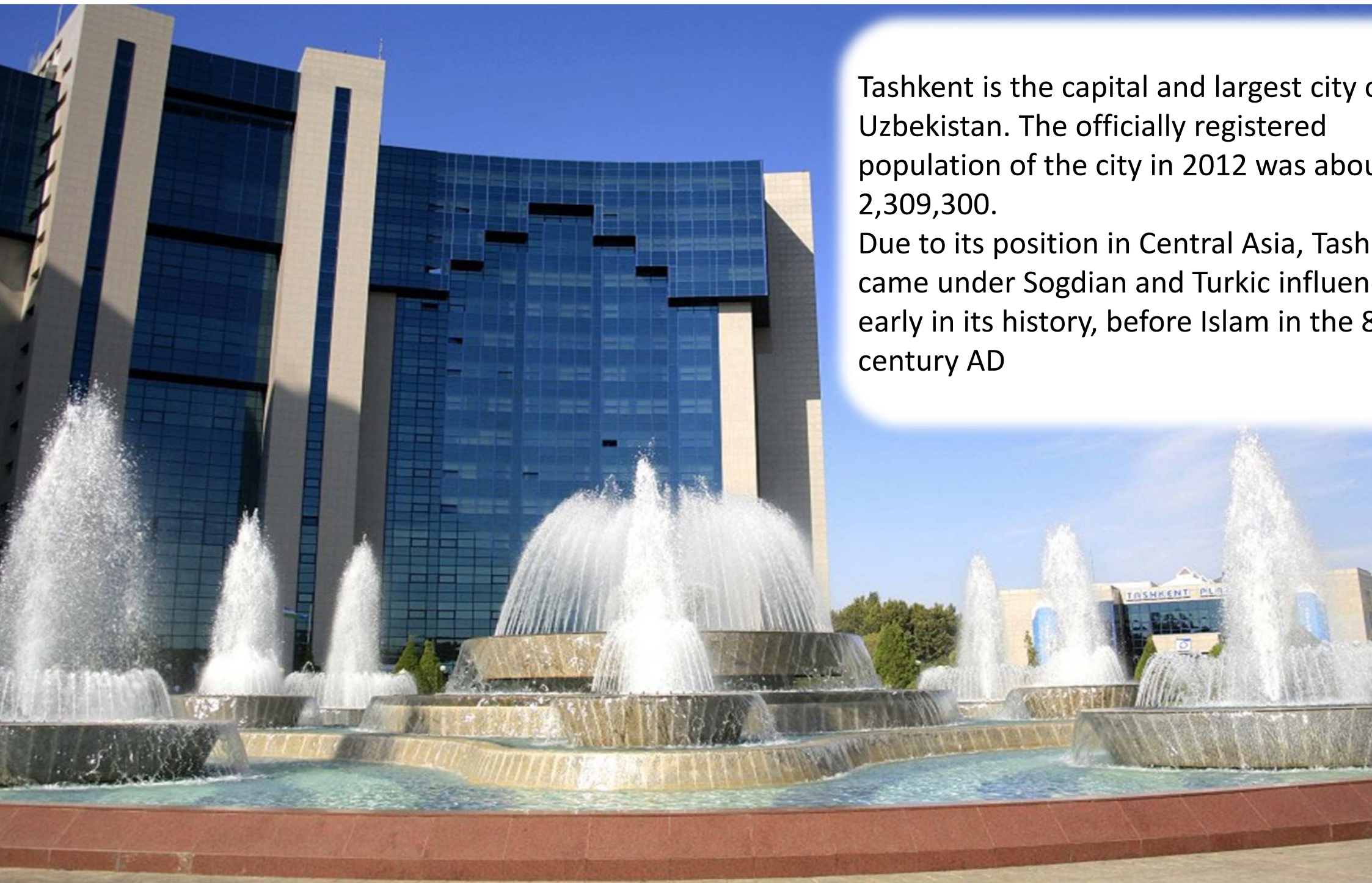


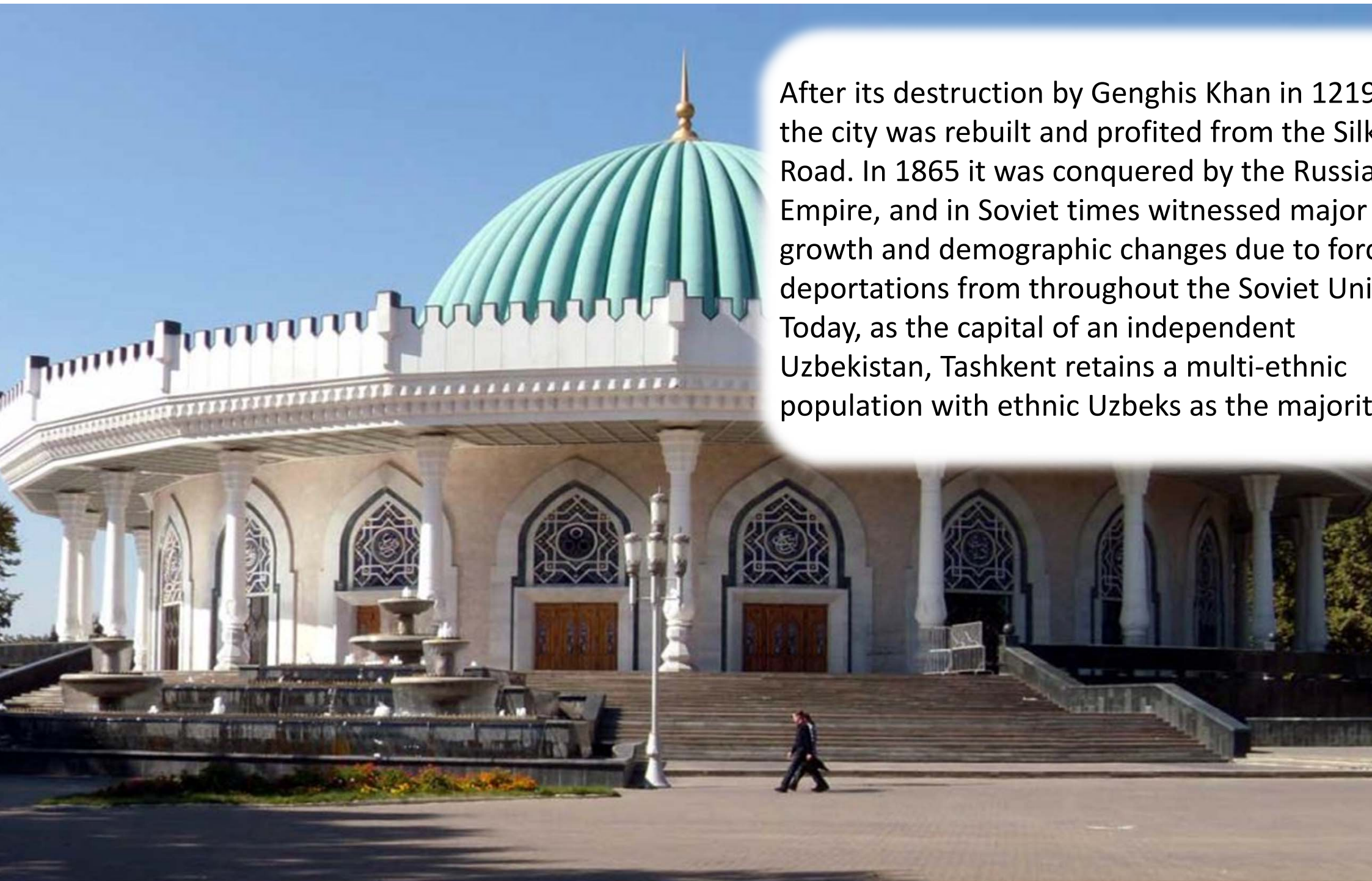
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Theme: TOWNS

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Tashkent is the capital and largest city of Uzbekistan. The officially registered population of the city in 2012 was about 2,309,300.

Due to its position in Central Asia, Tashkent came under Sogdian and Turkic influence early in its history, before Islam in the 8th century AD.



After its destruction by Genghis Khan in 1219, the city was rebuilt and profited from the Silk Road. In 1865 it was conquered by the Russian Empire, and in Soviet times witnessed major growth and demographic changes due to forced deportations from throughout the Soviet Union. Today, as the capital of an independent Uzbekistan, Tashkent retains a multi-ethnic population with ethnic Uzbeks as the majority.



