

Although there have been numerous historical interactions between the Umayyad State and the Byzantine Empire, the interpretations that have been made in the scholarly circles have tended to focus on either the military aspect or the diplomatic interactions that have been taking place, with the exception of focusing on the dynamic interrelation between the two. This leaves a loophole in comprehending how the Umayyads developed a balanced foreign policy that included warfare and negotiation as some of the strategic instruments. The problem that this paper seeks to discuss is the scarcity of a detailed overview of the ways in which the Umayyad administration combined military conquests and diplomatic programs to govern its complicated set of relations with Byzantium in the 7th and 8th centuries.

Main Research Question

How did the Umayyad State balance military confrontation and diplomatic engagement as it forged its foreign policy towards the Byzantine Empire?

Sub-questions

1. What historical and political contexts characterized the relations between the Umayyads and the Byzantines?
2. Which were the major military campaigns of the Umayyads against Byzantium, and what strategic goals did they achieve?
3. In what ways did the Umayyads engage in diplomacy with the Byzantine Empire, including the signing of treaties, payment of tributes, and exchanges of prisoners?
4. What internal and external circumstances influenced the rapid alternation of wars and peace talks during the reign of the Umayyads?
5. How far were the Umayyads able to maintain a coexistence of military and diplomatic efforts?

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the historical and geopolitical context of Umayyad–Byzantine relations.
 2. To understand the major military campaigns conducted by the Umayyads against Byzantium and their strategic significance.
 3. The study of the treaties, negotiations, and diplomatic envoys that the Umayyad State had adopted.
 4. To identify the internal and external factors which influenced the Umayyad approach to war and diplomacy.
 5. To assess the success of the Umayyad policy with respect to achieving stability and pushing political aims in their relations with Byzantium.
- Significance of the Study

Importance

The research achieves its most vital importance by revealing a fundamental yet underexplored element of early Islamic history which involves military strategies used in combination with diplomatic approaches for state governance. The study of Umayyad–Byzantine relations reveals how Islamic foreign policy developed through time while showing the beginning of Muslim-Christian relations and the early Islamic state's handling of regional power structures. The study adds to modern historical research by presenting a balanced analysis which examines political factors together with military aspects and economic elements and ideological components.

II. Methodology

The researchers applied a descriptive-analytical method which combines systematic event description with analytical evaluation. The research reconstructs military and diplomatic events through historical chronicles and modern academic studies and archaeological findings. The descriptive section presents the primary events which include military operations and diplomatic agreements and political changes yet the analytical section examines how these events connected to each other and their impact on Umayyad and Byzantine rule.

Structure of the Study

Chapter One: Historical and Political Context

- Section One: The Rise of the Umayyad State
- Section Two: The Byzantine Empire in the 7th–8th Centuries

Chapter Two: The Military Dimension of Umayyad Policy

- Section One: Major Military Campaigns Against the Byzantines
- Section Two: Strategic Objectives of Umayyad Military Action

Chapter Three: The Diplomatic Dimension of Umayyad Policy

- Section One: Treaties, Tributes, and Prisoner Exchanges
- Section Two: Diplomatic Channels and Negotiation Mechanisms

Chapter Four: Balancing War and Diplomacy

- Section One: Internal and External Factors Shaping Policy
- Section Two: Assessing the Success of the Balance

III. Historical And Political Context

The historical and political context of the Umayyad-Byzantine relations is important to the analysis of a pivotal era of history in the development of early Islamic and Mediterranean history. The emergence of the Umayyad Caliphate in the middle of the 7th century was a great change in the Near Eastern political life because the new Islamic empire greatly extended to the regions that were traditionally under the dominance of the Byzantines. This growth created a long period of contact between the two powers alternating between war, bargaining, and expediency.

The Umayyad state began in the context of the region change and inherited the administrative basis of the Rashidun Caliphate and geopolitical problem of neighboring empires. Through centralization, the Umayyads created advanced political, military, and administrative systems capable of conquering the big empire stretching to the Atlantic and Central Asia. They were close enough to Byzantine frontiers, and their strategic position, as well as Anatolia and the eastern Mediterranean, were sources of rivalry as well as a needed diplomatic relationship.

The Byzantine Empire faced dual challenges from internal and external forces which included territorial losses and economic difficulties and administrative changes that shaped its reaction to emerging Islamic power. The game required complex strategies to create a relationship which evolved through multiple stages of war and sea battles followed by diplomatic agreements for peace.

A detailed examination of Umayyad emergence together with Byzantine political and military development will provide essential understanding about their shared causes and methods and resulting outcomes of their interactions. The research focuses on Umayyad military and diplomatic operations to show how conflict and negotiation methods defined early Islamic foreign policy during this period.

Section One: The Rise of the Umayyad State

The Umayyad State achieved centralized control through Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan when he took power in 661 CE. The Umayyad State established a centralized governance system which replaced the previous decentralized Rashidun model that had maintained political stability across extensive territories. The Islamic Empire maintained domestic stability through military organization and institutional development and strategic Byzantine frontier defense and power projection which determined its historical path.

• Political Formation after the Rashidun Caliphate

The establishment of the Umayyad State following the Rashidun Caliphate represented a fundamental turn in the development of early Islamic polity, itself born out of the political crises of the First Fitna and the assassination of Caliph 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān. Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān held military strength, administrative experience, and strategic tribal alliances in his favor in consolidating power and declaring himself caliph in 661 CE, thereby initiating dynastic succession through the appointment of his son Yazīd. This contrasted with the earlier consensus-based leadership and furthered the state as centralized, hierarchical, and bureaucratized, with the caliph exerting direct control over taxation, provincial administration, and military affairs.

