

Great Britain's Role in Conclusion of The Erzurum Peace Treaty of 1823

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Iran's relationship with the Ottoman Empire has a special place in the history of interstate relations of the Middle East. Relations between the two neighboring states in the 16th–18th centuries were characterized by a series of military clashes. The causes of this conflict were veiled in various forms. The original cause of the conflict was religious: the struggle between Shia and Sunni. Later, moving to an economic standpoint, the causes of the conflict took on a more realistic outline and manifested into a struggle for control over the strategic trade routes that passed through the territory of the South Caucasus and modern Iraq (where the main religious shrines of the Shiites were located). According to the Iranian-Turkish agreements signed in 1736 and 1747, a border between the countries was restored on the basis of the articles of the 1639 Qasr-e Shirin (Zuhab) Treaty¹. In the second half of the 18th century, the clash with the Ottoman Empire occurred during the reign of Karim Khan Zand (1763-1779), who managed to successfully capture Basra. After the death of Karim Khan Zand, the Turks once again seized Basra and the surrounding areas near the Shatt al-Arab river². By the end of the 18th century, relations between the two nations were stabilizing, and a period of calm was starting that would last from 1780 until 1821.

One of the main problems between Qajar Iran and Ottoman Turkey in the early 19th century was the issue of the border separating in Eastern Anatolia, where the border between states had been established at the beginning of the 16th century. In connection with the frequent movement of Kurdish tribes from Qajar to Turkish

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- 1 According to the terms of this treaty, Arab Iraq ceded to the Ottoman Empire, and the territories from the Zenjir fortress to the east ceded to the Safavids. The Treaty of 1639 laid the foundation for a long, albeit not very strong peace between the two states, retaining its power almost until the end of the first quarter of the 18th century.
- 2 R.B. Aslanov, "Irano-turetskiye otnosheniya v 20-60-kh godakh XIX v." PhD dis. , Baku State University, 1983, p. 144.

territory, and with the complexity of the inherited rights of individual Kurdish khans, there were constant conflicts regarding the ownership of certain lands³. The nomadic tribes, as well as tribal chiefs on the Turkish-Iranian border, strongly resisted the efforts of the Sultan to put an end to their autonomy. At times, the Qajar Beylerbey openly supported the border chiefs, while also helping the Mamluks of Baghdad and the Munafiq Bedouins to stand against the Ottoman Sultan.

The nomadic tribes who spent one half of the year in the Qajar state and the other half in Ottoman Empire territory, respectively changing their citizenship from Qajar to Ottoman and vice versa, also played a very important role.⁴ It should be noted that in the Ottoman Empire, among the Kurdish and Arab tribes, lived many supporters of the Qajar Shah, who for the most part followed Shi'ism (tribes of Mukri, Bani-Ardalan, Jaff, Kelhor etC). Thus, the border conflicts between Qajar Iran and the Ottoman Empire were further magnified because of the nomadic tribes.

Starting in 1819, disagreements and clashes intensified between border authorities – the heir to the throne and ruler of Azerbaijan Abbas Mirza, and the Serasker, or the commander in chief of the Ottoman army in Erzurum. In 1820, when the Ottoman leader of Erzurum harbored representatives of Jaffa and Zeylaniyen tribes fleeing from Iran, Abbas Mirza demanded their return. However, the Erzurum ruler refused to fulfil this demand⁵. The Qajar government expressed their dissatisfaction to the Sultan in regards to the actions of Erzurum's Serasker and the Pasha of Baghdad. In connection with this appeal, Sir Robert Liston, the British ambassador in Istanbul, made every effort to appease both sides and promote a mutual settlement of their disagreements⁶. Despite the fact that the Ottoman side withdrew their Serasker, it did not solve the problem. The new Serasker Khosrov Mahomed Pasha was even more hostile towards Iran. In view of the weakening of Qajar Iran, following the Russo-Iranian War (1804-1813), and being confident that their army was not ready for a war against the Ottoman Empire, he sent his envoy to the Tabriz governor demanding that he return part of the Salmas magal lands. In response, the Kaymakam Mirza Bozorg sent to the Ottoman commander his envoy, Haji Ali Tabrizli who, in turn, had Mahomed Pasha arrested and

3 N.A. Kuznetsova, *Iran v pervoy polovine XIX veka*. Nauka, Moscow, 1983, p. 49.

4 Aslanov, *age.*, p. 38.

5 A.A. Adamov, *Irak Arabskiy Bassorskiy Vilayet v Ego Proshlom i Nastoyashem*, Tipografiya Glavnogo Upravleniya Udellov, Sankt-Peterburg, 1912, p. 417-418.

