

Diplomatic Relations Between the Safavid and Ottoman States in 1730-1736 (In Azerbaijani and Turkish Historiography)

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Abstract.

Relevance. This article aims to analyze the transformation of the region's geopolitical landscape in the first half of the 18th century against the backdrop of the profound political and military crisis of the Safavid state. It is noted that the years 1730-1736 are considered one of the most complex and dynamic periods of Ottoman-Safavid relations in the history of the Middle East. It is noted that this period has attracted the attention of researchers, particularly due to the rise of Nadir Shah, the weakening of the Safavid dynasty, and the changing regional balance of power.

Novelty. This article analyzes from a new political perspective how Nadir Shah established his political legitimacy by exploiting the internal crisis of the Safavid dynasty, how he presented the Ja'fari movement as a strategic instrument of foreign policy, and how his military successes influenced regional diplomacy. At the same time, an objective assessment of 18th-century history is provided through a comparison of Azerbaijani and Turkish historiography.

Results. The study examines the liberation of Azerbaijani lands under the leadership of Nadir Shah Afshar and the reform of the political and defensive structures of the Safavid state. This research draws on the research of renowned Azerbaijani historians such as Ismail Hakki Uzuncharshili, Elvira Latifova, Tofig Mustafazade, Nizami Suleymanov, and Tofig Najafli. Drawing on the work of these scholars, an in-depth analysis of the topic within its historiographical context is provided, providing detailed information on the weakening of the Safavid state, the transformation of the regional balance of power, and the intricacies of Nadir Shah's policies.

Thus, the article presents a comprehensive and multifaceted analysis of geopolitical dynamics, interstate relations, and military-strategic processes in Azerbaijan and the Middle East in the first half of the 18th century. The article also analyzes Nadir's military strategies, diplomatic moves and negotiation mechanisms in Ottoman-Safavid relations and explains from a scientific point of view how regional balance was restored.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Safavid Empire, historiography, diplomatic relations, Nadir Shah Afshar

Дипломатні відносини між державами сефавіду та османськими у 1730–1736 роках (в азербайджанській та турецькій історіографії)

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Анотація.

Мета цієї статті аналізувати трансформаційний процес геополітичного ландшафту регіону в першій половині XVIII століття на тлі глибокої політичної та військової кризи Сефевідської держави. Зазначається, що 1730-1736 роки вважаються одним із найбільш складних та динамічних етапів османсько-сефевідських відносин в історії Близького Сходу. Вказується, що цей період привертає увагу дослідників, зокрема у зв'язку з піднесенням Надір шаха, ослабленням династії Сефевідів та зміною регіонального балансу сил.

Методологія. У статті в основному застосовані методи історико-аналітичного, хронологічного, порівняльного та джерельного аналізу, що дозволяє провести поглиблене дослідження теми як із фактичної, так і з концептуальної точок зору.

Новизна статті. У статті аналізується з нової політичної точки зору, як Надір шах встановлював свою політичну легітимність, використовуючи внутрішню кризу династії Сефевідів, як він представляв рух Джафарі як стратегічний інструмент зовнішньої політики, і як його військові успіхи вплинули на регіональну дипломатію. Одночасно на основі порівняння азербайджанської та турецької історіографії дається об'єктивна оцінка історії XVIII століття.

Результати. У дослідженні розглядається процес звільнення азербайджанських земель під керівництвом Надір-шаха Афшара та реформування політико-оборонних структур держави Сефевідів. На основі досліджень відомих азербайджанських істориків, таких як Ісмаїл Хаккі Узунчаршили, Ельвіри Латіфової, Тофіга Мустафазаде, Нізамі Сулейманова та Тофіга Наджафлі, на цю тему. Спираючись на роботи цих вчених, проводиться поглиблений аналіз теми в історіографічному контексті, надається докладна інформація про послаблення Сефевідської держави, трансформацію регіонального балансу сил і тонкощі політики Надір шаха. Таким чином, стаття являє собою всебічний та багатогранний аналіз геополітичної динаміки, міждержавних відносин та військово-стратегічних процесів в Азербайджані та на Близькому Сході у першій половині XVIII століття.

У статті також аналізуються військові стратегії Надіра, дипломатичні кроки та механізми переговорів в османсько-сефевідських відносинах, з наукового погляду пояснюється, як було відновлено регіональну рівновагу.

Ключові слова: Османська імперія, Сефевідська імперія, історіографія, дипломатичні відносини, Надір-шах Афшар

Introduction.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the Safavid Empire was experiencing a deep crisis. The events that resulted in the fall of Isfahan in 1722 led to the weakening of the state. Taking advantage of this situation, the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire began to divide the Safavid territories. Ismail Hakkı Uzuncharshili, evaluating this situation from the Ottoman perspective, notes that the weakening of the Safavid state created both an opportunity and a long-term strategic burden for the empire (Uzuncharshili, 1988: 210-215).

Despite the formal restoration of Safavid authority in the early 1730s, real political power remained in the hands of military leaders. In this context, Nadir Khan (then known as Nadir Shah) came to the forefront and began to play the role of the saviour of the Safavid state.

Nadir Shah Afshar initially served under the Safavid ruler Tahmasp II. Within a short period, he restored stability within the country and carried out successful military operations against foreign invaders. Nadir's main objective was to recover the lost territories of the Safavid state.

In 1730-1732, Nadir Shah organized successful campaigns against the Ottomans and recaptured important strategic centers such as Tabriz and Hamadan. These successes created a new phase of tension in Ottoman-Safavid relations.

Analysis of the latest publications on this topic.

The topic of diplomatic relations between the Safavid and Ottoman Empires during the years 1730-1736 has been extensively researched in both Azerbaijani and Turkish historiography between 2020 and 2026. One of the significant studies conducted in this direction is the article by Zulfiya Valiyeva Onlen titled "The Ottoman Narrative Sources Related to the 17th-18th Century Safavid History" (Valiyeva, 2023).

The article provides a systematic analysis of the political and military struggle between the Ottoman, Safavid, and Russian empires for dominance over the North Caucasus and Azerbaijan during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. It also evaluates the Ottoman narrative sources reflecting this period. The author correctly asserts that during the Soviet era, these Ottoman sources remained insufficiently explored within Azerbaijani historiography.

As part of this research, the works of nine official Ottoman chroniclers and three Ottoman ambassadors have been integrated into scientific discourse. Among these, the writings of authors such as Abdi Efendi, Destari Saleh Efendi, Mehmed Rashid, and Ismail Asim Efendi hold particular significance. This article serves as a crucial study that theoretically and methodologically substantiates the importance of Ottoman narrative primary sources in the study of Azerbaijani history.

Another significant source for the study of this period is the doctoral dissertation by Rana Mammadova, titled "The Military-political activities and reforms of

Nadir Shah Afshar (based on persian-language sources)" (Mammadova, 2024). In this research, along with Persian documentary and narrative sources, materials from European, Russian, and Turkish historiography are analyzed in a comprehensive and integrated manner. The author presents Nadir Shah not only as a military leader but also as a reformer who demonstrated modernization trends in state administration.

In Turkish historiography, this issue is addressed in the collective monograph titled "Turkey-Azerbaijan relations from the beginnings to the present", edited by Ibrahim Tellioglu (2023).

The work analyzes Ottoman-Safavid relations during the Safavid and Nadir Shah periods, noting that from this stage onward, the histories of Turkey and Azerbaijan entered a process of relative differentiation. Furthermore, Nadir Shah's relations with the Ottoman Empire are evaluated as an integral component of his universal sovereignty ideology.

The Professor of Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University Hacı Mustafa Evarci emphasizes the protracted nature of the Ottoman-Safavid confrontation, which persisted from the 16th century through the early 18th century in his article titled "The role of the Crimean tatars in the Ottoman-Safavid wars" (Evarci, 2023). The author demonstrates that coalition forces played a pivotal role in these conflicts; specifically, the Crimean Tatars served as one of the primary military pillars of the Ottoman army during its Eastern campaigns. While the core focus of the research is directed toward the events of the 16th and 17th centuries, the early 18th century is presented as the concluding phase of this long-standing rivalry.

