

# Geopolitical Transformations and International Conflict over Iran 1944 - 1947

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## Abstract

The study indicates that the Cold War began in Iran before expanding globally. It details the Iranian parliament's refusal to approve Soviet oil concessions in the northern regions. This pivotal moment marked a significant decline in relations between Moscow and Tehran despite their geographical proximity. This event also initiated a new phase of strong ties between Washington and Tehran, where the U.S. played a crucial role in ending British dominance over oil investments in Iran. Additionally, the research highlights the efforts of American oil companies to secure concessions in Iran and their concerns regarding oil interests in the region. These concerns, coupled with the ideological conflict between capitalism and communism, prompted the U.S. government to adopt a containment strategy aligned with the Truman Doctrine. By implementing a plan to curb communist influence in Iran and other areas, the United States effectively turned the conflict to its advantage.

**Keywords:** Iran, War, Washington, Ideological.

The military alliance of yesterday's friends (England, Russia, the United States, and others) evolved into a ferocious rivalry for control over Iran by the end of World War II, bringing about significant changes to the international arena. Iran also changed from being a supply corridor for the Soviet Union over the Persian Corridor to a theatre of war for major nations (Egyptian Foreign Ministry Documents, File 161). This was made abundantly evident during the Big Three's February 1945 meeting in Yalta to discuss plans for the war's closing months, when Roosevelt and Churchill attempted, but were unsuccessful, to persuade Stalin to agree to the establishment of legal, democratic governments for the Eastern European countries (Kennan, 1961, p 105, Magda, 2002, 17, Lacour, 1959, 161-165). This marked the beginning of the shift

from an alliance to competition and from a hot war to a cold war.

Aside from the fact that the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company dominated the Persian economy and that the British and Soviets controlled the south and north of Iran, the Iranian issue was brought up during the Yalta Conference. Roosevelt urged Churchill and Stalin to remove their forces from Tehran, but their ambitions for Iranian oil prevented this (Bryson, 1985, p 265-280). Particularly after geological studies at the time demonstrated that the Arabian Gulf and the Caucasus were the world's oiliest regions, promising enormous rewards for local governments and those who secured oil concessions there (Archives of Countries, Saudi Arabia Governorate).

### The Struggle Over Iranian Oil and the Roots of the Cold War:

Reports from the US State Department from Tehran in the latter stages of the Second World War attested to the fact that the Soviet Union and the British had desires to rule over Iranian territory—albeit independently, not together. England wanted to monopolize commerce with Iran while also preparing to protect the oil riches, much of which it already owned. Regarding the Soviets, their goal was to realize the long-ago fantasy of finding a maritime route that would allow them to access the warm seas of the Arabian Gulf. In light of these conflicting ambitions, it became clear that the conflict in the Gulf region would not end with the end of the world war, but would begin in new paths and directions (F.R.U.S., 1943, General Patrick J. Hurley, 1943, pp. 363, 370.)

Thus, in order to fulfil the 1942 Treaty and keep the Soviets from accessing the economic potential of the Gulf, the United States stipulated that the Anglo-Soviet forces must be withdrawn from Tehran within six months of the war's conclusion (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorate), as the US Secretary of State called in December 1945 for the necessity of the complete withdrawal of the Allied forces from Iran before March 2, 1946 (Truman, 1956, pp. 93, 94)

The American situation in favor of Tehran is ascribed to a number of primary causes, chief among them being: Iran's situation as a strategic buffer between American interests in the Gulf and Soviet ambitions, in addition to the vast oil wealth that its lands contain, and the special importance it holds in the framework of American foreign policy, especially after the American companies Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony Vacuum were able to sign an agreement on December 29, 1946 with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, according to which the latter pledged to supply 40% of the Iranian oil it extracted for twenty years to the two American companies, in exchange for these two companies participating in the expenses of

extending the new pipeline that the Anglo-Iranian company intended to build to transport Iranian oil to the port of Haifa on the Mediterranean Sea (Archives of Countries, Document 9/3)

On the conference attendees' expectations for the future of their nation, the Iranian public opinion was split into two camps. The first group included: the pessimists who saw that the discussions would end with the division of Iran into areas of influence between England and the Soviet Union (as happened in 1907), while the other group included: the optimists who confirmed that the policy of imposing influence had ended, especially in light of the American presence, and that it was difficult for the Big Three, who were exhausted by the war, to continue it for the sake of regional interests that could be easily overcome politically (Archives of Countries, Document 9/3)

However, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov disapproved of everyone and declined the American invitation because he believed that his nation, the closest neighbour to the Gulf and a global powerhouse, had the right to preserve its common borders with Iran, safeguard national security, and preserve the Soviet oil production areas in Baku (Economist, Oct. 21, 1944), and that the Western countries monopolized the wealth, investments, and trade relations with the Gulf countries and emirates, in addition to the fact that the Gulf, as a waterway, enabled the Soviets to reach the countries of South Asia and East Africa, and thus relinquishing it meant that the Soviets were giving a strategic base to the Western navy to operate against Moscow, especially since London and Washington had already managed to obtain military bases there (Country Archives, Bahrain Governorate).