6 FO 248/42 From Constantinople, (1819-1821).

imprisoned⁷. The Kaymakam was again forced to express a protest against the actions of Erzurum's Serasker through the British representatives in Qajar Iran and the Ottoman Empire. However, this protest from the Qajar government was also ignored⁸.

The second incident, which aroused even greater indignation and insult in Iran, was the caravan search one of the wives of Fath-Ali Shah by the Ottoman authorities, en route to its pilgrimage to Mecca⁹. After that, the Shah's government broke off the relations with the Erzurum authorities and invaded the Ottoman borders, which became the beginning of the Iranian-Turkish war.

It should be noted that from the beginning of the 19th century, Iranian-Turkish relations should be viewed in the context of the British-Russian confrontation, since this factor is largely determined by their foreign policy. The main players in the region at this time were Russia and Great Britain.

In 1809, Great Britain conclude an agreement with the Ottoman Empire (*Kale-i Sultanije Antlasması*, also known as the Treaty of the Dardanelles, under Mahmud II). This opened the Ottoman market for British goods on the terms of Britain's recognition of the closed status of the Black Sea straits for military vessels in a peaceful time for the Turks. The industrial revolution in Great Britain, as well as rich eastern colonies (India in particular), allowed the East India Company to significantly secure its position in the region, leading to the result that Qajar Iran and the Ottoman Empire finally ended up under British influence.

In the 1820's, there was an aggravation of the Eastern Question¹⁰ that had developed into an international crisis; the immediate cause was the Greek uprising in the spring of 1821. The new crisis of the Eastern Question affected the entire Middle East. The territorial framework of the Eastern Question was broadened

7 Aslanov, *age.*, p. 39.

8 Aslanov, *age.*, p. 38.

9 J.B. Fraser, *Travels and Adventures in the Persian Provinces at the Southern Banks of the Caspian Sea*, Longman, London 1826, p. 311-312.

10 The emergence of the concept of the "Eastern Question" refers to the end of the 18th century, although the term was first used internationally in the Verona Congress of the Holy Alliance in 1822. In the 1830's, diplomatic documents, historical literature and journalism firmly entered the political lexicon. The main components of the "Eastern Question" were: 1) Conflict relating to the control of holy places in Palestine; 2) The struggle of the Christian peoples of the Ottoman Empire for gaining independence; 3) The rivalry of European powers (Russia, Austria, Great Britain, France, later Italy and Germany) for the division of territories of the weakening Ottoman Empire.

by including a number of other international problems, in particular, the Iranian one. In this case, the foreign policy course of Qajar Iran and the activity of foreign diplomats in Tabriz and Tehran would be affected¹¹.

The crisis of Russian-Turkish relations in connection with the Greek uprising led to the severance of diplomatic relations between the two nations. Thus, on June 28, 1821, Alexander I passed Sultan Mahmud II a note via his ambassador in Istanbul, G.A. Stroganov¹², that stressed the failure of the Ottoman Empire to fulfil its treaty obligations would result in frank hostile relations “*with the entire Christian world*” and would force Russia to take the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire under its protection. On July 18, the Ottoman government refused to accept another note from Russia, and on August 4th, the Divan turned to the Muslims of the Ottoman Empire with an appeal, in which Russia was viewed to be the initiator of the uprising in Greece. On August 10, 1821, Stroganov was called back, and diplomatic relations between the two countries were interrupted¹³.

The decisive stimulus to the Iranian-Turkish conflict (1821-1823) was the relationship between Qajar Iran and Russia. In the early 1820's, a strengthening of Russia's positions in the Qajar state was observed. Russia's interests in Qajar Iran at that time were represented by a Russian mission headed by S. I. Mazarovich. In the context of the rapidly advancing war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, the desire of the Russian mission to strengthen the crown prince Abbas Mirza in his anti-Ottoman plans was supposed. After the Russian mission in Tabriz received papers from Petersburg informing the Qajar court about the complications in Russian-Turkish relations, Russian diplomats visited Abbas Mirza to explain the basis of the disagreements between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. During this meeting, Mazarovich, “*not respecting due restraint, began asking him to be an ally of Russia. When Abbas Mirza confirmed his agreement, Mazarovich grabbed the prince's hand and kissed it as a sign of gratitude*”¹⁴. Abbas Mirza, deciding to take advantage of these events, promised to lead an army 50,000 strong against the Turks¹⁵.

