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## **US and the Crisis of Azarbaijan, 1945–1947**

### **Abstract**

The present article attempts to study the United States' role in settling Azarbaijan crisis in 1945–1946. The Allied Powers occupied Iran on 25 August 1941 to enjoy the best opportunity for transporting military and non-military aids through Iranian territory. During several conferences during WWII, the Allied Powers promised to get their armies out of Iran once the war was over, though the Soviet Union forces did not leave Iran after the war, which culminated in the Azarbaijan Crisis. The crisis was an arena for the first confrontation of US and USSR during Cold War and orientated US foreign policy during Truman administration. The question raised by the current research concerns how US assisted in settling the crisis. The article concludes that the role, played by the US, was to mobilize national and international support, forcing the Soviet Union to leave Iran. The article takes the subject matter into consideration by analyzing it through the appearance of the crisis, US' reaction to it, the role of Qavam Iranian prime minister of the time, political potential of the UN, and the special method by the means of which the crisis was finally settled.

### **Keywords**

Iran, Azarbaijan, US, USSR, Ahmad Qavam, Diplomacy.

### **Introduction**

The Azarbaijan Crisis is one of the important events in the history of Cold War that took place between 1945 and 1946. It was triggered when the Soviet Union's Red Army did not leave the Iranian province of Azarbaijan. During WWII, the United States as a result of some agreements with the Allies sent huge military and non-military assistance to the Soviet Union, saving them from a defeat to the Nazis. However, this was at the cost of occupying Iran by the Allies, causing huge casualties and infrastructure devastation for the

Iranians. Based on the commitments of the Allies following several contracts and conference agreements – including the 1941 Contract and 1943 Agreement in Tehran Conference – all military forces had to leave Iran once the war was over. American and British forces left Iran on due time, yet the Red Army did not follow their example. The Soviets insisted on military intervention in Iran, and the British accompaniment of them, forced the United States to demarcate the lines of competition and combat these previous allies.

US foreign policy of this period was in accordance with Truman Doctrine, comprised of Wilsonian principles and a new orientation to confine communism. Apart from Wilsonian principles that involve respecting the right of self-determination for all countries, the US considered setting Iran in traps of the Soviet Union and Britain as a clear sign of communism expansion and deprivation from the Persian Gulf interests. Iranians, in parallel to such an American way of thinking, imagined the Soviet Union and Britain policy was a very dangerous game against Iran's independence, a backward step to the colonial politics of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, a consolidation was formed in which Iranians looked for a very dynamic and delicate diplomacy to seek international support to preserve Iran's independence and protect domestic unity. Suddenly, there came US policy in this period to emphasize activating domestic politics and diplomatic potentials of her allies. It is of high account to compare this policy with Eisenhower's costly and complicated one that tried to initiate proxy wars and replace democracies with dictatorships. The latter, really, made the atmosphere of world politics much tougher.

Here, it is quite important to find how the United States helped Iran to save Azarbaijan from USSR and Britain, which was a dangerous game to depart and this is the very question to be analyzed and answered in this research. By studying documents and materials, published by both sides, the article will try to introduce a new line of analysis: confining communism expansion through rising national and international support in favor of the allies. The word 'rising' means mobilization of political internal environment of the allies in the course of augmenting national unity as well as international support like utilizing UN and its members. This kind of analysis indicates preferring diplomacy to war and democracy to dictatorship by US foreign policy during Truman administration. To examine this new form of analysis, the creation of the crisis, US' role in intercepting USSR, role of Qavam in deactivating USSR encouragement, utilizing UN and its member countries, and finally, the special way of settling the crisis.

### **USSR's Decision not to Leave Iran**

The crisis of Azarbaijan started from when the Soviet Union, the United States, and Britain agreed on several occasions, especially the Tehran Conference held between 28 November and 1 December, 1943 to leave Iran after the end

of WWII; however, once the war was over, the Soviet Union did not make any attempt to meet its commitments. Based on Article 5 of a contract, signed in January 1942 by USSR and Britain on one hand and Iranian government on the other to end German-launched combats in Iran, which is known as Trilateral Contract or Treaty of Alliance, and signed, Russian and British forces were obliged to leave Iran “not more than six months after the cessation of hostilities” (IFM/1323/12/25/950).