Tashkent is the capital of and the most cosmopolitan city in Uzbekistan. It was noted for its tree-lined streets, numerous fountains, and pleasant parks, at least until the tree-cutting campaigns initiated in 2009 by local government.

Since 1991, the city has changed economically, culturally, and architecturally. New development has superseded or replaced icons of the Soviet era. The largest statue ever erected for Lenin was replaced with a globe, featuring a geographic map of Uzbekistan. Buildings from the Soviet era have been replaced with new modern buildings. The "Downtown Tashkent" district includes the 22-story NBU Bank building, an Intercontinental Hotel, the International Business Center, and the Plaza Building.



In 2007, Tashkent was named the "cultural capital of the Islamic world" by Moscow News, as the city has numerous historic mosques and significant Islamic sites, including the Islamic University. Tashkent holds the Samarkand Kufic Quran, the earliest written copy of the Quran, which has been located in the city since 1924.

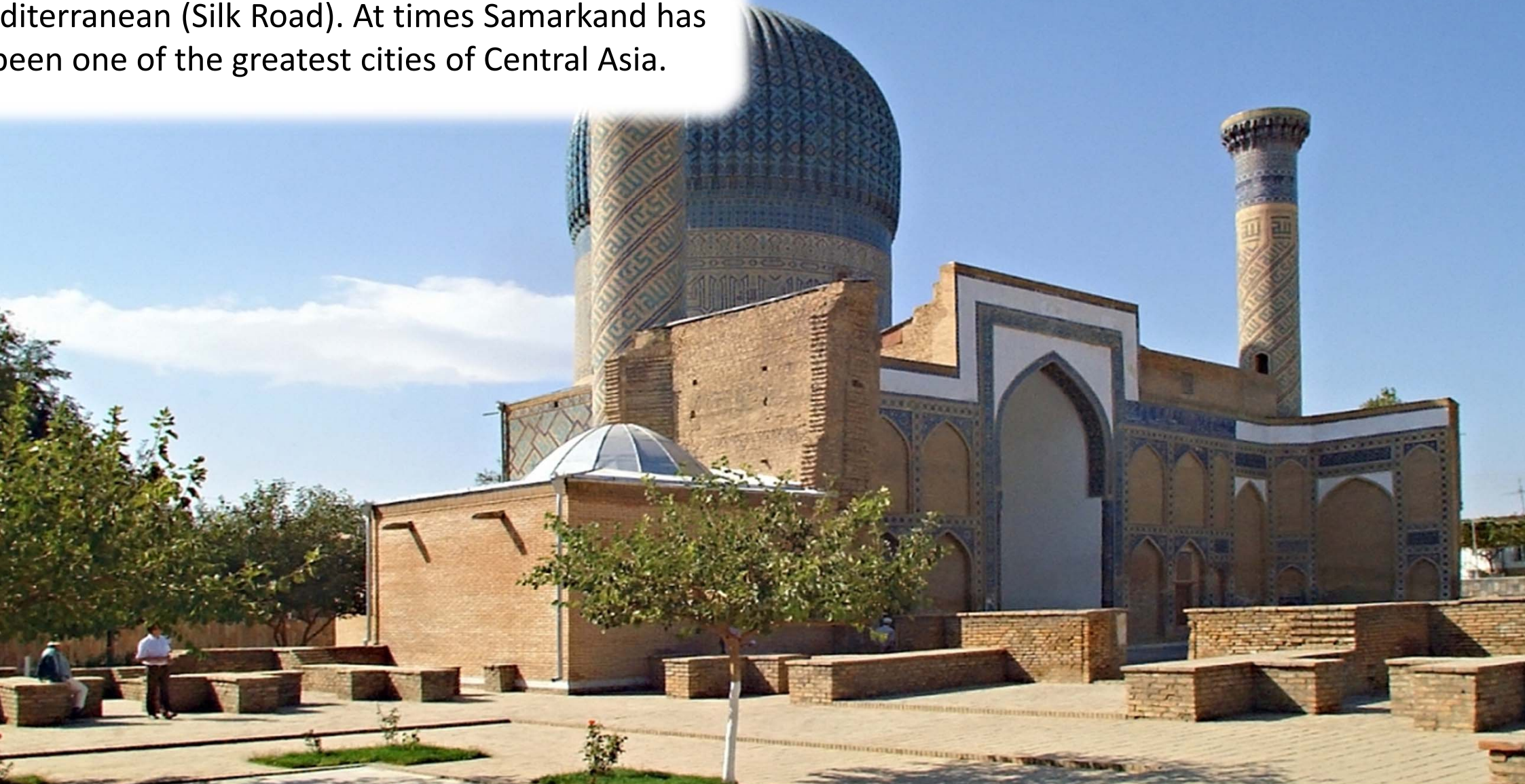
Samarkand traditionally was the second-largest city in Uzbekistan and the capital of Samarqand Region.


