

УДК 327

DOI: 10.21779/2542-0313-2023-38-1-16-28

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Азербайджан в российско-турецких отношениях (II половина XVIII века)

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В статье исследуются политическое и военное положение азербайджанских ханств во второй половине XVIII века, а также конфликты геополитических интересов Османской Турции и России в регионе Южного Кавказа. Освещаются вопросы социально-экономических и политических позиций азербайджанских ханств, их противоречивых отношений, а также военных планов стран региона на различных стратегических направлениях на Южном Кавказе.

Ключевые слова: *геополитическая военная стратегия, экономический, упадок, дипломатические отношения, подчинение.*

In the second half of the 18th century, the increasingly tense international relations had a serious impact on the South Caucasus. With its rich natural resources and important military-strategic position, Azerbaijan became a battleground between the more powerful neighbors, Russia and the Ottoman Empire. By taking control of the Caspian region, both countries were interested in the possession of the rich resources of Azerbaijan, on the one hand, and the Volga-Caspian trade route, which was of great economic importance, on the other. In addition, the struggle between Ottoman Turkey and Russia to restore and strengthen their military and political positions in the South Caucasus geopolitical region intensified. The Ottoman Empire, once one of the world's most powerful states, was experiencing one of the most difficult periods in its history in the second half of the 18th century. The Ottoman rulers, engaged in long wars of aggression, did not pay attention to the development of the country's economy. All attempts of individual sultans to rectify the situation failed [16, pp. 34–35].

The economic backwardness and social and political contradictions that prevailed in the country led the Ottoman Empire to fail in wars as well. As a result of their defeats in the wars with Austria, Russia and Venice, the Ottomans lost Transylvania, Slovenia, part of Hungary, the southern part of right-wing Ukraine, Moraine and other territories [28, pp. 56–57].

During the period under study, Russia stood out among the states struggling to strengthen their position in the South Caucasus, including Azerbaijan. Due to its socio-economic status and military power, this state left behind its rivals, Iran and the Ottomans, in the South Caucasus. Socio-economic reforms, carried out in the country during the reign of Peter I (1682–1725), not only increased Russia's economic power, but also significantly increased its international prestige [8, p. 125; 11, p. 163–165]. Unlike the Ottoman Empire, Russia's military potential was growing day by day. The Russian government, relying on a strong army, pursued an active policy of invasion, expanding its borders at the expense of the newly occupied territories. According to the experts' data, in the XVII–XVIII centuries the territory of Russia increased by 130 km² per day and reached 11,445,124 versts by the end of the XVIII century [11, p. 45; 8, p. 125; 18, p. 36]. It should be noted that the appeals of the

Azerbaijani khanates to Russia and the Ottoman Empire during this period were not quite intense. Turkish researcher Ibrahim Yuksel shows that only Shaki ruler Haji Chalabi khan (1743–1755) and Shamakhi ruler Muhammad khan appealed to the Ottoman government for help in the period when the Azerbaijani khanates were newly established [13, p. 27].

The stagnancy in the relations of the Azerbaijani khanates with Russia and the Ottomans in the 50s and 60s was also related to the passive policy pursued by these states in the South Caucasus. The country's significant economic and military weakening prevented Ottoman diplomats from being active in the South Caucasus. The analysis of the Russian-Ottoman relations of this period shows that the Ottoman government, based on its military and economic potential, preferred to take a defensive position in Caucasian politics. The stagnancy observed in Ottoman policy in the Caucasus was also in Russia's interests. At that time, the tsarist government, which was more active in Europe, did not want to give the Ottomans any reason to become more active in the Caucasus. The essence of this policy is very clearly stated in one of the letters of Catherine II (1762–1796). Catherine II wrote that "if we want to extend our borders from Qizlar to Iran, Porta (Ottoman. – *R.I.*), which is a direct neighbor of this country, we will immediately begin to seize the lands of Iran (meaning Azerbaijan) under the pretext of this" [10, p. 473]. However, this stagnancy in the Caucasian policies of Russia and the Ottomans began to be replaced by a certain revival in the second half of the 1860s. Russia was particularly active in this regard. After the seven-year war with European countries (1756–1763) ended without any results, the government of Catherine II began to interfere in the affairs of the Crimean Khanate, which was under the rule of Poland and the Ottoman sultan. Attempts by the Ottoman government to resolve the conflict peacefully did not yield any results [19, pp. 345–346]. Russia, which had long wanted to seize Crimea and gain access to the Black Sea, openly demonstrated its desire to start a war. Thus, the Russian-Ottoman war of 1768–1774 was initiated by the tsarist government.