Although this was a pretext to occupy Iran and ruin any infrastructure with the so-called purpose of ending German influence in Iran (Khan-MalekYazdi 1983; Houshang-Mahdavi 1996), such an obligation to leave Iran was underscored in several other meeting by the Allies. Commitment to leave Iran after the war was reassured by the Allies in Tehran Conference (Cottam 1988), held on 28 November 1943, to plan a joint military strategy and discuss political affairs. In February 1945, when the war ended and Germany was defeated, the Allies met in Yalta to consider the future of Germany. They also negotiated leaving Iran, but Germany’s defeat caused Stalin to stand firmly on his decision not to leave Iran unless he received an oil concession in north of the country.

Moreover, the Russians asked Britain to help them achieve that concession (IFM 1324/8/81/3). Soon after Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, showed Great Britain’s willingness to help Russians gain such a concession (IFM 1324/13/200/1/118). But in Yalta US and Britain insisted on not putting Iranian government under more pressure for oil concession until the end of the war, which was accepted by Stalin. The Allies also approved to resolve the issue of leaving Iran diplomatically (Arcilesi 1965: 22–25). As Bill says, the British were not worried about the presence of the Soviet Union in the north of Iran as long as their influence remained intact in the south (1989: 45).

On May 7, 1945, when Germany’s defeat was clear, Iranian Foreign Ministry sent letters to embassies of the Allied Powers in Tehran, asking them to respect their commitment to leave Iran, but they did not reply (IFM 1324/12/33). Iran realized she had to follow the issue seriously and diplomatically; therefore, she assigned a new mission for her delegations in the capitals of the Allied Powers to negotiate with their officials and discuss the withdrawal of their military forces. The American Department of State replied that US would consider the message, emphasizing on the timely withdrawal of American forces (IFM 1324/12/65/1). Great Britain replied that her exit depended on the Russian departure. She also proposed to the Soviet Union to leave Iran simultaneously, which the latter rejected (Alexander & Nanes 1980: 250).

It became clear for the Iranians that the situation resembled the Anglo-Russian entente and the competition during nineteenth century when they settled their disputes over Iran, trying to take separate spheres of influence. Iranian politicians realized they had to stand firmly against the recurrence of the same event. They tried to receive American diplomatic support and activate and

mobilize a global diplomacy against it (Zouqi 1989: 246). The United States was willing to stay in line with Iranians too. After the war, America came to be the only superpower. Americans showed to be very enthusiastic on respecting international security and peace. Hence, they were willing to ask other powers to leave Iran. Potsdam Conference was supposed to be held in July 1945; where the Allies wanted to talk about post-war issues. Iranian Foreign Ministry asked Iran's Ambassador in Washington to negotiate with US officials and persuade them to oblige both the Soviet Union and the Great Britain to have their forces leave Iran. Here, British politicians were circulating this necessity in Washington that they needed to defend oil installations in the south and, therefore, they might keep their forces for a while. Iranian Ambassador responded that they had enough forces in Iraq and the Persian Gulf, thus there was no need for any military presence in southern part of Iran. In Tehran, Mohsen Sadr-ol Ashraf, Iranian Prime Minister, convinced US ambassador to induce the officials in Washington for a serious intervention (Safari 1992: 146). This brought Iran and US into a united front, resulting in a decision by Potsdam Conference that stated the Allied forces would exit Tehran and the issue of leaving Iran would be decided in the coming conference of London (Alexander & Nanes 1980: 224).