The article titled "The example of Ruse (Rusçuk) in the organization and logistics of the Iranian campaigns of 1734-1735" by Alpay Bizbirlık and Sechkin Shenturk (Bizbirlık & Shenturk, 2023) examines the military preparations undertaken by the Ottoman Empire against the expansionist policies of Nadir Shah.

A central focus of the study is the role of the city of Ruse as a strategic logistical hub. The authors demonstrate that, despite the vast geographical distances involved, the Ottoman state established a sophisticated logistical framework to effectively manage the supply chains for the Eastern Front. The presented studies are distinguished by their diverse methodological approaches and source-based frameworks, creating a multifaceted scientific landscape that complements one another.

First and foremost, the work of Z.Valiyeva Onlen holds particular significance from a source-critical perspective. By systematizing Ottoman narrative sources, the author demonstrates the prospects of utilizing these materials in the study of Azerbaijani history.

This approach primarily focuses on the identification and critical analysis of primary sources. In contrast, R. Mammadova's research is centered on a specific historical figure – Nadir Shah and focuses on the interpretation of historical events. Thus, while the former expands the

source base, the latter demonstrates the interpretative potential of these sources.

The collective work edited by I.Tellioglu, representing Turkish historiography, offers a broader conceptual framework. In this study, Ottoman-Safavid relations are evaluated not merely as political and military confrontations, but as the beginning of a long-term process of historical divergence. Compared to the more event-oriented and regional analysis prevalent in Azerbaijani historiography, this approach is characterized by macro-historical generalization.

H. M. Evarci's research makes a significant contribution from the perspectives of military history and coalition politics. The author highlights the role of decentralized forces, particularly the Crimean Tatars, in the Ottoman-Safavid wars. This approach brings the issue of "auxiliary actors" – often overlooked in other studies – to the forefront and illustrates the multi-subject nature of these conflicts.

In contrast to the aforementioned studies, the article by A.Bizbirlik and S. Shenturk focuses on military-logistical aspects. Their research demonstrates that the military power of the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century was determined not only by combat capability but also by an advanced logistical infrastructure. This approach reveals the material and technical foundations underlying diplomatic and political relations.

Overall, while Azerbaijani historiography (Z.Valiyeva Onlen, R.Mammadova) places greater emphasis on source analysis and regional political processes, Turkish historiography (I.Tellioglu, H.M.Evarci, A.Bizbirlik, and S.Shenturk) prioritizes military-strategic, logistical, and macro-historical approaches. This distinction reflects the varying priorities and methodological characteristics of both historiographical schools.

In conclusion, these studies collectively provide both a rich source base and a comprehensive analytical framework for investigating Ottoman-Safavid relations between 1730 and 1736.

Main text.

In the early 1720s, the Safavid Empire faced a deep political and military crisis and had virtually reached the brink of disintegration. During this period, a large part of the territories, including Isfahan, the state's capital, had fallen under the control of the Afghans. At the same time, as a result of foreign interventions, the Russian Empire occupied the Caspian coastal regions of Azerbaijan and Gilan, while the Ottoman Empire seized the South Caucasus, South Azerbaijan, and Western Iran. By 1726, only the province of Mazandaran remained under the control of the Safavid ruler Tahmasp II.

In order to restore his authority, Tahmasp II launched a campaign to Khorasan in 1726. During this time, in the internal struggles for power in Khorasan, Nadir (the future Nadir Shah Afshar) from the Qirkhli clan of the Afshar Turkic tribe distinguished himself through his military skill. As a result of the relocation policy initiated

during the reign of Shah Ismail I, Nadir – who became the leader of the Afshars settled in the Abivard region – further consolidated his authority by capturing the fortress of Kalat. During the Khorasan campaign, Tahmasp II, considering Nadir's military potential, managed to win him over to his side. As a result of this alliance based on mutual political interests, Nadir was first appointed to the position of qurchubashi and later became the commander-in-chief of the army and was granted the title of khan.