11 S. V. Shestokovich, *Diplomaticheskaya Deyatel'nost A.S. Griboyedova*, Sotsekgiz, Moscow 1955, p. 68.

12 G.A. Stroganov headed the mission in Istanbul from 1816 to 1821 in the rank of extraordinary ambassador and all-powerful minister of the Russian Empire.

13 B.P. Balayan, *Diplomaticheskaya Istoriya Russko-Iranskix voyn I Prisoyedeneniya Vostochnoy Armenii k Rossii*, Izdatel'stvo AN Armanskoy SSR, Yerevan, 1988, p. 124.

14 Balayan, *age.*, p. 80.

15 N.N. Muravyova-Karskogo, “Zapiski 1822 g.”, *Russkiy Arxiv*, 1888, part 5, p. 105.

Upon receiving the news of the disruption of Russian-Turkish relations, Mazarovich continuously urged Abbas Mirza to join the war against the Ottoman Empire¹⁶. The Russian government officially informed the Iranian government about the aggressive actions of the Ottoman Empire “*which incurred the wrath of the emperor and were pushing Russia toward war*”¹⁷.

Despite the fact that Russia broke off diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire in the summer of 1821, Alexander I did not want to start a war with the Ottoman Empire, because war could aggravate Russia's relations with Austria and Great Britain¹⁸. The Russian government officials were not united in their opinions regarding their policies with Qajar Iran. One of the leaders on Russian foreign policy, I. Kapodistrias, together with the chief of General Staff, I.I. Dibich, insisted on securing a military alliance with Qajar Iran, but Alexander I and his foreign minister K.V. Nesselrode were against this alliance and an immediate war with the Ottoman Empire¹⁹. In turn, the instructions from Nesselrode on July 7, 1821 to the Russian envoy in Iran, Mazarovich, stated the following: “*His Imperial Majesty is deeply convinced that whatever events may happen in Turkey, they will only contribute to the welfare and prosperity of Persia, strengthening the ties that connect it with Russia*”²⁰. As a result, Russia took a provocative position in the Iran-Turkey conflict, hinting at possible support in the war, but in reality, fearing Britain's displeasure, declared itself to be a neutral party to the conflict. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Nesselrode consistently urged Mazarovich:

“to avoid anything that might give the agents of Great Britain the opportunity to think that we want to arm the Persians again against the Turks, or that we are catering to the Persians themselves, counting on the important advantage of a hit to Turkey from their side, in the event of a war with this power”²¹.

16 *AKAK*, Vol. VI, part 2, p. 259.

17 Muravyova-Karskogo, *age.*, p. 105; B.P. Balayan, *Mejdunarodniye Otnosheniya Irana, 1818-1828*, Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk Armanskoy SSR, Yerevan, 1967, p. 126.

18 O.V. Orlik, *Rossiya v Mejdunarodnix Otnosheniyax, 1815-1829: Ot Venskogo Kongressa do Adrianopolskogo Mira*, Nauka, Moscow, 1998, p. 139.

19 Balayan, *Mejdunarodniye Otnosheniya Irana, 1818-1828*, p. 76.

20 Vneshnaya politika Rossii XIX i nachala XX veka: Dokumenti Rossiyskogo ministerstva inostranix del. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Second series 1815-1830. Volume IV (12), March 1821-December 1822, Nauka, Moscow 1980, p. 213.

21 Vneshnaya politika Rossii XIX i nachala XX veka: Dokumenti Rossiyskogo ministerstva inostranix del. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, p. 404.

As Russian historian V. Degoyev notes: “*Objectively, the Iranian-Turkish war was too advantageous for Russia to not generate such ‘conjectures’*”²².

Thus, Russia, in every way inciting Qajar Iran to war with the help of its diplomats²³, preferred to follow neutrality in the Iranian-Turkish conflict. The Iranian-Turkish war had already begun when the Russian diplomat Griboedov, by orders from Nesselrode, visited Abbas Mirza and officially announced to him that Russia would refrain from joint action against the Ottoman Empire, due to the decisions of the Laibach Congress (January 26 to May 12, 1821) of the Holy Alliance. However, Alexander I will be pleased with the military action of the Qajar state against the Ottoman Empire²⁴.