On September 20, 1945, the Japanese Government surrendered, and Iran found an opportunity to ask the Allies to get their forces out of Iran in accordance with Article 5 of 1942 contract (IFM 1324/12/33). During two conferences of Allies' foreign ministers in London and Moscow, the Russians and the British jointly set the issue of Iran aside the conferences agendas. In London Conference, when Molotov rejected to talk about Iranian issue, Byrnes, US Secretary of State, demanded the Allied Forces to leave Iran upon Articles 33 and 35 of the Charter of the newly-established United Nations (UN) (Elm 1977: 34). Again, Molotov defied and Byrnes was set to talk with Stalin in Moscow Conference, where he emphasized the necessity of maintaining Iran's security by getting the forces out (Zouqi 1989: 251). Stalin complained about the unfriendly behavior of the Iranians who did not give the Soviet Union the northern oil concession. He said that upon 1921 contract with Iran, the Russians needed to secure Baku oil region and which required having some forces north of Iran (Fatemi, 1980: 105). Hereafter, Americans and British proposed a trilateral commission to solve the problem (IFM 1324/12/33). Iran strongly rejected this proposal, demanding Allies' meeting their commitment to leave Iran before March 2, 1946 (IFM 1324/12/144/1).

### **Iran to Use a New Wave of Diplomacy**

The new way for Iran settle the Azarbaijan Crisis was to refer to UN, mainly an American institution to guarantee world security and peace. Once there was no decision made by the Allies during their numerous meetings, Ebrahim

Hakimi, Iranian Prime Minister, ordered Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh, Iran's UN Representative, to lodge a complaint against USSR (IFM 1324/12/33). Referring Article 35 of the UN Charter, Taqizadeh reported an acute situation of crisis to the Secretary General of UN, complaining about the Soviet Union military intervention in the north of Iran and establishing the Autonomous Republic of Azarbaijan (Jami 1983: 363). Taqizadeh warned he would make a complaint to UN Security Council if USSR forces did not leave Iran before March 2, 1946. To settle the dispute, UN asked USSR to respond to Iranian complaint, but Andrey Gromyko, the Russian Representative to UN, demanded to dismiss the complaint (Zouqi 1989: 298).

President Truman did not let it to be so and, oppositely, supported it (Bill 1989: 48). When Truman posed the complaint firmly, George Allen, US Ambassador in Iran, encouraged Iranians to pursue it. Then, Hossein Allā, Iran's Representative to UN, lodged a complaint to the Security Council, explaining that though the due time for the forces to exit had been expired, USSR force still stayed in Iran. While the negotiations between Iranians and Russians officials were in progress in Tehran, Gromyko asked the Security Council to postpone dealing with it. Allā rejected this proposal even though Ahmad Qavam, Iranian Prime Minister, seemingly agreed. Here, both the US and the Great Britain supported Iranian position.

### **Russia's Heightening of the Crisis**

USSR was seeking to revive the nineteenth century entente. While Iran was dead set against USSR military presence under US support, trying to keep her doors closed, the Soviet Union took up a new policy of indirect influence: installing local governments, encouraging pro-Soviet parties and newspapers, putting Iranian government under pressure to receive pro-Soviet ministers in the cabinet, engineering elections in under-influence areas so as to draw pro-Soviet candidates of bullet boxes, etc. When Reza Shah left the country, USSR had the leftist activists institute *Toudeh* Party [populace party]. Reza Shah had not allowed any leftist activity or any hype in favor of communism. In May 1937, the security police arrested 53 men on the accusation of being close to USSR. Many of them were executed and others sentenced to long – term imprisonment.

A countrywide party, *Toudeh* enrolled workers of the newly established industries; however, USSR politicians needed a local party here with local attractive ideas to raise masses against the central government. Mir Ja'far Baqirov, Secretary General of [USSR] Azerbaijan Communist Party, helped USSR officials consider the idea of separating Iranian province of Azarbaijan and granting it independence. It was a great plot to detach Iranian Azarbaijan and annex it to USSR Azerbaijan, a scenario very much favored by Stalin (Hassanov 2004:

15–40). Mir Ja'far Javadzadeh, later known as Seyyed Ja'far Pishevari, who was a leading person to establish the Iranian communist party of *Toudeh*, founded *Firqa-ye Democrat-e Azarbaijan* [Democrat Party of Azarbaijan] to realize the goal of detaching Iranian Azarbaijan.