Both Russia and the Ottoman Empire attached great importance to strengthening their position in the South Caucasus. Economically and militarily weak, the Ottomans taking advantage of common language and religion tried to turn the Azerbaijani khanates against Russia. In 1769, the ambassadors of Sultan Mustafa III (1757–1774) visited the cities of Yerevan, Shusha, Ganja, Tabriz and Derbent [4, case 18, pp. 272–278]. Particular attention was paid to the rise of the Karabakh, Khoy and Guba khanates with stronger military potential against Russia. The Ottoman sultan advised Fatali Khan of Guba not to allow Russian troops into his territory. [6, case 18, v. 272–278].

Since their establishment Azerbaijan khanates had important relations with Ottoman. Independent Azerbaijan khanates didn't want to depend on any power and in the face of danger they asked Ottoman for help. Because in that period the main power that Azerbaijan khanates trusted against Russian revisionist policy in the Southern Caucasus was Ottoman. In the war period between Russia and Ottoman which occurred in 1768–1774 year the relation between Azerbaijan khanates and Ottoman became stronger [29, p. 177].

Throughout the war, Russian diplomats closely observed the actions of the Ottoman state in the South Caucasus. Numerous Russian spies spread rumors about the unification of the Azerbaijani khanates with the Turks and their preparations for an attack on Russia [4, case 18, p. 103]. All this forced the Russian government to take additional measures to ensure the security of its southern borders. The number of Russian troops on the Caucasus line was increasing. Russian consuls and agents were instructed to follow every step of the Azerbaijani khans [4, case 3, v. 4].

The Ottoman government's sharp reaction to Russia's move was apparently due to the fact that Derbent still retained its importance as a crucial strategic point. Russia's ambassador

to Georgia, S.D. Burnashov, who witnessed the events, wrote: "Not only in Iran, but also in the Ottoman Empire, the idea that when the city of Derbent is captured by Christians, the destruction of Muhammad's religion and government will be inevitable" [7, p. 7].

The deployment of Russian troops in Derbent led to the spread of various rumors in Turkey. In the Ottoman Empire, one of the Russian diplomats wrote that exit of the Crimean, Kuban and Bujag Tatars from the Ottoman Empire according to the Kuchuk-Kainarji Treaty, transition of Kerch and Yenigala in Crimea and Kinburn on the Black Sea coast to Russia, gaining by the Russian ships the right to sailing the Black Sea for the first time, the right of Russian merchant ships to pass freely in the Bospor and Dardanelles, the payment of 4.5 million rubles in compensation to Russia, the protection of Moldova and Wallachia by Russia were considered under new conditions [15, p. 915]. There were rumors about the violation of the terms of the treaty, the declaration of war on Turkey again and the detention of Russian troops in Derbent for this purpose [3 cases 478, p. 104]. The Turkish government sent two of its representatives here to clarify the situation around Derbent [14, p. 166].

The intensification of the negative reactions of both Turkey and European countries to this issue forced the Russian government to make concessions and maneuvers. Forced to reckon with the international situation, Catherine II began to spread rumors that General de Madame had acted arbitrarily, as if unaware of the matter. Trying to alleviate the international tension, Catherine II wrote that "General de Medem" on his return to our cities, at the strong request of the khan of Derbent, detained a small army of our soldiers in that city to protect him. However, as soon as we first heard about it, we ordered the immediate evacuation of our people from Derbent" [10, p. 435; 15, p. 531].

The Russian government also took a number of steps to defuse tensions in Russian-Ottoman relations over the deployment of troops in Derbent. A special declaration issued in this regard stated that the reports of the occupation of Derbent by Russian troops were baseless and that "the treaty" (the Kuchuk-Kainarji Treaty) can never be violated by us" [3, case 478, v. 104]. In an attempt to normalize relations with Turkey, the government of Catherine II, through its ambassador to Istanbul, N.V. Repn, told the sultan's government that it had no plans to seize Derbent. General de Medem's military campaign in southern Dagestan had no relation to the Ottoman state [3, case 478, v. 104].

