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CHAPTER V. THE INFLUENCE OF THE IRANIAN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, AND AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT OF AZERBAIJAN, AND THE GOVERNMENTS OF IRAQ AND TURKEY, AND THE GREAT POWERS ON THE REPUBLIC OF KURDISTAN

For the purpose of the discussion in this chapter, the factors influencing the Republic of Kurdistan are divided into three general categories: 1. The situation within Iran (Iranian government and Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan). 2. The role of neighbouring countries, Turkey and Iraq. 3. Presence of the Great Powers in Iran (the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States).

The relationship between the governments of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan warrants deeper consideration as they both challenged Iranian territorial integrity. And because of this challenge, relations between the Republic of Kurdistan and the Iranian central government must be examined. While exploring these relations, answers to key questions will be sought, such as: What were the most important friction points between the central government and the Republic of Kurdistan? Did the Iranian government and Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan ever take the Republic of Kurdistan seriously? What led to the disagreements between the Azerbaijan and the Kurdish governments?

The positions of Turkish and Iraqi governments vis-à-vis the Republic of Kurdistan are discussed in light of the obstacles that these governments attempted to raise in front of the fledgling nation-state.

The presence of the Great Powers in the region is examined in terms of their influence on the Kurds from the emergence of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Iran to the collapse of the Republic of Kurdistan. Moreover, the beginnings of the Cold War shall be reviewed here from the perspective of the conflict of interests in the region among the Great Powers. What were the policies of Great Powers, especially those of Soviet Union's, towards the Republic of Kurdistan?

1 Situation within Iran

1.1. Iranian Government

Although the door leading to democracy was cracked open with the presence of Allies in Iran, for the Iranian intellectuals, political parties, religious figures, and the Iranian society in general, the issue was not the advent of democracy itself. Rather, it was about dealing with the beginning of a transition toward democracy. One reality was the fact that the Iranian parliamentary government, which was resumed in 1941, was still unstable (Although the Iranian parliament was originally established during the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-9, it had, practically disappeared until the Allies occupied Iran in 1941). From August 1941 until December 1946, Iran's ruling governments changed eleven times. So many changes in government can be interpreted positively or negatively. On the positive side, without a violent confrontation the government was able to change hands eleven times. On the other hand, eleven times within five years is not the sign of a healthy democracy – in general, the optimal period of parliamentary elections is once every four years. The shah of Iran complained that Iranians would need another forty years before they could get used to democracy.⁶⁸⁵ It is also no wonder that Fakhreddin Azimi has chosen to give his book the title, *Iran: the crisis of democracy from 1941 to 1953*. For the purpose of discussion in this section, of the eleven ruling governments in Iran that took place between 1941 and 1946, there are only two that are significant for this study: The first is the government of Ibrahim Hakimi from October 1945 until January 1946 and the second is the Ghavam government, which stayed in power from January to December of 1946. During these two periods, Kurds founded two important political institutions in the Kurdish region, the KDP and the Republic of Kurdistan. No study of Iranian Kurdistan would be complete without considering them in depth.

Before the proclamation of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the demands of some Kurdish representatives on the Iranian government mainly focused on development and improvements in the areas of education and health in the Kurdish region. In October 1944, Ghazi Mohammad visited Tehran for about four months, meeting with the Iranian representatives, including the Shah and Mohammad Sa'id, Iranian Prime Ministry. In these meetings, Ghazi pointed out that 'the Iranian government paid insufficient attention to the

⁶⁸⁵ Abrahamian 1982, 215.

education and health issues in Kurdistan.’⁶⁸⁶ Ghazi Mohammad’s agenda gained a more political perspective after he entered the JK party. As mentioned before, the normalization of the Kurdish language was an important political agenda item for the JK. This can be illustrated by three of four formal requests presented by the JK to Fahimi, an advisor to the Iranian Prime Minister, when he had visited the Kurdish areas. These three requests were centred on the recognition of Kurdish as the official language in Kurdistan and the necessary steps to elevate Kurdish language up to an official standard. Meanwhile, in 1945 the language issue was one of the most important topics of debate in the Iranian parliament, defining lines of division among the parliament members. According to Abrahamian, for some members the democracy of Switzerland with its four official languages demonstrated that language by itself did not necessarily create a separate national identity.⁶⁸⁷ But for many Iranian parliamentarians and intellectuals, the standardization and formal recognition of some languages in Iran, such as Kurdish and Azeris, as languages to be used in education, was a sign of the division of the country.

Many central government representatives were convinced that Kurds, led by the JK party, were preparing for the establishment of an independent Kurdistan. Both Shah and Sa’id were in the opinion that the Kurds were organizing a secessionist movement.⁶⁸⁸ Fahimi, however, described the situation differently. On 28 January 1945, after his visit to the Kurdish region, he presented a report to the parliament, stating that Razmara, while he was the Army Chief of Staff, made mistakes and presented exaggerated information about the incidents in Kurdistan and certain Kurdish personalities, such as Ghazi Mohammad, in his reports to the governmental council.⁶⁸⁹ The intention of Razmara’s proposal was a military expedition to the Kurdish area, composed of units that were not controlled by the Allies. Furthermore, Fahimi accused some high ranking Iranian military officers of being responsible for the dissemination of incorrect information about Kurds and Kurdistan. Fahimi claimed that the Army Chief of Staff, the Defence Minister, and Hoshmand Afshar, the Brigadier General Commander of Kordestan Province, were disseminators of unfavourable statements about Kurdistan.⁶⁹⁰ Fahimi’s speech at the parliament not only contained comments about the military approach

⁶⁸⁶ Hewrami 2007, 13.

⁶⁸⁷ Abrahamian 1982, 219.

⁶⁸⁸ Hewrami 2007, 13-20.

⁶⁸⁹ Khosro Panah, ‘Hezbe Tudeye Iran ve Tahawolate Kurdistan’, *Goft-o-gu*, No. 53, 109.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

to Kurdistan but also about the socio-cultural situation in the region. He described the Kurdish region as poor, without adequate educational and health-care services and facilities.⁶⁹¹ The Mahabad deputy, Sadr Ghazi, also presented several reports in 1945 to the Iranian parliament that blamed Iranian newspapers for spreading incorrect and slanderous news and reports about Kurds and thus causing provocations between the central government and Kurds.⁶⁹²

Even after having raised the Kurdish flag at the Mahabad municipality building on December 17, 1945, Ghazi Mohammad still underlined the importance of national unity and solidarity with the Iranian people. Ghazi rejected the rumours spread by the Iranian media that Kurds were trying to secede from Iran. He claimed, Kurds desire to remain under the Iranian territorial integrity and under the flag of Iran.⁶⁹³ For Ghazi, Kurdistan had autonomy, a status that emerged since the occupation of Iran by the Allied forces. He claimed, 'it has been four years that we have had internal autonomy.'⁶⁹⁴ In fact, the administration of this internal autonomy had been formed in an election in Mahabad, sometime in 1943, when nine members, led by Ghazi Mohammad, were elected to head the government.⁶⁹⁵ In the meantime, through negotiations with the central government, Ghazi was striving to enlarge the Kurdish autonomous government's territorial power. As mentioned earlier, the Iranian military bases were centred along the line of Saqqiz-Baneh-Sardasht and Ghazi's aim was to get Iran to withdraw its army from these regions. Referring to a discussion that took place among Ghazi, Sarchikov, the Soviet Ambassador in Iran, and Muzaffar Firuz, a political advisor to the Prime Minister, Firuz noted that Ghazi was demanding that Saqqiz and Baneh belong to Mahabad. On the other hand, again according to Firuz, in its attempt to solve the Kurdish question, the Iranian government's proposal was to divide Kurdistan into three separate governorates: Sanandaj, Mahabad and Saqqiz-Baneh.⁶⁹⁶

Overall, three major political problems played roles in the 1945 - 46 Iranian Crisis:

- 1- The movement for reviving Constitutionalism in Iran (supported by some conservatives headed by Premier Ghavam, by the progressive sections of middle classes led by Mossadeq, and by the labour movement led by the Tudeh Party).

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

⁶⁹² Muzakirati Majlis Iran, session 14, meeting 162, November 21, 1945.

⁶⁹³ Hewrami 2007, 35.

⁶⁹⁴ *Kurdistan*, No. 1, 11 January 1946, 4.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ Hewrami 2007, 42.

- 2- The occupation of Iran by the Great Powers: national independence became a high priority when Iran was occupied by the Soviet Union and Great Britain.
- 3- Ethnic conflicts: especially with the presence of the Great Powers in the region, certain ethnic groups such as Azeris and Kurds made attempts at autonomy.⁶⁹⁷

The last point was a national and international hot topic in the Iranian political agenda, which had to be dealt with by Hakimi as the prime minister. Hakimi's second term in office, which lasted from October 1945 to January 1946, was marked by the beginning of the Iranian Crisis. According to many Iranian authors, it was a crisis of Iranian territorial integrity.⁶⁹⁸ The crisis led to new political developments in the north and northwest of Iran, namely the proclamation of the Azerbaijan government and the Republic of Kurdistan. Initially these two governments launched themselves as reformist movements, aiming at provincial autonomy and respecting the Iranian territorial integrity.⁶⁹⁹

Iranian constitutionalism and constitutional laws were a moral principle for the Republic of Kurdistan's leaders, they engaged their political affiliation with the constitutional laws. In their perspective, solving the Kurdish issue within the constitutional codes presented moral principle and a rational method. In December 1945, for example, Ghazi Mohammad stated that the establishment of constitutional law and democracy are the Kurdish demands, as well as the protection of autonomy 'that we currently maintain.'⁷⁰⁰ On a similar line, Seif Ghazi praised the constitutional revolution in Iran on the occasion of its forty-first anniversary as a reasonable framework to address the Kurds' demands. He pointed out that all Iranians, including Kurds, are equal before the constitutional law and that the Constitution's Code on the establishment of Provincial Council afforded Kurds the same civil rights as Persians, the dominant group in Iran.⁷⁰¹ The KDP programme also affirmed the importance of the Provincial Council. As the third article of the KDP programme states, 'members of the Kurdistan Provincial Council are immediately elected in accordance with the Constitutional

⁶⁹⁷ Abrahamian 1982, 219-23.

⁶⁹⁸ According to Borzowi, the two governments were going to separate from Iran, see Borzowi 1999; the Iranian ruling elites regarded them as separatist movements, undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran, see Fakhreddin Azimi, *Iran: The Crisis of Democracy 1941-1953* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, 1989), 136.

⁶⁹⁹ Azimi 1989, 136.

⁷⁰⁰ Hewrami 2007, 35.

⁷⁰¹ *Kurdistan*, No. 75, 11 August 1946, 1-2/4.

Laws.’ The decentralization of policy-making was an important aspect of the Constitution, which indicated that indigenous people are entitled to govern themselves through regional administration. In fact, the Republic of Kurdistan never came up with its own set of formal constitutional laws, mostly accepting implicitly the general Iranian constitutional laws as fundamental laws for the Republic of Kurdistan. Seif Ghazi pointed out, ‘Iranian constitutional law is our most fundamental law, the changing of which is unacceptable. Even parliament, government and shah can not change an article.’⁷⁰²

Several statements by Ghazi Mohammad, as well as views expressed by a number of tribal chieftains and members of the KDP Central Committee, confirm that most Kurdish leaders insisted on autonomy from the proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan on 22 January 1946, until the withdrawal of the Soviet military from Iran in May 1946 (afterward they downgraded their demand to maintaining a provincial council instead). At the ceremony for the proclamation of the Republic, for example, some leading participants went further with their enthusiasm for the new situation and claimed that Kurdistan was now independent.⁷⁰³ Ghazi’s sentiment for Kurdish autonomy was largely due to the presence of the Soviets in Kurdistan and to the signing of Friendship Treaty and Alliance with Azerbaijan government in April 1946. Cooperation with the Azerbaijan government was vital for the Republic of Kurdistan, as it stood as a buffer against a possible Iranian military offensive against the Republic of Kurdistan. *Kurdistan* published numerous reports about the friendly relations with and in respect of Azeris and the Azerbaijan government. Ghazi observed:

The Iranian government thinks that with the withdrawal of the Soviet Union troops from Iran, the Kurdish government will fail to maintain its friendly attitude towards Azerbaijan. This is a wrong assessment. The unity between the Kurdish and Azeri nations is strong.⁷⁰⁴

Soon after the withdrawal of the Soviets, Ghazi’s optimism lost its footing as the relations between Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kurdistan gradually deteriorated. One of the sources of the friction between the two governments was Azerbaijan’s unilateral political negotiations with the central government. This was in violation of the Azeri – Kurdish agreement not to hold unilateral negotiations with the central government. According to this agreement any

⁷⁰² Ibid., 1-2.

⁷⁰³ Speech of Ghazi see, *Kurdistan*, No. 10-11, 4/6 February 1946.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., No. 47, 15 May 1946, 3.

negotiations held with the central government would be mutual and both the Azeri and Kurdish and autonomous governments were to be kept informed of any proceedings. The fifth article of the Alliance Treaty between the Kurdish and Azerbaijan governments specifically related to the dealings with the Iranian government, ‘any negotiations conducted with the Iranian government should be carried out with the approval of Azerbaijan National Government and Kurdistan.’⁷⁰⁵ The implementation of the agreement, however, as well as the general cooperation between both governments depended on several factors that challenged each of them (see the following section). In the meantime, this political discord between Azerbaijan and Kurdish governments presented an ideal opportunity for the Iranian central government to formalize and implement of their own political agenda. The disagreements which deepened their problems and ultimately the weakened of Azerbaijan and Kurdish governments, meant more favourable conditions for the supremacy of the central government over both local governments.

Actually, the supremacy of central government over both local governments was clear when an agreement has been signed on April 4, 1946 between Ghavam and Sadchikov. They agreed on three points and summarized as follow: Firstly, the withdrawal of the Red Army would be completed in May. Secondly, their agreement on a joint Irano-Soviet oil company would be presented to the Fifteenth Majlis for ratification, no later than seven months after March 24. Thirdly, that the Azerbaijan’s government question is an internal matter of Iran.⁷⁰⁶ According to Atabaki, this agreement opened the way for the Iranian government to deal with the Azerbaijan question and an oil concession to the Soviets ratified by yet non-existent Fifteenth Majlis. In return for this, both sides accepted that the Azerbaijan question is an ‘internal Iranian matter’. Atabaki observed that Soviet offered Ghavam ‘exactly what he needed to accomplish his “Long March” on the road to Azerbaijan.’⁷⁰⁷

The first formal meeting between the central government and both local governments took place in Tehran on April 28, 1946 and was headed by Pishevari.⁷⁰⁸ According to Ghazi, Kurds were represented by Seif Ghazi and Sadr Ghazi.⁷⁰⁹ The Iranian government presented seven points that related to the Iranian Constitutional Codes, none of which, by the way, had

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid., No. 45, 8 May 1946, 3.

⁷⁰⁶ For the complete three points, see newspaper *Iran-e Ma*, No. 499, 7 April 1946, 1-2; Atabaki 2000, 145.

⁷⁰⁷ Atabaki 2000, 145.

⁷⁰⁸ *Iran-e Ma*, No. 517, 28 April 1946, 1.

⁷⁰⁹ *Kurdistan*, No. 44, 6 May 1946, 2.

anything directly to do with the Kurdish question. All points were narrowly focused on the Azerbaijan government and refer to certain cultural rights.⁷¹⁰ The Azeri and Kurdish delegates' requests were formulated in thirty three points, which did not clearly mention any claim to Kurdish aspirations, either. The meeting ended inconclusively.⁷¹¹

It is possible that the Iranian government solely focused on the issues related to Azerbaijan with the aim of inflaming division between the Kurdish and Azerbaijan governments. The Friendly Alliance Agreement between Kurds and Azeris meant cooperation between them and that posed a grave threat to the Iranian government. Moreover, the central government viewed the agreement as illegal, as such an agreement could take place only between sovereign states. For the Iranian central government both Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kurdistan were integral parts of the Iranian territorial. Therefore, putting distance and discord between Azeris and Kurds was a priority in Ghavam's political agenda. According to Mulla Izzat, Ghavam took immediate actions in line with his agenda. He exploited, for example, points of friction between Azeris and Kurds, such as border disputes. On the other hand, he tempted each provincial government with the promise to hold separate meetings, which led to an agreement in Tabriz that took place between the central government and Azerbaijan government, without the presence of representatives from the Republic of Kurdistan.⁷¹²

In difference by the Iranian government towards the Kurdish question compelled Ghazi to declare, 'the Kurds' enemies [Iranian government] have concluded that the Kurdish government does not exist.'⁷¹³ Referring to the homecoming of disappointed and humiliated Kurdish delegate, Ghazi also stated that the Iranian government has not taken the Kurds seriously, 'our representatives returned with disappointment.'⁷¹⁴ At about the same time as this frustrating experience for the Kurdish delegation in Tehran, the Red Army was withdrawing from Iran. Afterward, a pessimistic mood dominated Ghazi's political activities. Clearly incensed by the situation, Ghazi asked the following questions in one of his speeches:

⁷¹⁰ For these seven points, see Atabaki 2000, 145-6.