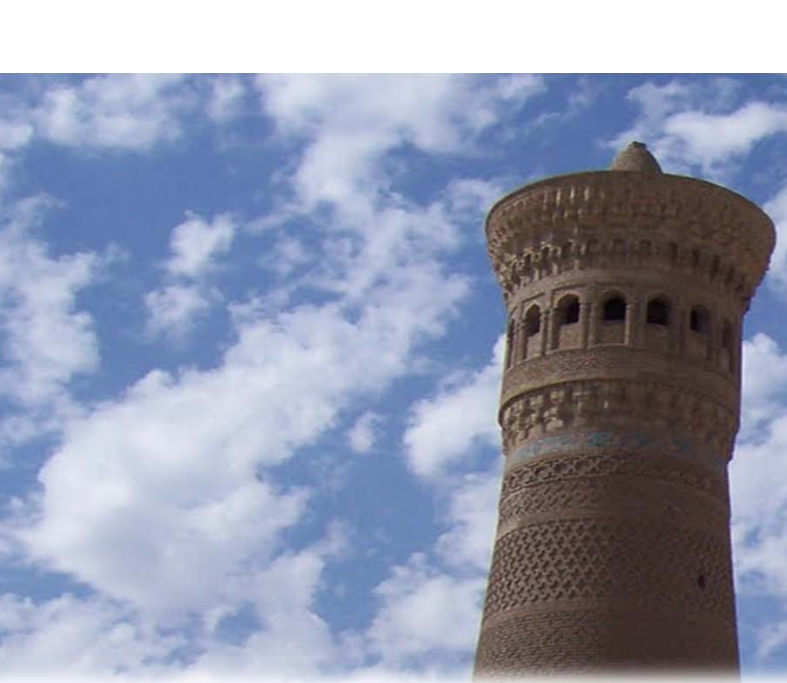


The city is most noted for its central position on the Silk Road between China and the West, and for being an Islamic centre for scholarly study. In the 14th century it became the capital of the empire of Timur (Tamerlane) and is the site of his mausoleum (the Gur-e Amir). The Bibi-Khanym Mosque (a modern replica) remains one of the city's most notable landmarks. The Registan was the ancient center of the city. The city has carefully preserved the traditions of ancient crafts: embroidery, gold embroidery, silk weaving, engraving on copper, ceramics, carving and painting on wood.