Regarding the position of Great Britain on the issue of Russian-Turkish disagreements, it should be noted that Lord Strangford, the British ambassador at the Sultan’s court, actively called for the prevention and then the end of the war, and at the same time trying to convince the Ottoman government about the importance of pursuing a more restrained policy in relation to Russia. The Iranian-Turkish war, for a variety of reasons, completely “dissatisfied” British diplomats. The British government feared that Russia would take advantage of the Iran-Turkey conflict and simultaneously launch a war against the Ottoman Empire. As Nesselrode observed: “*Wishing that Turkey would remain at peace with the powers of Europe, England undoubtedly wishes it the same in relation to the Asians as well*”²⁵. Strangford pursued a goal of maintaining certain equilibrium in the triangle of “Russia-Iran-Turkey”. This balance was to prevent the unity within the Qajar state with the Ottoman Empire against Russia and to not provoke a war, as this could lead to large territorial losses of these states (the Qajar state and the Ottoman Empire). This would also force Great Britain to take decisive measures to protect India and lead to a narrowing scope of British presence in the Middle East²⁶.

The Qajar state, in its foreign and domestic policy, was guided by the search for

22 V.V. Degoyev - I.I. Stamova, *Priz dla pobeditela*, Universitet MGIMO, Moscow 2013, p. 238-239.

23 For helping the Qajar state during the war with the Ottoman Empire (the Russian government transferred Abbas Mirza one million Rubles in silver), Alexander Griboedov received the Order of the Lion and the Sun (Kelly, L. *Diplomacy and Murder in Tehran. Alexander Griboedov and Imperial Russia’s Mission to the Shah of Persia*. Tauris Parkis Paperbacks, London 2006, p. 78).

24 Russian State Historical Archive [Rossiyskiy Gosudarstveniy Istoricheskiy Arxiv, [RGLA], F.1018 (Paskevicha-Erivanskogo I.F.) Inventory. 2, Case. 90, sheet. 11

25 *AKAK*, Vol.VI, part 2, p. 250.

26 Degoyev-Stamova, *age.*, p. 239.

a balance of power between the great leaders – Russia and Great Britain. The British government, like the Ottoman Empire, pursued a policy of preserving the “integrity” of the Qajar state, because of the fear of the so-called “Russian threat” to British ruling in India. Thus, as part of its eastern policy, Great Britain tried to prevent a conflict between these nations, which could lead to the complete disintegration of these countries.

The deepening of the Iranian-Turkish military conflict caused serious worry among the ruling circles of Britain. The British Charge d’Affaires of Iran, G. Willock, was forbidden to interfere to the Iranian-Turkish war²⁷. In a message to Nesselrode from A.P. Yermolov, the Governor-General of the Caucasus and the Astrakhan Province, he asserted “*the British are trying by all means for the Shah to send a letter to the Sultan certifying the desires of his peace.*” According to his assumptions, if the Turks or the British paid the cost to the Qajars for military preparations, that “*they (the British) will establish peace, and perhaps they will also buy consensus against us*”²⁸.

Meanwhile, by the beginning of September 1821, the inevitability of the outbreak of hostilities became obvious. Military operations began in two directions – Erzurum and Baghdad. On the western frontier of Erzurum, the Qajar troops were headed by the heir to the throne, Abbas Mirza, and in the south (Baghdad) – the eldest son of Fath-Ali Shah Muhammed-Ali Mirza, the Kermanshah ruler (*beylerbey*). The Ottoman sultan instructed the governor of Erzurum, Khosrov Pasha²⁹, to command troops in the north, while the Mamluks of Baghdad took the lead in the south.

At the end of September 1821, the army of Abbas Mirza invaded the territory of Eastern Anatolia, and soon seized the fortresses of Toprak-kala and Ak Saray³⁰, followed by Kars and Beyazit. The seizure of Beyazit caused panic among the Ottoman authorities, and they quickly retreated. Abbas Mirza continued his assault on Erzurum and, approaching the city, demanded payment of a large indemnity. In November 1821, the Qajar troops captured the fortress of Erchish, and forced Selim Pasha of Mush to submit, but he was subsequently reinstated by ‘Abbas

27 *AKAK*, Vol.VI, part 2, p. 259.

28 *AKAK*, Vol.VI, part 2, p. 259.

29 G. Williamson, “The Turko-Persian War 1821-1823. Winning the War but Losing the Peace”, *War and Peace in Qajar Persia: Implications Past and Present*, ed. Roxane Farmanfarmanian, Routledge, New York 2008, p. 91.

30 R.G. Watson, *A History of Persia from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the year 1858*. Smith and Elder. London 1866, p. 200.

Mirza. However, in connection with the onset of winter, he was forced to retreat to Tabriz³¹. Thus, in the short time between September and November, the troops of Abbas Mirza managed to seize the areas of Beyazit, Erchish, Bitlis, Mush and others³².

