SECRET

US URGENT

TEHRAN, May 15, 1946—3 p. m.
[Received 3:12 p. m.]

699. Qavam expressed the opinion to me today that the Tehran Govt must grant several concessions to Azerbaijan. He specified the questions of Commander-in-Chief of Azerbaijan Army and Governor General. He thought Tehran must concede these points to Pishreviri to prevent Azerbaijan from declaring independence from Iran and repudiation of the dynasty. Qavam thought that other provinces and even Tehran might take similar action with regard to the dynasty.

Qavam said that the Shah had interfered in the recent negotiations by refusing to concur in any concessions to Azerbaijan beyond the seven-point program announced in advance. As regards Pishrevir’s statement on the radio last night that failure to reach agreement in the negotiations had been due to influence exercised by irresponsible authorities, Qavam said Pishrevir meant the Shah. Qavam declared he had not told Pishrevir of the Shah’s interference in the negotiations and that Pishrevir had reached his conclusion by deduction. I am inclined to doubt the latter statement. Qavam has clearly made every endeavor to remain in the good graces of Azerbaijan and Leftist elements. Even if he did not accuse Shah in so many words he certainly let Pishrevir understand that he, Qavam, could reach a settlement except for the Shah’s opposition.

Qavam asked me to impress the Shah with the necessity for making these concessions to Azerbaijan if he wanted to save the unity of Iran and the crown. Regardless of whether Qavam’s views in this matter are sound, it does not seem to me a question which I should attempt to give advice, certainly in the absence of a request by the Shah for his [my?] opinion. I would welcome Department’s views.2

Qavam said without elaboration, that a refusal to make further concessions to Azerbaijan might well result in war between Iran and the Soviet Union. I am inclined to believe that both in this statement and his remarks regarding the dynasty, Qavam is building up arguments in favor of making concessions to Azerbaijan.

Sent Dept 699, repeated Moscow 197 and Paris.

Allen

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2 In telegram 440, May 17, 7 p. m., to Tehran, the Department stated: “We agree with your view that this is not kind of question in which you should give unsolicited advice. We are confident that you will be able, in case your advice is sought directly by Qavam or Shah, to give a reply which will be consonant with the assurances contained in the Declaration on Iran and which at the same time will avoid giving impression of a partisan attitude on part of this Govt in purely internal Iranian affairs.” (86160/6-1546).
WASHINGTON, December 20, 1946—7 p.m.

1054. Now that Iran Govt has been able to assert authority over Azerbaijan we hope Qavam will adopt conciliatory attitude toward people of that province and refrain from repressive or retaliatory measures against Russians, Azerbaijanis and Kurds. We believe the granting of general amnesty and limiting of punishment to judicial process against few guilty leaders would have good effect on world opinion and tend to counter Soviet statements that Iran is reactionary.

We feel that Qavam has splendid opportunity at this point to show statesmanlike qualities, mold Iran into homogeneous nation and put into effect reforms which he has stated are basis of his program and in general lead Iran toward a fuller life for the people and an improved place among the United Nations. It would be regrettable if through inaction or lack of publicity Soviet view that political trend in Iran is retrograde should gain currency in world. To prevent this we feel Qavam should lose no time in announcing and giving full publicity to a clear-cut program of social, constitutional and tribal reform which will leave no doubt that Iran is looking forward and not backward. In this connection we believe Qavam should refrain to extent possible from suppressing opposition parties and press but rather should encourage democratic processes and establishment of responsible press through positive leadership and by issuing official clarifying statements where misstatements have been made or truth distorted.

You may in your discretion make these views known to Qavam.

Byrnes