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Aide Memoire, Presented to USSR NKID official P. B. Zudin by Mr. Qavam on 27 February 1946

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Summary:

Iranian Prime Minister Qavam os-Sultaneh voices his objections to the presence of Soviet troops in Iran as well as to Soviet support for Azerbaijani autonomy.

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Moscow, 26 February 1946

First of all I consider it necessary to honestly and openly, and with deep conviction to declare that in spite of some reports in Iran there is every preconditions for Iranian-Soviet friendship and that the causes of unnecessary misunderstandings can be eliminated by implementing a wiser policy and expanding ties in all of Iran. The employment of other methods like, for example, the further presence of Soviet troops in Iran or the creation of autonomy inside Iran would without any doubt serve as the reason for a weakening of friendly feelings in the hearts of the Iranian people, giving rise in them to uneasiness and disappointment.

There is not the slightest doubt that as soon as the majority of the Iranian people are convinced of the absence of any threat from the Soviet Union directed against the independence and [territorial] integrity of Iran, it will very eagerly meet the sincere friendship and cooperation with the peoples of the USSR halfway. [Handwritten in the left margin: "scum!"]

My government could fully achieve this goal if favorable conditions are present.

As regards Azerbaijan I again direct your attention to the fact that the announcement of autonomy and the creation of a government in Azerbaijan, which has been considered an inseparable part of Iran since ancient times, not only violates the Iranian Constitution, as was previously pointed out, but would also cause great complications with which not a single government in Iran could cope.

The Iranian Constitutions is an achievement of a revolution and the fruit of great sacrifices of the Iranian people.

It is the only national document of the young Iranian Constitution and, if its foundations are undermined in one part of the country, then there is no guarantee that there will be no incitements to achieve the same goals in other provinces, too.

To this needs to also be noted that, according to fundamental laws, any change in this Constitution can be accomplished only by convening a Constituent Assembly and holding a referendum.

Therefore, taking into account the fact that the creation of local governments and the appointment of ministers completely violates the Iranian Constitution, the central government can obviously agree only with the principle of appointing the heads of some institutions and even the appointment of a Governor General according to the Provincial Enjumen [Translator's note: a local self-governing institution].

As regards the percentage ratio in the distribution of tax receipts of Azerbaijan Province and also questions touching on education, etc. then all these questions might be solved after the creation of a Provincial Enjumen in accordance with its rules and jurisdiction.

As regards the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Iran I quite regret that the respected Soviet Government has not agreed with their withdrawal before 2 March 1946.

At the very beginning of the talks I directed the especial attention of Generalissimo Stalin to the fact that my goal was the friendly resolution of all questions and the achievement of complete agreement on all problems affecting the vital interests of

Iran. I think that in the process there will be no special need to refer to the points of treaties and agreements.

However, in view of your reference to point 6 of the Iranian-Soviet treaty of 26 February 1921, I consider it necessary to note that according to this point the Soviet Government only has the right to introduce its troops into Iranian territory if some third country tries to use the territory of Iran for military actions against the USSR, and if to accomplish this purpose it resorts to actions which the Iranian Government will not be able to stop. In spite of the completely clear meaning of this article the Iranian Government, wishing to avoid the possibility of another interpretation of this article, entered into talks with the corresponding Soviet authorities, and in his official letter № 1600 of 12 December 1921 the Authorized Soviet Representative in Tehran, which letter is considered an inseparable part of the 26 February 1921 treaty, again confirmed the correctness of the interpretation cited.

In view of the above there is no way one can imagine that this article of the treaty could serve as a pretext for the further presence of Soviet troops in Iran.

With great regret I am forced to note that all my promises and advice, in spite of the fact that they come from a person undoubtedly representing all Iranian patriots, freedom-lovers, and all neutrally-minded strata of the population of Iran, attract the attention of the Soviet Government less than the complaints of a small number of people who, in spite of all the laws of our country, aspire to create a new Azerbaijani government.

As regards the question of oil and the creation of a joint Iranian-Soviet company, I hope that this question will be settled in a positive sense satisfying both sides on the resolution of the questions affecting Azerbaijan and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Iran.

In conclusion, I offer the suggestion that the Soviet Government, with that special elasticity which characterizes Soviet government leaders, give its agreement to the resolution of the Azerbaijani question and a timely withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Iran, and thus lay the foundations of cooperation in economic questions and the question of oil.

In such a situation, even if there are some groups of people ill-inclined toward the Soviet Union, there is no doubt that these feelings will be completely changed and give way to a feeling of trust and sincere friendship.

On receipt of your agreement I will immediately leave for Tehran and, after an exchange of opinions with the government, the talks will immediately be continued with the Soviet Ambassador in Tehran, and I am deeply convinced that the desired results will be achieved.