Muhammed-Ali Mirza, marching in the direction of Baghdad³³, also dealt a crushing blow to the Baghdad army, pushing them to the place of Beni Said, near Baghdad. However, the Shah government, despite major military successes, quickly withdrew troops in connection with the outbreak of cholera in Iran, as in Tabriz, where up to 70 people were dying each day³⁴. Muhammed-Ali Mirza³⁵ was forced to retreat as the epidemic swiftly spread among his troops.

Military operations resumed in the spring of 1822. The Ottoman command, deciding to take revenge for last year's defeat, under the leadership of the former Grand Vizier Muhammad Amin Rauf Pasha³⁶, considered "*the best of all the Turkish pashas*,"³⁷ besieged the fortress of Toprak-kala. However, Abbas Mirza, who had managed to attract not only Iranian, but also many Turkish Kurds to his side, once again defeated the Ottoman forces³⁸. Another division of the Ottoman army, advancing towards Tabriz, was also defeated by the Qajars³⁹. One of the decisive battles took place in Upper Basin, near Toprak-kala⁴⁰. Thus, the Qajar army, reflecting on the counterattack of the Turks, retained its positions in all Ottoman border possessions. In Bagdad pashalik, the Qajar offensive also continued, and they were able to capture Mosul and Kirkuk.

But Abbas Mirza was not able to progress his successes due to the continuing epidemic of cholera⁴¹. Moreover, during this period in Iran, the situation had become

31 A. Tekdemir, "XIX. Yüzyılın ilk çeyreğinde Osmanlı-Iran ihtilafı ve 1821-1823 savaşı", *Karadeniz (Black Sea-Çernoye More) Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, no 4, 2010, p. 83.

32 Watson, *age.*, p. 197-198; Adamov, *age.*, p. 419.

33 S. Shaw, "Iranian Relation with the Ottoman Empire in The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", *The Cambridge history of Iran: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, Vol. VII. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993, p. 312-313.

34 *AKAK*, Vol. VI, part 2, p. 282.

35 He died in November 1821 on the way to Kermanshah. (Shaw, *age.*, p. 312-313).

36 Shaw, *age.*, p. 313.

37 FO 78/101 Viscount Strangford. 25th October 1821.

38 Watson, *age.*, p. 200.

39 Watson, *age.*, p. 201.

40 Williamson, *age.*, p. 95-97.

41 Tekdemir, *age.*, p. 84.

extremely complicated, and revolts against the central government had flared up. It should be noted that by this time, Abbas Mirza had already exhausted all his financial resources. Despite numerous requests for financial assistance, Fath-Ali Shah limited himself to a symbolic sum of 2,000 Tomans⁴². For a long and large-scale war, large appropriations were required from the state treasury. Given all these domestic and foreign policy factors, Abbas Mirza proposed a ceasefire to the Erzurum Pasha⁴³.

It worth noting that as soon as military operations launched, the Qajar government appealed to Lord Strangford with a request to mediate the settlement of relations with the Ottoman Empire. As well, use all of his influence on the Sultan's government to resolve the contradictions between them. The British ambassador used this appeal as an opportunity for open mediation between the parties: "*It is with great pleasure... that I will try to represent the interests of the Qajar court in the Ottoman Empire, and I feel that it will be my duty to cooperate with any minister who can help resolve the conflict*". The British ambassador expressed the interest of his government with the words: "*Relations between Turkey and Persia will always have an active interest and ... His Majesty never ceases to care about the peace, prosperity and integrity of everyone*"⁴⁴.

Having received information about the losses of the Ottoman army on the Iran border, the British representative, with the help of his dragoman Reis Efendi, told the Sultan's government his regret in connection with the "*irrational policy of increasing the enemies of Turkey in the current unsettling circumstances*". In response, the Sultan replied that the impudence of the Qajars should be punished.⁴⁵ On December 25, 1821, the British Foreign Office sent the first general instructions to their ambassador in Istanbul, relating to the affairs of the Ottoman Empire and the Qajar state. In their instructions, it was noted that "*the sincere desire to preserve peace*" compelled the British government "*to look with sincere regret at the disagreements between the two countries,*" ordering him to "*to make every effort to peacefully resolve the disagreements between Ottoman Turkey and Iran.*" However, it was specifically emphasized that the ambassador should "*be careful,*" so that Britain would not become participant of

42 R.Ghirshman-V. Minorsky-R. Sanghvi, *Persia the Immortal Kingdom*, Orient Commerce Establishment, London 1971, p. 98.

43 Aslanov, *age.*, p. 43.

44 F. Adamiyat, *The Diplomatic Relations of Persia with Britain, Turkey and Russia 1815-1830*, Thesis to be presented for the Ph. D. Degree of the University of London. October, 1949, p. 252.