For the Russian-Ottoman relations, Kuchuk Kainaji was also crucial in the diplomatic terms. Russia's diplomatic status in Istanbul moved from being the third rank (resident) to the second (plenipotentiary)-with the understanding that in reality the Ottomans would begin to respect it as the first-rank power, and that it could have consulates anywhere in the Ottoman territory. The same thing could not be said about the Ottomans, however. Already seeing their military standing as the first-rank state slipping away-Sultan Selim III was poised, unsuccessfully, to build a modern army-diplomatically, too, Selim III's opening of the permanent embassies abroad, the first being in London in 1793, was treated by the Ottoman diplomats as "humiliating" [17, p.108]. Consequently, given the asymmetric rivalry that had accompanied their diplomatic relations, Russia's late – 18th century and the Ottoman relative decline came to be articulated as tense interactions, with "tsarist diplomats (trying) to add ceremoniol gains to battlefield victories, (whereas) their Ottoman counterparts sought symbolic compensations for the lost battles" [30, p. 19].

H.V. Abdullayev, a prominent researcher of the history of Azerbaijan in the XVIII century, connects the refusal of the Russian government to accept the Guba khanate under its auspices with the conditions set by Fatali khan and writes: "These conditions, set in the example of the Crimean Khanate, did not mean the renunciation of sovereignty, as expected by the tsarist diplomacy of Northeast Azerbaijan, but the acceptance of Russia's

protectorate in the form of patronage and alliance" [15, p. 551]. However, if we do not rule out such a possibility, we highlight the negative reaction of Iran and Turkey, as well as the European state.

Russia's victory over Turkey intensified its policy in the South Caucasus. This posed a serious threat to the independence of the Azerbaijani khanates. The intensification of the Russian-Georgian block after the war of 1768–1774 was a matter of serious concern to both the Azerbaijani khanates and Turkey. This is confirmed by the intensive correspondence between them. In 1775–1777, the rulers of Sheki, Khoy, Karabakh and other khanates had official correspondence with various officials of the Ottoman palace. On the one hand, the deployment of Russian troops in Derbent, and on the other hand, the increasing aggression of tsar Irakli II of Kart (1762–1798) against the Azerbaijani khanates forced Ottoman Turkey to pay more attention to the appeals of the Azerbaijani khans. The Turkish sultan Abdulhamid I called on the khans of Sheki, Karabakh and Shamakhi to unite their forces against the enemy aggression.

Azerbaijani khans expected real help from the Turkish sultan to fight against both their specific enemies and the enemies of the Turkish-Islamic factors. The ruler of Karabakh, Ibrahim Khalil khan himself, sent Molla Hasan to the Turkish sultan and stated that "if we receive the help we expect from you, we will destroy our enemies" [2, p. 750].

According to Russian Ambassador Stakhiev, interesting information is also provided about the positions of the Azerbaijani khanates during the Iran-Turkey conflict. It is clear from this information that the majority of Azerbaijani khans were friendly to Ottoman Turkey and even sought to form an alliance with it. However, it would be wrong to say that the Turkish sultan fully believed in the devotion of the Azerbaijani khans who expressed their loyalty. There were certain grounds for this. Thus, trying to prevent the attacks of Karim khan Zand (1763–1779), the Turkish government planned to send troops to Azerbaijan [3, p. 171]. In order to ensure the success of the operation, contacts were established with the khans of Khoy and Iravan, located on the border with Turkey, and valuable gifts were sent to them. It is interesting that while Hoy khan accepted gifts, Huseynali khan of Iravan (1759/1760–1783) refused to take such a step and said that he would appeal to Karim khan Zand for help if Turkish troops were sent to the Iravan khanate [3, p. 171].

Of course, the change in the position of Huseynali khan of Yerevan could not deter the Turkish government from implementing its plans. However, additional precautionary measures were made. The command of the army to be sent to Azerbaijan was instructed to gather 10,000 additional cavalry and 5,000 infantry troops in Kars, in addition to the army under its command. This army, which was to be moved into the territory of the Iravan khanate, had to start the war with Huseynali khan if necessary [5, p. 171].