According to these factors, Soviet interests required working to deprive Western economies and fleets of Iranian oil (Country Archives, Bahrain Governorate, Governor of the Soviet Union (Moscow), and working to spread communism in the Gulf region to confront capitalist ambitions (Middle East Governor).

Consequently, Iran became between the American-British hammer on the one hand and the Soviet anvil on the other.

As a result, the worldwide struggle started to evolve into the Cold War, which broke out in the Gulf before anywhere else. All Iranian internal fronts opposed England's efforts to maintain the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company as a covert government within the Iranian government as it existed prior to the war, while Standard Oil, Sconi Vacuum, and Sinclair Oil Corporation, three American companies, attempted to take advantage of the American presence. Then, it was a chance to open the door to negotiations with the Iranian government in September 1944 to obtain oil concessions in the five Northern provinces, and expressed its readiness to activate trade exchange and establish American air bases in Iran. At the same time, the Soviets requested oil concessions in the areas adjacent to them, and they sent an official committee to Iran headed by the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister S. Kavtrazde for this purpose on September 15, 1944. This delegation met with the Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Saeed Maraghi, and after discussions, Saeed announced the postponement of discussing the concessions until the war ended, thus closing the way for both the Americans and the Soviets. However, Kavtrazde insisted on trying to force Iran to sign the concession, and pressured the Shah to achieve this, relying on the Soviet military presence in Iran on the one hand, and the support of the Tudeh Party on the other hand, as he was well aware that his chances of obtaining the concession would disappear in the event of withdrawal from Iranian territory, and therefore he launched a fierce war to overthrow the ministry and obtain the concession (The Governor of Iran, Film 58, Portfolio 89)

Amidst this intense rivalry, there were rumours going around Iran that the Prime Minister was planning to give oil concessions to British and American businesses without consulting Parliament. Maraghi was compelled by this to send the issue to Parliament for a

resolution. On October 8, 1944, he revealed in a secret session that the administration had decided to wait until the conclusion of the war to approve the negotiations' completion. On the same day, he informed the British and American consulates in Tehran that the Shah had decided to break off the negotiations after learning that the Soviets had requested other mining concessions in addition to oil in the north of the country, and he refused to sign any new agreements during the war (The Governor of Iran, Film 58, Portfolio 89)

But given the difficult circumstances the country was going through, the American government had serious concerns, which were made clear by Murray, the American ambassador to Tehran, in a telegram he sent to his State Department. Murray stated that the pressures on the Iranian government to tie oil concessions to the withdrawal of foreign forces from its territory might push it to open the door to oil negotiations with the Soviets in secret, without bringing the matter before parliament or the public. He suggested that the American State Department send representatives of oil companies who had experience and competence to Tehran to follow developments closely, and to take into account that the Soviets would not be happy with an oil concession contract with American companies, and they might send representatives for the same purpose (F.R.U.S., 1945)

The Soviet response was violent. On October 24, 1944, Kavtridze gave a press conference where he criticised the Iranian decision, emphasising that signing an oil concession with Tehran would provide more job opportunities for Iranian workers in addition to building buildings, roads, and expanding agriculture and industry. He then clearly announced that the Soviets would not enter into further direct negotiations with the Iranian government, and that all their correspondence would be limited to political and military channels from Moscow itself, and not from the Soviet embassy in Tehran (Country Archives). This was an unmistakable sign of the

threat to break diplomatic ties and the potential for Soviet military action against Iran.

American officials believed that the Soviet Union would try to instigate a financial and economic crisis in order to promote political unrest in Tehran, hinder the work of the American financial mission stationed there at the time, and topple the Iranian ministry and possibly the regime itself. This belief was based on numerous reports the State Department received confirming the Kremlin's intention to turn Iran into a communist state, particularly in light of the Tudeh Party's obvious activities (F.R.U.S., 1943, Memo. N. (891.51/571). The party's followers swiftly put the American conjectures to rest by coordinating a campaign against the fall of the government, starting protests, and attacking them violently in parliament buildings and publications. Things developed quickly, and the demonstrations moved to the five northern cities: Rasht, Tabriz, Isfahan, Qazvin, and Mashhad, where they witnessed acts of violence. The Soviet army advanced to serve its interests and helped ignite the situation. The demonstrators took control of public buildings, and when the Iranian police tried to stop them, the Red Army intervened and disarmed them, and expelled the governor of Tabriz. Riots and clashes spread, resulting in a large number of deaths. Among the dead and wounded was a Soviet officer, and the Maraghi Ministry was eventually toppled to calm the situation (Country Archives)