⁷¹¹ Seif Ghazi, who participated in this delegation, reported the proceedings of this negotiation, see *Kurdistan*, No. 50, 27 May 1946, 1-2.

⁷¹² Mulla Izzat 2003, 301.

⁷¹³ *Kurdistan*, No. 47, 15 May 1946, 3.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*

What are we to do presently? What advice is [there] for the nation? Is it not our right to tell Tehran enough with your palaces built on our properties? I am asking you, the Kurdish leaders, commanders, farmers, and toilers, what can we do? What suggestions do you have?⁷¹⁵

On June 11, 1946, Firuz met with the government of Azerbaijan representatives in Tabriz. Without consulting with the authorities of the Kurdish government, they came up with a decision to allow Kurds in Azerbaijan to be educated in Kurdish until the fifth grade, the end of primary school. This decision officially put Kurds within the same category as other ethnic minority groups in Azerbaijan, such as the Assyrians.⁷¹⁶ In other words, they were categorizing Kurds as a minority within the Iranian territorial unity and specifically belonging to the Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan. It is interesting to note that Ghazi was actually delighted with this decision. On June 21, 1946, at Mosque *Soor* (red), Ghazi explained:

Article thirteen of the agreement states that the [Iranian] government acknowledges that Kurds living in Azerbaijan should enjoy the benefits of this agreement, as well. And according to the article three, [Kurds] are allowed to continue education in their own language until the fifth grade of primary school.⁷¹⁷

Ghazi saw the inclusion of these articles in the agreement as an improvement of the situation for the Kurds in Azerbaijan and was hopeful that it might have positive implications for the entire Iranian Kurdistan. He expressed his approval and hope with the following words:

In this article, the [Iranian government] confessed to our legitimacy and existence and of course we would like to see that all of Kurdistan enjoys such rights and freedom.⁷¹⁸

According to Sadchikov, Soviet Ambassador in Tehran, the agreement between Iran and Azerbaijan induced Kurds to deal with the Iranian government as a separate party rather than as a partner with Azerbaijan.⁷¹⁹ After the humiliation of the Tehran negotiations, when Kurds

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., No. 50, 27 May 1946, 1/3.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid., No. 60, 20 June 1946, 1/4.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid., No. 62, 27 June 1946, 1. For the whole treaty between Pishavari and Muzaffar Firuz, see *Kurdistan*, No. 64, 2 July 1946, 1-2.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid., No. 62, 27 June 1946, 1.

⁷¹⁹ Hewrami 2008b, 79.

were simply ignored, Ghazi lost trust in the Azerbaijan leaders and the relationship with Azerbaijan began to cool. As Roosevelt pointed out the Kurds reacted unfavourably to the agreement and they ‘felt that their wishes had been largely ignored.’⁷²⁰ Kurdish leaders made new attempts to seek a solution to their questions by dealing with the central government directly. Roosevelt noted that Ghazi Mohammad ‘went to Tehran to voice his disapproval to Premier Ghavam.’⁷²¹ On June 26, 1946, Ghazi Mohammad went to Tehran with a delegation and began separate negotiations with the representatives of the central government.⁷²² Iran-e Ma reported also that Ghazi entered Tehran in June 27, 1946.⁷²³

Regarding this visit, Iran-e Ma published a report and recommended that the Iranian government not obstruct Ghazi’s visit to Tehran for negotiations. The newspaper report argued that direct negotiations with Iranian authorities will remove misunderstandings between Kurds and the central government. The report further suggested that some reliable government representatives negotiate with Ghazi.⁷²⁴ Iran-e Ma’s report summarizes Ghazi’s intentions as follow:

The Kurdish society believes that in essence the Kurdish leader [Ghazi] aspires for agreement and peace. The meaning of holy democracy is to advance towards sacred peace. Ghazi himself is optimistic that solving the Kurdish question peacefully will be a benefit to all of Iran, as well as the Kurdish people and the progress of liberation and democracy.⁷²⁵

However, Ghazi’s attempt to directly negotiate with the central government did not produce any satisfactory outcome either. *Rahbar*, an Iranian newspaper that conducted an interview with Ghazi about the negotiations, relayed Ghazi’s summary of the affair:

I negotiated several times with Muzaffar Firuz, Ghavam (the Prime Minister) and Razmara, the Chief of Staff. Ghavam has good intentions but unfortunately he became sick and postponed our negotiation.⁷²⁶

⁷²⁰ Roosevelt 1947, 259.

⁷²¹ Ibid.

⁷²² *Kurdistan*, No. 65, 5 July 1946, 1.

⁷²³ *Iran-e Ma*, No. 567, 27 June 1946, 1/4.

⁷²⁴ Ibid., No. 577, 11 July 1946, 1.

⁷²⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁷²⁶ *Rahbar*, No. 762, 9 July 1946, 6.

Postponing the meetings and provoking hostility and polarization between Azerbaijan and Kurdish governments were a part of Ghavam's policy towards Azeris and Kurds a policy that in fact proved effective. Due to several ongoing internal and external problems, Ghavam was not yet ready to declare a clear position with respect to Kurdistan. There were growing disturbances in the south of Iran, Azerbaijan was still a major issue, and the Soviets kept pressing Iran for a possible oil treaty. These were among the issues that posed serious challenges to the Ghavam administration. Rahbar asked Ghazi whether he was worried about the progress of the negotiations. Ghazi answered, 'I am hopeful for a good future and that the central government will succeed in spreading democracy throughout the whole of Iran.'⁷²⁷ Ghazi's optimism was partly due to the fact that Ghavam was making efforts to establish a democratic movement, namely through his newly established Democratic Party (DP). On this note, Ghazi pointed out:

Ghavam said to me that we are now democrats and founded the Iranian Democratic Party. It is necessary to change the name of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and call it the Iranian Democrat Party.⁷²⁸

Ghavam had established the DP in the summer of 1946,⁷²⁹ in order to, according to Mo'tazed, counter the attempts of separatist movements in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan as well as the growth of the Tudeh Party.⁷³⁰ Ghavam identified his movement as a democratic one, indicating that he was a supporter of democracy in Iran. It was a calculated move to delegitimize both democratic parties in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. He introduced a progressive party program that included eleven articles to capture the public's attention. Two of these articles especially underline several characteristics of the democratic movement in Iran, which at that time was not under the direct control of the central government. Article one refers to the 'respect of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Iran.'⁷³¹ This article was also the first article of the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance that was signed in January 1942 by the Allied Forces with the Iranian government. National unity was an important

⁷²⁷ Ibid.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ *Iran-e Ma*, No. 568, 30 June 1946, 1/4.

⁷³⁰ Mo'tazed 2001, 757.

⁷³¹ For complete DP program, see *ibid.*, 757-64.

political priority for Ghavam. Iranian territorial integrity and sovereignty were going through fragile times during the period of the Iranian crisis in 1945 and 1946.

The second article refers to securing the principles of democracy. According to this article, the socio-political and economic issues of the Iranian people could be solved within the parameters of provincial councils. This article was composed of two clauses. The first clause was about treason and dealing with traitors. The later trial and hanging of Ghazi Mohammad and several Kurdish leaders of the Republic exemplified the implementation of this clause by the Ghavam administration. The second article of the Ghavam's political party's programme is as follows:

Politically, economically, and judicially secure the independence of Iran by dissemination of freedom and stabilization of the principles of democracy.⁷³²

Two of the clauses of this article were:

A) Gradually break off relations with traitors and eventually bring them before the court. B) Consignment of provincial and district affairs to the inhabitants by the establishment of Provincial and District Councils.⁷³³

During the Hakimi administration, relations of both the KDP and *Azerbaijan Demokrat Ferqehsi* (Azerbaijan Democratic Party, ADP) with the central government were thorny. Hakimi, convinced that they meant to break away from Iran, considered both parties illegal, labelling them 'anarchists', and refused to negotiate with them.⁷³⁴ Answering a question asked by a journalist working for *Rahbar* about the state of relations between the KDP and the central government, Ghazi replied that he does not have any of the optimism that he harboured during the Ghavam administration as the current Hakimi administration makes it impossible to go further with the negotiations.⁷³⁵ Hakimi considered the Kurds as a part of the Iranian family group. In his eyes, special attention to the Kurdish question was superfluous.

⁷³² Ibid.

⁷³³ Ibid.

⁷³⁴ Abrahamian 1982, 221.

⁷³⁵ *Rahbar*, No. 762, 9 July 1946, 6.

As Abrahamian noted, Hakimi claimed that ‘the Kurds had no genuine grievances because they were members of the Iranian race.’⁷³⁶

Ghavam’s ambition to form a Democrat Party that was united across Iran, encompassing other democrat parties established in several provinces, was achieved in early August of 1946, after Ghazi’s visit to Tabriz. *Kurdistan* reported that Ghazi Mohammad returned to Mahabad on August 10, 1946 after his eight-day visit to Tabriz.⁷³⁷ In the same issue, *Kurdistan* published a formal declaration by Ghazi, which had been sent also to Ghavam via a telegraph. According to the telegraph, the KDP and some other democrat parties, such as the ADP, had announced a readiness to join the Progressive Front composed of Ghavam’s DP.⁷³⁸ By October Ghavam formed a strong new cabinet. Ghavam’s intention was to solve the Kurdish question within the bounds of a provincial council and appoint Ghazi as the governor. This proposal, for the most part, was acceptable to Ghazi, as it allowed a special status for the Kurdish region under one governorate with Ghazi as the leading figure. The boundaries of this governorate were, according to Roosevelt, a territory that would stretch from the ‘Russian border to a point half way between Kermanshah and Sanandaj.’⁷³⁹ However, Ghavam had three conditions for Ghazi for the implementation of his proposal:

- 1- The Governor must be under the control of the central government.
- 2- Forces from the Iranian Army must be based within the governorship, especially along the borders with Turkey, Iraq and the Soviet Union.
- 3- The consent of the Governor of Azerbaijan, Dr. Javid of the ADP, must be obtained.⁷⁴⁰

Ghavam included the last condition most probably knowing that Dr. Javid would not endorse the proposal of the Kurdish governorship – a situation that would amplify the tensions between the Azerbaijan and Kurdish leaders.⁷⁴¹ As Eagleton acutely observed, Ghavam was a master in diplomatic negotiation and had perhaps foreseen that his proposal would fail to win the acceptance of all parties concerned.⁷⁴² In his new cabinet in early August, Ghavam sought

⁷³⁶ Abrahamian 1982, 221.

⁷³⁷ *Kurdistan*, No. 85, 12 September 1946, 1.

⁷³⁸ Formal declaration of this Telegraph, see *ibid.*, 4.

⁷³⁹ Roosevelt 1947, 259.

⁷⁴⁰ Eagleton 1963, 106; Roosevelt 1947, 259-60.

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁷⁴² Eagleton 1963, 106.

the approval of the Soviets by offering three ministries for the Tudeh Party in his cabinet. Accordingly, the Tudeh Party appointed Iraj Iskandari for the Ministry of Commerce, Mortiza Yazdi for the Ministry of Health, and Firaydun Kishavarz for the Ministry of Education.⁷⁴³ The new government, however, provoked a political crisis in Iran. The Allies of Iran, England and America, were discontented by the idea of a pro-Soviet government. In the meantime, the southern tribal confederations, Bakhtiyari and especially Qashqayi, were staunchly anti-Tudeh, and began a rebellion against Ghavam's government. As the situation reached critical levels, the Shah called on Ghavam to resign. Ghavam proposed to form a new cabinet but this time without any ministers from the Tudeh Party and he promised to restore the Iranian central authority in Azerbaijan, Kurdistan and in other Iranian regions that were insubordinate to the Iranian government.

Ghavam eventually removed the ministers that were Tudeh members and went on dealing with the rebellions in the south. He pacified them mainly by offering the rebel leaders posts in his new cabinet. As Ghavam did not receive any overwhelming reaction from the Soviets after the removal of Tudeh members from the government, he would gain some space to deal with Kurdistan and Azerbaijan as he planned without much interference from the Soviet Union. In the first half of October 1946, Ghavam ordered the military to enter Azerbaijan and Kurdistan under the pretext of maintaining law and security during the fifteenth round of parliamentary elections. Internal security on Iranian territory was an article (article 3 section a) of the Tripartite Treaty. According to this article, the Iranian Government could send armed forces to the whole Iranian regions (including Azeri and Kurdish regions) without opposition from the Great Powers. Relying on this background, Ghavam sent a telegraph to both local governments towards the end of November 1946 informing them that military units are being sent for the maintenance of order and security during the parliamentary elections.⁷⁴⁴ Although Ghazi attempted to make clear that Kurdistan possessed enough security forces of its own, Ghavam paid no heed to his objections.⁷⁴⁵ Ghavam was set on his objective to remove both governments and restore the Iranian territorial integrity. Ultimately, Ghavam succeeded in bringing the two governments down by mid-December 1946 and put his signature under a huge diplomatic and political victory. He owed a good deal of his success to being able to plant unsolvable discord between the Azerbaijan and Kurdish

⁷⁴³ Azimi 1989, 155.

⁷⁴⁴ Hewrami 2008a, 193.

⁷⁴⁵ For Ghazi's answer to Ghavam regarding the presence of Iranian military in the Republic, see *ibid.*, 193-4.

governments. The following section shall delve deeper into the issues between the Republic of Kurdistan and Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan.

1.2. Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan

The Iranian Azerbaijan issue during the Iranian crisis of 1945 and 1946 was the center of attention in both national and international agendas. In comparison, the Kurdish issue received much less notice. By 1945, Eastern Azerbaijan, with Tabriz as its capital, was rapidly building towards autonomy. The Iranian government considered the autonomist inclination of Azerbaijan a serious threat to its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Similarly, the Allied Powers in Iran (Great Britain and the United States) were putting their efforts into maintaining the territorial integrity of Iran, as well. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, was supportive of Azerbaijan's autonomist tendency and was trying to keep the Red Army in Iran as long as possible. The Soviets' support for an autonomous Azerbaijan and their insistence on remaining in Iran, despite the fifth article of the Tripartite Treaty of the Allied Powers, which required the withdrawal of military forces in no later than six months after the war's end, was exacerbating the already fragile situation and pushing it towards an international crisis. Thus Azerbaijan, having developed an ethnic nationalism, challenging the Iranian government to take serious steps to defend its territorial integrity, as well as posing a challenge to the Great Powers in Iran in terms of protecting their interests in the region, saw itself at the centre of national and international crisis in Iran

The establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party (ADP) was proclaimed on 03 September 1945. Three months later, the ADP formally opened the *Azerbaijan Milli Majlisi* (the National Assembly of Azerbaijan). The following step was the formation of the structure of the executive power, *Azerbaijan Milli Hükumati* (the National Government of Azerbaijan).⁷⁴⁶ It is very likely that this series of developments in Azerbaijan influenced the Kurds to follow the same policies. In other words, it could be claimed that the institutions launched within the Republic of Kurdistan were a hasty imitation of what had taken place in Azerbaijan. According to Ghassemlou, preparations for the establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan were not yet mature. It was not the culmination of the natural transformations and historical plans of the long Kurdish struggle. According to this perspective, the KDP's rush to proclaim the Republic of Kurdistan was a not-thoroughly-thought-out reaction to the

⁷⁴⁶ Atabaki 2000, 102, 129-30.

circumstances surrounding it in Iran and in the international arena, especially the formation of the National Government of Azerbaijan.⁷⁴⁷

The formal declaration of the establishment of the KDP took place in October 1945 at the first conference of the party, only about a month after the establishment of the ADP. In December 1945, the National Government of Azerbaijan was founded and one month later the Kurds proclaimed the Republic of Kurdistan on 22 January 1946. This chain of events in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan suggests that the developments in the latter largely depended upon the socio-political developments in the former. One justification for such a reaction by the Kurds can be traced back to the attempt by the Azerbaijan and Iranian governments to solve the Kurdish issue within the parameters of Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijan government claimed that the Mahabad region was a part of Azerbaijan. Pishevari, the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, was ready to accept a cultural autonomy for the Kurdish population in both East and West Azerbaijan – a position confirmed by what he had said to the US Consul in Tabriz, Robert A. Rossow:

I do not believe that Kurds can have their own government. We advise to establish their Majlis, namely only provincial council under control of Azerbaijan Government.⁷⁴⁸

By the time the Azerbaijan government was established, the relations between the KDP and the ADP had already deteriorated. Nevertheless, in the beginning of the Azerbaijan Majlis, five Kurdish representatives also had participated. Shortly afterward, however, they were disappointed with the ADP policy towards the Kurds and they returned to Mahabad. According to Derk Kinnane, the Azerbaijan government tried to negate the political power of the Kurds.⁷⁴⁹ As retaliation, the KDP leaders dismissed the Azeri officials in the Kurdish region, especially in Mahabad, and refused to sell tobacco to the Azerbaijan government. Similarly, the Kurds blocked the transport of Miyanduab's sugar to market in Tabriz.⁷⁵⁰ Soon after the proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan, relations between both sides deteriorated

⁷⁴⁷ Ghassemlou 1988, 134.