As one of the Iranian leading communists, he first instituted *Idalat* [justice] Party in Baku, then to become home minister in local cabinet of Jungle Movement. During Reza Shah's government, his leftist activities sent him to jail for a decade. He was released from imprisonment, by the time Reza Shah got out of the country and instituted *Ajir* newspaper to cover the news of communist activities more seriously (Maqsoudi 2001: 80). During the campaigns of the 14<sup>th</sup> round of *Majlis* [parliament], he managed to win a seat, but was rejected as the *Majlis* did not approve his credentials (Safari 1992: 107). When Germany was defeated, Stalin got focused on the issue of Azarbaijan and provided much more political and economic support to realize his scenario. Therefore, in July 1945, he ordered the initiation of *Firqa-ye Democrat-e Azarbaijan* (*Firqa*) (Hassanov 2004: 15). Afterwards, in a very secret step, Baqirov gathered some of the key members of *Toudeh* party in Baku and started negotiations to institute the *Firqa*. Abdu al-Samad Kambakhsh, member of the central committee of *Toudeh* party; Sadiq Padigan, administrator of *Toudeh* party in Azarbaijan; and Pishevari were the main figures to attend that session (Rubin 1980: 34). Later, they declared the inauguration of *Firqa* on September 3, 1945, through an announcement in both Farsi and Azari, under the leadership of Pishevari (ibid.).

As aforementioned, the main aim of installing *Firqa* was to detach Azarbaijan province and annex it to the Soviet Azarbaijan in the first step. Iranian papers of *Azarbaijan* wrote on the probable aims: The Russians are seeking to expand their huge interests like reaching oil fields, and to do so, the Red Army units in Iran, *Toudeh* Party, dependant newspapers, and ... are the favorite instruments (Nov. 19, 1941). However, they concentrated on Azarbaijan and Soviet soldiers began to prevent commuting of Iranian officials or military (Bayani 1996: 127). They, then seized all governmental assets, equipments, and armaments in favor of the *Firqa*. Very soon, the *Firqa* published a charter in which the aims and plans of the party through an introduction and 12 articles, demanding autonomy, creation of a local government and parliament, teaching Azari at schools, increasing Azari MPs up to one third of the *Majlis*, enacting land reform, development of industries and trade, and improvement of living standards for workers and employees via altering work relations. This was a huge governmental system, described by Atabaki as much more than a simple autonomy (2000: 143). During later days, the real face of the *Firqa* was unveiled. The party stated in its leaflets, announcements, and other publications that it had been established to free Azeri people (Jami 1983: 294; *Aras* 1 January 1947). Derakhshani, brigadier and the commander of Tabriz garrison, says that the Soviet forces in a very close coordination with the *Firqa* armed their people to stand against

the central government (2005: 27). Soon they held an election in Azarbaijan, instituting a “national” *Majlis*. By “national”, they were deliberately emphasizing invention of the new nation of Azarbaijan and separating it from Iran. This newly-established and so-called “national” *Majlis* appointed Pishevari to form a cabinet and introduce his ministers (Atabaki 2000: 142).

Pishevari formed his cabinet and tried to eliminate any sign of the central government power. Like all communist governments, he organized *Artesh-e Khalq* [people’s army], armed by the Russian forces (Khan-MalekYazdi 1983: 56). In the next step, they surrounded Tabriz garrison and under Russian forces’ support, made Brigadier Derakhshani and his forces to surrender (Derakhshani 2005: 236). Afterwards, *Artesh-e Khalq* became empowered by all armaments, including heavy arms. By plundering Tabriz garrison, now, they were more powerful than what the central government’s Tabriz Brigade was. Hereafter, they extended their power over all parts of Azarbaijan and were ready to challenge the central government power.