In November 1944, Morteza Agha Bayat led the formation of a new Iranian government. From the start, its foreign policy fell against of world aspirations for Iranian wealth. After that, Bayat made an effort to defuse the situation. He did this by presenting his ministry's agenda to parliament in broad terms, emphasising domestic matters, and avoiding any mention of the sensitive subject of oil concessions (Country Archives)

Nonetheless, a few delegates pressed for a clarification of his foreign policy's components, particularly in relation to oil concessions. Bayat

stated that until his administration had sufficient time to deliberate on this complex matter, he could not commit to anything. He was unable to escape for very long, though, as the Council members lost the chance to support him. Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh then surrounded him with a new draft law that forbade the Iranian government from signing any agreement to grant oil concessions with any foreign nation or company without first consulting the Parliament, and that anyone found in violation would face a sentence of three to eight years in prison. The Iranian Parliament approved that law, which was known as the "Mossadegh Law," on December 2, 1944 (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorates, Film 58, Portfolio 89)

The major powers were taken aback by this law's issuance, as was the Iranian government, since they were unable to call for its discussion. This was especially true given that the law was swiftly approved with 73 votes in favour compared to 9 votes against, 8 of which went to Tudeh Party members (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorates, Film 58, Portfolio 89). Thus, the Iranian parliament preserved the right of its people to participate in the exploitation of its wealth, and this law was also an official birth certificate for the rise of Mohammad Mossadegh in leading the Iranian national movement later.

The Soviet response to this law was violent because it was seen as an unfriendly act by the Iranians, who years earlier had granted the British the same opportunity and oil concessions in the southern part of the country, ignoring the shared interests and geographic ties between the Soviets and the Iranians as well as their cooperative efforts within the Allied forces. Through the Soviet Ambassador in Tehran and the Deputy Foreign Minister, they notified the Iranian authorities of this. In an attempt to absorb the Soviet reaction, the official Iranian channels commented that the aforementioned law not only prevented the Soviets from obtaining an oil concession in Iran, but also prohibited this for all other foreign companies (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorates, Film 58, Portfolio 89)

Violent campaigns were started against that law by the Iranian communist press. The Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister departed Tehran after several weeks, according to the Tudeh Party mouthpiece newspaper, *Rahbar*. During his visit, he offered several economic initiatives to build the nation, including securing oil concessions. The aforementioned statute, however, delayed the decision on these ideas to some officials who were unable to persuade the government of the necessity of paving the roads in the capital since the Iranian authorities did not thoroughly research these proposals (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorates, Film 58, Portfolio 89)

The Soviet response persisted to such an extent that the Soviet embassy in Tehran applied pressure for the Soviet maid serving the Iranian prime minister to quit. In addition, the Soviet envoy left a sporting event celebrating the Shah's birthday after the prime minister of Iran attempted to take a seat next to him. Sharp escalation tones marked the conclusion of the response, with threats to remain in Iran during 1945 and the first few months of 1946 and beyond (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorates, Film 58, Portfolio 89).

The Soviets between military withdrawal and economic intervention:

With their long history in the area, the British knew for a fact that the Soviets were willing to give the Russian bear its fur in addition to their military withdrawal from Iran in exchange for oil concessions in the northern regions and access to warm waters. This led them to ask Washington to cut back on the help that the United States was giving Moscow during the last stages of the war, believing that doing so would give Moscow more influence and jeopardize international peace. However, the White House was well aware that the American missions, with their American officials, advisors and officers in Tehran, gave additional weight to American influence on the Shah, and when sitting at the peace negotiating table, the principles of the Atlantic Charter could be achieved to guarantee

Iran's freedom and implement American policy there (F.R.U.S., 1943, N. (711.91/94),

The Americans also understood that communist inclinations posed a major danger to US interests in the Gulf and that their partnership with the Soviets was only intended to bring the conflict to a conclusion, especially in light of the wide influence that communism enjoyed in Iranian circles through the Tudeh Party, and its military presence in the northern regions (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorate), and England's loss of the power necessary to maintain its traditional role in the Middle East, not only because of its economic collapse, but also because its role had been cracked by Nazism and fascism, and its inability to confront communism had become clear. Therefore, the United States had to play an independent and strong role to confirm the victory of capitalism in the Middle East, even if this was done at the expense of England itself, or within the framework of integration between London and Washington (F.R.U.S., 1943, N. (711.91/94)

With Japan's surrender on September 2, 1945, and Germany's defeat in May of the same year, the US government therefore aimed to scale back its military presence in Iran. England also announced the withdrawal of its forces by December 1945 from all Iranian territories (Egyptian Foreign Ministry, Portfolio 283), with the exception of the forces in the southern sector. Meanwhile, the Soviets showed no intention of withdrawing, despite the continuous Iranian demand for their withdrawal in implementation of the Triple Alliance Agreement of 1942, which stipulated the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Iranian territory within six months from the date of the end of the war, i.e. March 2, 1946. As soon as this date came, the Russian forces did not withdraw, but rather Moscow strengthened its military presence with new additional units, distributed weapons to members of the Tudeh Party, and stirred up sedition in the northern part of Azerbaijan with the support of the Red Army (Truman, 1956, pp. 93, 94).