⁷⁴⁸ Richard A. Mobley, *A study of Relations between the Mahabad Republic and Azerbaijan Democratic Republic: The Turbulent Alliance and its Impact upon the Mahabad Republic of 1946*, (Washington D.C., 1979), tran. From English to Kurdish by Hessen Ghazi, *Pêwendiyekani Komarî Kurdistan u Komarî Azerbaycan* [relations between Republic of Kurdistan and Azerbaijan Republic], (Sweden: Apec Förlag, ?), 71.

⁷⁴⁹ Derk Kinnane, *The Kurds and Kurdistan* (London: Oxford U.P., 1970), 36.

⁷⁵⁰ Borzowi 1999, 324.

even further. By mid-February 1946, a crisis erupted in some areas that had a mixed population of Kurds and Azeris. Events rapidly escalated towards a possible large-scale armed conflict. Through the Soviet mediation, however, both sides accepted to seek a peaceful solution to their issues through negotiation.⁷⁵¹

From the proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan until April 1946 newspaper of *Azerbaijan*, organ of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party, mentioned no issue about the Kurds and the Kurdish government. On April 23, 1946, after a series of negotiations, high-ranking representatives from both sides signed a treaty of seven articles in Tabriz, which was called the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance. Under the pressure of Soviet Consul in Urumiyeh, both parties agreed to ‘strengthen their friendship.’⁷⁵² The question relating to the ethnic Kurdish and Azeri minorities in both territories was dealt with in articles 1, 2 and 6. Article 6, for example, stated that the Azerbaijan government ‘will take steps to contribute to the cultural and linguistic progress of the Kurds living in its territory, and vice versa.’⁷⁵³

One of the ambitions of this treaty was to form a bilateral delegation to undertake future negotiations with the central government.⁷⁵⁴ Soon after the signing of the treaty, on April 28, 1946, a delegation composed of representatives from both parties arrived in Tehran. But, Azerbaijan government saw Kurdish delegate as the representatives of the Azerbaijan government. *Azerbaijan*, organ of the ADP, published, ‘Azerbaijan representatives were included: Pishvari, Padgan, Ibrahimy and Seif Ghazy.’⁷⁵⁵ On the eve of the sending of this delegate to Tehran, newspaper *Azad Millet* published a speech of Ghazy Mohammad, it went as follows:

I cannot speak well of the Azeris and I hope that Pishvari can solve Kurdish and Azerbaijani question with the Iranian government. We shall entrust Pishvari to accompany these delegation.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵¹ Eagleton 1963, 77.

⁷⁵² *Kurdistan*, No. 45, 8 May 1946, 3.

⁷⁵³ For the Friendship Treaty and Alliance between Azeri and Kurdish governments, see *Azerbaijan*, No. 190, 5 May 1946, 1/4; *Iran-e Ma*, No. 522, 5 May 1946, 1-2; *Kurdistan*, No. 45, 8 May 1946, 3.

⁷⁵⁴ Cited in Atabaki 2000, 154.

⁷⁵⁵ *Azerbaijan*, No. 187, 1 May 1946, 4.

⁷⁵⁶ *Azad Millet*, No. 29, 29 April 1946, 1.

As mentioned earlier, the Iranian government had proposed its seven-point solution while the delegation arrived with a proposal that included thirty-three demands. Besides the fact that these demands were rejected by the Iranian government, it is interesting to note that the thirty-three points had almost exclusively to do with the relation between Iranian and Azerbaijan governments, disregarding almost entirely the Kurds' presence in the equation. In all of thirty-three demands, there is no specific reference to Kurds and Kurdistan. Only the twelfth point mentions something about the rights of Kurds as a minority.⁷⁵⁷ As the second demand suggested, Azerbaijan government in fact considered the Kurdish geography in question to be a part of Iranian Azerbaijan.⁷⁵⁸ As for the Friendship Treaty between Kurdish and Azerbaijan governments, Pischevari divulged a secret when explained to Rossow that the 'purpose of the friendship with the Kurds is to ensure that the central government could not use them against Azerbaijan.'⁷⁵⁹ However, ADP leaders were not entirely hostile to the idea of a possible semi-autonomy for Kurds within Azerbaijan.⁷⁶⁰

Autonomy for the Kurds within Azerbaijan was inspired by the Soviet Azeri representatives in Iranian Azerbaijan. Hassan Hassanov, a Soviet Azeri politician in Iranian Azerbaijan, relayed on 13 February 1945 to Baqirov, the president of Soviet Azerbaijan, the following message, 'after solving the Azerbaijan question, comes the question of granting autonomy to the Kurds.'⁷⁶¹ At the second visit of the Kurdish representatives to Baku, in 1945, Baqirov advised the Kurds to form a democratic party and work together with the Azerbaijan Democrat Party. Cooperation between both parties probably did make their demands on the Iranian government somewhat stronger, but in the eyes of Baqirov and Pischevari, the Republic of Kurdistan was a part of Azerbaijan Government. Baqirov clearly proclaimed to the Kurds that Kurdish areas belong to the National Democratic Government of Azerbaijan.⁷⁶² For Baqirov, the national identity of Iranian Azerbaijan as the same as Soviet

⁷⁵⁷ For the whole agreement and thirty three points, see Atabaki 2000, 16-24; *Iran-e Ma*, No. 540, 26 May 1946, 1/4.

⁷⁵⁸ *Iran-e Ma*, No. 540, 26 May 1946, 4.

⁷⁵⁹ Mobley 1979, 71.

⁷⁶⁰ Eagleton 1963, 76.

⁷⁶¹ Jamil Hasanli, *Faraz ve Frod Ferqyeh Dimocrate Azerbaijan be Riwayite Asnade Mahremaneye Arshifhaye Ithade Jamahir Shorawi* [The ups and downs of Azerbaijan Democratic Party according to the classified documents of the Soviet Union's archives], tra. From Soviet Azerbaijani to Persian by Mansur Homami, (Tehran: Ghazali Publishing, 2004), 45.

⁷⁶² Farooqi 2008, 37.

Azerbaijan. He viewed them as a nation that several decades earlier had been divided between to empires (Qajars and Russian Tsarists). Baqirov explained that ‘south Azerbaijan [Iranian Azerbaijan] is a territory of our original people.’⁷⁶³

Strategically, Iranian Azerbaijan had special importance for Baqirov and for the Soviet Union. Since the first presence of the Soviet military in the north of Iran, Baqirov had far reaching political plans for Iranian Azerbaijan. Baqirov’s grand ambition was to remove the boundaries between the Soviet Azerbaijan and Iranian Azerbaijan, and build a Greater Azerbaijan. In several of his speeches, Baqirov claimed that the Iranian Azerbaijan is the southern part of this larger Azerbaijan’s nation. Responding to Stalin’s question, ‘what do you want?’, Baqirov answered, ‘we want to help our brothers who live in South Azerbaijan [Iranian Azerbaijan].’⁷⁶⁴ For the Soviet Union, Iranian Azerbaijan had geo-political and economical significance. Geo-politically, the Iranian Azerbaijan offered a path towards the warm water ports as well as blockade before the British expansion towards the north. Economically, the area north of Iran and south of Caspian Sea, abundant in gas and oil reserves and other natural resources, had exceptional attractiveness for the Great Powers in Iran. Again, due to the above-mentioned reasons, matters relating to the Republic of Kurdistan were of much less importance to the political agendas of Baqirov and the Soviet Union.

Baqirov offered support to the Azerbaijan government, which further strengthened the position of this newly formed government. Besides Baqirov’s active support of the Azerbaijan government in Iran, there were also many other factors that put Azerbaijan in a more favourable position compared to that of the Republic of Kurdistan. Azerbaijan had played an important role during the period of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. The Council of Tabriz (*Anjomane Tabriz*) had helped from the idea of the Provincial Council in Iran.⁷⁶⁵ After about fourteen years of struggle, Sheikh Mohammad Khiyabani led an uprising against the central government in April 1920 in Tabriz. Although, it was not a separatist movement, it supported the demands for the role of the Provincial Council.⁷⁶⁶ The uprising also laid the groundwork in terms of experience and perspective for the upcoming Azerbaijan government.

⁷⁶³ Hasanli 2004, 19.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid., 21.

⁷⁶⁵ Atabaki 2000, 29.

⁷⁶⁶ For more detailed information about the revolt of Khiyabani, see Homa Katouzian, ‘Ahmad Kasravi on the Revolt of Sheikh Mohammad Khiyabani’, in Atabaki 2006, 95-119.

Pishevari, the leader of the Azerbaijan government, was a veteran communist and his political activities between the two world wars gained him a considerable reputation. He was a leading figure in the Gilan movement in 1921. Another important corroborating factor behind Azerbaijan's more favourable position was nationalism. The Azeris' deep-rooted nationalism and their ethnic identification were more widespread and developed than those of the Kurds in Iranian Kurdistan. Tribalism and ethno-tribal loyalties were the predominant norms in Kurdistan. As Rossow reported to the US Foreign Affairs, the manifestation of national awareness among Kurds had not yet developed. Loyalties were invested in chieftains and aghas and their loyalties in return were to the national Iranian government.⁷⁶⁷

The fact that Azeri and Kurdish communities were ethnically and culturally dissimilar did not help the situation either. Azeris and Kurds belong to different ethnic-family groups. The Azeri language belongs to the Turkic family of languages, while Kurdish is an Indo-European language. The majority of Azeri are Shi'ites whereas the Kurds in this region are Sunni Muslims. Religious differences were a source of friction for centuries, especially in areas where both communities lived in close proximity to each other, as was the case in the Urumiyeh Province. According to Mobley, had the Azeris more comparable elements of ethnicity with Kurds, then the conflict between both would have been reduced. Although Pishevari was warm to the idea of cultural rights for Kurds, in practice these rights were arbitrarily manipulated by the Azerbaijan government.⁷⁶⁸ Additionally, socio-economic differences and unclear boundaries between the both regions were also causing tensions.

The Azerbaijan government had achieved considerable economic transformation through a series of reforms. One notable example was the land reform, which distributed among small farmers large swaths of lands formerly belonging to landlords. Azerbaijan's regime had distributed, according to Soviet representatives in Maku, more than 1,500 till of land pieces among farmers and people who had no till land previously.⁷⁶⁹ The Republic's government, on the other hand, had planned but never implemented a similar land reform. Economically, Azerbaijan was immensely better off than Kurdistan as it harboured abundant reserves of natural resources. Azerbaijan produced much of the grain that was consumed

⁷⁶⁷ Kaveh Bayat, *Kurdha ve Firgih Dimocrate Azerbaijan: Gozarishhayi az Consolgariye America dar Tabriz Dey 1323- Esfand 1325* [the Kurds and Azerbaijan Democratic Party: reports from US Council in Tabriz January 1945- March 1947], (Tehran Publisher, 2010), 38.

⁷⁶⁸ Mobley 1979, 51.

⁷⁶⁹ Hewrami 2008b, 76-7.

throughout Iran. As Mobley notes, the Azerbaijan region under the control of the ADP was home to 35 percent of the tobacco, 25 percent of the grain, 20 percent of the sugar, and 22 percent of all the sheep and goats produced in whole of Iran.⁷⁷⁰ Azerbaijan was an important economic partner not only for the other regions in Iran but also for Iranian Kurdistan.

For similar reasons, the Iranian government paid more attention to the ADP's region than to the KDP's region. Strategically, the north-western Iranian territory, where the Azeri population was predominant, was like a defensive wall against the attacks of traditional enemies from the north and the northwest, Russians and Turks respectively. Because of its importance as a conduit between the Iranian central government and its aforementioned neighbours, Azerbaijan became a commercial hub, an important centre of industrial and agricultural production. As a vibrant international gateway, the economy and commerce in Azerbaijan were dramatically more developed in comparison with the other Iranian provinces. Accordingly, the participation of the Azerbaijani middle-class in the Iranian government during the reign of Reza Shah was larger than that of other Iranian provinces.⁷⁷¹ In contrast to the Azerbaijan region, the Kurdish area was under-developed in many respects.

As mentioned earlier, one of the most contentious points between the governments of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan was the issue of territorial boundaries. The importance of this issue was clearly pointed out in several reports by the representatives of the Great Powers in Tabriz, especially in those of the US and the Soviet Union. Rossow reported that differences between Kurds and Azeris were heightened when 'Kurds claimed authority on the entire border region [between both sides] from Mahabad to Maku, such as Miyanduab, Rezaiyeh and Khoy,'⁷⁷² which were a part of the Urumiyeh province. In 1930s, as part of Reza Shah's reconfiguration of provincial administration throughout Iran, Urumiyeh was assigned as part of West Azerbaijan with the city of Urumiyeh as its capital – beforehand Urumiyeh was a gray area in terms of dominance between the Azeri and Kurdish population. Kurdish leaders laid heavy emphasis on the inclusion of Urumiyeh within the Republic of Kurdistan for symbolic reasons as well as for economic and geo-strategic reasons. Urumiyeh was a vibrant regional commercial centre and rested on an important throughway between Iran and Turkey. The US Consul noted that Kurds have in mind to choose Rezaiyeh in place of Mahabad for their

⁷⁷⁰ Mobley 1979, 52.

⁷⁷¹ Cottam 1979, 119.

⁷⁷² Bayat 2010, 41.

capital.⁷⁷³ The most contentious areas were the northern and western regions of Lake Urumiyeh: Salmas, Khoy and Urumiyeh. In February 1946, Ghazi Mohammad and Pishvari met to reach a solution for the issue of boundaries. According to Rossow, the meeting ended inconclusively and the border conflict continued.⁷⁷⁴ Reports by the Soviet representatives were more or less along a similar line as those of the US representatives. The tensions finally gave way to an armed confrontation on September 20, 1946 in Salmas. The Soviet Consul in Maku reported that Kurdish fighters tried to capture the city Shapor (Salmas) but after armed confrontation with local inhabitants and with the arrival of Azerbaijan government's forces from Tabriz, the Kurdish fighters under the command of Taher Khan Shikak were forced to retreat from the region.⁷⁷⁵ However, disputes regarding territorial boundaries continued between both parties without any clear conclusions.

Mamadov, a Tas newspaper correspondent in Tabriz, reported on the crisis between both governments and Pishvari's policy toward the Republic of Kurdistan. During the early days of its establishment, the Azerbaijan Democratic Party concentrated only on their own interests, without taking the cooperation with the Tudeh Party and Mahabad into consideration. Pishvari had no serious plans for uniting with the Kurds. It was only near the end of both their governments that Pishvari broached the possibility of more cooperation with the Kurds. But by then it was too late for any decisive resistance, as the Iranian military forces entered Azerbaijan in December 1946. According to Mamadov, Pishvari's government, lacking any significant support from democrats in Iran, was vanquished and the Iranian central government gained the control of Azerbaijan.⁷⁷⁶

2 Role of neighbouring countries

Clearly, a formally established and recognized the Republic of Kurdistan would have been a source of inspiration in many regards for the Kurds living within the countries neighbouring Iran. Realizing that the establishment of a Kurdish autonomy or independence would be dangerous to their national security, Turkey and Iraq in particular took diplomatic steps against the establishment of a Kurdish government in Iran. Below is a more detailed account of these countries' policies in this regard.

⁷⁷³ Ibid., 43-4.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., 47-8.

⁷⁷⁵ Hewrami 2008b, 60.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid., 129.

2.1. Turkey

From the very outset of the Kemalist regime in the Republic of Turkey, a hard-line policy was pursued against the Kurds. This policy considered Kurds 'Mountain Turks' and sought to militarily crush any move to assert ethnic or national rights. Similarly, the regime was more than willing to support and cooperate with any neighbouring country in order to eliminate all Kurdish activity in the region. Turkey was one of the signatories of the Treaty of Sa'dabad (Reza Shah's summer residence in the northern suburbs of Tehran), which was signed on July 8, 1937, by four Muslim countries: Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. Border disputes were the central concern in this treaty.⁷⁷⁷

The occupation of Iran by the Allied Powers in 1941 had caused considerable anxiety to the regime in Turkey. As the political crisis in Iran gave way to the bold ethnic and nationalist movements, Iranian Kurds living along the eastern border of Turkey, were no longer contained as they had been during the reign of Reza Shah. In fact, by August 1941, Ghazi Mohammad was proclaiming Kurdish liberation.⁷⁷⁸ Calculating that any improvement in the national liberation movement of Kurds in Iran would mean trouble for them as well, the Turkish government was anxious to take precautions. As the British political officers in Iran reported, Kurdish success in Iran in liberating themselves from the Iranian government has 'influence on the Kurdish movements in Iraq and Turkey.'⁷⁷⁹

Kurdish political activities from 1941 to 1946 were closely observed by the Turkish representatives in Iran. Exaggerating even the slightest events to the point of making an international issue, the Turkish government went to great lengths to stop or at least limit the scale of these political activities and to a large extent it succeed in securing its interests in the region. It was the Turkish consul in Urumiyeh, for example, who informed the British and the Americans about the Kurdish leaders' visit to Baku in 1941. The Kurds' first trip to Baku in November 1941 became an international political issue. As British Foreign Office noted, 'there is a real danger least these developments should lead to an estrangement between the Russians and the Turks.'⁷⁸⁰ The Turkish government showed, according to British Foreign

⁷⁷⁷ For the complete Sa'dabad Treaty, see Hurewitz 1956, 214-6.

⁷⁷⁸ *Kurdistan*, No. 10 and 11, 4 and 6 February 1946.

⁷⁷⁹ FO 371/27245, 'Persia, 1941', File No. 5068, 18 December 1941.

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Office, 'increasing anxiety regarding developments in Persian Kurdistan.'⁷⁸¹ Turkish government officials worried that the Soviets would be supportive of the possible formation of a Kurdish state. Subsequently, the Turkish government pressed the British government (at the time Great Britain and the Soviet Union were still allies) for a clarification of the Kurds' visit to Baku, which was organized by Baqirov.⁷⁸² As it was important for the British to draw Turkey into the Alliance, the British government sought to assuage the Turkish government. Bullard explained:

I urged him [the Turkish consul in Tabriz] to do everything in his power to ensure that nothing shall be done in Kurdish areas which might arouse the suspicion of the Turkish government whose friendship is [of] importance.⁷⁸³

The Kurds' visit to Baku prompted the Turkish government to seek a guarantee from the British government that the Allied Forces in Iran would not support the Kurdish movement in Iran, or better still, extract a promise that the British would publicly oppose it. The British responded positively to the Turks' requests and made it clear to the Kurds in Iran that they should not count on any support from the British government. Moreover, the British pressed the Soviet government for a clarification of the meaning of the visit by the Kurdish leaders to Baku.⁷⁸⁴ Although, the Soviet ambassador in Iran claimed that the trip was organized for cultural purposes, the Turkish regime was convinced that the trip had a political aim as well, namely the eventual establishment of an independent Kurdish state. On December 2, 1941 the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that the Kurdish movement was aiming at the 'establishment of an independent Kurdish state' and 'were alleged to have been encouraged and materially helped by "the occupying forces in Persia".'⁷⁸⁵ Eventually, the anxiety of Turkish government was replaced by reassurance. The British reported, 'we [Britain] have had to urge the Soviet government not to encourage a separatist movement in Persia.'⁷⁸⁶ And the Soviets gave the following explanation in terms of their stance vis-à-vis Kurds and the Kurds' visit to Baku:

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Ibid., 20 December 1941.

⁷⁸³ Ibid., 1 December 1941.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid., 18 December 1941.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid.

The Soviet Army in Iran was not only against the supporting of the Kurds but it also actively put effort into disarming Kurds. The region where Kurds were armed did not belong to our sphere of influence. As for some notable Kurds visiting Baku, the trip was a solely cultural affair and had no political meaning.⁷⁸⁷

It is interesting to note that the news of the formal declaration of the Republic of Kurdistan did not reach the US consul in Tabriz for several weeks, until they received a message from the Turkish consul in Urumiyeh. Rossow noted that Turkish consul in Urumiyeh reported that the Republic of Kurdistan 'three weeks ago was established, though the news of the formal proclamation was never disseminated in Tabriz.'⁷⁸⁸ In March 1946, the Turkish General Chief of Staff reported that the news of the institutional establishment of the Kurdish government had been circulating and that indeed the Kurds did proclaim their government. The report further informed that Turks still had the control of the borders.⁷⁸⁹ With the following note, the British political officers in Iran confirmed the Turkish Ministry's opinion:

The Turko-Iranian frontier is very strongly guarded. The Turko-Iraqi frontier is strongly guarded as well, with the close collaboration of the Iraqi frontier authorities with the Turkish authorities.⁷⁹⁰

The Turkish government implemented stricter policies throughout the Kurdish areas that fell within its borders and tried to tightly survey any Kurdish movements, particularly at the borders with Iran. The Turkish government's reaction to the establishment of the Republic is described in a long report by Finogradov, the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey. According to Finogradov, the Turkish government took certain measures in order to prevent any spread of the Kurdish nationalist movement either from Iranian Kurdistan or from Iraqi Kurdistan, especially from Mustafa Barzani's struggle against the Iraqi government.⁷⁹¹ One of the greatest fears of the Turkish regime was the cooperation and participation of the Iraqi, Turkish and Syrian Kurds in the Republic of Kurdistan. Although not at a massive scale, there

⁷⁸⁷ Hewrami 2008a, 12-4.

⁷⁸⁸ Bayat 2010, 46.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid., 48-9.

⁷⁹⁰ FO 195/2595, 'Kurds and Kurdistan (Soviet propaganda in Eastern Turkey)', No. 14, 24 January 1946.

⁷⁹¹ Hewrami 2002, 91.

were Kurds from other parts of Kurdistan that did participate in the Republic of Kurdistan. Kadri Beg, for example, grandson of Jamil Pasha, head of the elite Kurdish family in Diyarbakir, was actively assisting.⁷⁹² On July 16, 1946 the US general consul in Tabriz visited Mahabad and reported, 'I became acquainted with some Iraqi and Iranian Kurds who speak English or Kurds from Syria that could understand French.'⁷⁹³

On April 5, 1946 Finogradov reported the Turkish newspapers' assertion that the establishment of the Kurdish government in Iran could cause anxiety for countries such as Turkey, Iraq and Syria.⁷⁹⁴ Following the developments in Iranian Kurdistan, in November 1945 the Turkish government came up with a Provincial Law especially for the Kurdish region in Turkey. According to this law, a Turkish army general became the governor of the region with special authorities. As Finogradov noted, 'this officer had exclusive authority, especially over political matters in the Kurdish region.'⁷⁹⁵

In 1945 and 1946, the Kurdish question was one of the major discussion topics for the countries among which the Kurdish populace was divided. According to Finogradov, for example, the Kurdish issue was one of the major agenda items during the recent negotiations between the Iraqi and Turkish governments. They signed a treaty for cooperation toward security and peace.⁷⁹⁶ Another agenda item for the Turkish government was the presence of Barzani's forces in Iranian Kurdistan. Turkey requested that the Iraqi government press the British for the return of Iraqi Kurds from Iran to Iraq, hoping that it would fatally weaken the Republic of Kurdistan as Barzani's troops composed the backbone of the Republic's forces. Barzani's uprising during 1943-45 against the Iraqi government had ended with many fighters taking refuge in the neighbouring countries, particularly in Iran. Turkish and Iraqi governments decided to exchange Kurdish deserters, as they claimed, between both sides.⁷⁹⁷ This protocol was also a part of the Sa'dabad Treaty, which was to be extended every five years or reviewed as made necessary by any developments in the Middle East region. If the national security of the signatory parties of the Sa'dabad Treaty stood in danger, then they were directed to convene in order to assess matters of the implementation of the Treaty. Both

⁷⁹² Eagleton 1963, 47.

⁷⁹³ Bayat 2010, 113-4.

⁷⁹⁴ Hewrami 2002, 91.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid., 91-2.

⁷⁹⁶ Ibid., 93.

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid.

the Iraqi and Turkish governments tried to guarantee the security of the border between both sides.⁷⁹⁸

2.2. Iraq

Shortly before the British invasion of Iran in August 1941, the Iraqi government that was established in 1921 by the direct involvement of the British had collapsed due to a military coup led by Rashid Ali al-Gilani. Aiming to strengthen its hold on Iraq before venturing into Iran, the British removed al-Gilani from power and established a new Iraqi government that was more tightly controlled by the British forces. Iraq, after Egypt, became an important British military base for the preparation of the Second World War in the Middle East. The British troops entered into Iranian territory from Iraq in August 1941. The southern part of Iranian Kurdistan fell under the sphere of Great Britain. In Iranian Kurdistan, British representatives followed the same policy as they had with the Iraqi Kurds, which respected the territorial integrity of the countries where the Kurds inhabited and considered the Kurdish question as an internal issue.

As mentioned earlier, Barzani and his fighters were an important part of the Republic of Kurdistan's military force. Expelling Barzani's troops or returning them to Iraq would have meant the end of the Republic. For this reason, the Iraqi government, through British representatives in Iran, tried to extradite Barzani's troops to Iraq.

By the time Barzani's uprising started in 1943, Iraq was under the political control of Great Britain. Eventually repelling Barzani's forces and forcing them to retreat into Iran took the active support of the British politicians and military. At the time, the JK was a significant nationalist Kurdish political party in Iranian Kurdistan and had developed several plans for cooperation and solidarity with other parts of Kurdistan, especially with the insurrection of Barzani in Iraq. The JK's letter to Barzani, for example, as discussed earlier, fell into the hands of the Iraqi government and it led to a series of efforts by the Iraqi government to cut ties between the two sides. After having studied the letter, the Iraqi Ministry of Interior asked the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs to bring the JK's political activities to the attention of the Iranian government and urge it exert more government control over Mahabad.⁷⁹⁹ Similarly, after the full staff of the Kurdish flag at the municipal building of Mahabad, the

⁷⁹⁸ Hurewitz 1956, 214-6.

⁷⁹⁹ FO 624/71, 'political situation in Kurdistan, No. 272, part eleven (311-350)', British Embassy in Baghdad, 15th October, 1945.

Iraqi government expressed their dissatisfaction about the development in the region. In 1945 Hamid Pachachi, the Iraqi Prime Minister, stated, 'Iraq was worried about the events in Iranian Kurdistan.'⁸⁰⁰ Iraqi government feared that, especially with the presence of Barzani's forces there, Iranian Kurdistan might develop into a political and military base also against the Iraqi central government. As mentioned earlier, Barzani had presented a proposal to the Soviet representatives in Iranian Kurdistan, where he requested from the Soviets not obstruct their struggle against the Iraqi government. Although, the Soviet officers did not respond positively to Barzani's request, Barzani nevertheless went on with efforts to further develop his movement. While in Iranian Kurdistan, Barzani sent representatives to Iraqi Kurdistan to organize political activities. The formal proclamation of the KDP in Iraq is an illustration of such activities.

The governments of Iran and Iraq pressed the Soviet government to take serious actions against Barzani and his followers in Iran. Both governments wanted to see the leading figures of Barzani's forces returned to Iraq. The answer of the Soviet government was simple and clear. Zatisv, the Soviet Ambassador to Iraq, explained that the issue of denying entry for Barzani into Iranian territory is a domestic issue of Iran and Iraq. In accordance with the principle of not interfering in matters of domestic affairs of sovereign states, the government of the Soviet Union can not instruct its army to disarm and discharge Iraqi Kurds in Iranian territory.⁸⁰¹ By this principle, Zatisv was referring to the article two of the section seven of the UN Charter, which was signed, with the Soviet Union among the signatories, in San Francisco in 1945. The concerned article stated:

Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.⁸⁰²

The presence of Barzani's forces in the Republic of Kurdistan clearly was a factor that strengthened the standing of the Republic. It was also a factor that facilitated a quicker and stronger institutionalization of the Kurdish political activities. In a letter dated 17 November 1945, the Iranian Foreign Minister informed the Soviet government of the existence of the units of Barzani fighters, along with other uprisings in province four, Urumiyeh and Mahabad

⁸⁰⁰ Hewrami 2002, 55.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid., 90.

⁸⁰² For the complete UN Charter, see the UN website: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml>

region, will cause instability.⁸⁰³ If the Great Powers had not been present in the region then it would have been simpler for signatory parties of the Sa'dabad Treaty to cooperate against the Kurdish movements. Referring to this matter, the Iraqi ambassador to his Iranian colleague on August 15, 1946, explained that:

According to a treaty between Iraq and Iran the entering Iraqi Kurds, especially Mustafa Barzani, whose hanging is waiting for him in Iraq, must be arrested by the Iranian government and returned to the Iraqi government. But Barzani and other fugitives are under the sphere of control of the Soviets and can not be captured.⁸⁰⁴

When the Republic of Kurdistan collapsed, Barzani and his troops did not surrender themselves to the Iranian government. Barzani sent a protocol to the Soviet consul in Urumiyeh requesting of them to be mediators between Barzani and the governments of Iraq and Iran. According to this protocol, in a general on January 15, 1947 Kurdish representatives, led by Sheikh Ahmad and Mustafa Barzani, relayed the following conditions to the Iranian and Iraqi governments. 1 – Amnesty for everybody that participated in the Barzan uprising (1943-45) and for every fighter that fought for freedom and liberation in Iraq and Iran. 2- Compensation from the Iraqi regime for the damages sustained by the Barzanis. 3- Autonomy for Kurdistan and freedom for all political movements. 4- Permission for the Barzanis to keep their weapons.⁸⁰⁵ This protocol was left without answer and archived by the Soviet government.

⁸⁰³ Hewrami 2002, 55.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid., 56.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid., 69-70.

3 Presence of the Great Powers in Iran

Many books and articles have been published about the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, and especially its origins in Eastern Europe and especially in Poland. However, less interest has been shown to the conflict between the US and the Soviet Union in the Middle East, particularly with regard to the Iranian crisis (1945 – 1946). This crisis revealed a historical background of rivalry between the Great Powers in the Middle East. This section will discuss the nature of the traditional rivalry in the Middle East, which existed between Russia and Britain, with US playing the role of a new Great Power. Special attention will also be given to the period of the Second World War in Iran. The discussion in this section will be based on the questions that were posed in the introduction of chapter V, which is mostly related to the Republic of Kurdistan. Before analyzing the international rivalry of the Great Powers in Iran, it is fitting to evaluate some important theories on international relations, which could be helpful to understanding the Great Powers' 'practised' political agenda. International relations theories are statements which explain the associations of variables relating them as causes and effects, as stated by Kenneth N. Waltz, one of the important realist scholars. These theories depict how a domain or system is organized and how its parts are connected, indicating the factors which are more important than others.⁸⁰⁶

3.1. International Relations Theory

The Cold War and the conflict between the two superpowers after the Second World War were central to the study of the theory of International Relations. While from the second half of the 1950s, an increasing interest of the great powers in the problems of the Third World countries can be seen, the conflict of interests between these great powers in Iran started a bit earlier, dating back to 1945. After the Second World War, the theories of international relations shaped the context of the cold war between 1945 and 1991 and it is necessary to study the different phases of the battle by using various international relations theories. In this study, the various schools offering interpretations of international relations can be categorized into three general phases: (1) competition between (neo)realism vs. (2) (neo)idealism/liberalism, and (3) structuralism after the Second World War. The first two phases should be discussed with regard to several important elements, because these two schools, especially realism, were dominant during the Second World War.

⁸⁰⁶ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York, Columbia University: Waveland Press, 1979), 1-10.

In general, two important elements within (neo)realism and (neo)idealism will be discussed, which are directly or indirectly relate to the events in the Middle East, particularly in Iran during the period of the Second World War. Also, due attention will be given to the political environments and the political policy of the Great Powers during this time. The two elements within (neo)realism and (neo)idealism are: (1) the concept of *Sovereignty* and *Non-intervention*, and (2) the *Balance of Power*. Eventually, the third phase, structuralism, will be described.

3.1.1. (Neo)realism vs. (neo)idealism/liberalism

Between the two world wars (1920-1940), a competition of schools of thought took place between realism and idealism. The debate between these two theories was generally constructed along the following question: how can the international order best be maintained? Making the world safer through the establishment of democratic regimes and dissemination and division of political power in the whole world with the creation of specific organizations were the main political demands of the idealist school. After the end of World War I and under the leadership of President Woodrow Wilson, these demands and the related principles were institutionalized into international organizations like the League of Nations, which was later replaced by the UN.⁸⁰⁷ An establishment of collective security was the essential principle within the League of Nations as well as for the school of idealism. This also an essential principle within the UN, which tried to protect the coalition states against any state which committed aggression.⁸⁰⁸ Another focal point within the League of Nations and for the school of idealism was the Permanent Court of International Justice. Idealism claimed that all international disputes could be resolved through the legal process of international law. The solution of the Mosul question (see chapter III) between Turkey and British-Iraqi governments in 1926 can be cited as an example of this resolution process.⁸⁰⁹ However, the eruption of the Second World War led to the triumph of the realist school. Thus, it is

⁸⁰⁷ Cynthia Weber, *International Relations Theory* (2th ed., London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), 38.

⁸⁰⁸ For details on the collective security aspect of the League of Nations and UN, see Lunn H. Miller, 'The Ideal and the Reality of Collective Security', *Global Governance* (No. 5, 1999), 303-32.

⁸⁰⁹ The Mosul issue was solved in the satisfaction of England and not due to the wishes of the local population. The Italian-Ethiopian war of 1935-36, the outstanding Japanese-Chinese war over Manchuria in 1931-37, highlighted the complexity of these conflicts and the problems of applying the principle of collective security. More importantly, it showed how a League of Nations was Eurocentric.

interesting to examine some of the essential international relations' elements between the two world wars, which weakened the idealist school and tilted the scale towards the realist school.

The outcome of the First World War can be seen as the cause of the World War II. This relationship can be explained in three ways. First, the First World War was a strong nationalist war. More than ever before, soldiers had the strong gut feeling of being part of a nation that was superior to, or in any case, had to compete with other nations. The soldiers' extremely strong identification with their countries of origin was, in both the First and the Second World War, harnessed by their warring nations. Hitler understood the power of this feeling and his National Socialist policies were used to fully exploit it. A second link came from the fact that Germany suffered tremendous economic and infrastructural losses in the First World War. Germany was unable to bear these further losses after the long years of struggle in the trenches, and the immense destruction of its cities and horrific massacres of its people. Looking for scapegoats, they came to see the Jews, Socialists and Bolsheviks as the primary reason behind the great defeat of Germany. This intense dissatisfaction led Germany to see themselves as victims of the war. This is the emotion which Hitler used to gather support within the country for going into the Second World War.⁸¹⁰

A third relationship between the two wars stemmed from the Treaty of Versailles after the First World War, which was signed between Germany and the Allies. This treaty was extremely punitive for Germany: its army was strongly constrained, large tracts of land were to be ceded and huge economic recovery payments had to be made. The treaty was aimed at immediately halting Germany's international conquest ambitions, rather than taking into account the possible long-term consequences. The treaty's measures did immense damage to the German economy and led to widespread unrest and discontent among the German population, which made the rise of the Nazi Party possible. At the same time, the Treaty of Versailles only had weak mechanisms for reprisal if Germany violated the rules. Thus, there was no obstacle in Germany's way once it moved to wartime footing.⁸¹¹

With regard to the Great Powers in Iran, the following question is important: how should the Great Powers behave towards one another and towards weaker states? The realists

⁸¹⁰ For details on the causes of the Second World War, see Philip Michael Hett Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe* (London: Longman, 1987); Edward Hallett Carr, *International Relations between the two World Wars, 1919-1939* (London: Macmillan, 1990).

⁸¹¹ For more information on the influence of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany, see W. M. Jordan, *Great Britain, France, and the German Problem, 1918-1939: A Study of Anglo-French Relations in the Making and Maintenance of the Versailles Settlement* (London: Oxford University Press, 1943).

believed that the best guarantee for peace lay in a balance of power between the Great Powers. Because the system of the League of Nations failed and then the Second World War broke out, the idealist school became discredited after the war and the realist's school prevailed.⁸¹² The realist, or power politics school, was represented by E.H. Carr and Georg Schwarzenberger in Britain and by Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau in the US. The existence of the state system was for abovementioned scholars the main goal of arbitrage in political power, in which there was no common authority above the sovereign state, and where there was international anarchy in the sense of a lack of government at the international level.⁸¹³ Perhaps the most famous member of the realist school is Morgenthau, author of the classic called *Politics among Nations* (1960). The three major elements that typify Morgenthau's writings are the beliefs that nation-states are the most important actors in international relations, that there is a clear distinction between domestic and international politics, and that international relations is predominantly about the struggle for power and peace.⁸¹⁴ Morgenthau represented the first or rational approach, focusing on the rational assessment of interests and power resources to reach value-maximizing choices.⁸¹⁵ This Rational Actor Model remains useful as a quick approximation to predict choices by policy-makers in states such as the Soviet Union, where the detailed process of decision-making was hidden from public view.⁸¹⁶

The national security of the boundaries of a state is one of the central themes of the realist school. In other words, safeguarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state is an important task for the realist doctrine. This political theory, according to Staden, reached its highest point in the 1950s.⁸¹⁷ According to the realist school, the state is the highest political actor and dominates the population. Sovereignty of a state depends on whether and to what level it is weak or powerful, which in turn means that a weak state is less sovereign. The

⁸¹² For more on the debate between realism and idealism, see Herz, J.H., *Political Realism and Political Idealism* (Chicago, 1951).

⁸¹³ Clive Archer, *International Organizations* (2nd ed., London/New York: Routledge, 1992), 78.

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁸¹⁵ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (4th ed., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 3-4.

⁸¹⁶ For a more detailed discussion on decision and policy-making in world politics, see Charles J. Kegley, *World Politics: Trend and Transformation* (12th ed., USA: Wadsworth Publisher, 2009).

⁸¹⁷ R.B. Soetendorp and A. van Staden (red.), *Internationale Betrekkingen in Perspectief* [international relations in perspective], (Utrecht: Spectrum BV, 1987), 43.

sovereignty of states has been a solid principle since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and it spread from Europe to the whole world. This widely accepted concept of sovereignty led to the creation of the idea of a territorial state, which is one of the most important political landmarks of our times.⁸¹⁸ Despite all the violence of the First and Second World War, according to many authors, it created the apotheosis of the modern state, the modern state system and the related principles of sovereignty and non-intervention. This was especially the case in the non-Western world in the second half of the twentieth century.⁸¹⁹ Nevertheless, these new states were often dependent in many respects, and not sovereign, according to one of its definitions by Krasner, who operated within the realist theories.⁸²⁰

Daniel Philpott, a neoidealist supporter, attempted to explain that universally states respected each other's territorial sovereignty.⁸²¹ The importance of institutionalization of the states, that is when they are recognized jointly by the members of the international community, came to the attention of the (neo)idealist school. This was officially the founding principle of the United Nations. The member states were maintaining their credibility and demonstrating their mutual respect for sovereignty by adhering to mutual agreements, understandings and treaties. These included the prohibition to intervene in matters of other sovereign states, with states being accepted as a global norm.⁸²² This principle of sovereignty and non-intervention, was laid down in article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and widely accepted by UN in article 2(4, 5 and 6) within the Charter of the United Nations.

The (neo)realist school is critical of this and believes that the sovereignty and non-intervention is not an unyielding principle, and there are many reasons that these principles could be violated, for the sake of humanitarian causes, for example. The most important conceptual notion of (neo)realism is its view of international politics as a system of sovereign states, in which each state's behavior principally results from its relationship to other states. However, as the title of his book, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, suggests, Krasner had a highly critical opinion about territorial sovereignty and its value in the current era. Krasner had a very realistic view of the political world, the principles of territorial sovereignty and

⁸¹⁸ Ibid.

⁸¹⁹ Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, 'Van beschavingsmissie tot zelfbeschikkingsrecht: de evolutie van Europese soevereiniteit buiten Europa', in Hellema 2004, 37-56.

⁸²⁰ According to Krasner, this definition refers to the formal organization and effectiveness of political authority within the state (Krasner 1999, 4). For detail information about four different sovereignties, see *ibid*, 3-42.

⁸²¹ Philpott 2001, 3-10.

⁸²² Ibid.

even the frequent violations thereof. To illustrate his point, Krasner gives the arbitrary interpretation of the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention by the European Great Powers, who acted by adapting these principles as per their interests.⁸²³ The violation of the territorial integrity of Iraq in 1991 in the second Persian Gulf War and the establishment of a 'safe haven' for the Kurds is a potent example to describe the violation of sovereignty of a state.

The concept of the balance of power is the second aspect of contention within (neo)realist and (neo)idealist school and is defined by Waltz as what, 'explained the results of states' actions, under given conditions',⁸²⁴ which can be either conflict leading to instability or that of cooperation leading to a stable balance of power. In order to maintain stability and balance, power was divided between the Great Powers to form an alliance. However, despite cooperation being the main slogan, competition for individual state interests continued to play a dominant role. This led to a state of events where there was a lack of political interest on part of the United States to maintain international order and enforce the Versailles Treaty. Concurrently, after the United States pulled out of the world political arena, the only remaining Great Powers were Britain and France. In the background, the US continued to play a vital role in international political decision-making, despite it not being a member of the League of Nations. The US could not remain silent in global political arena for long, however, because one of the key elements in the balance of power theory is the unilateral formation of more powerful states. As Waltz points out, they are unitary actors who, 'at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination.'⁸²⁵

In the third decade of the twentieth century, for example, only a collective security pact of the League of Nations could achieve success in implementing effective sanctions, but this success would threaten the monopoly of the Great powers. For example, when Italy entered Ethiopia in 1935, the Council of the League of Nations claimed that Italy had violated the pact and the Assembly established a committee for the imposition of sanctions on Italy. These sanctions included an embargo on exports of war materials from Italy, prohibition on all Italian exports and the cancellation of all loans to Italy. The oil-embargo was not imposed out of fear of escalation of events in Europe, especially keeping in mind the growth of Nazi-

⁸²³ Krasner 1999, 85-6.

⁸²⁴ Ibid., 118.

⁸²⁵ Ibid.

Germany.⁸²⁶ But instead was an example of ‘external efforts’ by the states constituting the League of Nations to weaken the power of Italy and thus maintain a balance of power within Europe. The category of ‘external efforts’ was defined by Waltz as the move to strengthen and enlarge one’s own alliance or to weaken and shrink an opposing one.⁸²⁷ The invention of collective security through separate systems of the states can be cited as another example of ‘external efforts’. This separate system of Alliances was created not only to guarantee the French security, but also provide protection against the tyrannies of Nazism. On the other hand, another means for states to obtain a balance of power is through ‘internal efforts’, which Waltz describes as the ‘move to increase economic and military capability’ within one’s own state.⁸²⁸

Since 1945 there was an emphasis on international arbitration as a solution to international relations issues. The United Nations also saw this as an instrument for determining disputes between nations. For example, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968 can be considered as a milestone in multilateral arms control, which was negotiated through the help of a UN body.⁸²⁹ These agreements were intended to ensure peace and security. It could be achieved by the intervention of the UN, Inter-Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), NGOs, IGOs and powerful governments. In the late twentieth century, some Third World countries showed resistance against the superpowers and maintained a non-aligned stance in international politics. The balance of power was primarily a product of the old regime in Europe and was a motivating power in nineteenth century’s diplomacy. Until 1945, the standard character of world political arena was multipolar, as it always consisted of five or more powers.⁸³⁰ During the Cold War this changed to a state with just two world powers, symbolized by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact, with increasing tensions between the two blocks. As Waltz observed, ‘with only two great powers, a balance-of-power system is unstable.’⁸³¹ With the collapse of the

⁸²⁶ Armstrong 2004, 27-30.

⁸²⁷ Ibid.

⁸²⁸ Waltz 1979, 118.

⁸²⁹ Jordan 2001, 51-6.

⁸³⁰ Waltz 1979, 163.

⁸³¹ Ibid.

bipolar world in 1989 due to the fall of the Soviet Union, the concept of a balance of power dismantled hastily.⁸³²

3.1.2. Structuralism

After the Second World War, a third theory called structuralism was a major intellectual movement in France and also proved to be internationally influential. The common goal for this theory was to define different aspects of human culture (politics, habits, etc.), primarily ‘language’, and to draw a system based on the language theory. As S.F. Nadel pointed out, ‘ordinary language obscures a distinction that is important in theory.’⁸³³ Structure is an abstraction and is not something we see. It is in the realm of grammar and syntax, not of the spoken word.⁸³⁴ Structure must instead be defined by the ‘enumerating of the system’s parts and by the principle of that arrangement.’⁸³⁵ Within the structuralist school, two important approaches were essential for the study of human behaviour: individualistic and holistic. The first examined an individual’s behaviour, which is an important part of structural theory and, according to Waltz, ‘is now a social-science favourite.’⁸³⁶ An example of this approach is that many political and economic phenomena are due to individuals trying to maximize their surplus at the micro level, which is also a pivotal assumption of many social science theories. The second or holistic approach emphasizes on macro level phenomena with multiple individuals interacting, which leads to the emergence of a social system with some level of stable structure. The approach aims to explain the reasons for changing patterns of social, economic, political and cultural structures and also predict how these transformations would affect human behaviour. Since the changing of the social environment played a significant

⁸³² For a contemporary in-depth discussion on the balance of power theory, see T.V. Pual, James J. Wirtz, Michel Fortmann, *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004); For a historical approach to the theory, especially in the twentieth century, see Martin Wight, ‘The Balance of Power’, in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London, 1966); For a classical approach, which focuses on the struggle against Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna, see Edward V. Gulick, *Europe’s Classical Balance of Power* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1955).

⁸³³ Cited in Waltz 1979, 80.

⁸³⁴ Ibid.

⁸³⁵ Waltz 1979, 80.

⁸³⁶ Ibid., 73.

role on the human behaviour, the social environment was also studied along with individual characteristics in the structuralist system.⁸³⁷

Structuralism had been concerned with the division between societies such as between the rich and poor, both within countries and at the global scale. This led to an interest in transnational relations and inter-governmental links. According to this school, the structure of world politics was defined by economic factors and thus, (Neo-) Marxism-Leninism also belonged to this school. For structuralism the division of labour is crucial for the nature of social control and solidarity and thus it determined the manner in which individuals interacted. Structuralism not only attended to the economical relations between states and world politics, but it also concerned itself with the divisions within and between societies. Marxism, which is a part of the larger structuralist school, predicted that capitalist modes of production would ultimately lead to a classless society. This is another example of structuralism providing a direction about individual behaviour. Important topics of research within structuralism were the historical development of capitalism and the interdependence of the relations of the 'Third World' with respect to the 'First World'.⁸³⁸

3.2. Soviet-Union's policy towards Kurds in Iran

Iran was a strategically important region for the Great Powers. Thus, Iran automatically became a part of international political strategies, with the Great Powers using the country as an instrument for their political and economic ambitions. This fact became more clearly particularly in the nineteenth century, when conflicts emerged between Britain and Russia in the Middle East. Russia's expansionist policies and their need for warm-water ports clashed with Britain's need to maintain their line of communication in the Eastern Mediterranean and their desire to protect a vast area, which stretched from the Persian Gulf to Tibet.⁸³⁹ According to Kesrayi, the influence of the Great Powers in the Middle East from beginning of the nineteenth century began with the oppression of the Russian military and ended with the oppression of the British military.⁸⁴⁰

⁸³⁷ Soetendorp 1987, 243.

⁸³⁸ Archer gave attention to the Marxist writers, and some Third World views - particularly those of the dependency school and the developmentalists - who have made a contribution quite separate from that of the Marxist tradition, Archer 1992, 106-23.

⁸³⁹ Bruce Robellet Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 130-1.

⁸⁴⁰ Kesrayi 2000, 236-7.