45 FO 79/100 Strangford to Londonderry, 10th August, 1821. No. 89.

these disagreements⁴⁶. British diplomats had made every effort to “*seems caring*,” as Yermolov said, to stop the military operations that had arisen between the Qajar state and Ottoman Empire⁴⁷.

Thanks to the efforts of Lord Strangford, Mirza Abdul Wahab sent an official note to the British envoy, which reported the withdrawal of Qajar troops and an intention to restore peace between the states. Negotiations only began nine months after the cessation of military actions. This long delay may have been due to the absence of Lord Strangford, who was at the congress in Verona (October 20 – December 14, 1822), where Spanish and Greek issues were being discussed. It also may have been due to Erzurum’s pasha refusing to begin negotiations until he got direct instructions from the Sultan⁴⁸.

Finally, at the beginning of 1823, the crown prince Abbas Mirza and his minister expressed dissatisfaction with the slowness of the Ottoman government, stating that “*Turkey will be responsible for the consequences*”⁴⁹. At the same time, Abbas Mirza continued his preparations for the next campaign, believing that the behaviour of the Ottoman Empire did not indicate a desire to make peace⁵⁰. However, the active efforts of the British ambassador led to the opening of negotiations. The peace conference began in June 1823. Mirza Ali Mohamed, an official of the highest rank in the government of the Azerbaijani province, was the representative of the Qajar government, and Rauf Pasha, the former Grand Vizier and now Serasker of Erzurum, negotiated on behalf of the Ottoman Empire⁵¹.

The draft of the peace treaty put forward by the Ottoman side was based on the principle of restoring the territorial integrity of the Sultan’s possessions. This meant that the Qajar troops had to leave all occupied territories. The Qajar government agreed to leave all the occupied lands, however, Mirza Ali Mohammed

46 FO 248/42 Londonderry to-Strangford. 25th December 1821, No. 11.

47 Shestokovich, “Angliskaya diplomatiya i borba vokruq prestola v Irane”, p. 69.

48 Adamiyat, age., p. 256.

49 FO 78/114 Mirza Abdol Ghassem Kaim Mukam to Strangford enclosure in latter's despatch to Canning 26th March 1823, No. 22.

50 FO 78/115 Strangford to Canning, 26th May 1823, No. 55.

51 According to Sufizade, representatives of Britain (Colonel Wilson) and Russia (Colonel Denis) took part at the time of signing the agreement (Soofizadeh, A. “I. ve II. Erzurum Antlaşmalarının Siyasi Açından Değerlendirilmesi”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no 32 (54), 2013, p. 184).

instructed the Kaimakam to provide certain historical rights to Qajar Iran over the provinces of Zohab, Shahruh, and the Baban tribes of Sulaymaniyah⁵².

The agreement, signed in Erzurum (July 28, 1823) almost completely repeated the terms of the peace treaty of 1746.⁵³ The Erzurum treaty, consisting of an introduction and 7 articles, proclaimed mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs (Article I) obliged both parties not to allow incursions of border tribes from one side to the territory of another (Article III)⁵⁴, and not to accept defectors, nor to support them (Article IV). The parties undertook to provide protection to pilgrims traveling from the Qajar state to the Ottoman Empire and back, and not charge the merchants with any additional extortions other than the usual customs duty on their goods (Article II). The treaty also stated to return the stolen or confiscated property of merchants from both sides (Article V), and provides for a regular (every 3 years) exchange of residents (Article VII)⁵⁵.

Although the Qajar state was victorious in the battlefield, the signed peace treaty did not provide any territorial acquisitions for it. The Qajar state was required to return the territories seized during the war back to the Ottoman Empire within sixty days of signing of the treaty⁵⁶. In addition, the parties pledged that they would not make compensation claims to each other. The Qajar state was also unable to ensure the continuation of the receipt of the tribute that it received for some time from the Pasha of Baghdad⁵⁷.

Abbas Mirza and his minister Reis Efendi, expressed their full appreciation to the British ambassador in the Ottoman Empire for the efforts and services that he had provided to restore peace between the two nations. The government of the Ottoman Empire was also “*very satisfied*” with the result of the negotiations in

52 Adamiyat, *age.*, p. 259

53 *Istoriya Vostoka. Vostok v novoye vreme (konets XVIII - nachalo XX vv.)* Volume 4. Book 1. Moskva 2004, p. 128; Shaw, *age.*, p. 313.