In the early 1780s, Russia began to implement the plan. The famous Russian commander A.V. Suvorov was appointed commander of the army to be sent to the South Caucasus. As mentioned above, this army was supposed to distract the Turkish army from the battlefield, as well as prevent possible alliances between the Azerbaijani and Dagestani authorities with the Ottomans. At the same time, this army had to pay attention to strengthening its position in the Caspian region of Russia. AV Suvorov came to Astrakhan, collected information about the Caspian littoral regions and informed his government about the possible routes [21, case 216, p. 1–3]. However, the Russian government had to postpone the march at the last moment. The planned march caused a great stir not only in Iran and Turkey, but also in Europe [1, v. 415].

However, Russia's military preparations forced Ottoman Turkey to retaliate. The Sultan's government had high hopes for the help of the Azerbaijani khans and the rulers of

Dagestan in preventing Russia's impending military campaign in the South Caucasus. However, the ongoing disputes between the rulers of Azerbaijan and Dagestan during this period divided their forces and did not allow them to fight from a united front against foreign enemies. It is no coincidence that at that time the Ottoman palace attached great importance to the unification of forces hostile to Russia's policy in the Caucasus. The intensive correspondence of the Turkish government with individual judges proves that the sultan made great effort to establish peace in Dagestan and Azerbaijan [25, p. 105]. An example of this is the decrees issued by Sultan Abdulhamid I (1774–1789) in 1775. The decrees were issued in connection with the preparation of Fatali khan from Guba, Hussein khan and a number of Dagestan rulers for the attack on the Karabakh khanate. The sultan demanded to take part in the attack on the Karabakh khanate [12, p. 105].

Despite the Ottoman government's attempts to establish peace in the South Caucasus, tensions between the Azerbaijani khanates not only decrease, but also intensified. They even tried to use Turkey's help in the fight against their rivals. As early as 1768, Muhammad Said khan from Shamakhi, who was deprived of his lands by Fatali khan from Guba, appealed to the sultan for help. Some facts confirming this can be found in Russian archival documents. It is clear from the report of the collegiate archivist Karp Latinsev to M.V. Tumanovsky dated November 2, 1780, that in August of the last year based on Sunni law the Ottoman sultan sent a letter to Mohammad Said khan through his messenger. From this letter it could be concluded that the Ottomans wanted to help Muhammad Khan with money and troops.

In May 1780, representatives sent by the Ottoman sultan visited Mohammad khan of Shamakhi, Fatali khan of Guba, as well as various rulers of Dagestan. They told the rulers and the population that when Russian troops came to Derbent, they should try to prevent their actions and inform the Ottoman palace. The ambassadors of the Turkish sultan promised to help the population with money [22, case 217, p. 39]. Haji Rahim, a resident of Ganja, sent information to the Ottoman government that Russian troops would arrive in Iran by ship and by land.

In the 1780s, the Russian government began to act purposefully in the South Caucasus. The measures taken to unite Crimea showed that Russia would pursue a resolute policy in the South Caucasus. Thus, Aha Muhammad khan Gajar turned to the main opponent of Russia in Southern Caucasus [27, p. 324]. The rumors caused alarm among the Turkish and Iranian authorities. In this connection, the Ottoman sultan repeatedly offered his patronage and assistance to the Azerbaijani rulers in the joint struggle against Russia and sent them many gifts. For example, Baku khan Malik Mohammad khan (1768–1784) was sent various gifts worth 5,000 rubles, including watches. Although Fatali Khan of Guba had previously asked Turkey for help, he did not accept the sultan's letters and gifts, as he now hoped that Russia would recognize him as the ruler of all Azerbaijan, and ordered the Baku khan to send back the pasha's envoys with gifts. However, it became clear from the letter sent by Astrakhan Governor Zhukov to Prince Potemkin that the Baku khan ignored the order of Fatali khan and promised to inform the Ottoman government about the arrival of Russian troops through the coming ambassador. According to preliminary information, the Russian navy intended to oust the khan.

