

## **Qavam and International Conflict**

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### **Abstract**

This Article Examines the political turmoil, Iran foreign Policy, great powers interventions with especial reference to Firqa-yi Dimokrat Azarbajejan and oil crisis between 1941-1947.

This article also deals with the international reaction, the role of the United Nations, and that of the Prime Minister, Qavam, who concluded agreements with the Firqa-yi Dimokrat leaders and the USSR. The successful pressure from the west and the U.S. on the central government to crush the movements and the international agreement between America and USSR which led to the fall of Democratic movements particularly Firqa-yi Dimokrat Azarbajejan are analysed.

This field has been hitherto unexplored for that matter need to know Azari Turkish, Persian and English, to have access to primary sources, because the materials are scorched (secondary sources are not reliable), and Also this Period needed the wide research and investigation interviews.

In this article, I have tried to present the original material using mostly the primary sources and also limited secondary sources cautiously and carefully.

**Key words:** Qavam, Oil Crisis, Foreign Relations, Fergayi-Dimokrat

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Qavam [1] was a native of Azarbaijan, who ostensibly supported the need for reforms, and was a more acceptable figure to the Soviet Union, with long political experience. Thus he was elected as

as Prime Minister and formed the new cabinet on January 26th, 1946.[2]

Qavam Played his cards so successfully, gaining the support of the majority of Iranian Progressives, the Tudeh and even the Soviet Union

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(who declared Qavam to be brilliant politician), that his power and influence became rival to that of Muhammad Reza Shah himself.[3]

Qavam was emboldened to criticise the Shah's policy, but in reality there existed a power struggle between them that was itself pouted in the fact that Muhammad Reza was pro-British, while Qavam Supported the United States.[4]

Qavam felt his position threatened by the presence of seven Tudeh cabinet members, especially in view of approaching elections. Ideally, Qavam needed a strong opposition party in government, [5] something that the Iranian political system lacked, despite the constitutional basis. Thus he announced over the state run radio, on June 29<sup>th</sup> 1946, about the creation of the Hizb-Dimukrat to contest the election in opposition to the Tudeh, hoping thereby to weaken it[6]. This step further accentuated the divisions existing between the Shah and the left, as Qavam indicated to each hi intention of bringing about the downfall o the other. Using ex-Tudeh agitators, such as Ali Umid for example to help organise the Dimukrat-I Iran, Qavam established a strong coalition of landowners and higher officials who represented the interests of the bourgeoisie and defined the feudal system. The party thus represented the old aristocracy who sought revenge against Reza Shah for ousting them from power, and the newer middle-class created by Reza Shah; both elements were present in the first central committee of July 10, 1946.

The Dimukrat-I Iran then implemented Qavam's labour law of 1946, by negotiating higher wages from the Anglo-Iranian Oil

Company, and the Soviet-operated fisheries, and by leading anti-Communists. After the collapse of the Azarbaijan national government, the Tudeh's only ally was the CCUTU, which managed to retain its power and remained a major political force, which Qavam was determined to break. Its General Secretary was thus arrested, its paper banned, its organisers detained, and the headquarters and party building occupied by the army. This represented the Dimukrat's most important strategy success. Although it's determination to break the influence of the Tudeh in the long run, however, was its downfall, or its members gradually became disaffected with its operations against the Tudeh and, group by group, left, many in fact started joining the Tudeh.[7] Qavam concern for the security of the left also gave cause of concern to conservative Iranian pro-Western opinion, which believed that by controlling the 15th Majlis, he would sacrifice Iran's resources, beliefs that were , in fact, unfounded.

Qavam and West real aim was the suppression of all democratic movements within Iran, which were contrary to their interests, specially Firqa-yi Dimukrat in Azarbijan [8]

Of the problems facing Qavam, two sorts distinguished themselves: disturbances and foreign policy. His internal policies were deliberately conciliatory, he immediately stopped atiTudeh suppression, reintroducing Freedom of assembly. He engineered the arrest of important right-wing politicians and pro-British sympathisers, he implicitly warned the Shah not to interfere.