54 In particular, it was the tribes of Haydaranli and Seybekli.

55 Complete transliteration of the contract from the archives of Turkey is given in A. Sufizade's article, although in the comments he notes that the contract consists of 8 articles (the last Article VIII presumes that the terms of the treaty must be fulfilled within 60 days from the date of signing). (Soofizadeh, *age.*, p. 183-194) See also translations of the Treaty in the French and Russian: Chirikov, Y.I. *Putevoy jurnal Y.I. Chirikova, russkogo komissara-posrednika po turetsko-persidskomu razgranicheniyu 1849-1852 gg.* Tipografiya O.I. Baksta, Sankt-Petersburg 1875, p. 638-648.

56 Chirikov, *age.*, p. 638-639.

57 M.S. Ivanov, *Ocherki istorii Irana*. Gos. Polit, Izdat, Moscow 1952, p. 138.

Erzurum, and with the fact that “*the honor of the Sultan and the interests of the Ottoman Empire were equally secured*”⁵⁸.

At the same time, disagreements arose between Abbas Mirza and Fath-Ali Shah regarding the ratification of the Erzurum Treaty. Sultan Mahmud II first ratified the treaty, but Fath-Ali Shah was refusing the ratification. The main reason for the Shah’s discontentment was that he believed the return of the conquered territories without any compensation was too much of a concession to the Ottoman Empire⁵⁹. The Shah issued a statement where he expressed discontent over the actions of the heir and the kaymakam. He also expressed his dissatisfaction with the situation of the Sulaymaniyah Pashalik and the granting of asylum to the Kurdish tribes. However, the inability to challenge and incorporate changes in the treaty forced the Shah to officially ratify it three months after the signing. Thus, the war with the Ottoman Empire from 1821–1823 did not give the Qajar state any tangible territorial benefits, except Ahurik and Zohab (with the exception of Khanekin, Binkurde and Shemiraan). After which the Erzurum treaty actually remained under the rule of the Qajar state (the mountainous part was Iranian, the plains were Ottoman)⁶⁰. The loss of the Turks included more than 51,000 people and the Iranian side lost more than 10,000⁶¹.

Soon after signing the peace treaty, the Qajar representative Mirza Ali Mohammed, who was still in Erzurum, received instructions from Abbas Mirza regarding a proposal passed through Rauf Pasha. The proposal was given to the government of the Ottoman Empire that would transform the peace treaty into a defensive alliance⁶². Simultaneously, immediately after the conclusion of the Erzurum peace treaty, the Shah’s ambassador Mirza Faizullah was sent to Istanbul to ask for the Sultan’s assistance “*in the hypothetical war against Russia.*” The Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II “*agreed, upon the Shah’s offer, and promised him all kinds of benefits from the Ottoman Porte*”⁶³. By this time, the union of intents of the two countries and the aspiration of Abbas Mirza for a military alliance with the Ottoman Empire, was due to the aggravation of the relationship between the Qajar state and Russia. Russian con-

58 Adamiyat, age., p. 262-263.

59 Adamiyat, age., p. 268.

60 V.F. Minorskiy “Turetsko-persidskoye razgranicheniye” *Izvestiya Imperatorskogo russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva*, 1916, Volume 52, Vipusk 5, p. 353.

61 Aslanov, age., p. 48.

62 Adamiyat, age., p. 263.

63 *AKAK*, Vol.VI, part 2, p. 343.

sul in Tabriz A.K. Amburger, in a report to General Yermolov on August 5, 1823, asserted that in addition to the official articles of the Treaty of Erzurum, there were also allegedly secret article, namely “*that the prince must pay 15,000 Tomans for the cannons he had taken from the Turks, and that Turkey was obligated to help Persian troops in the event of an offensive by a neighboring power*”⁶⁴, referring to Russia. Although these rumors did not have any real grounds, Yermolov exaggerated the details and told Nesselrode that, according to information received, there was an accumulation of Ottoman troops in the Erzurum area. “*A detachment of artillerymen came to Kars and ordered the fortresses to be repaired.*” Yermolov pointed out that in the border regions, “*there are rumours everywhere that there is a break in relations with Russia*”⁶⁵. In another letter, Yermolov informed the Russian Foreign Minister:

“The military actions on the part of Persia have already ceased, even despite their most recent succes. The gold of the British has a powerful influence and is equally necessary for a shah's stature, and to the heir for various purposes. The British, if their policy requires it, may not only stop the fighting of the Persians and the Turks, but may even unite them for mutual efforts”⁶⁶.

All the reports from the Russian general testified to the concerns that they experienced regarding a possible alliance between the two countries.

