

had to fall back from the Maragha, Miandoab and Miyaneh regions toward Tabriz. At the same time, the Iranian Army is expected to launch an offensive around the Astara-Ardebil regions. Under the current circumstances, the Azerbaijanis are unlikely to hold out long. The probability remains that being flattened themselves against the border-line, the Azerbaijanis will try to cross it. In this case, we kindly ask for your permission to accept the Azerbaijanis.²⁶

On 11 December, the Central Committee of the DPA and the United Trade Union made a joint statement. The statement called for peasants, intellectuals, party members, and all workers to wage a war against their bitterest enemy. Tabriz police started to purge the city and other towns of Qavam's secret agents. To anticipate the Iranian Army's offensive, some urgent measures had been taken, specifically counter-offensive arrangements. While military preparations and mobilization of the capital's population were in full swing, on 11 December came an instruction from I. Stalin addressed to Pishavari, Shabustari, Javid, and Padegan. It said:

The prime minister is entitled to send troops to all parts of the country, including Azerbaijan. For this reason, it would be inexpedient and useless to go on with armed resistance. You had better announce that you do not object to bringing governmental forces into Azerbaijan with the purpose of maintaining law and order in the region during the elections. You must link this step to your desire to ensure the integrity of the Iranian peoples, their freedom and independence. All these should be documented by signatures of Governor Javid and chairman of the provincial council Shabustari to be further forwarded to Qavam and the Shah.²⁷

Having received this instruction from the Soviet leaders, the Soviet Consulate in Tabriz pressurized Azerbaijani leaders to cease resistance and let the government forces enter Azerbaijan without any resistance. Consulate officials relied on Qavam's promises that the governmental forces would not subject Democrats to repression. Though DPA leaders had not welcomed Soviet suggestions and mistrusted Qavam's promises, they had to adopt them. The same day, the provincial council made a decision on suspending resistance and letting the Iranian troops into Azerbaijan. The decision was signed by Shabustari and Javid and dispatched to the Shah and Qavam. The same day, the Azerbaijanis ceased all military operations and informed Baku at 4:00 A.M. about it.²⁸

The U.S. Vice-Consul in Tabriz Rober Rossow, wrote that the Soviets had decided that the maintenance of the Azerbaijani regime at this point was not worth the risk of military intervention, and had told its leaders that, except for moral and diplomatic support, they were on their own. Javid and Shabustari favored non-resistance and proposed to surrender. On the other hand, fire-brand Biriya and tough warrior Qulam Yahya wanted to fight to the bitter end. Pishavari was