In November 1726, the forces led by Nadir defeated Malik Mahmud and liberated the city of Mashhad from the Afghans. After this victory, Tahmasp II appealed to the population of Khorasan, demanded that they obey Nadir's orders. Through successive military operations, Nadir defeated the Afghan tribal leaders and forced them to recognize his authority. With the capture of Herat in 1729, Nadir further strengthened his dominance in the region. As a result of the victories achieved in 1728–1729, favorable conditions were created for advancing toward Isfahan. Consequently, in December 1729, Tahmasp II entered the capital Isfahan, ending more than seven years of Afghan rule and restoring Safavid authority (Bilge, 2015: 206).

The deposition of Ahmed III as a result of the political upheaval that took place in the Ottoman Empire in 1730, caused serious internal conflicts within the empire and created favourable geopolitical opportunities for the return of Azerbaijani territories. On the other hand, after the death of Peter I, a relative softening was observed in Russia's expansionist policy in the Caspian coastal regions, which brings the possibility of returning these territories onto the agenda.

The researcher Elvira Latifova characterizes these historical processes in her scholarly article named "The place and role of the north-western territories of Azerbaijan in the Caucasus policy of the Ottoman Empire in the 1720s-1730s" (1720-1730'lu yıllarda Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kafkasya siyasetinde Azerbaycan'ın kuzeybatı topraklarının yeri ve rolü) as follows: "Strengthening of the Safavid state as a result of the effective measures implemented by Nadir Khan led to the intensification of the state's foreign policy activities. Under such circumstances, the liberation of the territories occupied by the Ottomans and Russians became the main objective of the Safavid state's foreign policy. At the beginning of 1730, military operations between the Safavids and the Ottomans resumed. It should be noted that during this period the internal political situation in the Ottoman state was extremely difficult. In September 1730, an uprising broke out in Istanbul under the leadership of Patrona Halil. This event resulted in the deposition of Sultan Ahmed III and the accession to power of his nephew Mahmud I" (Latifova, 2023, p. 113).

After returning to Isfahan, Tahmasp II demanded the return of territories that had previously belonged to the Safavid state before coming under the control of the Ottoman Empire. For this purpose, a diplomatic

delegation headed by Vali Mohammad Khan was sent; however, by the decision of the Ottoman court, the delegation was imprisoned in the fortress of Mardin. The main reason for this step was the beginning of the military movement of Nadir's troops toward Erivan. As a result, a new phase of the Ottoman-Safavid confrontation began in the territory of Azerbaijan, leading to large-scale military operations.

In 1730, Tahmasp II besieged the city of Tabriz, and Safi Guli Khan joined these military operations. Although Abdullah Köprülü, the commander-in-chief of the Ottoman Empire forces, advanced in order to assist the besieged garrison, he was defeated during his march and forced to retreat toward Erivan. As a result, in September 1730, the Ottoman garrison stationed in Tabriz was forced to surrender.

The news of the liberation of Tabriz by the Safavid army caused serious concern in the political circles of Istanbul. According to the conclusions of Turkish historians referring to the sources of the period, Ibrahim Pasha, the Grand Vizier, was accused of conceding Tabriz in pursuit of strategic interests. A secret letter that he allegedly sent to the city's governor Kara Mustafa Pasha was regarded as the main evidence of secret negotiations with Nadir Shah Afshar (Kulbilge, 2010, p. 225).

In the same year, the cities of Maragheh and Hamadan were also liberated from Ottoman control by Nadir Khan.

After this, the combined forces of Tahmasp II and Nadir marched toward Ardabil and besieged the city, but this attempt was unsuccessful. Russia, which was interested in the withdrawal of Ottoman forces from Azerbaijan, Russia ordered assistance to Nadir to be delivered via General Levashov, commander of the forces stationed in Gilan. However, Levashov pursued a contradictory policy by simultaneously supporting both the Safavid and Ottoman sides: while secretly sending Russian officers and artillery to Nadir, he also allowed Ottoman forces to pass through territories under Russian control and move toward Shirvan.

After prolonged resistance, Ali Pasha, who commanded the defence of Ardabil, abandoned the city on 5 January 1731 and retreated to Astara. A part of the Ottoman forces advanced from the direction of Baku and reached Shamakhi on 27 February 1731. During this period, as a rebellion broke out against Nadir in Khorasan, he forced to leave the region. Taking advantage of this situation, Tahmasp II assumed supreme command and in December 1731 began military operations against the Ottomans with an army of approximately 18,000 soldiers.