The leaders enhanced provincial control through their selection of dependable governors and wulāt while they adapted Byzantine and Sassanian administrative frameworks into their own governing system. The Umayyad dynasty created a professional standing army which operated from garrison cities called *amsār* with the Syrian army serving as their most dependable military power. The Umayyads created an ideological system which justified their rule by showing their ability to maintain unity and order and defend the borders from Byzantine

threats. Through their political pragmatism and strategic alliances and military power the dynasty established Muslim stability while building modern administration systems which enabled long-lasting imperial governance.

The complex political system ensured domestic peace while determining how the Umayyads would handle their relations with the Byzantine Empire through both military operations and peaceful diplomatic interactions.

- **Administration and Military Organization**

The Umayyad State created an administrative and military system to control its expanded territory while fighting its main external enemy Byzantium. The caliph maintained his power through provincial governors or deputies who controlled taxation and security and administered justice and managed a team of scribes and fiscal experts and native notables. The *dīwān* system established its formal structure which created the state's essential operations through three main divisions: *Dīwān al-Kharāj* for revenue collection and *Dīwān al-Rasā'il* for correspondence and *barīd* for postal intelligence. The state administration achieved cultural and political standardization through the replacement of Greek and Persian languages with Arabic.

The Umayyads institutionalized a professional army based on the loyal Syrian corps and established garrison cities like Kūfa, Baṣra, and Fuṣṭāt, with strategic bases and administrative hubs. Navies, at the initiative of Mu'āwiyah, allowed them to control the eastern Mediterranean and fight sea battles such as the Battle of the Masts. The leaders established a precise tribal strategy which united competing groups through the recruitment of non-Arab soldiers who joined their forces.

The Umayyads established a lasting administrative-military system by creating a centralized bureaucracy which they supported with a professional army and garrison system and naval advancements. The bases provided internal security which allowed for territorial growth while creating a system that balanced military operations with diplomatic relations with the Byzantine Empire.

Section Two: The Byzantine Empire in the 7th–8th Centuries

The Byzantine Empire during the 7th and 8th centuries experienced essential political and military and social changes because of territorial losses and domestic issues and the rapid expansion of Islamic power. The Byzantine Empire maintained its defense through practical administrative changes which included the thematic system and Anatolian protection and military strategy adjustments even though the empire faced economic difficulties and religious disputes and court politics. The historical events established how the Umayyad Caliphate would conduct military operations and diplomatic relations and border control.

- **Political Structure**

The Byzantine Empire of the 7th–8th centuries was highly centralized and adaptive, framed within Roman imperial traditions and Christian ideology. The emperor held the highest authority, both politically and religiously legitimized; succession was by no means based strictly on heredity but on military support, court influence, or the patronage of an aristocracy. The government received assistance from particular bureaucratic departments which included *logothetes* who handled financial matters and military operations and foreign relations and an imperial council that provided strategic advice to the emperor about policy decisions and emergency situations and administrative matters.

Thematic districts allowed for further decentralization by putting combined civil and military authority in the hands of *strategoi* while simultaneously strengthening frontier defenses and facilitating local mobilization of troops. *Symphonia* (the close relationship between church and state) made the Orthodox Church a pivot of legitimacy, whereas the Iconoclastic Controversy exemplified the interplay between religion and imperial policy. The network of landowning elites, aristocratic families, and military commanders provided continuity to administration and politics but also contributed to palace intrigue and internal power struggles.

Taken together, Byzantine political organization integrated central authority, administrative specialization, local military-administrative innovation, and religious legitimization in a manner enabling the empire to survive the contraction of its territories and hostile pressures. This structure conditioned the decisions about war, diplomacy, and frontier management that had an immediate impact on long-term relations with the Umayyad Caliphate.

- **Military Power and Internal Challenges**

During the 7th and 8th centuries Byzantine military forces implemented essential structural changes to handle their shrinking territory and limited financial resources and growing social political challenges. Thematic districts (*themata*) decentralized recruitment and integrated soldiers into local economies, providing sustainable frontier defense, while elite central regiments preserved rapid strike capability and imperial authority. The eastern Mediterranean stayed under naval power control through Greek fire usage but the loss of coastal provinces created resource shortages.

Internal problems together with palace takeovers and noble conflicts and religious disputes about Iconoclasm and population decrease and economic decline restricted all available military choices. The strategic focus on containment developed through defense operations and selective counter-offensives and practical diplomatic methods. The Byzantine Empire used its defensive structures together with stationed military forces and modified supply systems to maintain its strength after losing territory and financial resources.

The Byzantine military reforms during this time period focused on creating organizational flexibility and defensive strength. The empire responded to Umayyad expansion through interconnected internal problems and strategic needs which led to a defensive strategy with specific military operations and diplomatic efforts instead of constant offensive warfare.

IV. The Military Dimension Of Umayyad Policy Toward The Byzantines

This paper has identified multiple elements which form Umayyad policy toward the Byzantine Empire. The military aspect stands out as the main factor which determined the outcomes of conflicts and territorial growth and political validation during the 7th and 8th centuries. Each empire encountered the other after they experienced domestic unrest which led to a military battle that became necessary for achieving strategic dominance and controlling Anatolia and Armenia and Mediterranean coastal areas. The Umayyads used their military campaigns to achieve two fundamental objectives. The first objective involved uniting their territories under a single rule while the second goal focused on expanding their Islamic dominion across foreign territories. The Byzantines needed to stop Umayyad expansion because the empire required continued existence and Christian control of eastern Mediterranean territories.