During this period, the Russian-Ottoman rivalry for Azerbaijani lands also intensified. The Turkish government's attempt to strengthen its position in the Iravan Khanate was a source of concern for Irakli II, a Russian puppet. Aware of this, Irakli II expressed his concern to Potemkin. Akhalsikha pasha sent men to Iravan, Erzurum, Kars and Bayazid pashas trying to persuade Iravan khan Gulamali khan (he ruled for 1783, only eight months) and to get his consent to send troops to Iravan fortress. Proximity to Turkey was necessary due to historical

circumstances. With this step, Turkey tried to prevent the attempts of Irakli II, a Russian puppet, to subjugate the Azerbaijani khanates. Gulamali khan's uncle Shamsaddin Agha was especially initiative. The events in other parts of Azerbaijan could not but disturb Turkey, so it tried to contact local rulers and provide them with military assistance in order to prevent the Russian state's policy of aggression against the Caucasus, especially Azerbaijan. From Turkey, the head gatekeeper Pasha Mohammadsalah bey went to the city of Khoy to Ahmad khan (1763–1786), and from there to Ibrahim khan. He also delivered various gifts and letters to Shaki khan Muhammad Hasan khan (1783–1795). The sultan's letters guaranteed that the Azerbaijani khanates would be protected by the sultan. The Turkish ambassador also visited Fatali khan of Guba, Umma khan of Avar (1774–1804), Mohammad khan of Qazikumukh, usmi of Garagaytag, shamkhal of Tarku and a number of other rulers of Azerbaijan and Dagestan [25, case 416, II h., v. 3].

Turkey, like Russia, tried to win over Iranian rulers. He paid more attention to Ali Murad Khan and wanted to build his confidence in Iran. Turkey's rapprochement with Iran was aimed at significantly limiting the maneuverability of Russia and its ally in the South Caucasus, Irakli II in the region. The Russian state was very concerned about Turkey's policy in Iran and Azerbaijan. In a document written to Prince G.A. Potemkin on January 1, 1784, P.S. Potemkin stated that he tried hard to awaken the people there [23, case 331, II h., v. 80]. The Ottomans continued to send their representatives to Akhalsikhe, Azerbaijan and Dagestan. Suleyman Pasha from Akhalsikhe called on the people of the Caucasus to go to war against Russia, a religious enemy. Russia's plans to strengthen the position of the Christian population in the South Caucasus forced Ottoman Turkey to retaliate. At the end of 1783, the sultan sent his representative Khalil Efendi to Dagestan, Shirvan, Karabakh and Yerevan, instructing him to directly spread anti-Russian propaganda among the population and to reveal the occupation intentions of the Russians. Before Khalil Efendi came to Ibrahim khan of Karabakh, the commander of the Russian troops in the Caucasus, General Potyomkin, was able to get accurate information about all his activities through usmi of Qaytaq Amir Hamza. The Russian authorities were closely watching how the local khans would treat Khalil Efendi. Suleyman Pasha Gaytag sent letters to the usmi of Qaytaq Amir Hamza, shamkhal of Tartu Murtuzali, khan of Avar Umma khan, Muhammad khan of Qazikumuglu, Ali Sultan of Jangutayli and other rulers of Dagestan. In these letters, the rulers were promised aid and gifts to mobilize the army [24, work 350, II h., v. 4ar.]. On March 5, 1784, P.S. Potemkin seized the letter and sent it to G.A. Potemkin.

Ottoman ambassadors from Akhalsikhe also stubbornly campaigned against the deployment of Russian troops in Ganja. Russia's envoy to the Caucasus told his government that if Russian troops were stationed in Ganja, it could lead Muslims to take up arms against Russia. This could lead to the breakdown of diplomatic relations between Russia and a group of khanates of Azerbaijan. That's why Russia was wary of it.

The Ottoman sultanate, however, was unable to provide military assistance to the rulers of the Caucasus, urging them using money and gifts to fight against the Russians. The Ottoman government demanded that the Azerbaijani khans prevent the deployment of Russian troops in Ganja. During this period, the importance of the Iravan Khanate in Russian-Ottoman relations was gradually increasing. Both states tried to take control of this khanate. The Ottomans tried to use the power of the Azerbaijani khans, including Ibrahim Khan of Karabakh, to carry out this plan. The Ottoman state also had a great influence on Ibrahim khan's rapprochement with the Iravan khanate. The Iravan khanate and fortress, which were of strategic military importance, could not escape the attention of the Ottomans, as did Russia. The Iravan Khanate was considered the key to the South-Eastern Caucasus. That is why

Russia gave a special task to Irakli II to seize this strategically important khanate. In response, the Ottoman government instructed the pashas of Akhalsikhe, Kars, Erzurum, and Bayazid to negotiate with the khan of Iravan to obtain consent for the deployment of Ottoman troops in the Iravan fortress for a certain amount. However, the death of Guba khan in 1784 did not allow this intention to be realized. This murder was perhaps not accidental, and Russian-Georgian officials might have been involved in it.