In the treaty of Gullistan in 1813, Iran renounced Derbent, Baku, Jerevan, Shaki, Karabakh and the surrounding areas to Russia, as well as any of its claims to Georgia, Dagestan and Mingrelie. Again outbreak of the Russo-Persian hostilities ended with the Treaty of Turkmenchai in 1828 and Iran surrendered the remaining part of Armenia to the Russians. The expansion of Russian to the south, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, is related to the Kurdish question. Initially it was based on the military relationship between some Kurdish elites with Russian officers in order to form alliances against both the Ottoman and Persian empires. For this reason and because Kurds had obtained more freedom in the Tsarists region, many Kurdish families immigrated to the Caucasus.⁸⁴¹ With the conquest of Northern provinces of Iran, several Russian orientalists, particularly after the second half of the nineteenth century, focused on the study of the Kurdish literature, culture, politics and history. In this period Kurdish studies in Russia became popular and many books were published in different areas.⁸⁴²

The Russian advance in the Islamic world was under way and came at the expense of Turkey, Iran and the Central Asian states. However, Central Asia had undergone major economic changes since the Russians introduced cotton cultivation. The Russians kept their eye on the potential resources of Central Asia. When the American Civil War (1861-65) began, the Russians had a shortage of cotton fabrics,⁸⁴³ which made the conquest of Central Asia rather necessary. The Russians and the British did not want a war with Iran and they mutually agreed that Iran was a buffer between their own areas of strategic importance. Russians, however, were concerned about the continued development and expansion of Great Britain in India. Atabaki and Versteeg suggest the following:

The British knew how to enforce the control of the Afghan foreign policy. This ended the Russian expansion. The *Great Game* between the two superpowers was sealed in 1895 with a treaty in which the boundaries and spheres of influence of the Russian and British empires were

⁸⁴¹ Khaled Murad Chatoyov, *Mejoy Pewendyekani Russia u Kurd: Lekolineweh u Balgahnameh* [history of the Russian and Kurdish relations: investigation and documents], tra. from Arabic to Kurdish by Nacat Abdullah (Suleymaniyeh: Shvan Publishers, 2006), 22-8.

⁸⁴² Ibid., 16-7.

⁸⁴³ Hélèn Carrerr D'Encausse, 'Systematic Conquest, 1865 to 1884', in Edward Allworth (ed.), *Central Asia, 120 Years of Russian Rule* (London: Duke University Press, 1989), 131.

strictly defined. Afghanistan became a buffer state and got the finger-shaped strip up to Pamir, with Russia and Britain remaining on its two separate sides.⁸⁴⁴

Until post-World War I, Pan-Islamism was an important de-facto ideal within the Kurdish community and also for the majority of the Kurdish leaders. In contrast, Pan-Kurdism was a weak sentiment, but still some Kurdish nationalists, such as Kamil Badir Khan, were hopeful for and striving towards the prospective growth of Pan-Kurdism.⁸⁴⁵ Russian policy towards Kurds in post-World War I is illustrated in declaration by the Russian Foreign Affairs Office made on April 18, 1923. According to this formal declaration, the Russian should not support the Kurdish movement against the Turkish government and also not support the Turkish government against the Kurds. Compassion must be showed to the Kurdish struggle as an instrument against Britain.⁸⁴⁶ After the establishment of the modern nation-states in Turkey, Iran and Iraq, the Soviet government tried to strengthen its position by building connections with these new central governments, especially with the new Iranian government under the leadership of Reza Shah. After the negotiation of the Treaty of Friendship in 1921 between Russian and Iranian representatives,⁸⁴⁷ according to Mo'tazed, the Iranian military was able to reconquer the north of Iran and end the movement of Jangali.⁸⁴⁸

As mentioned in chapter III, Reza Shah executed strict policy programs in Iran. According to these programs, the administration, education and legal system, among other infrastructure, were modernised. His goal was to design a centralised modern state based on a secular-oriented public administration. Kuniholm argues that Reza Shah turned his attention

⁸⁴⁴ Turaj Atabaki and Joris Versteeg, *Centraal Azië, mensen, politiek, economie en cultuur* [Central Asia: people, politic, economic and culture], (Amsterdam: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, NOVIB, 1994), 22. For details on the rivalry between Great Powers, see Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, (London: Fontana Press, 1989).

⁸⁴⁵ Kamil Badir Khan on September 29, 1917 sent a letter to the Russian representative in Caucasia about solving the Kurdish question and sought collaboration. For this letter, see Hewrami 2006, 9-23.

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid., 33.

⁸⁴⁷ Article 6 of this Treaty is interesting because it formed the basis for entry of the Allied forces into Iran in 1941. A summary of this article is as follows: 'If a third party [...] by means of armed intervention in Persia, or if such power should desire to use Persian territory as a base of operations against Russia, [...] and if the Persian Government should not be able to put a stop to such menace [...], Russia shall have the right to advance her troops into the Persian interior.' For the whole Treaty of Friendship between Russia and Persia, see Hurewitz 1956, 90-4.

⁸⁴⁸ Mo'tazed 2001, 177.

to the realisation of three great objectives: a centralized government, modernisation, and freedom from foreign influence.⁸⁴⁹ Since the economy of Iran, in particular the oil industry, was heavily dependent on the super powers, the dissatisfaction of the Iranian people with the Shah and the foreigners increased. In the meantime, the rivalry between the Great Powers also increased. In the Treaty of Petersburg in 1907, Iran was divided into three zones, putting north of Iran under Russian control, south and southwest under the Great Britain, and a kind of neutral zone in between. History repeated itself when the Allied Powers occupied Iran in August 1941. In order to guarantee military supplies for the Soviet Union's fight against Germany, Iran was divided again into three zones. This recurring division of Iran by the Great Powers was a sign of the continuous struggle for political and economic domination in Iran.⁸⁵⁰

Kurdish nationalists in Iran saw this as an opportunity to organize themselves within a political institution when the Allied entered Iran in August 1941. After formation of the JK, the leaders of this party approached the Allies and referred to the fourth article of the Atlantic Charter by saying that 'they [US and UK] respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.' A few months following the occupation of Iran, the Allied Powers collaborated with Iran in January 1942 to create the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance (see appendix II), which strengthened the position of the Iranian central government towards ethnic groups who tried to obtain their autonomy. The treaty consisted of nine articles and three annexes, all of which were compatible with the principles of the Atlantic Charter (see appendix I). In this agreement Britain and Soviets agreed to defend Iran against aggression by Germany or any other power.⁸⁵¹ The treaty also promised respect for Iran's political independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty (article 1) and that Allied forces would be withdrawn from Iranian territory no more than six months after an armistice or peace between the Allied Powers, Germany and her associates, whichever came first (art. 5). According to article 1 and 7, Iran was to be provided with economic support by the Great Powers. These two articles were also repeated in the agreements coming out of the conference of Tehran, which lasted from November 28 to December 1 of 1943.⁸⁵²

⁸⁴⁹ Kuniholm 1980, 134.

⁸⁵⁰ George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs* (3th ed., Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1962), 32-6.

⁸⁵¹ George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948: A study in Big-Power Rivalry* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1949), 175.

⁸⁵² Hassan Mofidi, *Asnade Konfranshaye Tehran, Yalta ve Potsdam* [document of the Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam Conferences], (Tehran: Antsharat Part, 1981), 65-6.

Subsequent to the Tripartite Treaty, Iran cooperated with the Allies and promised the free passage of the Allied forces and facilities. The Allies were permitted to maintain military forces in the territory of Iran. Iran was an important military base for the eventual victory of the Allied Powers and it was strategically important for the transportation of military goods to the Battle of Stalingrad. Kuniholm pointed out that more than 2,000,000 tons of supplies had been delivered to the Soviet Union, with 350,000 tons delivered through the Persian Corridor.⁸⁵³ The Battle of Stalingrad, which lasted from August 1942 until February 1943, was one of the bloodiest conflicts in history. Despite the spotless record and overwhelming power of the German's Sixth Army prior to Stalingrad, the Soviet troops launched a counter-offensive program on November 19, 1942 and succeeded in breaking through German lines. Eventually, the German troops were surrounded by the Red Army. Thus began the Soviets' slow process waiting for the of the German's definitive decline.⁸⁵⁴ With this defeat, the German military realised that they were not invincible and it was surely crushing for Hitler's confidence. The overthrow of the Germans troops in the Battle of Stalingrad enabled the following victories for Allied forces in Normandy in 1944 and Ardennes in early 1945, which brought an end to Hitler's dream of 'world domination'.

Before and during the Battle of Stalingrad, the Soviets had a clear policy towards Kurds: maintain security in the region and not encourage the Kurds to obtain any kind of autonomy. As Sir Bullard, British Ambassador in Tehran, suggested to the British Foreign Office:

I believe that it is not correct to say that the Soviet authorities are encouraging an autonomous Kurdish movement. I have even heard of instances where they assisted the Persian Government against the Kurds. For example they are sending some Red Army soldiers to reinforce the Persian gendarmerie at the Miandoab sugar factory, which Kurds are believed to be threatening to loot.⁸⁵⁵

A letter by Molotov, the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Smirnov, the Soviet Ambassador in Tehran, dated August 31, 1942, clearly illustrated the updated policy of the Soviets towards the Kurds. According to this official letter, polarization intensified between

⁸⁵³ Kuniholm 1980, 146.

⁸⁵⁴ For details about the Battle of the Stalingrad, see Edwin P. Hoyt, *199 Days: The Battle for Stalingrad* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1993).

⁸⁵⁵ FO 371/27245, 'Persia, File No. 5068', December 8, 1941.

the two ethnic groups, the Kurds and the Azeris. The priority was given to the Azeris and the Kurds were considered unreliable and in the service of the British imperialism. According to Molotov:

On May 13, 1942 we had asked our ambassador and consulates in Iran not to cause obstruction to the Iranian military in the region. Iranian forces should be in control of the Rezaiyeh area to protect people and Kurds must respect and listen to the Iranian government. Our consulate and military officers did not correctly understand our goal. Therefore, the Iranian government believes that we offered help to Kurds, which irritated many of our Azeri and Iranian friends. Kurds have rebelled against the Iranian authorities and they looted properties of innocent people. They are a cause of insecurity in Iran and terrorise the Azeri people. We [the Soviets] must prioritize help for the Azeris, as they are the majority in Azerbaijan and ethnographically and historically they have a strong relation with the Soviet Azerbaijan. This does not mean that we turn against the Kurds. We just need to provide more support to Azeris to promote our interests in northern Iran. There is no unity between Kurds. They are divided among backward tribes and in the service of the imperialists [British]. The Soviet Union refuses a sovereign state or autonomy for Kurdistan.⁸⁵⁶

Two factors could easily be identified as reasons behind the adoption of the abovementioned policy by the Soviets: (a) the Soviet Union was busy with a war against Germany in the Battle of Stalingrad, and (b) while this war raged, support by the Allies for the Soviet forces was necessary. That support as forthcoming, as can be seen in the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance, article 3 (section b), which states:

To secure to the Allied Powers, for the passage of troops or supplies from one Allied Powers to the other [...], the unrestricted right to use, maintain, guard and, in case of military necessity, control in any way that they may require all means of communication throughout Iran.⁸⁵⁷

Iran was an important route that had to be secured for the victory of the Allied forces in the Battle of Stalingrad. Accordingly, it was incumbent on the Soviets not to encourage the Kurds

⁸⁵⁶ For the complete letter of Molotov, see Hewrami 2008a, 53-8. Summarized translated from Kurdish into English by the author of this dissertation.

⁸⁵⁷ Complete articles of this treaty see appendix II.

towards the fulfilment of any national ambitions but rather to do everything to bring about a peaceful coexistence between the Kurds and the Persian government.

After the distribution of Molotov's letter amongst the high ranking Soviet officers in Iran, Soviet representatives travelled to the areas of the northern Iranian Kurdistan to obtain guarantees from Kurdish leaders for maintaining peace and security in the region. Most tribal chieftains of the northern Iranian Kurdistan obeyed the Soviet policy to preserve security in the region. The organization by Kurdish leaders, who were mostly tribal leaders, of an inclusive political conference was one of the important events at that time. The wedding feast of a son of Gharani Agah, chieftain of Zerza in Ushnawiyeh, in September 1942 was a good occasion to hold a conference. Almost all Kurdish leaders, from Salmas to Saqqiz, were invited to this party.⁸⁵⁸ As planned, the meeting took place after the wedding. The participants decided on the following key positions: (1) to remain loyal to the government of Soviet Union and to take no action against this country and their army in Iran and consent to no agreements between Kurds and other powers without support of the Soviet Union, (2) put an end to the plundering and come up with a solution against looters, and (3) to protect the Kurdish unity and abide by the principle of 'everybody for one and one for everybody'. The regional leaders were also elected in this meeting. Emer Khan Shikak was elected as leader of Khoy, Salmas of the region up to the Soviet border (Jalali's tribe), and west and south Urumiyeh was put under the leadership of Gharani Agah Mamash.⁸⁵⁹

The Soviets were not directly involved in the proceedings of this conference. As Maksimov, Soviet consular in Urumiyeh, notes, 'it is not true that we organized and participated in this meeting'.⁸⁶⁰ However, they had an indirect role in this meeting. After the completion of the conference, for instance, according to Maksimov, some Kurds, under the leadership of 'Zêro Beg, went to the Soviet consulate in Urumiyeh to convey the results of the conference.'⁸⁶¹ This type of indirect control on the Kurdish activities was an example of the Soviet policy towards the Kurds. At that time, the leaders of the JK Party visited the Soviet representatives several times in Urumiyeh and Tabriz to seek support for their activities, but all of their attempts were met with silence. However, after the Soviet victory at Stalingrad,

⁸⁵⁸ According to Soviet reports, sixteen Kurdish tribal chieftains participated in this conference. For the names of these tribal leaders, see Hewrami 2008a, 72.

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid., 71-3.

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid., 75.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid., 73.

the matter of rights of ethnic groups and minorities became a major agenda item in the Soviet foreign policy.

In the period of the Battle of Stalingrad, the traditional conflict between Great Britain and Russia in Iran was less important, and it was more important for the two super powers to cooperate with each other to eliminate their mutual enemy. But as the war progressed, especially after the Allied victory in the Battle of Stalingrad, the historical conflict between Great Britain and Russia in Iran surged forth once again. Kuniholm wrote that their cooperation in Iran became less important. As the war moved west across the steppes of the Soviet Union, it became increasingly apparent that Allied actions in Iran were not in accordance with the terms of the Tripartite Treaty.⁸⁶² In this period, the British, and more so the Soviets, looked after their own interests and showed less respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence that Iran had been promised in the Tripartite Treaty. After the Battle of Stalingrad, Soviet policy was aimed at achieving its political and economic goals by helping ethnic groups to fight against the incumbent Iranian government. The concept of the 'right of nations to self-determination' marked the foreign policy of the Soviets and led to the strengthening of the identities of the ethnic groups under the slogan 'liberty for the Kurds and the Azeris from the oppression of the Persians.' Pressuring the Iranian Government to obtain economic compromises was high on the political agenda of Soviet Union.

After the triumph of Stalingrad, the Soviet position in world politics was strengthened. International influence and credibility of the Soviet military and policy was noted. And these were strengthened for furthering their economic and political interests, which included support for many governments and movements in the world political arena.⁸⁶³ With regard to the Kurds in Iran, the Soviets had no long-term political plan. Gerald Dooher noted that the only option remaining for the Kurds was to join the movement that the Soviets had established in the form of a protégé Kurdish government under leadership of Ghazi Mohammad.⁸⁶⁴ The Soviet support for the Kurds was limited and by no means was meant to give a green-light for the establishment of a Kurdish state or autonomy. To this day, no

⁸⁶² Kuniholm 1980, 147-8.

⁸⁶³ For the influence of the triumph of the Battle of Stalingrad on the Soviet policy, see Alexander Werth, *The year of Stalingrad: An Historical record and a Study of Russian Mentality, Methods and Policies* (New York : Knopf, 1947).

⁸⁶⁴ *Goft-o-gu*, No. 53, 135. Borzowi 1999, and many Iranian researchers argue that the proclamation of the Republic of Mahabad was based on a green-light surreptitiously provided by the Soviets.

official Soviet document has surfaced to give evidence to any plans by the Soviets to establish an independent Kurdish state in Iran. When the Republic of Kurdistan was proclaimed, the Soviet representatives in Tabriz received the news with discomfort and disapproval. According to Eagleton, two prominent KDP leaders visited Dr. Samadov at the Russian Hospital in Tabriz to explain why the Kurds had proclaimed their independence and formed a government without first having obtained Soviet approval.⁸⁶⁵

The short-term political plan of the Soviets for support of the Kurds, which was mainly operative between 1944 and 1946, had the following goals: to prevent Iranian military offensive on the free-zone Kurdish area, form a Kurdish-Soviet Cultural Society, supply weapons to the Republic of Kurdistan, etc. In connection with this, Baqirov's opinion was relevant to the claim that the Soviet policy towards Kurds was not to establish a Kurdish state. Baqirov stated that the Soviet representatives in Iranian Kurdistan once again warned Ghazi Mohammad that 'he must keep to the instructions, which had been given to him before, and that he must not undertake any actions against Iranian troops.'⁸⁶⁶ These short-term collaborations were meant to prevent the Iranian central government from reaching key economical goals, with an especial Soviet eye especially being on the creation of a lucrative northern Iranian oil treaty. By the end of 1944, the Soviets were disappointed when Iranian government refused to grant that oil concession. This was the reason for the first major conflict on Iranian oil between the Great Powers, which formed the basis of the Iranian crisis of 1945-46.