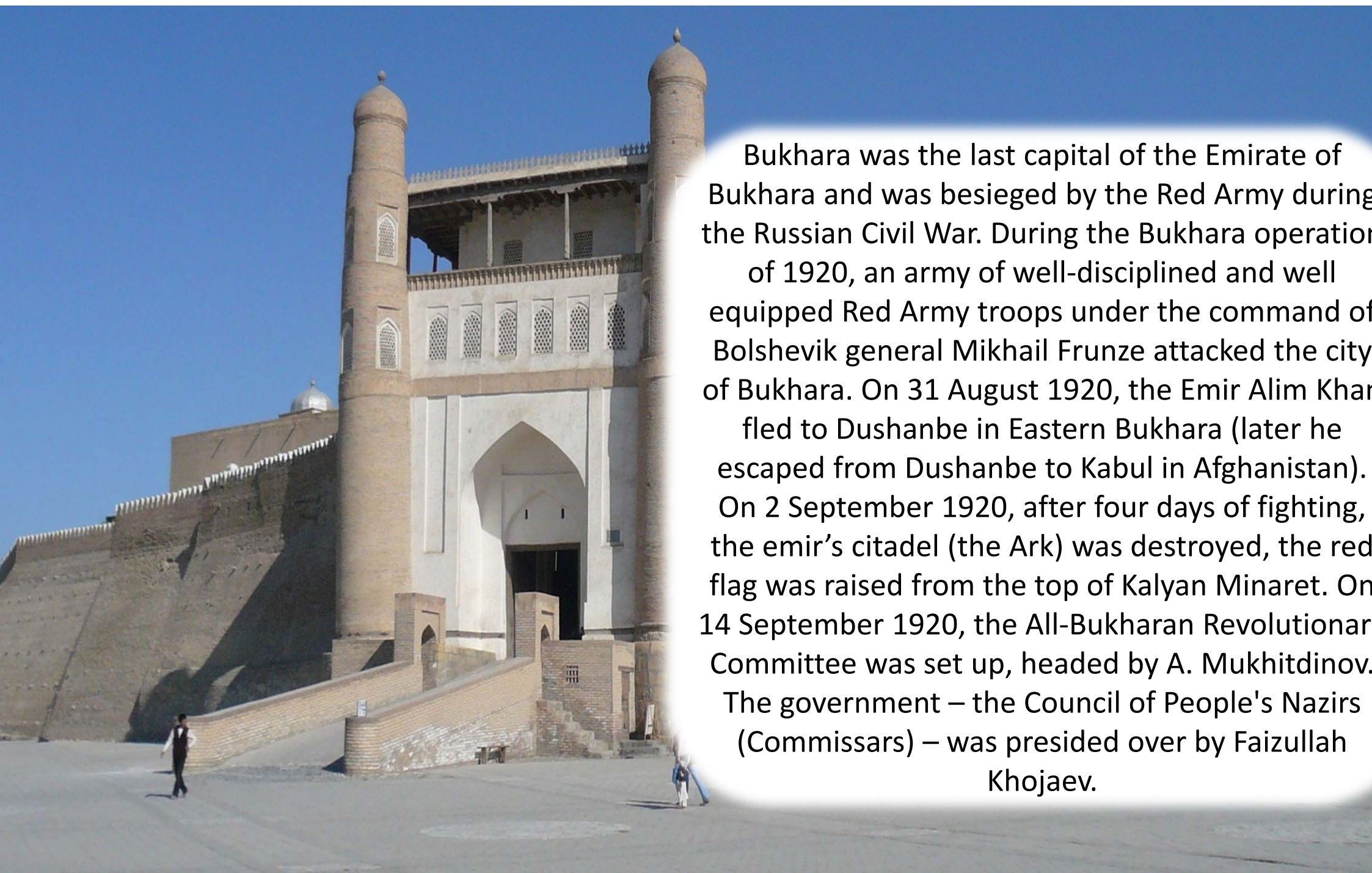


Along with Bukhara, Samarkand is one of the oldest inhabited cities in Central Asia, prospering from its location on the trade route between China and the Mediterranean (Silk Road). At times Samarkand has been one of the greatest cities of Central Asia.