The White House operated entirely independently of the British administration in regards to the response to the Soviet refusal to withdraw from northern Iran since England's position appeared precarious from the start, as it sought to maintain the division of Iran between London and Moscow. Because Anglo-Soviet aspirations impeded the execution of American economic policies, its leaders felt that eliminating them and maintaining the unity of Iranian land was essential to the security of the United States (Archives of Countries, Governor of the USSR)

Thus, under the pretext of the Soviet retreat and its aggressive strategy, the US State Department attempted to conceal its economic incursion into Iran. Then, because Tehran was unwilling to make this demand openly for fear of upsetting the Kremlin and making matters worse, Washington persuaded Tehran to insist that Moscow leave its land. For this reason, the US State Department dispatched H. Minor, the newly appointed chief of the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, to Tehran. Additionally, he reaffirmed that his nation intends to remove its troops from Iranian land. Iranian circles expressed their satisfaction with this visit, especially since the country was in dire need of a powerful mediator like Washington to protect them from Soviet ambitions (The Governor of Iran, Film 58, Portfolio 89). On the economic side, Washington urged Tehran to demand that the Soviets pay the debts they owed to Iran for the costs of transporting Russian equipment via Iranian railways, customs duties, and transit fees. These debts amounted to \$28 million, but the Soviets refused to pay them (Egyptian Foreign Ministry)

Not content to stop there, the Soviets also funded opposition movements in northern Iran in an attempt to incite sedition there. This was particularly evident in the city of Mianeh in southeast Azerbaijan, where on December 10, 1945, protests broke out very quickly and resulted in widespread destruction of both public and private property. One by one, the

demonstrators overran government offices, set fire to train stations, and took control of them. In order to break off contact with the central government, they cut communication links with Tehran, assassinated a number of Iranian police officers, and disfigured their corpses in front of police stations. The matter ended with the surrender of the police forces, despairing of receiving supplies. It became certain that these movements were not just demonstrations, but separatist movements that took what was known as the "Democratic Party" in Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, and other northern Iranian provinces (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorate, Film 58, Portfolio 89)

The Red Army forces intercepted the Iranian armored vehicles and stopped them from interacting with the separatist movement. This was the Iranian government's attempt to maintain control over the situation after the Minister of War dispatched two armored divisions from the army to the north of the country. In order to consider the urgent issue, the Iranian administration called for a secret meeting of the parliament. Some representatives attacked the Soviet authorities and accused them of inciting separatist movements, but the representatives of the Tudeh Party responded to them by saying that what was happening was no less violent and exploitative of the country's wealth than the United States and England, especially after the inability of the American advisors in the Iranian army and police to deal with the situation (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorate, Film 58, Portfolio 89)

The situation in northern Iran quickly got out of hand when, on December 12, 1945, some 700 separatists met in Tabriz, the capital of the Azerbaijan region, and declared their intention to secede from Iran and establish an independent Azerbaijani government. They were led by Jafar Peshwari, the leader of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party, which was a continuation of the Tudeh Party. The Kurdistan Democratic Party, led by Qazi Muhammad, also announced their separation from Iran and the establishment

of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorate, Film 58, Portfolio 89). The Soviet Union announced its full support for the two new states, and the continued presence of its forces in (Khorasan, Gorgan, Mazandaran, Gilan, and other northern Iranian cities), and the prevention of the security presence of Iranian forces from entering these areas.

The United States expressed its dissatisfaction with the Soviet measures and encouraged Iran to refer the matter to the Security Council on January 19, 1946. Iran was even supported in achieving a political victory to support its case against the Soviets. While the British were willing to reach a reconciliation decision with the Soviets regarding Azerbaijan, the United States was not. Accordingly, the Iranian Prime Minister traveled to Moscow in February 1946 with the aim of negotiating the Soviet withdrawal from his country, but his attempts did not yield anything, in the face of the Kremlin's insistence on not withdrawing until they obtained oil concessions in the areas under their control, and established an Iranian-Soviet oil company in the northern provinces, which prompted the United States to protest against this (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorate, Film 58, Portfolio 89)

Thus, the US government came to understand that any accommodation of the Soviet Union would result in Iran becoming a communist hotspot and in the US interests in the Gulf and the region as a whole collapsing. Perhaps the Soviets would seek to incite the Kurds in the northern regions of Iraq and Turkey to unite and establish an independent state (Middle East Governor, Film 48, Portfolio 74). The American situation was supported and legitimized by the March 1942 treaty signed between London, Moscow and Tehran, in which Washington was an unofficial partner in solidarity to guarantee Iran's independence and territorial integrity.