However, in the battles that took place around Nakhchivan, Erivan, and Baghdad, the Safavid troops suffered serious defeats. In particular, in the Battle of Qurijan near Hamadan, Tahmasp II suffered heavy losses and was forced to retreat and return to Isfahan. Following these failures, Ottoman forces regained control over Tabriz and Maragheh.

It should be noted that although political instability

was observed in the Ottoman Empire during 1729-1730, with the accession of Mahmud I from the beginning of 1731 a certain degree of stability was restored in state administration. This factor played an important role in the failure of Tahmasp II's military initiatives. Turkish historian Ughur Kurtaran writes about it in his research article: "On the southern front, Ahmad Pasha of Baghdad, the governor of Baghdad, who received the sultan's decree, advanced toward Iraq-i Ajam. Since the Safavid forces retreated and dispersed without resistance, Kermanshah was occupied without a battle (30 July 1731), and numerous artillery pieces and supplies were seized.

Afterward, when Ahmad Pasha marched toward Hamadan, Tahmasp Shah moved from Tabriz to Qazvin. In early September, Ahmad Pasha entered Hamadan, and letters requesting peace were sent to him by the shah. When the peace proposal was rejected, Tahmasp Shah launched an attack on 15 September with a large army of 40,000 men. The battle between the two armies took place in the region of Qurijan, located six hours from Hamadan, and as a result of the battle the shah suffered a heavy defeat.

After the defeat, in which the Safavid Empire army lost roughly twenty thousand men, the Shah fled with about five hundred supporters, whereas the khans of Qazvin and Shiraz were killed." (Kurtaran, 2011, p. 185).

Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor Nizami Suleymanov, in his studies particularly emphasized the impact of these military-political failures of the Safavid ruler on the later fate of the state: "After being defeated in the battles, Shah Tahmasp II was forced to sign an unfavourable peace treaty with the Ottoman state in the city of Kermanshah on 16 January 1732. According to the treaty, the territories north of the Aras River – Erivan, Ganja, Tbilisi, the province of Shirvan, Dagestan, and the territories up to Kermanshah – were given to the Turks. According to the terms of the peace, Tabriz remained within the Safavid state" (Suleymanov, 2018, p. 120).

At the same time, the successes achieved by Nadir Shah Afshar against the Ottoman Empire encouraged the government of the Russian Empire to pursue a policy aimed at returning the Caspian coastal provinces to the Safavid Empire. In this context, the Treaty of Rasht was concluded with Russia on 21 January 1732. According to the treaty, Russia undertook to return the territories located south of the area where the Kur River flows into the Caspian Sea, while Nadir had to ensure that those territories were prevented from falling under Ottoman control.

After learning about the peace concluded by Tahmasp II with the Ottomans and his military failures, Nadir Khan sharply criticized this policy. In letters addressed to the Ottoman leadership and the governor of Baghdad, Ahmad Pasha of Baghdad, he declared that he considered the concluded treaty illegitimate, he demanded the return of the occupied territories, warning that otherwise military operations would resume.

As historian Tofiq Mustafazade notes, in the summer of 1732 Tahmasp II appealed to the Ottoman authorities, emphasizing Nadir Khan's disobedience and proposing to neutralize this "troublemaker" through joint efforts. However, the Ottoman side treated the shah's sincerity with suspicion, interpreting it as a strategic "double game" intended to preserve peaceful relations in the event of Nadir's possible failure (Mustafazade, 2002, p. 933).

After returning from Herat, Nadir Khan arrived in Isfahan and openly criticized the policies of Tahmasp II, and this stance was likewise supported by military officers. Finally, at a military council held in August 1732, a decision was made that Tahmasp II was incapable of governing the state.

With the enthronement of Abbas III, formal legitimacy in the Safavid state was restored. As the guardian of the minor ruler, Nadir Shah acted in this capacity. Nadir renounced his previous title "Tahmasibqulu Khan" and adopted the high administrative titles of "Vakil al-Dowleh (Deputy of the State)" and "Naib al-Saltanah (Regent)", thereby concentrating actual political power in his own hands.