As the mother of 12-year-old Muhammad khan, who came to power in the Iravan khanate, was Georgian, the influence of Irakli II on the Iravan khanate increased. Seeing that the situation had changed to the detriment of the Ottomans, he began negotiations with Khoylu Ahmad khan, who had close relations with the sultan, on the capture of the Iravan fortress. In addition, the Ottoman government sent orders to individual pashas to mobilize troops to protect the Iravan fortress from Irakli II and Russia. Thus, the Iravan Khanate became the main point of the Russian-Ottoman conflict in the South Caucasus. The capture of the Iravan fortress by the Ottomans would be a major blow to Russian and Georgian policy. Neither Tsar Irakli II nor Russian diplomacy could allow this. In Yerevan, there was a struggle between supporters and opponents of Irakli. As we have noted, Mohammad Khan, whose mother was Georgian, wrote a letter to Suleiman Pasha in August 1784 stating that he would serve Tsar Irakli II. Of course, Muhammad Khan, who was attached to the Christian world from his mother's side, did not seem to want to struggle against his uncles.

The arrival of a 60-member Ottoman delegation to the South Caucasus in 1784 led to an increase in the activity of the Ottoman state here. Russia, which had managed to annex Crimea peacefully, was still reluctant to take any steps that would irritate the Ottoman sultan. The Ottoman court, unwilling to reconcile with its recent losses, sought to consolidate itself in the South Caucasus. Sultan Abdul Hamid called on Muslims to "holy war" against Russia to defend Iran and Dagestan [20, work 350, I h., v. 4]. The fact that the rulers of Dagestan and Azerbaijan, including Fatali khan from Guba, appealed to the Ottoman sultan for help in this call aroused great suspicion in the ruling circles of Russia. Although Tsar Irakli II was a rival of Fatali khan, he did not accept the idea of his rapprochement with the Ottomans. In his letter to PS Potemkin dated July 16, 1784, he wrote that it seemed impossible for Fatali khan to take such a step [23, work 331, VII h., v. 35].

Negotiations between Akhalsikhe pasha and the rulers of Azerbaijan and Dagestan against Russia's intentions of aggression were successful. From the letter of S.D. Burnashov to P.S. Potemkin on April 22, 1785, it is clear that the representatives of the allies left for Istanbul under the leadership of Ibrahim Efendi [24, work 350, V h., v. 63–64]. However, the signing of the alliance agreement did not take place at the last moment. The Ottomans did not succeed as a result of internal conflicts between the Azerbaijani khans and the lack of definition of the responsibilities of the allies, as well as the insidious policy of the Russian state against the rapprochement of the Azerbaijani khanates. However, it should be noted that the majority of Azerbaijani khans wanted to continue cooperation with the Ottoman Empire to jointly fight against Russia's plans of aggression. Rather, they were ready to act as allies against Russia while maintaining their political and economic independence. However, the lack of Ottoman government's real military assistance prevented the Azerbaijani khans from taking decisive action in this direction and caused them to take a double position. Thus, Ibrahim khan's proximity to the Ottoman state required him to take the opposite position from Irakli II [23, work 331, VII h., V. 35]. Undoubtedly, most of the Azerbaijani khanates could have abandoned this policy and taken a hard line against Russia if the Ottomans had given real help.

On May 6, 1784, S.D. Burnashov wrote that a man sent by Tsar Irakli II to Ibrahim khan in Shusha returned. It is clear from the letter brought by this man that Ibrahim khan also asked Hoi khan to accept the patronage of Russia [23, case 331, V h., v. 54]. Thus, in addition to establishing diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire, Ibrahim Khan of Karabakh was interested in maintaining relations with Russia.

The ambassadors sent to Azerbaijan from the Ottoman palace called on the provincial rulers to gather troops to oppose the Russians. The correspondence was intended to focus allied forces on the banks of the Kura River. This was not a random selection.