Given the threat that Soviet aspirations posed to global capitalism in general and British

interests in the Middle East in particular, Washington attempted to work with London to combine its opposition to communism and support for Iran (Middle East Governor, Film 48, Portfolio 74). The American and British governments then suggested to Tehran that a tripartite committee be sent to study the situation with the three countries, but the pro-Soviet newspapers obstructed American efforts (Middle East Governor, Film 48, Portfolio 74)

US President Truman made the decision to confront the Soviet Union head-on in order to compel them to uphold their international duties in March 1946. In a sharply worded letter, he demanded that Stalin leave Iranian territory and urged Stalin to follow international accords and the Iranian constitution, just as the United States and England had done. But Stalin rejected the American tone, pointing out that the formation of a national government for the Azerbaijan region did not conflict with the Iranian constitution, and that the Soviet forces demanded that the Iranian government not send new forces to the northern regions, because this would worsen the situation and lead to more bloodshed. Therefore, the Soviet forces were forced to intervene armedly to maintain security and peace, based on the right granted to them under the 1921 treaty concluded between the two countries, the provisions of which guaranteed this right to the Soviets. This treaty was the most dangerous weapon in the hands of the Soviets against Iran, because it enabled the Red Army to enter Iran in the event of any threat to the Soviets. This raised concerns in both American and Iranian circles because, while the American administration was certain of the logic of the power that the Soviets were waving to yesterday's allies, Iran saw in it a Soviet insistence on occupying the northern regions, which could lead to their separation from the Iranian body (Archives of Countries, Document 9/3, Registration No. 22). From here onwards, US-Soviet relations deteriorated, allies turned into enemies, and it became certain that US policy in the Gulf would take the initiative to respond to Soviet ambitions.

Without a doubt, Iran's security and sovereignty were placed at risk by the international conflict over Iran and the major powers' competing interests. This also exposed the Iranian government, led by Ibrahim Hakimi, to increased political and oppositional pressures and violent campaigns in the press and in parliament, which ultimately led to the government's resignation on January 27, 1946 (Archives of Countries, Document 9/3, Registration No. 2). As a result, on January 28, 1946, Ahmad Qavam al-Saltanah was appointed to head a new ministry. Despite the difficult circumstances under which he took office, he was able to accomplish a number of accomplishments. First, he tried to settle disputes with Moscow through diplomacy, but soon realized that the only option the Soviets would accept to finish their withdrawal from the northern regions was oil concessions. Therefore, he chose to block their path and suggested to them that they might be able to obtain that in theory (Archives of Countries, Document 9/3, Registration No. 2).

All his predecessors in the premiership had always attempted to avoid, but the Sultanate, following the policy of appeasement, included three ministers from the leaders of the communist Tudeh Party in its administration. This infuriated London, whose administration expressed how extremely annoyed it was with this move. It resorted to its traditional methods to embarrass the situation of the Prime Minister, so it lavished money on the tribal sheikhs in southern Iran in order to incite them to carry out revolutionary movements to demand secession, similar to what had happened in the north, and to demand the removal of the communists from the ministry as a basic condition for reaching an understanding with the government (Archives of Countries, Document 9/3, Registration No. 2).

American leaders were persuaded by Soviet tactics that they were up against a planned and purposeful program of expansion in many places to govern the globe, rather than just a ploy by an ally wanting to enhance its part of the profits, and

that they had to rise to this clear threat (Lerch, O'Charles, 1976). Accordingly, the US State Department asked its embassy in Moscow to prepare a report on the Soviet efforts and objectives, and ways to deal with them. In February 1946, George Kennan, the US attaché there, submitted a comprehensive report in which he evaluated the reasons for the Soviets' refusal to leave Iran, their goals in Turkey and Greece, their hesitation to join the World Bank, Stalin's open criticism of the capitalist system, the inevitable confrontation between capitalism and socialism, and the latter's eventual triumph. Kennan stressed that the coming battle would be based on the conflict between capitalism and socialism, and that the Iranian crisis and the conflict over oil were only the first episode, and that the episodes would follow later with the aim of imposing control over the global economic system.

Therefore, he proposed imposing a policy of capitalist encirclement of the Soviets materially, militarily, and morally, so that the United States could impose permanent peaceful coexistence between the Western and Eastern camps, which was known as the policy of containment, which Kennan believed would be effective in stopping the communist advance (F.R.U.S., 1946). This report is considered a turning point in the conflict between the two major poles, because it established Soviet practices in the form of actual interests, in addition to drawing the general threads of American policy during the next stage.

The Prime Minister of Iran issued an order to detain a large number of pro-Western individuals and groups, including Zia al-Din Tabatabai and his group, who were renowned for their support of England. As a result, he was successful in winning over the Soviets and reducing hostilities between Moscow and Tehran. He also reopened many of the closed channels between the two countries, which prompted the Kremlin to try to convince him to withdraw his country's case from the Security Council, but he did not respond to this desire, given that this might anger the United States, in



addition to the fact that it would make Iran lose one of the most important pressure elements it possesses against the Soviet Union to complete its withdrawal, which is the greatest goal that the Sultanate's leadership seeks to achieve and for which it entered negotiations on the oil concessions (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorate, Film 58, Portfolio 89, Record No. 14 )

He roused London and Washington to help his nation since the Sultanate was a proponent of the school that allows transitory partial solutions in order to accomplish the bigger aim. He told the American ambassador in Tehran as well as the British chargé d'affaires that he was forced to give in to the Soviet demands for oil concessions in return for the Soviets pulling out their soldiers from Iranian land. Then he concluded an agreement with the Soviet Ambassador in Tehran on April 8, 1946, stipulating the evacuation of Soviet forces from Iran within six weeks starting from March 24, 1946, in exchange for the establishment of an Iranian-Soviet oil company, whose concession would extend for a period of 50 years, and shares would be distributed at a rate of 51% to Moscow and 49% to Tehran during the first twenty years, with the proportions being equal between the two parties during the rest of the concession period, and the profits would be distributed according to the shares, with the final approval of this concession being postponed until the new Iranian parliament ratifies it during its fifteenth legislative session, with this to be done within seven months starting from March 24. 1946 (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorate, Film 58, Portfolio 89, Record No. 13)

Regarding the Azerbaijan area and the separatist activities in the north, the parties also concurred that these are internal Iranian matters that should be resolved between the Iranian government and the people living in the northern territories. Iranian newspapers of various orientations saw this agreement as a major victory and an important step in preserving the unity of Iranian territories (Archives of

Countries, Iran Governorate, Film 58, Portfolio 89, Record No. 13).

This agreement confirms that the Prime Minister resorted to this as a kind of political manoeuvre to turn the tables on the Soviets, especially in light of their military dominance over the northern regions, Iran's inability to intervene against them, and the Tudeh Party's control over the internal front. This agreement is considered a temporary victory for the Soviets, as it would have consolidated their presence in Iran indefinitely, whether through the new concession or by relying on the Tudeh Party, which he was well aware of (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorate, Film 58, Portfolio 89, Record No. 13)

The US response to this agreement was extremely violent. In March 1946, the Secretary of State issued a strongly worded statement indicating that the US government could not stand by and let the Soviet Union violate the 1942 Treaty and the 1943 Tehran Declaration for long. He said that Moscow was fanning the flames of revolution and maintaining its forces on the territory of an ally, so it had to be faced head-on, and that war would be prepared going forward, especially since the Russians only speak one language, which is the number of your military divisions. He also announced in the Security Council during the presentation of the Iranian issue on March 18, 1946, that the American government would use military force to deter the Soviets if necessary, and Truman actually issued his orders to the Chiefs of Staff of the American forces to prepare to move immediately.

Thus, the international situation became tense in a worrying way, which was clearly expressed by the American newspapers, as stated on the front page of Newsweek magazine: "The general climate between Moscow and Washington is reminiscent of the fall of 1938 when The Munich crisis has reached its peak (Khalil, 1980, pp 313-315). This reflects the sensitivity of the oil issue and the importance of the Gulf in American politics.

Based on the American threat to use force, and the policy of appeasement followed by the Sultanate's leadership, Stalin yielded to American pressure, and the Red Army began to gradually withdraw from Iran, in implementation of the terms of the new agreement (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorate, Film 58, Portfolio 89, Record No. 14). This decision is attributed to the United States' possession of nuclear weapons, which it would not hesitate to use if its interests were threatened, especially since Moscow did not possess the atomic bomb until 1949. There is no doubt that the Soviet withdrawal before the Iranian parliament approved the oil agreement, deprived them of the real pressure element that was at their disposal, and thus the fate of the oil concessions agreement became up in the air.

The complete withdrawal of the Red Army forces from Iranian territory ended in May 1946 (Mark, 1975, p. 61), and thus the curtain was drawn on a chapter of the Soviet-American dispute over Iran, but that did not put a complete end to the conflict, as Washington remained to obstruct the establishment of the Iranian-Soviet Oil Company in the Iranian parliament, due to the danger it represented to American interests in the Gulf.