One of his first steps was to declare invalid the terms of the treaty concluded by Tahmasp II with the Ottoman Empire. Although Nadir demanded the return of the occupied territories from the Ottoman authorities, this demand was rejected, and military confrontation became inevitable.

In the autumn of 1732, a new stage of military operations under the leadership of Nadir Khan Afshar began, and the city of Kermanshah was liberated first. Later, having seized the strategic initiative, Nadir advanced toward Baghdad and besieged the city. However, in the battle took place in July 1733 he was defeated by the Ottoman commander Topal Osman Pasha and was forced to retreat.

Nevertheless, Nadir quickly gathered new forces and resumed military operations, gaining superiority over the Ottoman forces by the end of 1733. As a result, the Treaty of Baghdad was concluded between the parties.

"According to the peace, the Ottomans agreed to return the Safavid territories they had occupied for a period of 10 years and partially fulfilled this commitment" (Ganiyev, 2019, p. 202).

However, since the Ottoman court did not ratify this agreement, the war flared up again. In the next stage, the Ottoman sultan sent decrees to the pashas stationed in the region ordering them to leave the occupied territories. Taking advantage of this political situation, Nadir launched a military campaign toward Shirvan. The disobedient behaviour of Surkhay Khan and his opposition to central authority accelerated Nadir's intervention in the region.

On 17 August 1734, Nadir entered the city of Shamakhi, where he established a new administrative system and appointed local authorities. In the same year, in a decisive battle near Gabala, the forces led by Surkhay Khan were defeated. In this battle, the Dagestani detachments that joined him, as well as the auxiliary

forces of the Ottoman Empire, were also defeated.

Afterwards Nadir continued military operations toward Ganja and besieged the city. Although the siege lasted for a long time, the fortress put up strong resistance. During this period, as a result of diplomatic negotiations with Russia, the Treaty of Ganja (1735) was concluded. According to the agreement, the cities of Baku and Derbent were to be returned.

In the next phase of military operations, Nadir marched toward Kars, one of the main strongholds of the Ottoman forces. The decisive battle with Abdullah Pasha in June 1735 ended with Nadir's complete victory, and the Ottoman army suffered heavy losses.

After this victory, the Ottoman garrisons stationed in the fortresses of Tbilisi and Ganja were forced to surrender. The governor of Ganja, Ali Pasha, was absolved and allowed to withdraw. Thus, as a result of Nadir's military and political strategy, Ottoman positions in the region were seriously weakened, and significant achievements were made toward restoring the territorial integrity of the Safavid state.

The military successes achieved by Nadir Shah further expanded his political ambitions and led to the development of plans for an attack against the Ottoman capital. Although for this purpose, he attempted to establish military-political cooperation with the Russian Empire, the Russian government preferred to discourage Nadir from this initiative and instead tried to direct him toward the border regions of the Ottoman Empire adjacent to the Safavid state.

The outbreak of war between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire in 1735 forced the Ottoman side to enter into peace negotiations with Nadir Shah. For this purpose, the conduct of the negotiations was entrusted to the beylerbeyi of Ganja, Ganjali Pasha. In March 1736, negotiations began between Ganjali Pasha and the Safavid representative Mirza Muhammad. It should be noted that this process meant a violation of the conditions established within the framework of the Treaty of Ganja, thus, according to that agreement, no separate peace was to be concluded with the Ottoman Empire without Russia's participation.

As a result of the negotiations, the parties reached an agreement to restore the borders to the situation that had existed during the reign of Murad IV. This agreement actually brought the war to an end, and except for certain local clashes, the Ottoman-Safavid confrontation did not regain a large-scale character until the death of Nadir Shah Afshar.

The Ottoman diplomatic delegation arrived in Ganja on November 20, 1735, and in Barda on December 15. This delegation, operating under the leadership of the beylerbeyi of Ganja, was granted permission to enter Nadir's camp on January 20, 1736, and on February 1 they reached the Mughan plain. On February 10, official negotiations began between Ganjali Pasha and Mirza Muhammad.