As soon as information about the secret negotiations between the two countries became known to Lord Strangford⁶⁷, the British ambassador in Istanbul, he immediately began negotiations to prevent this alliance. The British diplomat understood that such a union would inevitably clash the Ottoman Empire with Russia, while his task was to achieve pacification between the two countries. Therefore, the British ambassador considered it his “*duty to prevent this union,*” using all his influence on the Ottoman government⁶⁸.

During the meeting of the Divan (Council of Ministers) of the Ottoman Empire held on September 27, 1823, “*the proposals of the Qajar government were almost unanimously rejected*”, and the reasons given by the Sultan were as follows:

64 AKAK, Vol.VI, part 2, p. 282.

65 AKAK, Vol.VI, part 2, p. 255.

66 AKAK, Vol.VI, part 2, p. 255.

67 By the beginning of November 1823, G. Willock had already informed Lord Strangford in a letter about these proposals made by the Ottoman Empire (FO/78/118 Strangford to Canning 24th December 1823 No. 187).

68 Adamiyat, age., p. 264.

- (1) Because the conclusion of an offensive and defensive alliance with the Qajar state could be perceived by Russia as hostile actions, and this would contradict the peaceful policy demonstrated by the Ottoman Empire;
- (2) In connection with the fact that the British ambassador expressed Great Britain's dissatisfaction of such a union;
- (3) In connection with the fact that an alliance with such a "heretical" state such as the Qajar state, with the exception of cases of general danger, would be contrary to Muhammad's law⁶⁹.

It is noteworthy that in all his contacts with the Qajar heir and his ministers, Strangford tried not to show his knowledge about the secret negotiations between the Qajar state and the Ottoman Empire. It is speculated as such, so that he would not lose the trust of Abbas Mirza, and even more so, not be suspected of disrupting these negotiations. Presumably, so as not to lose the trust of the heir, nor be suspected of disrupting these negotiations. Nevertheless, he instructed G. Willock to be on guard on this issue, and not to disclose to the Qajar court any information about the activities of the representative of Great Britain in Istanbul. However, if the Qajar government continued to persist on forming a military agreement with the Ottoman Empire, Willock, in this case, should direct all his efforts to show Great Britain's discontent⁷⁰.

Therefore, at the beginning of the 19th century, the historically established relationship between the Qajar state and the Ottoman Empire entered a new period, the nature of which was largely determined by the relations of leading European powers. It is from this time onwards that the Iranian-Turkish relations should be studied in the context of international politics, with a special emphasis on the role of British and Russian diplomacy, as it was particularly these factors that largely determined the course of their relationship. The specific activities and policies of these powers in the countries of the Middle East, in turn, did not come from the interests of the countries of this region, but instead it stemmed from the international relations of European powers.

The Iranian-Turkish war had shown Iran's inability to independently pursue an active foreign policy and to secure victories on the battlefield during the peace negotiating. Any union between the Ottoman Empire and the Qajar state was

69 FO 78/116. Strangford to Canning. 10th October 1823. No. 141.

70 Adamiyat, age., p. 267-268.

viewed by Russia as an alliance against it, and naturally, they did their best to prevent an alliance between the two Muslim neighbors. Britain also considered a possible alliance between the Sultan and the Shah with disapproval, but for different reasons. The central idea of British policy was an attempt to prevent military actions between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, and to achieve a settlement of relations between them. Thus, trying to prevent the weakening of the Ottoman Empire, and the strengthening of Russia's influence in the entire Middle East. In this way, the attempts of the Qajar government to conclude a military alliance with the Ottoman Empire against Russia were met with a sharp rebuttal from Britain, as it went against their interests. The role of British diplomacy in the conclusion of the Erzurum Treaty in 1823, as well as the pressure exerted on the Ottoman government by the British ambassador in Istanbul to cancel the Qajar proposal for a military alliance with the Ottoman Empire, was undeniable. In general, the entire eastern policy of Great Britain towards the Qajar state was an attempt to adapt it to its policy in the Ottoman Empire.

The Qajar policy of seeking an alliance with the Ottoman Empire seemed unproductive, on the one hand, due to a lack of mutual understanding between the two nations, and on the other, because of British efforts to prevent this union. The contradictions between the Qajar state and the Ottoman Empire did not allow them to create a coalition against a common enemy. The main role was played by the external factor, namely the moderation by Britain. The plans of Abbas Mirza to create a military alliance with the Ottoman Empire, in the end, collapsed.

In conclusion, from the beginning of the 19th century, Iranian-Turkish relations have become one of the key issues in the Middle East region. The diplomatic struggle of European powers in the Qajar Iran and the Ottoman Empire during the Russo-Iranian and Iranian-Turkish wars visually demonstrated their manipulative and aggressive nature.

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