On April 23, 1946, in anticipation of the upcoming round, the US State Department removed W. Murra, the US ambassador to Tehran, who was ill. This marked the start of US preparations for enacting the US economic strategy. He was replaced by Allen G. Allen, who was not only experienced in foreign affairs, but also in Iran's internal situation and the affairs of the region in general (Archives of Countries, Iran Governorate, Film 58, Portfolio 89, Record No. 13). Therefore, upon his arrival, Allen sought to provide the appropriate climate to achieve this, so he began working to establish the Shah to stand up to the Soviets, and he also convinced Iranian officials that the United States and Western countries were determined to support Iran (Khalil, 1980, p 316)

Allen used a strategy of intimidation and enticement with the Sultanate, warning him of the ramifications and the threats to Iran's security, when the Sultanate sought to reassure the Soviets by bringing the oil deal to Parliament as soon as it convened. Additionally, he conveyed to him the administration's intention to back Iran not only politically and economically but also militarily if needed. He also promised to extend a helping hand to Iran and expand economic cooperation between the two countries, in addition to the American military assistance it would provide to strengthen the Iranian army. This led to the travel of American General Schwarzkopf, who had been working as an advisor to the Iranian police since 1942, at the head of an Iranian mission to Washington to study the matter, and then Allen was able to achieve successive successes .

The Communist press expressed concern over these developments, claiming that the Americans were reckless businessmen who only wanted to expand their wealth and invest in order to build a new colonial empire on the ruins of the British Empire. They also claimed that, in line with their policy of defiance against the Soviet Union, the Americans were preparing for a third world war, with Iran serving as its first theatre, which would put Tehran in danger and prolong the chaos.

Allen persuaded the Sultanate's leadership that the Iranian army could defeat the rebels without the Soviet Union's help by pointing out in the terms of the Iranian-Soviet oil agreement that Moscow gave more consideration to the oil industry than to Azerbaijan's future. With American support, the Sultanate's leadership undermined the communist movement, and eliminated and persecuted the separatist movement in the north of the country with the help of American military advisors, after failing to reach a common ground for self-rule with them. His first steps on this path were to dismiss the three ministers affiliated with the Tudeh Party, and declare martial law in Azerbaijan on December 10, 1946. Two days later, Iranian

soldiers advanced on the area and destroyed the separatist groups and the opposing forces. In order to defuse the situation, affirm the territory's subjugation to Iran, and halt the persistent rumours that the Soviets were spreading, Allen persuaded the Shah to visit the Azerbaijan region.

Despite the severity of this blow to Moscow, and its strong impact on the future of the Iranian-Soviet oil agreement, the Soviet response did not match the event, as the Soviet bear did not move to support the members of the Tudeh Party who were persecuted, but rather contented itself with the media war and enabling the leader of the separatist movement to escape, thus giving American policy a wider space to implement its plan to obstruct the agreement, especially since this caused the Soviets to lose many of their supporters in Iran and the northern regions, and even prompted some politicians to enter the American camp as the strongest camp. Not content with that, the US government delivered the Kremlin another, more severe blow in an attempt to destroy the Soviet oil concession in Iran, symbolized by the Truman Doctrine.

Truman Doctrine and Resolution of the Conflict:

The American president asked Congress to approve the allocation of \$400 million to support free peoples in their struggle against the Soviets in a speech he gave on March 12, 1947. The American administration did not stop there; instead, it delivered another, more violent blow to the Kremlin, symbolized by the "Truman Doctrine" (Egyptian Foreign Ministry, Portfolio 471). Congress approved this on May 12, 1947, because the economic conflicts in Iran were accompanied by similar Soviet movements along the southern Soviet borders, starting from Western Europe, passing through Turkey and Greece, then Iran, and ending with the countries of the Far East (Egyptian Foreign Ministry, Portfolio 471).

The Truman Doctrine, in its economic aspect, is summarized in adopting economic, technical and military aid as an approved

American approach to limit the Soviet role and confine its movements within the geographical scope of the communist bloc (Egyptian Foreign Ministry, Portfolio 471), linking European policy to Washington's policy, and containing European decisions in a one-way relationship of influence, such that American opinion is the source of European policy decisions, and imposing American hegemony over the various regions of the world by establishing a network of American-regional alliances to fill the gaps created by World War II. Based on this, Truman's strategy shifted eastward and towards the Gulf via Iran and the northern belt (later the Baghdad Pact) in an effort to limit the Soviet Union and work with England to destroy the long-standing Russian goal under the new name of communism.

It is noteworthy that the Truman Doctrine's prohibition on aiding Greece and Turkey without mentioning Iran was intended to, among other things, sabotage the Iranian-Soviet oil agreement and pressure the Iranian government and representatives to ask for American assistance by downplaying Iran's economic benefits and igniting controversy within Iranian society. This is confirmed by President Truman's advisor, Clifford C. Clifford, who prepared the final draft of this doctrine (F.R.U.S., 1947, N. (868.00/3-747), as he pointed out that Truman's speech included a paragraph that Truman ignored, stipulating the preservation of natural resources in the Middle East region, and he did not mean by this sentence anything other than Gulf oil.