On the eve of a new war with Russia, the Ottoman government also sought to strengthen its position in the South Caucasus. The sultan's government again defended the Iravan khanate and opposed Irakli II. The sultan's decree sent to the governor of Iravan, Huseyngulu khan, in June 1787 stated that the governor of Tbilissi, Irakli II, was calling on the Russians to divide and seize Azerbaijan and all Muslim lands [26, work 461, II vol., p. 76].

The Russians were deeply concerned about the Turks' approach to Yerevan. The interests of Russia and the Ottoman state in the Caucasus clashed again in Yerevan. The situation in the Caucasus became tense again. Like the Dagestan feudal lords, the Azerbaijani khanates expected a war between the two empires. On February 21, 1787, shamkhal of Tarku sent his ambassador to the headquarters of P.S. Potemkin to express his desire to receive Russian citizenship.

As Russia became stronger in the South Caucasus, relations with the Ottomans deteriorated. The tense relations between the two states in this region had a serious impact on the Azerbaijani khanates and the feudal lords of Dagestan. P.S. Potyomkin informed G.A. Potyomkin that it was necessary to apply to some khanates to return to Russian protection. The step taken by Fatali Khan in June 1787 to accept Russian citizenship was a kind of signal for Turkey to start a war. In fact, this could have led to Fatali Khan's official severance of ties with the Ottomans.

The Ottoman government also tried to win over the rulers of Azerbaijan and Dagestan and raise them to war against Russia. At that time, the Ottoman palace sent various decrees, clothes and gifts to the rulers of Dagestan, Muhammad Hasan Khan of Sheki, Ibrahim Khan of Karabakh and Fatali Khan of Guba through a doorkeeper. Ibrahim Khan was instructed to distribute these gifts. The Turkish ambassador went to the Avar and Qaytag khans and advised them jointly attack Georgia. Concerned about this incident, Fatali khan sent a letter to Avar khan Ali Sultan and Qaytag usmi, urging them to change their minds about attacking Georgia.

During the Russian-Ottoman War of 1787–1791, the Azerbaijani khans also appealed to Ottoman Turkey on various issues. Ibrahim khan of Karabakh and Mohammad khan of Iravan hoped to get help from the Turkish sultan not only for the struggle against the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom, but also Agha Mohammad khan, who was getting stronger in Iran. However, we have no information that the Ottomans provided any assistance to the Azerbaijani khans during this period.

During the war, the Ottoman government repeatedly tried to involve the Azerbaijani khans and the rulers of Dagestan in military operations against Russia. In 1789, the new Ottoman sultan, Salim III (1789–1807), and his chief vizier addressed a letter to the khans of Sheki, Shamakhi, Karabakh, and the rulers of Dagestan. The khans mentioned in the letter were suggested that when the Turkish troops attacked Anapa, they attacked the Kizlar to distract the Russian troops [9, p. 391]. However, the rulers of Azerbaijan and Dagestan did not implement the proposal of Sultan Selim III. The Turkish army was defeated near Anapa.

It should also be noted that the insidious policy of Russian diplomacy played a significant role in the failure of the alliance of the Azerbaijani khanates with the Ottomans, both on the eve of the Russian-Ottoman war and during the war. The Russian government skillfully sowed the seeds of enmity both among the Azerbaijani khans and between them and the Ottomans, thus preventing their unification. Russia, trying to keep the Azerbaijani khans in its sphere of influence, also skillfully used the means of economic impact. An example of this is the exemption of merchants who traded in the goods of Ahmad Khan (1789–1791) from Guba during the war from paying customs duties in Russia [8, p. 306]. The Russian-Ottoman War of 1787–1791 resulted in the defeat of the Ottomans. In December 29th, 1791, the Treaty of Yassi was signed between these states [31, pp. 24–41]. However, this agreement did not put an end to the conflict between Russia and the Ottomans over the Caucasus.