The two powers maintained a complicated military relationship which evolved continuously through yearly summer campaigns and winter operations and siege warfare and naval battles and border defense construction. Each state demonstrated its strategic interests through its political, economic, and ideological requirements which became evident in this situation. The way military operations functioned in the region depended on operational methodology and strategy and offensive and defensive interaction which determined the geopolitical stability.

The two empires experienced internal development changes because of extended warfare which affected their administrative organization and military structure and resource distribution systems. The permanent sequence of campaigns together with fortification efforts created immediate frontier dynamics which evolved into enduring battle strategies that connected military operations with political and diplomatic activities. The military dimension represents a fundamental element for understanding the complete Umayyad–Byzantine relationship because it shows how these empires dealt with power struggles and regional control and survival challenges.

Section One: Major Umayyad Military Campaigns against the Byzantines

Byzantium's Umayyad military campaigns The Levant formed a key region in the expansion of Islam, both militarily and economically, with vast areas being subjected to the administration and military control of Arab-Muslim authorities. These forays—ranging from smaller annual summer raids in Anatolia, to massive expeditions with the sieges of Constantinople—were aimed at reinforcing the legitimacy of the caliph, unify and focus tribal forces, and demonstrate the increasing power of his Umayyad state. That's why given how Much, much bigger high-level military

• Expeditions of Mu'awiyah

Military campaigns by Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān against the Byzantine Empire established the early Umayyad Caliphate as a formidable power and therefore defined the long-term frontier dynamics. Working from a base in Syria, Mu'āwiyah used a mixture of sawā'if summer raids with winter operations of fortification and logistics in order to consolidate border control and test Byzantine defenses. He innovated, establishing a navy and securing important victories like the Battle of the Masts (655 CE) that extended maritime control and enlarged strategic reach beyond land campaigns.

These military efforts consolidated Mu'āwiyah's political legitimacy by integrating the Arab tribes and projecting state authority, yet also opened the path to diplomatic collaboration through the institution of truces, prisoner exchanges, and tribute arrangements. The construction of fortified towns and garrisons, together with organized frontier patrols, yielded a viable defensive and offensive apparatus combining immediate military gains with long-term territorial administration.

In all, Mu'āwiyah's campaigns constituted a complex mix of land and naval warfare with political symbolism and frontier management that established enduring precedents in Umayyad–Byzantine relations and illustrated the use of military strategy both as an instrument of expansion and as a complement to diplomacy.

- Maslama ibn Abd al-Malik and the Siege of Constantinople

The campaign of Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik against Constantinople, which was considered as an embodying the power of the Umayyads to coordinate military actions on a large scale, the frontier planning, and the strategic siege in 717-718 CE. The policy was to not only bring down the political and economic status of Byzantium but also to assert Umayyad supremacy, thus being able to control the trade routes. Maslama encircled the city with a huge army and fleet and used siege engines, fortifications, and advanced logistics to supply and pressurize the city. But the Byzantine determination, strategic defense under Emperor Leo III, Greek fire, the bitter winter, and logistic stress would be the reasons for the failure of the siege, which would be the result of the careful preparations made by the attacking side. The failure would emphasize the drawback of the Umayyad military capability in the case of fighting against fortified urban centers and would point to the necessity of combined operations, strategic patience, and frontier management. Nevertheless, the campaign was a way to increase Maslama's prestige and to show the caliphate's determination to take ambitious military goals.

These activities disclosed the fact that the involved parties' diplomatic and military actions were closely connected since, for instance, exchanges of prisoners, negotiations for ceasefires, and information-gathering networks all moved along with the military operations. In short, the war strategies of Maslama demonstrated a high level of skill and boldness in the Umayyad's overall plan that integrated political, economic, and military goals and at the same time acknowledged the limits set by the physical setting, city defenses, and the technical superiority of the Byzantines.

- Naval Battles and Control of the Mediterranean

The need for the Umayyads to become the ruler of the Mediterranean was thus dictated by both the need of the day and the modernity of arms; challenging the Byzantine Navy at its stronghold, while still covering the coasts, trade, and troop movements. Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, the then already capable fleet of the caliphate laid down important naval bases in Syria and Palestine, and connected the naval with land movements. The decisive win at the Battle of the Masts, CE 655, not only exhibited the rapid development of Umayyad maritime power but also indicated such aspects as the production of ships, control, and tactical union were all getting sophisticated.

The Byzantine Empire did not give up and fight like a lion till the last moment, especially due to the use of Greek fire and through experience in maritime warfare. The Umayyad maritime forces, to some extent, were able to not only besiege coastal cities but also protect trade routes, reinforce the frontiers, and make the caliph's authority more political. By possibly synchronizing the ground and naval strategies, the Umayyads claimed a multi-faceted approach that tipped the balance between military force, logistics, and diplomacy, which eventually necessitated a strategic shift in Umayyad-Byzantine relations and established integrated warfare as the eastern Mediterranean's standard model.