The *Firqa* government also was about to replace Iranian culture and economic policies in Azarbaijan. They took over cultural instruments like radio, newspaper, publications, university, schools, and so on to spill their cultural message throughout Azarbaijan. They also instituted any other needed cultural instruments like associations to change the arena to something alien to Iran (Hassanov 1384: 116; Nejati 1999: 46–51). Economically, they were not quite successful. They confiscated some properties and capitals, enacting very excessive land reforms against the landlords. These policies raised discontent among the capitalists and landlords who were the most influential people of the area. Their economic policies also did not meet the expectations of the middle class as they could not provide enough money to pay salaries (Bayani 1996: 151–153). As they followed such economic plans to get detached and isolated from the country, the economic situation gradually got deteriorated.

## Coming of Qavam

Ahmad Qavam, the last and determining prime minister during the crisis, was a pro-American politician, which was not favorable for the USSR and the Great Britain. Such an inclination to US came from an Iranian experience in foreign relation, where Iranian politicians tried to rely on a third power to detract Russia’s and Great Britain’s destructive influence. Qavam knew that Iran’s geopolitical situation was very special and attractive to these great powers as they had been pinned to Iran since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was also well aware that challenging them was very hard. But the time, also, was momentous as he could count on US, UN and the other international mechanisms. Taking US uphold for granted, Qavam came into diplomatic negotiations with Stalin. He

tried to guarantee negotiations by bringing some pro-Soviet ministers into his cabinet, revoking some martial law regulations in Azarbaijan, declaring some ranges of associations, parties, and press freedoms, and dismissing or court-martialing some army commanders especially some of the pro-Britain ones (Safari 1992: 165; Jami 1983: 378).

Hereafter, Qavam stated that he wanted to solve the crisis through negotiation with USSR. Stalin quickly invited him to Moscow and in February 1946, Qavam left Tehran to talk with Stalin under a diplomatic mission (Behnoud 1998: 259).

The Soviet officials might have been thinking if the Red Army left Iran, Britain would take control of the north of Iran to stage sabotage operations against USSR. Probably, they were right, owing to at least the experience with two pro-Britain cabinets of Sadr and Hakimi after WWII (Bill 1989: 45–46). Actually, the British had a better influence than USSR in Iranian cabinets, army, and other decision-making areas (Cottam 1988: 87). So, as Houshang-Mahdavi says, it was quite logical of the Russians to struggle to find ways of influence (1996: 43–49). But it was a nefarious and scandalous form of spreading influence by either giving support to evidently-dependant parties, groups, and individuals, or encouraging riots, subversions, and other acts of this sort.

Qavam was aware of the Russians' concerns and aims. He somehow acknowledged these concerns when he dismissed some pro-Britain officials to, contrarily, appoint some pro-Soviet ones, or made friendly behavior with USSR-poppet governments of Azarbaijan and Kurdistan (*Ajir*, August 19, 1945; Fatemi 1980: 145). Seemingly it was the suitable and popular policy as USSR was so potent to mobilize masses. *Azadi* Daily reports that the Russians were so potent in hiring people for their leftist organizations in Iran (January 29, 1946). Therefore, it would be the Iranian cabinet's Achilles' heel to combat the Soviet influence while remaining very corrupted and pro-Britain during WWII.

In Moscow, Qavam had two rounds of negotiations with Stalin and Molotov. He tried to listen what they had in mind. Qavam carefully understood that he had to calm down the situation and that these meetings were nothing else than hearing sessions. In the first round, Stalin criticized Iranian policy against the Soviet in Paris Conference where Iran reclaimed her 17 cities, lost during Irano-Russia wars (1804–1813 & 1825–1828). Qavam responded that he had not been in charge during the time of the conference. Stalin continued that Iranians were menacingly looking for oil in Baku. He astoundingly stated that Azarbaijan was Iran's internal issue, though the Russians expected a friendlier manner with regards to the region's autonomy (Lytle 1987: 17; Alexander & Nanes 1980: 252). Qavam replied that Iranian constitution did not allow giving any autonomy (Behnoud 1998: 263). Again, Stalin and Molotov raged against Qavam and disclosed a map of Iran, showing him how Iranian government had been unfair in granting Britain an oil concession in the south and not doing the same in favor of Russians in the north (*Dad*, April 15, 1946).

As for leaving Azarbaijan, they promised to do it in due time. But Qavam instantly understood that they did not want to get out. Qavam held two covert meetings with George Kennan, US charge d'affaires in Moscow, and consulted him about what had gone in his conversation with Stalin and Molotov. Qavam and Kennan drew the Soviet aims and demands, and devised a plan to neutralize them (Bill 1989: 48; *Jebheh*, June 18, 1946).

Qavam and US officials realized they had to bring Stalin into negotiation under political and military pressure. On March 2, 1946, James Byrnes, US Secretary of State, sent a letter to the Soviet embassy and complained against the Red Army's not leaving Iran in due time, asking for quick action to leave Iran. A week later, US State Department issued the second complaint letter, and then completed the pressure plan by sending USS Missouri warship to Istanbul to warn the Russians of a military reaction (Fatemi 1980: 106).

Qavam, also, took part by conducting diplomatic pressure. He asked Hossein Allā, Iranian Ambassador to UN, to sue the USSR on terms of occupying Iran and not getting the Red Army out. American embassy in Tehran declared that the United States would support Iran's complaint. In few days, Iran and US brought about a widespread international support against USSR. Soviets tried to put Iranian complaint away from UN Security Council agenda by persuading Allā to withdraw. The Russian ambassador to UN asked the Security Council to put the complaint aside due to the ongoing negotiations between the two countries. Allā argued that Qavam is under pressure in Moscow and so he could not accept this (Jarmanand Burrell, Vol. 13, 1977: 15).

The pressure against Stalin was successful as Qavam received positive signals for second round of negotiations. On his last day of stay in Moscow, Qavam met Stalin and both accepted to continue negotiations in Tehran. Here, it was clear that Stalin was going to get the Red Army out under international pressure, but he wanted to receive an oil concession in return for his leaving Azarbaijan. Qavam accepted and the negotiations continued in Tehran (Alexander & Nanes 1980: 258).

### **Agreement in Tehran**

Stalin sent his new ambassador, Ivan Sadchikov, to Tehran on March 20, 1946 to pursue the negotiations. He continued talks with Qavam and reached an agreement on April 4, 1946, which was around three issues:

1. The Red Army were to leave Iran within 45 days since March 24, 1946;
2. Qavam would present the contract of establishing Irano-Soviet Shared Oil Company within seven months to the parliament for approval;
3. Azarbaijan would remain an Iranian internal affair, but the Iranian government would accept to do some reforms in favor of Azarbaijani people (*Rahbar*, March 28, 1946; Safari 1992: 173–175; Jami 1983: 395–397).

The result of this agreement turned out to be in accordance with Iran's interests. Yet, Russian geologists were pessimistic about the amount of oil in the northern part of Iran; their estimations, showing no considerable oil resource. Thus when Iranian parliament rejected the contract, it was tolerable for the Russians. Also, the time frame for approving the contract lasted so much that it could give many opportunities to flee from any commitment (Bill 1989: 49). Hence it was temporarily something, only to show that it was nothing. This very reason made Qavam to accept it as a diplomatic way of dealing cards.

While the Red Army was getting out, Qavam, upon the Iranian Constitution, issued a note on Azarbaijan on April 22, 1946 where an *Anjoman-e Eyalati* [local parliament] had been appointed to make decisions on local affairs in place of the central government (Zouqi 1989: 306; *Time*, June 13, 1946).

### Negotiation with *Firqa*

When Qavam issued the note on Azarbaijan, Stalin asked the puppet government of *Firqa* to consider the realities of the international politics and come to compromise with Qavam (Hassanov 2004: 155). In April Qavam and Pishevari agreed to negotiate with each other in Tehran under the mediation of Sadchikov (*Kayhan*, April 29, 1946). The main obstacle was dissolving *Firqa* members into the Iranian government. First round of the negotiations did not succeed as Qavam did not accept military figures to join *Artesh* [Iranian Army] (Jami 1983: 409). Here, *Firqa* was trying to resist, but the Red Army, leaving Azarbaijan on the new due time of May 7, along with Sadchikov's request of Qavam to order revoking the complaint in UN Security Council brought about a chance to accelerate the compromise. The Russians wanted Iran to withdraw the complaint because of the new reality of exiting units of the Red Army (Bill 1989: 49). Allā did not accept hence the Russians asked Qavam to dismiss him. Considering the situation, Qavam complied, but asked Sadchikov to make up for it and hold more pressure on *Firqa* to come to settlement, which the latter mutually agreed. It is worth mentioning here that Qavam sent a secret message to Allā, explaining that his dismissal did not concern disobeying to revoke the complaint, and Allā admired it as a diplomatic trick (*Time*, April 8, 1946).