The researcher of the Safavid period, Doctor of Historical Sciences and Associate Professor Tofiq Najafli, in his monograph titled “The Foreign Policy of the Azerbaijani Safavid State (in Turkish Historiography)”, referring to the negotiations conducted by the Ottomans with Nadir Shah, notes that in order to eliminate the contradictions between the parties a five-article peace proposal was prepared. According to this project, the following provisions were proposed:

1. The Safavid side abandoning the traditional Shiite madhhab and accepting the Jafari madhhab, which was presented as a branch of Sunnism;

2. The establishment of a fifth mihrab for the Jafari madhhab in addition to the four existing madhhab mihrabs within the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca;

3. The appointment of a special order who would lead the pilgrims departing for the Hajj pilgrimage, the equalization of his authority with that of the emirs of the Egyptian and Damascus caravans;

4. The mutual release of prisoners held by both sides and the prohibition of their trade;

5. The establishment of permanent diplomatic representations in the capitals of both states (Najafli, 2020: 184).

However, Ganjali Pasha stated that he did not possess sufficient authority to accept the presented conditions and that he had only received a mandate to discuss border issues.

For this reason, in order to deliver the prepared draft treaty to the court in Istanbul, a new envoy delegation was organized under the leadership of Abdulbaqi Khan. This delegation, together with Ganjali Pasha, departed from Mughan on March 7, 1736. Among the representatives sent by Nadir were Mirza Abdulqasim Kashani and Molla Bashi Ali Akbar. One of their main tasks was also to deliver the news of Nadir's accession to power to the Ottoman sultan.

After stabilizing relations with the Ottomans, although Nadir Shah conducted military operations in the direction of Dagestan for a short period, he mainly focused on legitimizing state authority. He put forward the initiative to convene a nationwide congress in the Mughan plain. For this purpose, a large camp was established near the Javad crossing, where thousands of residential houses, religious and public buildings were constructed, and a large population gathered there in a short time.

During the congress, Nadir Shah formally declared that he did not claim the throne and left the selection of the country's future ruler to the discretion of the participants. However, it is clearly evident that this process was part of a previously planned political strategy. During the discussions, the news of the death of Abbas III also spread, which further weakened the opportunities for legitimacy of the Safavid dynasty.

As a result, the majority of the congress participants declared that Nadir Shah was the most suitable candidate

for the throne. However, before accepting power, he put forward three main conditions: first, the complete cessation of political support for Tahmasib II and his descendants; second, the elimination of conflict between the Shiite and Sunni sects and the provision of religious tolerance; and third, the acceptance that power would become hereditary within his lineage.

After these conditions were accepted, Nadir Shah's accession to the throne was formalized, thereby bringing an end to the political rule of the Safavid dynasty and the Afshar state was founded (Najafli, 2014, p. 417).

With the proclamation of Nadir as shah at the congress held in Mughan on March 8, 1736, Safavid rule officially came to an end and the foundation of the Afshar state was established.

The envoy delegation sent by Nadir before he had even been proclaimed shah arrived in Istanbul at the beginning of July and was received there with great ceremony. However, the proposals put forward by Nadir Shah were not unanimously accepted in the Ottoman court; in particular, the provisions related to the Jafari madhhab caused serious debates among the Ottoman ulema. As a result of the discussions, it was decided that two main clauses from the five-article proposal package – the recognition of the Jafari madhhab and the allocation of a mihrab for it in the Kaaba – would be temporarily removed from the agenda.

The remaining three articles were considered acceptable for the Ottoman side, and it was proposed that an agreement be reached on this basis. Although Abdulbaqi Khan agreed to this option, he stated that the final decision had to be coordinated with Nadir Shah. In fact, these three accepted articles constituted an important part of Nadir Shah's diplomatic initiatives.

According to the agreement, the border line between the Ottoman state and the Afshar state was confirmed along the line determined by the Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin concluded in 1639.

With this, the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud I officially recognized Nadir's title of shah. In the letter sent by the Sultan, it was stated that the issues of the safety of pilgrims, the establishment of diplomatic relations, and the release of prisoners had been resolved; however, it was emphasized that the demand to allocate a mihrab in the Kaaba for the Jafari madhhab was not considered appropriate from the perspective of Islamic law.