Although the Russian-Turkish War of 1787–1791 ended with the Treaty of Yassi, the geopolitical situation in the South Caucasus region continued to be tense. The long struggle for power in Iran finally ended with the superiority of the Gajars. After the unification of Iran and the territories of South Azerbaijan under the rule of Aga Mohammad khan Gajar, we are witnessing the complete indifference of Ottoman Turkey to the events taking place around the South Caucasus. This showed that the Turkish sultan did not intend to take any steps to protect the Azerbaijani khanates from Iranian aggression. As for Iran, in April 1795 it drew up a three-pronged plan to continue its military operations in the South Caucasus. The first direction was to the Mugan steppe, Shirvan and Dagestan, the second to Yerevan, and the third to Karabakh. However, his brother Murtazagulu khan, who was hostile to Aga Muhammad khan Gajar, came to Talish khanate to gather military forces and 50 sea boats had to be sent with the staff to defeat him. In the first stage, Talishkhani Mirmustafa khan and Murtazagulu khan not only resisted the army of Aga Muhammad khan Gajar, but also managed to capture prisoners. Agha Mohammad khan Gajar's large-scale military operation in the South Caucasus could not disturb Russia. Therefore, to pursue Russia's geopolitical interests in the South Caucasus, the State Council made a decision in September 19th, 1795, to "expel the Iranians from the Caucasus." Soon Russian troops approached Derbent and captured the city. In early 1796, the khanates of Guba, Baku, Shamakhi, Salyan, and Ganja were captured by the Russian army. Although Ottoman Turkey was unable to launch a military operation against Russia, it tried to unite Iran, Azerbaijani khanates and Dagestan feudal lords. The Turkish government also decided to increase the number of garrisons in Kars, Akhalsikhe, Van and Bayazid. In addition, Selim III gave special instructions to collect information about the actions of the Russian army and the attitude of the local population to them in the occupied territories. Russia tried to use the territory of Azerbaijan for its strategic purposes. However, the death of Catherine II on November 9, 1796, changed the situation. Paul I (1796–1801), who came to power, recalled military units following Russia's foreign policy to create relative stability. However, the seizure of political power by Alexander I (1801–1825) opened a new page of aggression in Russia's foreign policy.

Thus, in the second half of the 18th century, the incompatibility of interests and goals of the Ottoman Turkish and Russian governments in the South Caucasus geopolitical region paved the way for new wars in the 19th century. The establishment of mutually hostile relations between the Azerbaijani khanates led to the aggression of foreign invaders. Thus, although in the first thirty years of the next century there were twice the Russian-Iranian wars (1804–1813 and 1826–1828) and the same number of Russian-Ottoman wars (1806–1812 and 1828–1829), Russia was able to win these wars and defeat Iran and Ottoman Turkey. As a result, not only the territories of the Azerbaijani khanates were occupied, but also the khanates were completely abolished and the lands were divided between Russia and Iran, a temporary

ruling of Ottoman Turkey (1823–1835) was established in Azerbaijan. However, we must not forget that Turkey has always stood by Azerbaijan and remains an interested state in building its territorial integrity. It is no coincidence that the philosophical opinion of the national leader of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev "One nation, two states" is still true today. The support of the Republic of Turkey in the liberation of Azerbaijani lands occupied by Armenian aggressors for almost 30 years, the professional leadership of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev and his relying on the strength of our people victoriously ended the 44-day war.

Conclusions

Analyzing the relationships between Russia and Ottoman Empire in their attempts to take control over the South Caucasus in the second half of the XVIIIth century, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The existence of both objective and subjective grounds to believe that the geopolitical status of the South Caucasus, making it an attractive region for the neighbouring countries.

2. Historical diversity of international and diplomatic relationships between Russia and Ottoman Turkey lead to unstable foreign policy between the states.

3. A series of wars turned out to be the logical end of the grown animosity between Russia and Ottoman Turkey, greatly influencing the military and political positions of these countries.

4. The clash of interests between Russia and Ottoman Turkey resulted in weakening of the social and political positions of Russia and Ottoman Turkey in the Southern Caucasus and the dissipation of states of the region with their final annexation to the Empire.

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Поступила в редакцию 20 июля 2022 г.

UDC 327

DOI: 10.21779/2542-0313-2023-38-1-16–28

Azerbaijan in Russian-Turkish Relations (2nd half of the 18th century)

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The article deals with the problem of political and military status of the Azerbaijani khanates in the second half of the 18th century. Special emphasis is placed on the conflicts of the geopolitical interests of the Ottoman Turkey and Russia in the South Caucasus region. The study and research issues of the socio-economic and political positions of the Azerbaijani khanates, their mutual and contradictory relations, as well as the military plans of the countries of the region in various strategic directions in the South Caucasus are relevant.

Keywords: *geopolitical, military strategy, economic decline, diplomatic relations, subordination, ambassador, khanate.*

Received 20 July 2022