Sadchikov forced the *Firqa*, preparing them for a settlement. After a month, the second round of negotiations commenced in Tabriz on June 11, 1946, and Qavam sent Mozafar Firouz to resume the talks with Pishevari and Mohammad Qazi, head of the USSR-installed Government of Kurdistan (Atabaki 2000: 167; Zouqi 1989: 307). Eventually, the agreement was achieved, and a contract was signed between the parties which mainly said:

1. Pishevari and Qazi as heads of USSR-installed governments of Azarbaijan and Kurdistan accepted to hand over the power and desist from undermining Iranian sovereignty over Azarbaijan and Kurdistan;

2. *Majlis-e Eyalati* [*Firqa* parliament] would transform into *Anjoman-e Eyalati*;
3. Ministers in USSR-installed governments of Azarbaijan and Kurdistan would be appointed as director-generals in those provinces governorates (Roseau 1381: 66–77).

As Iranian Foreign Ministry documents shows, Iranian government obtained little control in these two provinces as the *Firqa* kept most of its administrative structures, but was successful to oust *Firqa* and its political and military ties with USSR (IFM 1325/13/200/1/30).

When the agreement was reached, the British tried to provoke new unrests to resume their old game of entente with the Soviet Union, expelling the Americans from Iran. Actually, it was clear prospective that Great Britain would lose her usual influence in Iran to the coming Americans. Therefore, they started to undermine the situation. At first, they asked the Shah to remove Qavam since they saw him an American puppet for relinquishing British influence (Zouqi 1989: 289). But, the US backed Qavam, not letting the British to be successful (Fawcett 1992: 21). Great Britain, then, tried to check Qavam by mobilizing oil workers and southern tribes, triggering some riots against him. What is more, they were ready to send their forces from Basreh and the Persian Gulf coasts to Abadan and change the situation (Bill 1989: 53; Behnoud 1998: 72). Qavam did not try to suppress the riots. He made a very political decision and sent a mission, composed of governmental envoys as well as *Toudeh* agents to Khuzistan province to talk with the riots leaders and settle them. Qavam escaped this British-caused crisis successfully (Amin 2007: 98–112). Iran, then, opposed Great Britain's involvement in that crisis and deploying of her forces along the Iranian southern boundaries. Great Britain tried to justify it by resorting instability around oil installations, but found nothing and acknowledged that Iranian government had done suitable security actions that needed no military intervention (Jarmanand Burrell, Vol. 13, 1997: 207–210).

Here, another matter is worth mentioning. Because of the crisis in Azarbaijan and Qavam's utilizing some pro-*Toudeh* ministers, and *Toudeh*'s important role in settling the British-caused southern unrests, expansion of communism caused some concern for all: the Shah, Qavam, the Americans, and even the British. Great Britain was specifically concerned about the spread of *Toudeh*'s influence among the workers of oil industry next to the Persian Gulf. This was also a concern for the United States, but they were opposed to the Great Britain's way of tackling the problem. George Allen, US Ambassador to Iran, showed a full support of Qavam's cabinet, believing that only this policy could be in accordance with the interests of the United States and protect Iran, as both the Soviet Union and the Great Britain wanted to bring back Iran to their old politics by dissecting the country from north and south (Alexander & Nanes 1980: 275; *Ittla'at*, September 15, 1946). Qavam, however, overcame the problem of *Toudeh* influence with his own solution. He raised the conflict with *Toudeh*

ministers on finishing the south unrests and used it as an excuse for resignation on October 17, 1946. *Toudeh* party confirmed the same conflict by issuing a statement in the following days. But the next day Shah again asked Qavam to arrange a new cabinet. Qavam did it without using any pro-*Toudeh* minister. It really was an end to the concern over the influence of communism (Zouqi 1989: 320; Rubin 1980: 45).