Finally, the peace agreement that had been reached was approved by Sultan Mahmud I on October 17, 1736.

PhD in history Farah Huseyn, analyzing Nadir Shah's aforementioned political course, emphasizes: “Nadir Shah's steps and overall policy aimed at establishing sincere brotherly relations and mutual trust with the Ottoman state created the ground for positive transformations. Although he was not able to fully achieve the results he desired regarding the sectarian issue, he nevertheless ensured that relations between the two states, in essence, entered a completely new

phase compared to previous periods and gained a new significance.

This transformation became a political line and manifested itself in the relations of the Ottoman Empire with the Afshar and Qajar states even after the assassination of Nadir Shah, as numerous examples confirm. Thus, upon receiving the news of Nadir Shah's death, Sultan Mahmud I immediately convened an extraordinary council at the palace and declared that he would remain loyal to the political agreements concluded with the Afshar state" (Huseyn, 2019, p. 161).

Professor Azmi Ozjan in his studies presents the following views regarding Nadir Shah's sectarian policy: "By organizing a congress on the Mughan plain with the participation of army commanders, state officials, the ulema, and notables, he stated his intention to return to Khorasan with the argument that Iran had now achieved stability. The participants, whose number reached 20,000, asked him not to leave Iran.

In return, he accepted this request on the condition that the radical Shiite understanding – which had caused wars between the Safavids and the Ottomans and ultimately led to bloodshed – would be abandoned and that the moderate Jafari madhhab would be adopted. Thus, he was elevated to the position of ruler with the title of Nadir Shah (24 Shawwal 1148 / March 8, 1736). With this event, the rule of the Safavid dynasty came to an end.

This initiative, launched by Nadir Shah with the aim of putting an end to the hostility arising from sectarian divisions among Muslims and rescuing Iran from isolation among Islamic countries, led to him being accused of Sunnism in Iran."

Conclusions.

In the first half of the 18th century, against the background of the deep political and military crisis of the Safavid state, the emergence of Nadir Khan Afshar on the political stage fundamentally changed the geopolitical landscape of the region. The facts examined during the research process and the scientific conclusions of prominent historians allow the following generalizations:

– Nadir Khan not only unified the disintegrating Safavid territories under a single center but also succeeded in regaining lost lands through military means. His military-diplomatic struggle with the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire between 1730 and 1735

constituted a decisive stage in the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan;

– In 1732, the inactivity of Tahmasp II and the unsuccessful Peace of Kermanshah accelerated his removal from power. The congress held in Mughan in 1736 was not merely the selection of a ruler, but the official confirmation of the transition from the classical Safavid theocratic system of governance to a new type of Afshar military-administrative system. With this event, the 235-year rule of the Safavid dynasty in the history of Azerbaijan came to an end;

– The proposal of the "Jafari madhhab" put forward by Nadir Shah aimed to end sectarian confrontation in the Islamic world and to shift the Safavid-Ottoman rivalry from an ideological sphere to a political-legal framework. Although the Ottoman side did not fully accept the sectarian clauses, with the Treaty of Constantinople signed in 1736 the period of prolonged wars between the two states was replaced by relative stability and diplomatic recognition;

– Russia's withdrawal from the Caspian coastal regions under the Treaty of Rasht (1732) and the Treaty of Ganja (1735) demonstrates that Nadir Shah had the capacity to resist not only the Ottomans but also Russian expansion.

The Ottoman-Safavid relations of 1730-1736 should be characterized not merely as a military conflict between two states, but as a fundamental transformation of the inter-imperial system in the Middle East. Studies conducted in Azerbaijani and Turkish historiography allow a deeper analysis of the military-strategic and geopolitical aspects of this period. These studies demonstrate that this stage was one of the decisive periods that determined the subsequent trajectory of the region's political development.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the activities of Nadir Shah Afshar not only preserved the statehood traditions of Azerbaijan but also restored the balance of power in the region and presented a unique diplomatic model aimed at the unity of the Islamic world, even though it could not be fully realized under the conditions of the time. The new political system he established had a conceptual impact on the administrative structure of the region and on the system of international relations in the subsequent periods.

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