The main cause of Qavam's nervousness was

the Firqa-yi Dimokrat, which was directly related to his foreign policies. Right from start, Qavam knew that to act at all he needed the approval of all three big powers, and that to reach that stage Russia would have to withdraw its troops and its support, something that it would not do unless its long standing ambition of Northern oil concessions was satisfied.

In fact, Iran was strategically and economically very important indeed to Britain, America, and the Soviet Union, and none of these powers wanted others to have an undue advantage. The suppression of the Firqa-yi Dimokrat movement was such an issue that serious repercussions would be felt throughout the middle east because of the influence enjoyed by the movement throughout Iran.

The premiership of Qavam, reflected to a considerable extent his personal influence and political outlook. In his earlier administration of 1921, his American leanings led to the unsuccessful Northern Oil concession attempt; and his lifelong encouragement of American presence culminated in the Millspaugh financial mission of 1944 [9].

Unsurprisingly, his pro-Western attitudes had external as well as internal effects: the gradual reduction of communist influence aimed ultimately toward the removal of the Soviet presence and thereby the collapse of the Firqa-yi Dimokrat. His conciliatory tactics marked an unprecedented subtlety in Iranian politics and Qavam operated successfully by deceit.

Qavam's consistent policy of "Positive Equilibrium" was mainly to have a confessional

balance between East and West and he had recognised his main problem as the Russian desire for a concession in the North to balance [11] Britain's right in the South. His positive overtures to the USSR were intended to discourage its support of the Firqa-yi Dimokrat and political bluff. The policy, worked successfully as Stalin viewed Qavam's premiership with apparent favour, which was reflected in the official Tudeh newspaper for Qavam's national policies [13]

Indeed, the Tudeh was viewed as an internal threat corresponding to external (Russian) pressures and the lifting of martial law in Tehran<sup>14</sup> is understood to have been an overture of appeasement since Tudeh meetings and cells had been particularly affected by the restriction of right of assembly. More open conciliation followed by the leaders to key cabinet posts [15]. finally the displacement of General Arfah and various pro-British figures demonstrated Qavam's neutral image [16].

On the other hand, however, the Firqa-yi Dimokrat was distrustful of Qavam. Pishavari, both before and after becoming leader, criticised the premier on the grounds of past [17], but the movements were in an awkward position since despite uncertainty about Qavam, he was preferred to Hakimi, and their fear about his motives towards them was balanced by the modest hope they held for his promise of direct negotiations with the Soviet Union.

But no sooner had Qavam arrived in power, then the issue was wrested from his control and forced the attention of the UN on 30th January, and the promised direct negotiations with the USSR

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became an inescapable reality in the resolution of the Security Council [18] which demanded continuous with the parties and reserved the right of intervention to itself in the event of failure, maintaining the issue on the agenda [19] the Iranian delegation, headed by Qavam himself, [20] was welcomed in Moscow on 29th Bahman 1324 (18th February, 1946) but the meeting with Stalin and Molotov reached no firm conclusions.

The linked issues of oil, Azarbaijan and troop withdrawal demonstrated fundamental differences of approach, Molotov demanding oil concessions and trying to avoid negotiations about Azarbaijan by referring Qavam to Pishvari and his administration. Even his promised date of withdrawal i.e. March 2nd was qualified by requirement of favourable actions on Iran's part [21]. In response, Qavam was obliged to reject Soviet demand in order to maintain consistency with previous Iranian policy.

Moderated Soviet proposals for a joint-stock company and suggested reforms in Azarbaijan were intended as a conciliatory package. However Qavam replied very harshly, showing a belligerent attitude toward Azarbaijan's linguistic demands and insisting upon completion of the Soviet withdrawal by 2nd March before any concession would be made, the Soviet memorandum was effectively rejected [21]. The angered Russians, on March 1st, answered uncompromisingly, [25] withdrawing the assistants, earlier preferred stating that the Northern force would remain to protect the Soviet's insecure Iranian interests, [26] which according to him was threatened, and they justified in terms of the Irano-Russian Treaty of