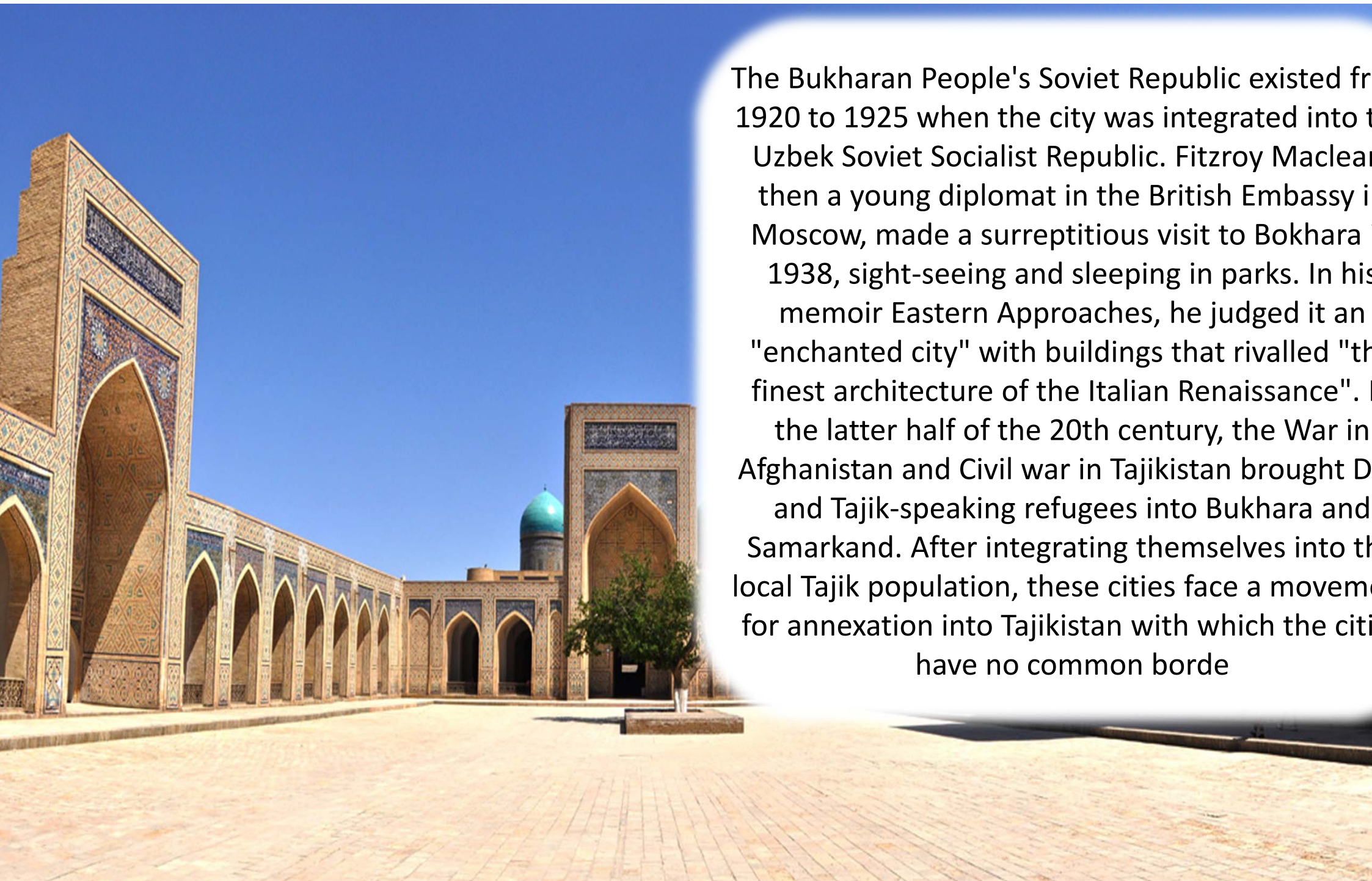




Bukhara is the capital of the Bukhara Region (viloyat) of Uzbekistan. Bukhara is a city-museum, with about 140 architectural monuments. The nation's fifth-largest city, it had a population as of 24 April 2014 of approximately 227,710.[citation needed] Humans have inhabited the region around Bukhara for at least five millennia, and the city has existed for half that time. Located on the Silk Road, the city has long served as a center of trade, scholarship, culture, and religion. UNESCO has listed the historic center of Bukhara (which contains numerous mosques and madrassas) as a World Heritage Site



Bukhara was the last capital of the Emirate of Bukhara and was besieged by the Red Army during the Russian Civil War. During the Bukhara operation of 1920, an army of well-disciplined and well equipped Red Army troops under the command of Bolshevik general Mikhail Frunze attacked the city of Bukhara. On 31 August 1920, the Emir Alim Khan fled to Dushanbe in Eastern Bukhara (later he escaped from Dushanbe to Kabul in Afghanistan). On 2 September 1920, after four days of fighting, the emir's citadel (the Ark) was destroyed, the red flag was raised from the top of Kalyan Minaret. On 14 September 1920, the All-Bukharan Revolutionary Committee was set up, headed by A. Mukhitdinov. The government – the Council of People's Nazirs (Commissars) – was presided over by Faizullah Khojaev.



The Bukharan People's Soviet Republic existed from 1920 to 1925 when the city was integrated into the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic. Fitzroy Maclean, then a young diplomat in the British Embassy in Moscow, made a surreptitious visit to Bokhara in 1938, sight-seeing and sleeping in parks. In his memoir *Eastern Approaches*, he judged it an "enchanted city" with buildings that rivalled "the finest architecture of the Italian Renaissance". In the latter half of the 20th century, the War in Afghanistan and Civil war in Tajikistan brought Durrani and Tajik-speaking refugees into Bukhara and Samarkand. After integrating themselves into the local Tajik population, these cities face a movement for annexation into Tajikistan with which the cities have no common border.