Section Two: Strategic Objectives of the Umayyad Military Approach

The Umayyad military policy against Byzantium was not directed to territorial conquests alone; rather, it consisted of frontier security, an assertion of caliphal authority, and consolidation internally. Coordinated raids, sieges, and naval operations would weaken Byzantine power, secure crucial trade routes, and establish fortified frontier zones. This all resulted in a long-term strategy balancing defense, expansion, and power projection across the frontier.

Securing the Frontiers

Ensuring the frontier was safe was at the heart of the Umayyad regime's policy towards the Byzantine Empire. It mixed up the defensive works with the mobile campaigns and the administrative control. Fortified cities, garrison towns, and watchtowers on the Levantine-Anatolian corridor enabled the surveillance of the enemy's movements, the fast marching of the troops, and the provision of security to the local people. The yearly summer raids (ṣawā'if) and the winter campaigns (shawātī) through which the military power was forced upon and the Byzantine consolidation was disrupted, thus the authority of the caliphate was strengthened, constituted the mobile operations.

As an example of ecologically sound border control in the *thughūr* system, the integration of military posts, fortified villages, and mobile units under a single command was inherently structured for defense as well as for offense. Locating security in these borders was the safeguarding of commerce routes, the fixing of the economy, and the strengthening of political authority - all of which were the basic tools of conducting diplomacy with Byzantium. Simply put, the Umayyads' frontier plan was a complex blend of military, political, and economic initiatives that secured not only defense and growth but also the durability of their regional sway.

Expanding Influence

The Umayyad strategy against the Byzantine Empire was one of expanding influence;

Its military aspects included attacks on the coast of Anatolia, the Aegean, and the Mediterranean in order to make the Byzantines lose control and to develop forward bases. Displaying caliphate authority over the peripheries was thus accompanied by the extraction of tribute. The field success was thus a support of the caliph's legitimacy. He by this deed brought together the Arab tribes and the provincial elites and became a symbol of divine favor.

Besides that, the Umayyads also made use of client rulers, tributary arrangements, and strategic alliances to extend their influence without stretching their military resources too far. Control over the trade routes, the ports, and the productive regions was a very important factor for maintaining fiscal stability and for supporting naval operations. From the ideological point of view, the religious sanction of the campaigns contributed to the spiritual and political authority of the caliphate.

Basically, the Umayyad method was a mixture of force, diplomacy, and economic leverage that helped them to consolidate their power and project their influence over the long term throughout the eastern Mediterranean.

Weakening Byzantine Power

The wars of the Umayyads were fundamentally aimed at the gradual destruction of Byzantine power. The ultimate goal was to not only protect the caliphate's borders but also to make further expansion easier. To achieve this, the Umayyad armies launched numerous raids-*sawā'if*-on fortresses, towns, and supply depots throughout Anatolia and the Levant. These raids were aimed at disrupting logistics and weakening economic resources so that the Byzantines would be forced to take defensive postures. In parallel, naval operations challenged Byzantine dominance on the sea and thus helped the Umayyads to extend their power over the eastern Mediterranean.

The use of diplomacy and psychological warfare supplemented these endeavors. The use of truces, tribute arrangements, and prisoner exchanges allowed the Muslims to weaken Byzantine authority without incurring heavy losses. The economic disruption constrained the Byzantines further in their capacity to provision armies and maintain infrastructure. At the same time, the ideological offensive stressed the superiority of Islam over Eastern Christianity and therefore the caliphate's prestige was enhanced.

In other words, the Umayyad strategy was a coordinated war to use military and naval, economic, diplomatic, and ideological means to break down the Byzantine power, limit its strategic options and prepare the ground for long-term expansion. It was a complex, multi-faceted response to imperial rivalry.

V. The Diplomatic Dimension Of Umayyad Policy Toward The Byzantines

Wherefore military campaigns were the centerpiece of the Umayyad strategy against the Byzantine Empire, diplomacy was nonetheless a significant factor in the caliphate's organization of the northern frontier. The Umayyads saw that a direct military confrontation alone would not bring long-term stability, protect economic interests, or enhance political authority. It was through diplomatic interaction as a supplementary tool that the caliphate was able to negotiate truces, set up tribute agreements, exchange prisoners, and regulate border tensions without, however, incurring the full costs of continuous warfare. The Umayyads combined them with military pressure to achieve a balanced approach: on the one hand, they could be seizing the maximum strategic gains while at the same time, on the other hand, they were minimizing the risks and thereby reinforcing both the political legitimacy and the economic stability of the state.

While military campaigns dominated the Umayyad strategy against the Byzantine Empire, diplomacy was a significant factor in the caliphate's organization of the northern frontier as well. The Umayyads understood that a direct military confrontation alone would not bring long-term stability, protect economic interests, or project political authority. Diplomatic engagement as a complementary instrument thus enabled the caliphate to negotiate truces, create tribute agreements, exchange prisoners, and regulate frontier tensions without, however, incurring the full costs of continuous warfare. The Umayyads integrated them with military pressure to achieve a balanced approach: on the one hand, they could be seizing the maximum strategic gains while at the same time, on the other hand, they were minimizing the risks and thus, reinforcing both the political legitimacy and the economic stability of the state.

This chapter examines the mechanisms, means, and goals of Umayyad diplomacy with Byzantium as well as how negotiations, treaties, and political alliances were employed to support military initiatives with a stable balance between conflict and coexistence.