1921. 27

A Russian announcement on March 2nd hinting about the withdrawal only from the less problematic regions of Mashhad, Shahrud, and Simnan further angered Qavam, for whom the withdrawal date was of supreme symbolic importance [28]

With no major successes gained in the fortnight of talks, other than the appointment of Sadchikov as Russian ambassador, a joint declaration was published on March 5 [29] that promised resumption of the talks, later on. On his return Iran, Qavam confessed to the press his failure to move the USSR on the issues important to the Iranian central government [30]. these direct negotiations drew widespread popular support, but the approval of the bulk proved not to be an accurate reflection of the true efficacy of international talks, and a number of political figures including Musaddiq and the contributors to Jabha, considered talks with Tabriz [31] to be a more acceptable and less dangerous alternative solution [32]. the failure of Russian talks pressurised Qavam into this field of negotiations.

The situation which subsequently owing to USSR failure to withdraw its troops by 2nd March, 1946, caused a controversy which inspired a strong reaction from Iran and the West, and ultimately contributed to the beginning of the Cold War.

British reaction was strong because of the importance of Iranian interests, [33] and the traditional rivalry existing in Iran with Russian influence meant that Britain was opposed to the Northern concessions although it would not have been concerned if that existed anywhere else in the

world [34]. The sole reason for the ultimate acceptance of the Russian's concession were the hope of Soviet withdrawal and the promise of the defence of her own rights [35]. By November 1945, Britain was confident that its influence in the government and army was secured. Britain's stance in reaction to the events of March 1946 became gradually aligned to the United States, and the U.K. ultimately relinquished its position as superpower in Iran [37].

America's increasing role was therefore diametrically opposite to Britain. At the beginning of World War II America was unbiased to the point of neutrality [38] and was acceptable as an intermediary amongst the signatories of the Tripartite Treaty. The increasing involvement of America brought about a growing estrangement from the Soviet Union [39] as America took a firm stand over the non-interference clause of the Tehran Declaration, [40] and the active encouragement by the U.K. and Iran a position [41] was supported by American suspicious that Russian non-co-operation might be significant in future relations elsewhere. Iran seemed to be a test case for the developing Cold War.

A third significant party was the Central Iranian Government, inspired by Sayyid Ziya, set out to discredit Soviet motives [42] and depolarise the Firqa's image as a true revolutionary movement. [43] in its weakness, Iran looked overseas assistance and pressurised the western bloc to take an active in resisting the Soviet influence [44].

Lastly the Tudeh party activated its power to countermand government's propaganda, justifying Soviet action with criticisms of an Iranian

government was seen as undemocratic, and, acting as the self-styled national mouthpiece of the USSR, 45 pointed out the necessary preconditions for the Soviet Withdrawal, and stated that Soviet Union needed to strengthen the growing democratic movements in Iran, justifying its interference with reference to Britain's imperial career and contemporaneous intervention in various Mediterranean states [46].

Qavam returned from Moscow having failed to achieve a successful withdraw despite the statement that negotiations would continue. Qavam quickly went to Murray, the American ambassador, and extracted statements of support in the event of an Iranian approach to the UN [47] Despite Soviet objections, [48] on 18th March, 1946, Ala presented a formal note to the Security Council, which was tabled on 25th March which declared:

- i. The Soviet failure to withdraw its troops after March 2nd , 1946, was a violation of Tripartite Treaty of 1942.
- ii. Soviet intervention in Iran's internal affairs through its military and political agents (i.e. the Firqa-yi Dimokrat and Kumula-yi Kurdistan) was a violation of the Tripartite Treaty, the Tehran Declaration, and the United Nations' Charter.
- iii. Iran urges the UN therefore to take immediate action under Article 35 of the UN Charter, which states that the Security Council is given authority to investigate any conflict that might threaten international peace.[50].

Qavam had made supportive statements indirectly but the extent of his complicity was uncertain [51]. The timing was also unfortunate, as

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Sadchikov was due to arrive on March 20th to continue negotiations [52]. The surprised Soviets requested more time, until 10th April, to prepare, and Sadchikov pressed to conclude negotiations and by March 25 the withdrawal was well under way, with a six-week completion target [53].