The United States' increased cooperation with Britain in Iranian affairs added a new and important dimension to the Iranian crisis of 1945-46. As the end of the Second World War gradually drew nearer, the influence of Britain diminished in the Middle East, particularly in Iran. The US took a dominant position as a third force to counterbalance the two major powers. The US concerned itself, especially after 1944, with Iranian issues but still cooperated with Britain to form a strong united front against the Soviet Union. However, an important test of Anglo-America cooperation was the enforcement of the fifth article of the Tripartite Treaty. The cornerstone of this article was that Allied forces would be withdrawn from Iranian territory no more than six months after an armistice or peace between the Allied

⁸⁶⁵ Eagleton 1963, 74.

⁸⁶⁶ Natalia I. Yegorova, 'The "Iran Crisis" of 1945-46: A View from the Russian Archives', *Institute of Universal History Russian Academy of Sciences* (Working Paper No. 15, Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, May 1996), 13.

Powers, Germany and her associates, whichever came first. This principle was an important point for the conflict between the Soviet Union and Anglo-America in Iran because withdrawal proved to be problematic for the Great Powers. The Soviet Union, in particular, showed every intention of establishing itself permanently in Iran. The issue of the withdrawal of Allied military forces from Iran and the Iranian crisis, which planted the seeds of the Cold War in Iran, are two essential aspects that will be described in following section.

3.3. Anglo-American policy towards Kurds in Iran

The political and economic influence of the British government on the Middle East dates back much further than that of the United States, which had only become an international Power since World War I. The following were four significant elements of British foreign policy in the nineteenth century: (1) to protect the route to India, (2) to safeguard the communication lines between the metropolis and their empire, (3) to promote their trade, and (4) to guarantee respect for a minimum of humanitarian standards. These were important reasons for the defence of the independence and integrity of both the Ottoman and the Persian Empires against the threats of Tsarist Russia.⁸⁶⁷ This policy continued after the First World War when the new states, which were formed by the dismantling of the two Empires, continued to oppose the new Soviet regime. Anglo-American policy supported the Iranian central government, especially when Britain maintained security in the oil fields in the south and south western regions of Iran. In contrast, the Soviets encouraged regionalist movements against the Iranian central regime to pressure the Iranian government into possible oil concessions. According to Mo'tazed, from the beginning of 1921 two obstacles were faced by the Iranian government to liberate themselves from the influence of outsiders. The first had to do with attempts of Soviet government to establish a secessionist communist regime in the Gilan province and the second was related to the British government. The monopoly on oil exploration concessions was maintained by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company⁸⁶⁸ and due to the presence of oil fields, Iran was strategically an important country in the Middle East.

Since the discovery of oil fields in southern Iran in the early twentieth century, the major powers' aspirations in Iran heightened even further. As a result of Britain's special role in the oil industry, British influence in Iran was even greater than the considerable Russian influence. Oil was a factor in Anglo-Iranian relations from as early as 1901, when Iran

⁸⁶⁷ Lenczowski 1962, 653.

⁸⁶⁸ Mo'tazed 2001, 175.

granted a concession to the Australian William D'Arcy. The shares of D'Arcy were sold to the British in 1908 and in 1909 and the Anglo-Persian (later Anglo-Iranian) Oil Company was founded. Indeed, diplomatic conflict between Britain and Persia was exacerbated because of this sale of shares from D'Arcy to the British government. In 1931, the Iranian government was highly dissatisfied due to the lower rates of profit it was receiving. In 1932 the Persian parliament declared the Convention of 1901 invalid. The British government answered this move with an ultimatum. Britain then brought the matter to the League of Nations in Geneva. Negotiations resumed in Tehran through the agency of the League of Nations, but they did not lead to any results.⁸⁶⁹

In the beginning of the twentieth century, especially in the period between the First and Second World Wars, Britain and the Soviet Union were actively trying to spread their influence in the Middle East. While the impact of the Great Powers was present after the First World War throughout the Middle East, the role of the US in Iran rose to that of an important power in the Second World War. Lenczowski divided the US relations with the Middle East into three distinct periods: (1) until 1941, (2) during the war period from 1941-45, and (3) after 1945.⁸⁷⁰ The first phase included the beginnings of the American Protestant missionaries paying serious attention to the Middle East, particularly in the nineteenth century. For example, they established the American University in Beirut (as Syrian Protestant College in 1866), American University at Cairo, secondary schools, known as 'colleges' in Tehran and Baghdad. This thesis deals with the second phase of US foreign policy towards Iran in the Second World War. Because the influence of the Allied Powers in Iran increased between the two World Wars, the Shah of Iran sought a third power as a competitor to other Great Powers. Mohammad Reza Shah, Reza Shah's son and successor from 1941-79, formed a relationship with the US. This gave the US, after the weakening of Britain, a free hand in its struggles as the new Great Power against the Soviets.

After the Anglo-Soviet occupation of Iran, the Iranian government invited the American advisers to organise its disordered public and government finances. US civilian and military personnel assumed influential positions as advisers to the Iranian government and began to direct reforms in such key areas as financial administration, domestic security, and

⁸⁶⁹ Bahman Nirumand, *Persien, Modell eines Entwicklungslandes*, tra. To NL by Marre Dubbink, *Perzië, voorbeeld van een ontwikkelingsland* [Persia, an example of developing country], (Amsterdam: Kritiese Bibliotheek, 1969), 31-43.

⁸⁷⁰ Lenczowski 1962, 669.

military organisation.⁸⁷¹ In the period of the Battle of Stalingrad, the American military arrived in the Persian Gulf as the Persian Gulf Command (PGC). Suddenly after the Battle of Stalingrad, according to K.S. Lambton, the British handed over the administration of the Iranian railway to American personnel, who were able to further increase quantity of carriage supplies.⁸⁷² An important American military base was stationed in the Persian Gulf from where the US troops patrolled and guarded not only the oil fields in Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, but also observed the Soviet expansion in the Middle East. Offner explained that the US sent two noncombat military missions of 5,000 men to advise Iran's army and the police.⁸⁷³ The majority of the US Army that arrived in the Persian Gulf came between 1942 and 1943 and according to Lenczowski, it was composed of about 30,000 troops of non-combatant character.⁸⁷⁴ The main purpose of these troops was to speed up the transportation of supplies to Russia and for the construction of military bases. Lenczowski points out that the US non-combatant troops were in charge of building and reorganizing the harbours on the Persian Gulf coast and Shatt-al-Arab, construction and reparation of highways, building of airports, and operation of the Trans-Iranian Railway.⁸⁷⁵

The first major conflict of Great Powers in Iran was in the period of the last quarter of the year 1944. This was termed the Iranian oil crisis and it formed the basis of the origins of the Cold War in the region. The Cold War (1945-1991) was the continuation of the political conflict between Western World states, with one side under the leadership of the United States, and the other being the Communist World, which was under the leadership of the Soviet Union. This political conflict was evident across various international domains, such as military tension, economic competition and domination in world politics. Although the military forces never officially clashed between the two blocs, they manifested the conflict through military coalitions, strategic conventional force deployments, extensive aid to states deemed vulnerable, propaganda dissemination and espionage.⁸⁷⁶ With regard to the

⁸⁷¹ Cleveland 2002, 188.

⁸⁷² K.S. Lambton, 'Some of the Problems Facing Persia', *International Affairs* (Vol. 22, No. 22, Mar., 1946), 255.

⁸⁷³ Arnold A. Offner, *Another Such Victory: President Truman and the Cold War, 1945-1953* (Stanford/California: Stanford University Press, 2002), 113.

⁸⁷⁴ Lenczowski 1949, 273.

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁶ For US and their Alliances against the Soviets and their states' satellites in the period of the origins of the Cold War in Europe, see John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War: 1941-1947*

intelligence operation of Soviet Union towards the capitalist bloc, Vasili Nikitich Mitrokhin divided the Cold War into three distinct phases. The first phase was of the Soviet intelligence operations in Britain from the 1930s until 1951. This period was popular as the *Golden Age*, during which the *Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopastnosti* (KGB, the Soviet security and intelligence service) collected better intelligence than any other power. The second phase during the 1950s and 1960s was aptly called the *Silver Age*, during which substantial intelligence successes were still maintained. The third phase was from the 1970s until the 1980s and was known as the *Bronze Age*, marked by few major successes and, eventually, the fall of the Soviet Union.⁸⁷⁷

According to Paul Kennedy, there were four main political features of the Cold War after 1945. The first was the intensification of the split between the two blocs in Europe. The second was its steady lateral escalation and spread from Europe to the rest of the world. The third was the increasing arms race between the two blocs, along with the creation of supportive military alliances. The final element was the competition to find and create new partnership across the globe by both the Soviet and the Western alliances.⁸⁷⁸ These four elements greatly affected international relations.

The region comprising the countries of Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan in the Middle East and its strategic location on the borders of the Soviet Union, made it an area of high interest for the United States defence planners and their allies during the Cold War. The second feature of the Cold War, as suggested by Kennedy, can be clearly seen during the period of the Iranian oil crisis in 1944 and also during the period of 1945-46. The conflicts of interest between the Anglo-American and Soviets became heated during this period. In one document, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) stated:

(New York: Colombia University Press, 1972); for origins of the Cold War in the Middle East, see Kuniholm 1980; for the origins of the Cold War in Iran, see Estrange L. Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946* (Cambridge Middle East Library, Hardcover, 1992).

⁸⁷⁷ Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West* (Penguin Books Press, 2000), 518. Mitrokhin was a Soviet leader in the service of the KGB and this book is based on unprecedented and unrestricted access to the foreign intelligence arm of the KGB called the First Chief Directorate (FCD), one of the world's most secret and closely guarded archives.

⁸⁷⁸ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Fontana Press, 1989), 482-509.

The Soviet Union views Iran not only as a possible base to attack the vital Caucus oil fields of the Russians, but also a Soviet base for political penetration and possible military operations against areas of vital importance to the security of the Western Powers.⁸⁷⁹

Through this document the CIA tried to understand the motive behind of Soviet troops in Iran and advised the US government to take action. As the CIA stated in the following paragraph:

If the USSR occupied or dominated Iran, it would: (a) gain control of the oil resources now exploited by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company; (b) threaten the oil fields in nearby Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain; (c) acquire additional bases for carrying on subversive activities or actual attacks against Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan; (d) control continental air routes to Iran, threaten those crossing Turkey, Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Persian Gulf, and menace shipping in the Persian Gulf; (e) undermine the will of all Middle Eastern countries to resist aggression; and (f) acquire a base 800 miles nearer than any held at present to potential British-US lines of defence in Africa and the Indian Ocean area.⁸⁸⁰

The rivalry between Anglo-Soviets guided the United States' growing interest in Iran. One of the important ideological figures of America's anti-imperialist mission was General Patrick J. Hurley.⁸⁸¹ Because of the conflict of interest that the British and Soviets had in Iran, he advised President Roosevelt to take action. For the monopoly over their oil resources, the British tried to stay in Iran while the Soviets wanted warm-water ports and northern oil concessions. Kuniholm, who viewed this conflict in terms of Britain's declining influence in the Middle East, suggested that the United States either play a strong independent role in Iran or coordinate its efforts with those of the British, but under American leadership.⁸⁸² General Donald Connolly explained that the State Department saw two US interests in Iran: the need to protect the Gulf in order to safeguard the oil fields in Saudi Arabia, and the desire to protect small nations' rights through the Atlantic Charter.⁸⁸³ The Soviets, however, showed

⁸⁷⁹ CIA historical review program release in full, 'the Current Situation in Iran', (ORE 48, No. 3, 20 October 1947). http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?doc_no=0000256620

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁸¹ Roosevelt's special emissary to Stalin in the winter of 1942. He was the first Allied representative to go to Stalingrad.

⁸⁸² Kuniholm 1980, 149.

⁸⁸³ Cited in Barry Rubin, *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1941-1947: The Road to the Cold War* (London: Frank Cass, 1980), 87.

every intention of establishing themselves permanently in Iran. The Soviets had two strategies to attain this goal. First, they placed their men within the leadership of the Tudeh Party. Secondly, they encouraged both Kurdish and Azerbaijan governments, with the idea of separating the northern provinces from Iran and weakening the central government enough to place it at the mercy of the Tudeh Party.⁸⁸⁴

The existence of the Great Powers in Iran during the oil crisis in 1944, especially during the Iranian crisis of 1945-46, exacerbated not only the Iranian political, economic and social movements, but it also led to a conflict of interest between the Great Powers. As Fred Lawson explained:

From Washington's perspective, an American presence in Iran could provide a vital buffer zone between the USSR and the oil-producing regions along the southern Gulf littoral; from London's, continued control over Iranian oil and the air route to India represented primary components of British post-war planning; and from Moscow's, US attempts to promote 'open door' policies in the [Persian] Gulf provided little more than window-dressing for American imperialism and demanded firm countermeasures to prevent the spread of US hegemony into areas bordering the southern republics of the USSR.⁸⁸⁵

The Iranian crisis in 1945-46 probably began in the period of the Iranian oil crisis in 1944. On August 16, 1946, Lavrenty Beria, Deputy Chairman of the Council of the People's Soviet Commissars and a key figure behind the Kremlin's designs to obtain an oil concession in northern Iran, signed a report on the issue of the Anglo-American policy towards Iranian oil reserves and production. The report specifically referred to Anglo-American contradictions in the struggle for the northern Iranian oil fields.⁸⁸⁶ In September 1944, an agreement between Anglo-Iran and Standard Oil was signed for joint exploration in Iran, which led the Soviets to take further steps. They made an official request for the creation of a mixed Soviet and Iranian company to look for and eventually exploit deposits in the northern region of the country. Two weeks later, the Soviet Vice Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Ivanovich

⁸⁸⁴ Andre Fontaine, *History of the Cold War: From the October Revolution to the Korean War, 1917-1950*, tra. From the French by D.D. Page, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 281-82.

⁸⁸⁵ Fred H. Lawson. 'The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, (Vol. 21, No. 3, Aug., 1989), 307.

⁸⁸⁶ Yegorova 1996, 3.

Kavtaradze, asked the Shah for oil exploration rights in an area of northern Iran.⁸⁸⁷ Such a proposal could only alarm the western oil companies and the Shah decided it was necessary to consider the proposal of Kavtaradze with the advice of the American and British. When the Iranian Prime Minister Sa'id asked the American oil expert Herbert Hoover for a model petroleum contract with the Soviet Union, he saw no objection to such a concession.⁸⁸⁸ But in reality the US Oil Companies began to pressure the Iranian government for oil concessions for the US. Britain had little difficulty in persuading the authorities in Iran to refuse the request of Soviet. The Iranians had gained enough experience with the Russians to know that such a pact would mean a complete Soviet takeover of the oil region. Therefore, Iran was in no rush for an oil concession with the Soviets. Kavtaradze returned to Moscow disheartened and empty handed. This situation around the issue of granting oil concessions revealed a new tendency in Iranian foreign policy and illustrated the conflict of interests between the Great Powers in Iran.

Thus on the December 2, the parliament almost unanimously passed a law forbidding the granting of a concession to a foreign country for the duration of the occupation without a prior agreement. The author of the law was Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq, who a few years later would become famous as the head of the Iranian government that nationalised the Iranian oil fields. This law surprised everyone and especially angered the Soviets.⁸⁸⁹ After the Iranian decision to terminate all negotiations over oil concessions with the Soviets, the Russians went against the Iranian government in three ways. First, Soviet soldiers stopped all commercial rail shipments northward from Tehran and all grain shipments to Tehran from the north.⁸⁹⁰ Second, through the Tudeh party, which was an important instrument of the Soviet policy in Iran, according to Kuniholm, the Soviets kept pressuring the Iranian government for the possibility of an oil concession.⁸⁹¹ The supporters of the Tudeh Party organized demonstrations against the central government in almost every major Iranian city and also took over factories in Tehran, Isfahan and other major cities.⁸⁹² And in northern Iranian

⁸⁸⁷ Kuniholm 1980, 195.

⁸⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁹ For the details of the law Mossadeq's submitted to the Majlis, see Lambton K.S., 'Some of the Problems Facing Persia', 1946, 264.

⁸⁹⁰ Rubin 1980, 97.

⁸⁹¹ Kuniholm 1980, 154.

⁸⁹² Fred H. Lawson, 'The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (Vol. 21, No. 3 (Aug., 1989), 315.

Kurdistan, the JK party proclaimed an official declaration for granting the northern Iranian oil concession to the Soviet Union.⁸⁹³ The third way was fracturing Iranian territorial integrity, and this was realized with the formation of the Azerbaijan government in 1945 and the Republic of Kurdistan in January 22, 1946.

Gradually the US became concerned with these events. Charles Bohlen, Chief of the State Department's Division of East European Affairs, warned that it was necessary to pay 'close attention' to Soviet-Iranian relations in the north.⁸⁹⁴ Kuniholm asserted the US had no intentions of using force to maintain Iranian independence, the real question was whether the United States intended to back the Atlantic Charter in more than just theory.⁸⁹⁵ Roosevelt still respected the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the Allied Powers respected the Iranian territorial integrity and political independence. Further, the Charter increased the protection of America's interests in Iran. Because of these interests in Iran, particularly in the Persian Gulf, some diplomats, including George Kennan, US Ambassador in Moscow, and Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, asked Roosevelt to take a harder line with the Soviets. When Harry Truman became the American president, after the death of President Roosevelt in April 1945, he took an increasingly harder stance against the Soviets all around the globe. Under Truman's direction the State Department began to pursue a more active policy regarding Iran.⁸⁹⁶

Step-by-step the period of the Iranian oil crisis ended and the Iranian crisis of 1945-46 began and led to the intensification of the diplomatic conflict between the Anglo-Americans and the Soviets. By the beginning of 1945, the Soviet intervention in the north of Iran was increased to protect its allied ethnic groups. For example, the Red Army blocked Iranian army operations against Kurdish dissidents, supported the other ethnic minority groups such as the Azeris, Armenians and the Orthodox Church increased their political influence. Soviet pressure on the Iranian government to grant oil concessions was heightened in 1945, when the Politbureau of the Central Communist of Soviet Communist Party ordered Baqirov to take further steps towards building an autonomous government in Iranian Azerbaijan. The formal document focussed mostly on the Azerbaijan issue, with only one of the thirteen points related to the issue of northern Iranian Kurdistan, and the essence of the document was to:

⁸⁹³ For the JK declaration, see Hewrami 2008a, 114-6.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid.; Kuniholm 1980, 197.

⁸⁹⁵ Kuniholm 1980, 199.

⁸⁹⁶ For a discussion on Truman and his relation to the Cold War from 1945-53, see Offner 2002.

Take necessary action that the inhabitants of the northern Iranian Kurdish region be adscribed into an autonomy movement that would lead to the establishment of a Kurdish national autonomous state.⁸⁹⁷

The aim of the Soviets was not to establish a Kurdish state, but was to use the threat as a leverage to obtain its economic ambitions, such as winning an oil concession, in Iran. The Soviets saw the solution of the northern Iranian Kurdish question within that of the larger issues pertaining to the breakaway Azerbaijan government, and Baqirov especially claimed this to be the main purpose. Actually, this was a short-term political plan, which became evident when the Soviets agreed with Ghavam on a possible oil agreement and the Azeris/Kurdish question was then pushed to the background. The withdrawal of the Allied military from Iran, which was an important element of the Iranian crisis of 1945-46, should be thoroughly discussed and for this it is necessary to refer to some important issues from the Yalta (February 4 to 11, 1945), Potsdam (July 17 to August 2, 1945), London (September 1945) and Moscow (December 16 to 26, 1945) Conferences, which were treated the policies of the Great Powers towards Iran.

The increasing intensity of the political interests of the Allied Powers became manifest after the end of World War II on May 1945, resulting in increasing enthusiasm for Iranian political, economic and social movements. The Iranian population was being split between pro-British, pro-American and pro-Soviet groups. The Soviets were supporting the leftist, socialist and working-class elements of the population, and the British were supporting the conservative and landowning elements.⁸⁹⁸ The US government tried utmost to maintain the central government in Iran. This political polarisation not only brought Iran into a crisis, but it was also an important factor in the origins of the Cold War. Truman, Churchill, and Clement Attlee, during the Potsdam Conference, had not only sanctioned against the Soviet domination of Poland, but the question of the removal of foreign troops from Iran became more urgent. Before the Potsdam Conference and shortly after the end of World War II, the Iranian king Mohammad Reza Shah requested that the British and Soviet governments evacuate their troops. The Iranian government reminded the Allied Powers of the Tripartite Treaty of 1942,

⁸⁹⁷ Monidjeh Sadr and Rahim Nikbakht, *Peydayesh Firqiyih Dimocrate Azerbaijan: Be Riwayet Asnad ve Khatirat Montashir Nashodih* [the rise of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party: according to unpublished documents and memoirs], (Tehran: Nazar Publishers, 1981), 224.

⁸⁹⁸ Rubin 1980, 163.

which promised the Iranian government that the Allied forces would withdraw their troops within six months of the ending of the war.

At the Yalta Conference, the Allied Powers had agreed to meet following the surrender of Nazi-Germany to determine the post-war borders in Europe. Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945, and the Allied Powers agreed to meet over the summer at Potsdam to continue the discussions that began at Yalta. Although the Allies remained committed to fighting a joint war in the Pacific, the lack of a common enemy in Europe led to difficulties reaching a consensus concerning post-war reconstruction on the European continent. The Iranian government was just as disappointed with the results of Potsdam Conference as of the Yalta Conference. The Iranians thought that the option to withdraw the foreign troops from Iran was on the agenda at the Yalta Conference, but this did not come up for discussion. This was however the most important subject at the Potsdam Conference. American troops were already being withdrawn and the US Persian Gulf Command terminated its mission on June 23, 1945.⁸⁹⁹ At Potsdam, the British urged the Soviets to agree to an accelerated timetable for mutual withdrawal of the troops from Iran. Truman supported the British proposal and said that he expected US troops to leave Iran within sixty days.⁹⁰⁰

Stalin did not show any interest in this subject. He believed that World War II was not over in May 1945, as it still continued against Japan. Stalin claimed that the Allied troops should be withdrawn from Iran after the war against Japan ended, but he promised the Iranian government that he would withdraw his troops from Tehran. After the Anglo-Americans pressed for a stronger commitment from the Soviet leader, Stalin agreed that the foreign powers had six months to withdraw their troops after the end of the war with Japan. Evacuation of the troops from the capital of Iran was clearly agreed on at the Potsdam Conference, but a withdrawal of the Allied Powers' troops from the whole country was due to be discussed further at the foreign ministers meeting in the London Conference.

After the termination of the Second World War, the Iranian government tried everything to ensure that the Allies would withdraw their troops from Iran. Iran saw the presence of foreign troops, particularly that of the Soviets, as a danger to their sovereignty. Meanwhile, on September 6, four days after Japan's surrender, Anushiravan Sipahbodi, Iran's Foreign Minister, made a formal statement to the effect that Iran was responsible for its own internal security and was being prevented from accomplishing this task. He stressed that the

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid., 164.

⁹⁰⁰ Offner 2002, 113.

end of the war had removed the need for special authorisation to assume this responsibility and evacuation within six months was now certain.⁹⁰¹ The Iranian government asked the American government if Iran could be represented at the London Conference. At the London meeting the Americans quickly agreed that all foreign troops would be evacuated by March 2, 1946 at the latest, but one may well wonder if Molotov had any intention of honouring that agreement. Between the time of the London and Moscow Conferences, the Soviets in northern Iran were actively helping some ethnic groups struggle against the central government of Iran. Lawson claimed that the Soviet activities in the north of Iran were followed as:

On the one hand, Soviet actions in northern Iran have generally been seen as part of a larger program of expansionism. [Russian] support for the autonomous government in northern Iran in the face of stiff American opposition, expressed in the firm US demands that the United Nations censure the USSR for its policies in the region. On the other hand, Soviet actions in Iran's northern provinces in 1945-1946 can also be viewed as a reaction to American initiatives throughout the Middle East in general, and along the southern [Persian] Gulf littoral in particular.⁹⁰²

The Moscow Conference coincided with Iran's attempts to solve its two major problems with the Soviet Union: the events in Azerbaijan and northern Iranian Kurdistan, and the determination on part of the Soviets not to withdraw their military and thereby strengthen their position in Iran. Approximately one week before the Moscow Conference, the Iranian Ambassador to the United States, Hussein 'Ala, sent a message to the US, which recommended that the questions related to Iran be on the agenda at the Moscow Conference.⁹⁰³ The Iranian question was an essential topic at the Moscow Conference in the following two regards: the withdrawal of Allied forces from Iranian territory and the formation of Provincial Councils in Iran. Anglo-American representatives, Bevin and Harriman, discussed with Stalin on December 19, 1945, the possible withdrawal of military forces from Iran. Stalin's reaction included the following concerns:

⁹⁰¹ Kuniholm 1980, 275.

⁹⁰² Lawson, 'The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946', 321.

⁹⁰³ Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-1973: A Study of Foreign Policy in Modernizing Nations* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975), 124.

The first concern was about the hostility of the Iranian government towards the Soviets. Second, this hostility caused sabotage of the Baku oil fields. Third, the Soviet-Persian Treaty of Friendship of 1921 should be honoured, especially article 6. Fourth, the Soviets would later consider whether it would withdraw their troops under the Tripartite Treaty or keep them there under the 1921 treaty. Fifth, Soviet military was not interfering in Azerbaijan. Sixth, the Iranian government was trying to stir up trouble between Russia and the Anglo-Saxon powers.⁹⁰⁴

The first issue was discussed without a formal conclusion and it was decided to continue the topic of the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Iran at the informal level during the subsequent sessions.⁹⁰⁵ But the Anglo-American-Soviet representatives established a commission to further investigate the Iranian issues, amongst which the withdrawal of the Allied troops from Iran was the first of eleven points being on the commission's agenda.⁹⁰⁶

The establishment of Provincial Councils was also an important issue at the Moscow Conference. Article 4, 6 and 11 of the commission's agenda referred to this issue and it also formed a significant focus of the Allied Commission in Iran. According to article 4:

The commission should try to bring a solution to the problems between the central government and the regions with which it has a problem. [The commission] should help the Iranian government for the establishment of Provincial Councils based on Iranian constitutional law.⁹⁰⁷

Article 11 states that, 'the first provincial election must be under observation of the commission.'⁹⁰⁸ The commission of the Allied forces in Iran also investigated and supported the issue of the linguistic rights of the ethnic minorities in Iran, which was the third factor that was discussed at the Moscow Conference. Educational-linguistic rights for ethnic minorities in Iran were accepted by the Allied Commission in article 7, which stated that the 'ethnic minorities, including Arabs, Turks and Kurds, must be able to use their language for education and other purposes.'⁹⁰⁹ But, to what extent was this commission successful?

⁹⁰⁴ Ibid., 125.

⁹⁰⁵ Yegorova 1996, 15.

⁹⁰⁶ For these eleven points of the commission, see Hewrami 2008a, 290-91.

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid., 290.

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid., 291.

⁹⁰⁹ Hewrami 2008a, 291.

On the one hand, it was unsuccessful because the Soviets were not interested in this commission. According to Molotov, Anglo-Americans formed the commission illegitimately without the presence of the Iranian government, and so it could not do anything.⁹¹⁰ The Soviets, however, had not yet achieved any northern Iranian oil concessions and were concerned with the Anglo-American presence in Iran and the Persian Gulf. Therefore, in the last quarter of 1945 and the first quarter of 1946, the Soviet Union tried to strengthen its presence in northern Iran to maintain the buffer zone as protection against attacks from the south. Fearing expansion from the south, Soviets saw the presence of the American military in the Persian Gulf as a threat, which might have been one of the leading causes for the Soviets' attempt to retain its troops in northern Iran. Thus by helping two governments, Azerbaijan and Kurdish, the Soviets were intent on strengthening its position in northern Iran.⁹¹¹ Another reason that the Allied Commission's proposal was unsuccessful was because the Iranian parliament eventually refused it. An important Iranian politician in the Majlis was Muhammad Mossadeq, who rejected the proposal of the commission, and ultimately Hakimi, the Prime Minister, also refused the proposal of the Allied Commission towards Iran.⁹¹²

The final element of Paul Kennedy's features of the Cold War after 1945 was the competition to find new partners after the the Second World War. The Soviet recognition of Syria and Lebanon, the promotion of the Communist parties in Iraq and Syria, support for the Armenians, Iranian Azeris, Tudeh Party and the Kurds of Iraq and Iran, were examples of the active Soviet policy towards the Middle East, particularly in Iran. According to Rubin, the success of these Soviet activities would largely depend on how well Great Britain would be able to maintain its traditional position in the Middle East, particularly in Iran, and how much the US would undertake to support Britain.⁹¹³ From 1946 there is an indication that the US and England began to cooperate for their own interests, namely by blocking the expansion of the Soviets to the south and protecting the oil fields in the region of the Persian Gulf. Their cooperation not only strengthened the hand of the Anglo-Americans, but it also strengthened the political position of the Iranian government against the Soviet Union with regard to withdrawing their troops from Iran.

⁹¹⁰ Ibid., 297; Yegorova 1996, 16.

⁹¹¹ For more on the Great Powers' conflict on Iranian crisis, see Louise L Estrange Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946* (Cambridge Middle East Library, Hardcover, 1992).

⁹¹² Ramazani 1975, 125-6.

⁹¹³ Rubin 1980, 158.

After Stalin's hard hitting and critical election speech on February 9, 1946 against capitalism⁹¹⁴, Churchill visited Truman to work together against the Soviet expansion around the world.⁹¹⁵ Approximately two weeks after Stalin's election speech, George Kennan, US Ambassador in Moscow and an important ideological figure of America's anti-communist mission, sent a long telegram to the State Department. It was concerning the Soviets' behaviour and it advised the Truman administration to take a hard line against the Soviet Union. Kennan alerted the 'congressional committees to the dangers of the Communist conspiracy.'⁹¹⁶ Kuniholm concluded that:

The Truman administration eventually came to the conclusion that bilateral diplomacy between the Soviet Union and Iran was not a desirable method of solving the Iranian question. Even when sanctioned by the United Nations, bilateral diplomacy created too many opportunities for coercion. Such a course made it difficult to uphold the principles of the United Nations and threatened the security interests of the United States.⁹¹⁷

Via the United Nations, the Iranian government together with the US and British governments pressured the Soviet Union to withdraw their troops from Iran. Eventually on March 22, 1946, Stalin released a statement to an American press agency expressing his faith in the UN. On March 26, his ambassador to Tehran informed Ghavam that Russian troops would evacuate the whole country by May 9 if he would agree to a joint oil company, with 51 percent of the stakes for the Soviet Union and 49 percent for Iran, and if he would reach an understanding with the leaders of Azerbaijan. The Prime Minister gave his consent with the one condition that it would have to be ratified by a parliament that was to be elected within seven months following the end of foreign occupation.⁹¹⁸ After withdrawal of the Soviet troops from northern Iran, the Iranian government dissolved the two autonomous governments of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. The Iranian parliament that was elected in July 1947 promptly

⁹¹⁴ Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 'Stalin's election speech, February 1946', (Cold War Files Documents, February 1946). See WWICS website:

<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/coldwarfiles/index.cfm?thisunit=0&fuseaction=documents.list>

⁹¹⁵ Ibid., 'Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech, March 1946'.

⁹¹⁶ George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950* (US: Bantam Book, 1967), 309. For Kennan's long telegram to the US State Department, see *ibid.*, 285-313.

⁹¹⁷ Kuniholm 1980, 303.

⁹¹⁸ Fontaine 1968, 284.

refused to ratify the oil pact with Soviet. The Soviets, who had been roundly beaten, did not even attempt to intervene because Truman's administration took a hard line against them. On March 12, 1947, Truman issued, according to Abdulreza Hoshang Mahdawi, an important declaration against the expansion of communism in the international arena and called for the protection the small nations, such as Turkey and Greece, against the dangers of communism. This policy of the Truman administration played a significant role during the period of the Cold War and built a strong defensive dam against the communism expansion worldwide.⁹¹⁹

⁹¹⁹ Abdulreza Hoshang Mahdawi, *Tarikhe Rawabte Kharji Iran: Az Abtedaye Safaviyah ta Payan Jange Dowome Jahani* [history of foreign relation of Iran: from the beginning of Safawid until the end of the Second World War], (Tehran: Amir Kabir Publishers, 2007), 437.