## End of the Crisis

On October 6, 1946, the Shah, upon the Constitution issued the command of holding the national election of the 15<sup>th</sup> *Majlis*. Qavam stated that the election were to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> of Azar, but the government would try to secure the situation in Azarbaijan. He said that the government would send *Artesh* to Azarbaijan to be confident of holding the election in free and proper circumstances (*Ittla'at*, October 8, 1946).

Once more, the Russians tried to come back to the political arena of Iran. Sadchikov informed Qavam of his government's opposition to sending the *Artesh* to Azarbaijan. The *Firqa*, also, stated that they would resist any forces to come to Azarbaijan (NAI 1325/293004747/00410026). Then, the *Firqa* asked USSR for military support, but the latter backed only morally (Hassanov 2004: 179).

Qavam provided much assistance for *Artesh*'s mission to Azarbaijan. During the few months before the election, in close cooperation with American advisors he equipped *Artesh* with any needed armament and training (IFM 1325/13/200/1/125). Allen, also, made Qavam confident of US full support on sending *Artesh* to Azarbaijan (Alexander & Nanes 1980: 275). Qavam, then, asked Iranian Representative to UN to inform UN Secretary General of the decision to send *Artesh* to Azarbaijan to secure condition for holding a free election. He, also, asked Azarbaijan Governor to have any needed cooperation with *Artesh* in case of any resistance (Jami 1983: 469). On December 10, 1946, he ordered the *Artesh* to go to Azarbaijan. On December 12, 1946, the *Artesh* entered Tabriz without any resistance, and *Firqa* heads fled to the Soviet Union (*ibid.*). During Pahlavi dominance, Iranians were celebrating the day of 21<sup>st</sup> of Azar [December 12] as the 'Day of Saving Azarbaijan' which can be seen as Iranians D-Day.

## Conclusion

The crisis of Azarbaijan was a consequence of illegal and illegitimate occupation of Iran by the Allies. In this case, while US concern was to assist the Soviets versus Nazis, Great Britain and USSR in union were following another aim. During WWII, these two powers found that Iranians wanted to

utilize US in order to remove them from Iran. They, also, realized that US greedily wanted to enter Iran and challenge their influence. They both tried to utilize the crisis of Azarbaijan to bring back Iran to 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial game; where they departed Iran as their sphere of influence.

Their policy failed, however, owing to the alliance between Iran and US which won international support in line with risen unity among Iranians to defend their independence. While Americans played a great role by deploying UN and threatening USSR by force, Qavam's diplomacy, a result of Iranians' unity, as a complementary step, played an important role in driving the Red Army out and intercepting Great Britain's attempt to enter the country. This precise and well-made diplomacy let US containment policy to be successful in the first step. It was also successful in replacing Great Britain with the United States in the Persian Gulf.

The successful result of Iran and US alliance in the crisis of Azarbaijan – as first confrontation with USSR in Cold War – provided a context for US statesmen in policy-making against USSR in the next events like the Turkish crisis of straits, the Greek civil war, etc. Upon the conditions of the crisis of Azarbaijan in which George Kennan was actively involved, containment policy came out to be a sophisticated and effective policy.

The pattern of Iran-US alliance and cooperation shaped a model of behavior against USSR-waged crises. Upon this model which worked in Turkey, Greece, and the other places, the US learnt to help allies to mobilize their population and domestic potentials as the best way of defending their independence. So, it strengthened democracy, flourished diplomacy, and mobilized domestic capabilities among allies much more than any time. This model could guarantee the allies' independence without facing the danger of war. As a result, one can see very conciliatory foreign policies than the ones in the following years which can be described at best tougher, costlier, more war-involving, and dictator-creating.

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