Meantime, the Iranian problem had become a priority issue in the Security Council of the U.N and on 25th March, a sharp conflict occurred between East and West concerning the presentation of the Iranian case. Ala, who favoured its presentation sought an opportunity to condemn Russia for her failure to complete the withdrawal by 2nd March. But the debate went ahead on the 26th and Council made its increasingly common East-West split, suggested to present the Iranian evidence amid Gromyko protest that the latest agreement pre-empted the UN interference [54]. Ala failed to produce evidence to support the Russian claims and the Council maintained the issue on its agenda, [55] despite Russian claims that participation by a non-Council-member was not competent [56]. The French proposed commission [57] made no real improvement but supported the Soviet postponement [58].

Gromyko walked out on the 27th [59] and the Ala resented his case [60]. On 29th March the Council decreed that Iran and the USSR should hold talks and report [61]. On 2nd April 1946, [62], Ala shocked everyone by withdrawing the complaint and supporting the Soviet position, claiming that the central government needed outside help for the negotiations with the Firqa-yi Dimokrat [63]. The main activity of Russian Council was now unnecessary but America wished

to substantiate the withdrawal and the discussion was postponed until May 6th, when the USSR and Iran would report on the state of the withdrawal, and the UN would determine its future role [64].

Qavam's attitude to the Russian negotiation was very much coloured by his continual American leanings. Before negotiations with Moscow, he promised ambassador Murray that any joint-stock company would be balanced by an American concession in Baluchistan [62]. This American friendship was vital for the survival of a government which trusted the USSR as little as its people did Britain, and thus the diplomatic path was laid for the two treaties of 4th April, one of which was a general diplomatic agreement, the other a specifically concessional oil treaty [63]. On the 6th Gromyko demanded, that Iran be removed from the agenda [67]. While Stettinius the U.S. representative urged the Council to wait until May 6th and Sadchiko replied in Tehran by pressuring Qavam to withdraw the case, issuing veiled threats, [68] which Qavam took very seriously, [69] consulting the US. military attach Jernigan, who also leaned on him not to withdraw the complaint for reasons of national prestige in the UN [70]

Qavam's final submission to Russian pressure relieved him both of the popular support and, partially, of his fear that continued debate in the UN might tempt Russia to leave a very healthy Firqa behind. When they left, Ala was instructed to withdraw the case, [71] contributed to great Western disappointment and obvious Soviet delight.

Now the Security Council was torn between the technical resolution of the problem according to

UN principles, and the significant Anglo-American suspicion that Iran's withdrawal was enforced [72]. When Ala privately confirmed this to Henderson, a Foreign Office Secretary, [73] American support was sought for a proposal or the UN to supervise the 15th Majlis elections in an attempt to prevent a Tudeh walkover and for an American statement that Qavam was working [74] under Soviet pressure in order to keep the issue alive and viable. [75] Thus Article 33rd which would have forced the dismissal of the case, was declared inapplicable with Dutch and British support, the latter party declaring the resolution of April 4th to be still valid.

As the deadline or withdrawal, approached without any sign of a Russian departure from Azarbaijan, Qavam immediately led a delegation to Moscow to discuss the Red Army withdrawal, the oil concessions, and the Azarbaijan problem. His failure to reach actual agreement with the Soviet Union was immaterial; it did however pave the way for negotiations within Iran, and the replacement of Kavtaradze by Sadchikov as Soviet ambassador, allowed the resumption of negotiations, and finally an agreement was reached on 4th April, promising oil concession. The Soviet Union was now to withdraw by 6th May, and Qavam in return promised an oil concession, though not before the 15th Majlis had convened and approved it. But concerning Azarbaijan, Russia viewed it as internal Iranian affair for Iran to solve it alone.

Soviet charges of Western bellicosity are answered with claims of Russian intervention, [76] and on April 23rd the issue was retained, at least

until May 6th [77].