The American conjectures were soon realised when, on June 14, 1947, the Iranian Prime Minister wrote to the American ambassador in Tehran expressing his hope that the United States would support Iran by lending it money from the World Bank and by sending military assistance, citing the country's economic problems and external threats (F.R.U.S., 1947, Vol. V, Memo. N. (891.00/6-1647)). The American State Department responded to the Iranian demands and signed an agreement with it on June 19, 1947, stipulating that the latter would

provide Iran with military equipment worth \$25 million (F.R.U.S., 1947, Vol. V, Memo. N. (891.00/6-1647)), with the aim of thwarting the establishment of the Iranian-Soviet Oil Company.

As the critical time drew near for the Iranian parliament to debate the Soviet oil concession agreement and the creation of the Iranian-Soviet company, the US State Department gave Allen instructions to make a statement in September 1947 saying that Washington thought Tehran had complete freedom to accept or reject this agreement, but that Tehran could count on US support in the event that it rejected it in order to thwart Soviet blackmail. He also stressed the United States' support for Iran in order to obtain its freedom and independence internally and externally, and this statement had a clear impact on some members of parliament.

During a pivotal session of the parliament on November 11, 1947, the leader of the Sultanate delivered a comprehensive report to the Iranian parliament. The report covered his rise to power, the reasons behind his signature of the agreement with the Soviet ambassador regarding Moscow's oil concessions in the northern regions, and his assurance that the parliament would have the authority to approve the agreement. After heated discussions, the parliament refused to recognize the granting of this concession, by an overwhelming majority of 102 votes, compared to only two votes (Egyptian Foreign Ministry, Portfolio 445). The Iranian-Soviet talks were then considered as if they had never happened.

Washington thus achieved its goals, while Moscow, feeling betrayed, responded with great violence. It began with media criticism and denunciation of the Iranian government's predicament, ridiculing the American role and calling the Sultanate's organization "an American creation," and progressed to diplomatic indifference. The Soviet escalation reached the level of threats, as Moscow sent an official memorandum to Tehran, describing the Iranian government's situation on the oil agreement signed between the two sides as

"treachery," and concluding the memorandum by saying: "The unfriendly act undertaken by the Iranian government harms the relations between the two countries, and it must bear the consequences."

This memorandum's release had a significant effect on Iranian public opinion and the government since political circles interpreted it as a threat of hostile Soviet action. The Iranian cabinet remained in session continuously for two consecutive days to prepare an appropriate response, which led to the spread of anxiety and tension and the spread of rumors among the people about a possible Soviet attack. Therefore, a state of emergency was declared throughout the country, Iranian forces were supported in the northern provinces, and precautionary measures were taken to protect public facilities, roads, and transportation. Before the Iranian cabinet had finished its long session, the prime minister contacted the American ambassador to consult with him on reviewing the final draft of the memorandum in response to the Soviet threat, which stated that the establishment of the Soviet-Iranian Oil Company was conditional on the approval of the Iranian parliament, which rejected it due to its conflict with the "Mossadegh Law." It explained that the reason for the delay in presenting the agreement to parliament was due to the lack of security and calm to hold parliamentary elections in the country, and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company concession, it was signed before the aforementioned law was issued. The parliament suggested that the oil collected from the northern areas be sold to the Soviet Union as a gesture of goodwill. The memorandum ended in an American-style manner, with Iran reaffirming its opposition to the Soviet menace and emphasizing the necessity of ending tactics based on intimidation, coercion, and harassment, as Soviet radio covered Iranian matters.

## Conclusion:

Due to its location and close proximity to Russia, Iran changed from being a bridge to aid the Russians to a hotbed of conflict, control, and influence imposition by former allies (Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States). The study also explained the geopolitical shifts and international competition over Iran in the late stages of World War II. It also demonstrated how oil played a pivotal role in the struggle between the major powers, leading Britain to maintain its forces in southern Iran and Russia to seize control of the northern regions and support separatist movements there as a means of applying pressure on the Iranian government to grant oil concessions. The Iranian parliament acted to safeguard the nation's interests by passing a law that forbade the granting of oil concessions without the consent of its members as a result of the destabilization of internal security and stability in Tehran, the escalation of internal conflicts, and the worsening of political and economic crises.

The research also disclosed the endeavors of American oil corporations to secure oil

concessions in Iran, their apprehensions regarding their petroleum interests in the vicinity, and how these apprehensions, along with the extent of the ideological struggle between capitalism and communism, led the US government to announce a containment strategy in line with the Truman Doctrine. By devising a plan to limit communist influence in Iran and other regions of the world, the United States was able to turn the struggle to its advantage.

The study also demonstrated that the Cold War originated in Iran before spreading to other parts of the world and explained the reasons for the Iranian parliament's refusal to approve the Soviet Union's oil concessions in the country's northern areas., and how this event represented a turning point in the decline of relations between Moscow and Tehran to their lowest levels despite the geographical proximity, and to the rise and launch of a new phase of strong relations between Washington and Tehran, in which the former played an important role in ending England's dominance and monopoly over oil investments in Iran.

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