Section One: Diplomatic Agreements and Treaties

Umayyad policy towards Byzantium was, as a result, to rely largely on diplomatic agreements and treaties as ways of managing conflicts that were needed to secure the frontiers and prevent continuous warfare. Tribute arrangements emphasized the power of the Umayyads while saving both sides from expensive battles, prisoner exchange treaties eased frontier tensions, and temporary truces gave each empire time to recover and

redirect their resources. These steps were indicative of a practical strategy by which the Umayyads balanced military pressure with diplomatic negotiation to calm the disputed areas and strengthen their political authority.

Bonus Contracts

Tributary agreements, or *jizya*, were one of the main elements of Umayyad diplomacy towards the Byzantine Empire and served as both a practical and a symbolic tool of power. In terms of economics, they were a continuous source of income which was very necessary for the financing of war operations, the paying of the garrisons, and the building of the administrative infrastructure of the border areas. In terms of politics, they empowered the caliph's authority, showing the Umayyad hegemony to the Arab tribes, states of the neighborhood, and Byzantine client rulers through the caliph's domination without the necessity of abject conquest.

Tribute devices not only normalized the issues of border areas which had been involved in military conflicts and thus enabled the Umayyads to recycle their forces on the most important spots of the border in order to prevent the Byzantine incursions but also ensured the enforcement of such devices in the fields through a combination of coercion, which included garrison oversight and patrols, and negotiation which reflects a unified approach of both these two strategies towards one another. On a symbolic level, *jizya* payments were the means through which the Byzantines recognized the supremacy of the Umayyads thus the caliphate was endowed with the honor and the image of a divinely ordained Islamic state was projected into the outside world.

Tribute agreements were most of the time an integral part of broader diplomatic strategies such as truces, prisoner exchanges, and negotiated settlements, through which the Umayyad forces managed the entire frontier in a well-balanced way. By combining fiscal, military, and diplomatic measures, they kept the Byzantine territories under their control while at the same time saving the resources and consolidating the strategic objectives of the long term.

Prisoner Exchange Treaties

Prisoner exchange agreements represent the primary diplomatic instrument through which the Umayyad employed diplomacy with the Byzantine Empire, harmonizing pragmatic, political authority, and humanitarian concern aspects in a strategic manner. These agreements settled the return of captives taken in scuffles on the frontier and were meant to calm down the locals, hence avert the deepening of the conflicts and keeping the chances for a peaceful coexistence along the Levantine and Anatolian borders open. Through the regularization of such an exchange, the Umayyads were enabled to have control over the timing, extent, and the conditions of such meetings.

The prisoner exchanges were, in political terms, a mirror of the caliphate's political legitimacy and authority: the well-performed negotiation showed the ability of the Umayyad to implement the agreements and demonstrate power far from Damascus by the direct involvement, whereas the participation of Byzantine, at the same time, acknowledged Umayyads' as a negotiating partner of a certain level. The presence of humanitarian considerations, based on Islamic ethical standards, guaranteed the humane treatment of captives, thereby, contributing to an enhanced image of the caliphate both at home and abroad.

Besides that, exchanges were also economically and militarily connected to bigger policies, for instance, tribute agreements and truces, to the extent that they returned able bodies and were infrequently ransoms or reciprocal concessions. Their strategic potential resided precisely in the opportunity to cultivate relations that could decrease human and material expenses of a protracted war, thus, opening up possibilities for trust-building, communication, and long-term frontier management.

To sum up, treaties for prisoner exchanges were a manifestation of the Umayyads' sophisticated stance vis-à-vis the Byzantines, with a mixture of force and negotiation, military pressure and diplomacy, as well as balancing immediate operational needs with long-term strategic goals. They were one of the factors contributing to the stabilization of the frontier, political authority, and the projection of Umayyad legitimacy along a contested and volatile border.

Border Truces

Truces constituted a major part of the Umayyad diplomatic policy with the Byzantine Empire, an instrument of statecraft to settle frontier regions and regulate the ebb and flow of war and coexistence. These accords halted hostilities for a limited period of time thereby allowing the two empires to consolidate their territories, regain their economic strength, and negotiate more enduring arrangements. Along the unstable Levantine and Anatolian frontiers, where raiding, besieging, and skirmishing were the order of the day, truces offered a regulated method of lessening both the human and material sacrifices of warfare while still preserving strategic advantage.

By means of truces, the Umayyads were in a position to move their troops to other areas, enhance their defensive works, revamp their garrison troops, and carry out various administrative measures without fear of immediate Byzantine counteraction. In this sense, truces constituted an integral part of policy, being responsible

for the provision of operational flexibility and chronological control in the border area. The political aspects of diplomacy and the putting into effect of truces formed the basis of Umayyad rule, as truces were indicative of the Umayyads' ability to combine coercion with diplomatic skill, while the Byzantine involvement in the procedure was a silent acknowledgment of Umayyad supremacy in a frontier zone of consequence.

In this way, truces serviced the trade routes by letting commerce flow.

Furthermore, they kept agriculture safe, and by assuring the continuance of revenue collection they were able to allow further spending on the military and administrative sectors. On the other hand, they gave off the impression of controlled strength and sensible rule, hence, they discouraged the enemy from launching an attack and gave confidence to the allies and the local population that the caliphate was efficient.

Truces were frequently used in conjunction with other diplomatic means, such as tribute agreements, prisoner exchanges, and border settlements. They represent a holistic frontier strategy. The use of truces as intentional policy rather than simply a stoppage of hostilities enabled the Umayyads to maintain a fragile equilibrium along the area of conflict and to keep simultaneously military preparedness and viable administration.

Consequently, border truces can be seen as one manifestation of the Umayyads' highly developed frontier management policy. In this respect, they helped to stabilize a situation which was volatile, facilitate political authority, allow for economic continuity, and be a supplement to other military and diplomatic instruments. It is an illustration of the caliphate's capability of realizing both the immediate and long-term objectives in its intricate relations with Byzantium.

Section Two: Tools and Channels of Diplomacy

The Umayyad diplomacy towards Byzantium relied on a large number of efficient instruments and avenues which permitted not only communication, negotiation and influence but also a significant extension of these aspects beyond the mere formal treaties framework. By using diplomatic missions, marriage politics, and established negotiation procedures the Umayyads could communicate strategic intentions, build trust and acquire crucial intelligence. The caliphate thus could use these tools to combine the military pressures with the possibilities of cooperation, thereby integrating political, economic and security goals into a single foreign policy. Consequently, the Umayyads by their operation were able to keep a feasible equilibrium between hostility and interaction, an equilibrium that ensured stability at a turbulent border.

Envoys and Delegates

Envoys and delegates were the key figures of Umayyad diplomacy in their relations with the Byzantine Empire. They performed the roles of negotiators, representatives, and information gatherers. These envoys selected from the elites of the caliphate, negotiated treaty agreements, brokered and managed tribute and prisoner exchanges, and gathered information on Byzantine political, military, and economic affairs. Their presence gave the Umayyads the means to exert authority, make their intentions clear, and create trust while at the same time showing off their power and maintaining strategic oversight. Envoys enabled intricate diplomacy that combined personal negotiation with formal agreements such as truces and tribute treaties. Their training in language, etiquette, and protocol helped to avoid misunderstanding and made communication more effective. The combination of negotiation, observation, and policy implementation made the envoys powerful tools of the caliphate's influence and prestige, thus they were able to make informed decisions regarding the volatile Byzantine frontier. Envoys and delegates were the embodiment of the Umayyads' advanced diplomatic relations approach which was a balance of persuasion, power projection, and strategic prudence, all in managing a complex relationship with Byzantium.

Use of Political Marriages

Among the methods used by the Umayyads to conduct diplomacy one of the most important was political marriages which helped sealing alliances, guaranteeing loyalty, and, stabilizing the borderlands of the empire. The Umayyads by introducing the marriage between their kin and the Byzantine officials or the local aristocrats used less force and more influence to administer in the areas already under pressure and further extend their control. Marriages ensured the loyalty of the conquered through the creation of family relationships that were the core not only of the Arab but also the Byzantine worlds, and military and political strategies completed the picture.

In a symbolic way, through political marriages, the Umayyads showed their sophistication and political skills on how they mixed power with negotiation. The allied families after all were the real supporters that in practical terms by giving men, materials, and means of transport they made possible the caliphate to hold its strategic position. These marriage alliances were part of the tribute contracts, prisoner exchanges, and envoys forming a multi-layered different from each other yet in harmony framework of managing frontiers which was a balance of coercion, diplomacy, and personal ties.

To sum up, the political marriages of the Umayyads were one of the ways of the creative genius with which they not only were able to turn them into tools of political benefit, but also made them a source of further legitimization, security of the most important regions, and projection of influence over Byzantium without direct conflict.

Communication and negotiation mechanisms

Umayyad diplomacy with Byzantium was primarily based on effective communication and negotiation. This enabled it to handle conflicts, reach compromises, and further its strategic goals. The Umayyads had a clear way of showing their intentions, negotiating the terms of truces, tribute arrangements, and exchanges of prisoners through letters, envoys, and intermediaries.

Negotiations were well-organized and carefully thought out, firmness being rightly tempered with flexibility so that good results could be obtained without losing authority. Besides, communication was also a strategic leverage tool, a way of indicating readiness for war or showing restraint to affect the Byzantines' decisions. Envoys returned with information about troop movements and fortifications as well as political developments, thus giving the Umayyads an opportunity to use the information in military planning and diplomatic strategy.

It is emphasized that knowledge of culture, protocol, and etiquette can make negotiations not only effective but also persuasive and a reflection of the sophistication of Umayyad diplomacy. The caliphate not only consolidated political authority but also stabilized its frontiers and complemented military initiatives by combining structured negotiation, strategic messaging, intelligence, and cultural awareness.

The parts of communication and negotiation, therefore, indicate a more nuanced perception of Umayyad diplomacy in which the role of dialogue was seen as being one of the wider strategies of coercion, alliance-building, and frontier management for maintaining a balanced and sustainable relationship with Byzantium.

VI. Between War And Diplomacy

The Umayyad strategy towards the Byzantine Empire was essentially a perennial adjustment between combat and into the talks, mirroring the intricacies of the geopolitical world in the 7th and 8th centuries. While on the one hand, wars were the means through which territorial gains were achieved, frontier regions were secured, and the power of the caliphate was displayed, on the other hand, diplomacy provided the necessary instruments in dealing with relations, lessening the conflict costs, and ensuring stability in the disputed areas. Essentially, this two-track approach enabled the Umayyads to be flexible with changing situations, withstand the pressures from the Byzantines, and at the same time, most effectively use the strategic and political outcomes.

An understanding of the interrelation between war and diplomacy is a prerequisite for the analysis of Caliphate's frontier policy as it serves as a foundation for complex decision-making processes, strategic priorities, and the use of multi-faced instruments to maintain influence, legitimacy, and long-term security through a regional environment that was volatile.

Section One: Factors Shaping Umayyad Policy

Internal factors such as political stability, economic strength, and the need to confirm the caliphate's legitimacy, as well as external factors, for example, Byzantine power, border security, and local alliances, determined the course of the Umayyad policy toward Byzantium. The complex interplay of these factors not only accounts for the time sequence of the Umayyad offensives and peace agreements but also shows the caliphate's mode of balancing between military action and negotiation to control and calm the volatile border area.

Internal Stability

Internal harmony was at the core of the Umayyad stance towards the Byzantine Empire: the caliphate's power abroad was based on its political unity at home and domestic peace. The faction struggles among the Arab tribes, the residual loyalties to the previous caliphate, and local resistance in the newly conquered areas were their nerves of the earth. Stability was indispensable for the military, frontier security, and diplomacy.

The Umayyads succeeded in attaining unity at all levels by means of administration, politics, and the army: loyal governors, efficient taxation, and judicial systems; prudent succession; alliances with influential tribal leaders; and garrisoned troops, strategically placed, who were able to prevent unrest. Stability, or rather the lack of it in most cases, directly influenced foreign policy as internal unrest usually meant a cautious or diplomatic stance toward Byzantium, while domestic tranquility allowed for ambitious military campaigns and expansion.

Internal order gave the caliphate the means to maintain the frontier provinces, collect revenue, and implement consistent long-term strategies. It also gave them negotiating leverage with Byzantium that the Umayyads were disciplined and capable rulers.

Therefore, it was both a condition and a factor of Umayyad foreign policy to the extent that internal stability allowed for the mobilization of resources, the implementation of agreements, and strategic flexibility, whereas periods of domestic weakness limited the options and required diplomatic prudence.

Economic Considerations

Economic factors controlled the whole of Umayyad policy toward the Byzantines, they were deciding factors in their strategy both on the military and diplomatic levels. By holding the vital trade routes, the coast cities, and the border regions they were making sure that the money coming from commerce, taxation (kharāj), and tribute (jizya) was flowing into the treasury and thus financing the campaigns, the garrisons, and the naval operations.

Financial well-being allowed the caliphate to conduct large-scale campaigns, keep up the defenses, and make up its mind if the diplomacy which was in the form of truces or tribute agreements was more money-saving than war. The control of resources even reached to the lands that had been taken over, as a way of encouraging taxation, agriculture, and trade.

The sound economy also gave the state political and strategic leverage as it was able to show its power and thus the military and diplomatic moves being made were able to be maintained and have the desired effect.

Religious and Political Legitimacy

Military, diplomatic, and frontier decisions were outward signs of religious and political legitimacy, which formed the very core of the Umayyad policy towards Byzantium. Politically, it was through victories on the battlefield and successful diplomacy that the caliph's authority was strengthened as he was seen to be competent and as he secured the loyalty of the Arab tribes and provincial administrators. Religiously, the Umayyad source of authority was in leading the Muslim community, and it presented the military campaigns as just ones - thus they were seen as being in accordance with the interests of Islamic principles - and as such, ideological legitimacy was being reinforced.

Dual authority was reflected in the handling of the frontier, which was reliant on the military presence, local government, and the use of symbols to ensure loyalty and control. Legitimacy was the glue that held the inside together and gave the caliphate standing with others; this policy enabled the caliphate both to carry out effective negotiations with Byzantium and to make a show of power, stability, and prudence.

Section Two: Assessing the Success of Balancing War and Diplomacy

Just from the understanding of the war and diplomacy equilibrium maintained by the Umayyads against the Byzantines one can get an idea of how good their frontier strategy was. The interplay of expanding territories, treaties, and victorious battles at the frontier level is mirrored in the political and economic caliphate impacts of a much wider scale. By examining those triumphs and difficulties one can see that the use of force and negotiation by the Umayyads not only determined the duration and authority of the state but also its socio-political structure.

Achievements

The Umayyad Caliphate managed their conflict and diplomacy with Byzantium very effectively, and as a result, they were able to make a lot of significant military, diplomatic, economic, and political gains. By turning the border zones-al-thughūr, which were between the two empires into fortified areas, stationed troops, and carrying out efficient logistics-the most important frontier regions were made safe from the Byzantines. Coexistence was realized through treaties, truces, tribute agreements, prisoner exchanges, envoys, and political marriages, and the power of the caliphate was strengthened. These measures not only gave the caliphate more authority inside the country and also more prestige abroad but they were also a clear demonstration of the use of strategic wisdom as well as military power.

It was a system in which campaigns were followed by negotiated truces that economically protected trade, tax revenues, and social stability, thus pointing to the inclusion of fiscal considerations in frontier policy. All these achievements-secure disputed territories, balance coercion with negotiation, and safeguard state interests both in the short and long term-were instrumental in the strengthening of Umayyad control.

Challenges

The Umayyad Caliphate, while being successful in many ways, had to face the difficult problems of trying to balance war and diplomacy with Byzantium. It continued to be a powerful military force with strong armies and a dominant navy, which limited the gains from conquests and forced the caliphate to be in a state of continuous vigilance over its frontiers. On the inside, tribal rivalries, factional disputes, and unrest in the periphery regions challenged the caliphate and thus it was diverted from its negotiating position at times. Economically, the strained treasury due to long campaigns and the cost of the frontier forced the government to make conciliatory agreements like tributes and truces.

On the diplomatic front, the hardness of Byzantine politics, the changing alliances, and local power games required a lot of foresight and adaptability from the caliphate as a wrong step at any time could escalate the tension. Religiously, the caliphate had to portray itself as a model in both political and religious matters—a mighty empire which, however, had to deal pragmatically with a Christian empire. These intertwined military, domestic, economic, diplomatic, and ideological challenges made it necessary for the Umayyads to keep readjusting their strategies if they were to maintain internal stability and frontier influence.

The challenges comprising military operations, internal matters, economy, diplomacy, and ideology were intertwined, and thus the Umayyads had to keep readjusting their strategies if they wanted to maintain their influence on the frontier and at the same time keep stability inside.

Long-term Impact on Islamic–Byzantine Relations

The policy of the Umayyad Caliphate against Byzantium influenced the areas of military, diplomatic, economic, and political relations that were Byzantium's habits and that remained for a long time. The military frontier fortifications and the garrison systems exemplified a model for the controlled engagement-balanced defense with regulated offenses. At a diplomatic level, negotiations and management of conflicts were established through treaties, tribute agreements, prisoner exchanges, envoys, and political marriages, which prevented spontaneous escalations. Economically, it was oriented towards the long-term unification of the eastern Mediterranean networks, thus becoming mutually dependent by stabilizing the border regions and ensuring the safety of the trade routes. On the political-ideological level, the Umayyads confirmed their right to rule and invited Byzantium to recognize their right, at the same time establishing a framework for rivalry that was modulated by negotiation. Together, these policies formed a durable model for coexistence that determined the Islamic–Byzantine relations for the next centuries and was influential in strategic and diplomatic norms.

VII. Conclusion

Research on the Umayyad policy towards the Byzantine Empire portrays an approach that was more than one layered, using both the sharpness of the sword and the skillfulness of the negotiation in order to take care of the intricate border that was of great strategic value. The confrontation with a strong and persistent enemy as well as the need to secure their internal power were the two major issues that the Umayyad Caliphate had to deal with during most of the 7th and 8th centuries. Looking at the matter through the lens of history, politics, military, and diplomatic strategy, there were elements in the policy which, if revealed, showed the Umayyads to be intentionally and subtly balancing between forcing and bargaining, thus reflecting their pragmatic and ideological nature.

The Umayyads had the chance of showing off some of their feats of arms, among which there were defending the frontiers, launching attacks, and building fortress defenses. The caliphate's ability to gather the necessary resources, mobilize the troops, and extend its power over the areas outside the immediate territories was demonstrated by the long campaigns of the so-called sieges of Constantinople and the assumption of maritime supremacy in the Mediterranean, undertaken by the likes of Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān and Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik. Such wars not only solidified the rulers' political authority and unity of the people but also made the caliphate the talk of the town as a sturdy and resilient state that was capable of not only defending the lands of Islam but also broadening its reign.

By the same token, the Umayyads created diplomatic instruments that went hand in hand with the military operations and thus lessened the war's costs and risks. Among others, treaties, tribute agreements, prisoner releases, border truces, and political marriages paved the way for regular interaction and negotiation through which the caliphate was able to treat the Byzantines in a pragmatic manner. The decision to communicate through envoys and negotiations assumes that both parties had a thorough understanding of interstate relations where diplomacy wasn't simply a reaction but an instrument integrated into broader policy goals. The caliphate thus became even more flexible due to this dual strategy and could, therefore, move from confrontation to compromise depending on the development of the situation.

Various factors like intranquility, the economy, and religion and political legitimacy had an effect on the Umayyads' policy. The internal unity among diverse people's groups and tribal factions was what formed the core that was necessary to support both military ventures and diplomatic motions. The extent of operations and their duration, and thus the choices of war or agreements, were dependent on that. Also, religious and political legitimacy that was strengthened through military triumph, sound diplomacy, and Islamic authority proclamations was the very core of the internal and external trust in the caliphate and thus the main condition of the implementation of its policies and their respect.

The Umayyad successes did not go without continuous troubles of the same scale. The resistance of the Byzantines, the disunity inside, financial constraints, as well as the challenge of the cross-cultural diplomacy, were factors that not only limited the strategic options but also called for constant adjustments. Yet, the caliphate's

capability of solving these issues indicates quite a high level of political maturity and strategic vision; thus, it could be seen as the value of multi-faceted statecraft-military, diplomatic, economic, ideological.

The influence of Umayyad policy in the far run was not limited only to the nearby border. By setting the norms of negotiation, ensuring the trade routes, and strengthening the frontiers, the Umayyads planted the seeds of Islamic-Byzantine relations going beyond the dynasty's fall. These relations would be maintained by the following Islamic dynasties and would turn into the stability as well as the predictability of the eastern Mediterranean relations where confrontation and diplomacy were the counterparts in the rulers' toolbox and foreign policy.

To sum up, the Umayyad's case teaches the main role of the equilibrium between fighting and negotiations in governance, proving how the combination of military potential, tactical negotiations, and internal unification could keep a political system alive in a complicated geopolitical environment. The achievements as well as the obstacles of the caliphate provide valuable insights for the study of early Islamic governance, frontier management, and interstate relations taking into consideration the lasting importance of the Umayyad-Byzantine interaction in determining the political, economic, and ideological medieval Mediterranean world.

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