Now Soviet wishes for a peaceful border and a smooth beginning to the oil project led to pressurize Tehran to conclude negotiations, and Qavam's desire to bring a secure peace and appease his people ensured his enthusiastic response. The variety of issues discussed was compounded by the bifurcation between the internal and international aspects of crisis.

But, infect, when great powers reached to an agreement (behind the scene) and politically divided the world between themselves, Soviet Union withdrew troops from Iran by crushing all Democratic movements in Iran, Qavam was deposed and the Shah's power was increased.

1941-1947 was a period of political liberty in Iran, but opportunities were wasted due to the lack of cohesion amongst political society. After assuming power by the Shah, a unique chance to get real constitutional democracy had finally been lost.

#### Notes

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21. *Dad*, no. 713, 26th Farvardin, 1325 (15th April, 1946).
22. Ibid. no. 714, 27th Farvardin, 1325, (16th April, 1946).
23. For more details of Molotov Memorandum, see, Ibid.
24. Ibid., no 717, 30th Farvardin, 1325 (19th March, 1946).
25. *Razm*, yr. 3, pp.2174-2201.
26. Rossow, R., "Red Tanks from a Moslem Graveyard", in Lisagov and Higgins, *Overture in Heaven*, New York, 1964, p.155.
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31. Ibid., No 472, 6th Isfand, 1324 (25th march, 1946).
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33. *Iran-I Ma*, no. 374, 2nd Urdibihisht, 1324 (22nd April, 1945).
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61. *Yearbook of the UN*, 1946-47, p.331.
62. See also, *UN Security Council Journal*, op. cit. pp.433-44.
63. For a similar concept, see Abrahamian, op. cit., pp. 127-4.
64. *Yearbook of the UN*, op. cit., p. 332.

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70. See Dictatorship of Riza Shah, *Central Asian* 75. *Ibid.*, pp.159-90
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Title	Owner	First pub	Place pub
Iran-I Ma	Jahanshir Taffzuli	1324	Tehran
Rahbar	Ishandari	1324, 1943	Tehran
The New York Times	-	-	New York
Azhir	Pishavari	1324,1943	Tehran
Azarbaijan	Saufuf	1320, 1324, 1948, 1945	Tehran
Dad	A.H.A. Nuri	1322/1943	Tehran
Jabha	A. Zirkada	1325/1946	Tehran
Dunya	S.A.K. Tabatabai	1341/1962	Tehran
Qiyam-I Iran	None Stated	1324/1945	Tehran
Razm	R.Radmanish	1321/1942	Tehran
Sitara-yi Surkh	None State	1321/1942	Tehran

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## قوام و منازعات بین‌المللی

### نجله خندق<sup>۱</sup>

#### چکیده

از آنجایی که برداشت صحیح و آگاهانه از سیاست خارجی ایران در طی سالهای ۱۹۴۷-۱۹۴۱ و نقش ابرقدرتها در شکل‌گیری و اضمحلال فرقه دمکرات آذربایجان، در عرصه سیاست خارجی کشور از اهمیتی فوق‌العاده برخوردار است، در مقاله فوق سعی کرده‌ایم تا با استناد به منابع اصلی و مأخذ دست اول و نیز انجام مصاحبات رو در رو، به نیاز و خلاء موجود در این زمینه پاسخ دهیم.

در این راستا اساساً سعی ما بر این بوده است تا ضمن پرده‌برداری از نقش قوام در انعقاد معاهده با رهبران فرقه دمکرات و اتحاد جماهیر شوروی، به تحلیل واکنش جهان و نقش سازمان ملل در این باره پرداخته و فشار موفقیت‌آمیز غرب و بخصوص آمریکا بر دولت مرکزی ایران و نیز توافق این کشور با شوروی در راستای اضمحلال جنبش‌های دمکراتیک و بویژه فرقه دمکرات آذربایجان، را از جنبه‌های مختلف تحلیل کنیم.

کلید واژگان: قوام، بحران نفت، روابط خارجی

پژوهشگاه علوم انسانی و مطالعات فرهنگی  
پرتال جامع علوم انسانی

۱. استادیار، گروه علوم سیاسی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس