

April 16, 1967
Telegram from the Romanian Embassy in Teheran,
No. 84.075

Citation:

"Telegram from the Romanian Embassy in Teheran, No. 84.075", April 16, 1967, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [AMAE], Telegrams from the Romanian Embassy in Teheran; January - July 1967, Vol. 1. Contributed and translated by Roham Alvandi and Eliza Gheorghe, and included in CWIHP Working Paper, "The Shah's Petro-Diplomacy with Ceaușescu" (2014).
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/119598>

Summary:

Dranceanu recounts a conversation with the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. It was brought up that Moscow had suggested that the socialist countries could build a 'consortium' that would receive Iranian oil via a pipeline through the Soviet territory.

Original Language:

Romanian

Contents:

Translation - English

Telegram from the Romanian Embassy in Teheran, No. 84.075, 16 April 1967, Top Secret

1. On 15 April 1967 I met the shah of Iran on the occasion of my departure from Iran.

Telling me that 'it seems you are leaving us,' the Shah asked if the new ambassador would reside in Teheran. I said yes and then the shah made a series of positive judgments regarding relations between Iran and Romania. Underlining that our countries had become friends, that there were no problems which would hamper the development of our relations, the Shah praised the policies of our government, labeling it as realistic and wise, on economic matters as well as on domestic, internal matters and international matters. He added that he was pleasantly impressed with the discussions he had had with Romanian leaders and he had good memories from his trip to Romania.

'We are two countries which get along well, and we can cooperate on various levels in the future', he said.

I answered that I share his assessment regarding Iran-Romania relations, that [these relations] had developed well over the past years, and that there were many opportunities for the development of these relations.

Moreover, I underlined the importance of the visits that had taken place.

2. Regarding Iran's relations with other countries, the Shah focused on relations with the USSR, evaluating them as very good and underlining that the USSR is interested in having economic and political relations with Iran, because Iran posed no danger to the USSR, and he believed that Iran also had no reasons to fear the USSR.

Speaking about the visit by Baibakov, the vice-president of the USSR Council of Minister, and the discussions [the Shah] had with him, the Shah said that Baibakov told him he had not come to Teheran with pre-conceived ideas or with proposals, but with the desire to listen to Iran's wishes regarding cooperation with the USSR on economic matters. Then the Shah added that there are prospects for doubling the amount of natural gas [exported by Iran to the USSR] compared to the quantities the USSR had previously asked for.

He said that the USSR also wanted oil and that Iran can provide the USSR with oil [extracted] from the north of the country.

The Shah said that the USSR had put forward the idea of creating a consortium of socialist countries [through which they] would buy large quantities of Iranian crude, and that he [the Shah] had nothing against the desire of socialist countries to form this consortium. He added that from Iran's economic point of view, he agrees with this, since Bulgaria would want to [import] approximately 5 million tons of crude in the future, but, he wondered, 'what would Bulgaria pay the crude with?'

For this reason, he added, if Bulgaria bought crude through this consortium, the arrangement will be made with the USSR, and Iran could buy plenty of things from the USSR. Another advantage is the fact that the Soviets would deliver their crude, and use the Iranian one for their own consumption.

Of course, the Shah added, there are countries like Romania which might not be interested in this consortium, preferring instead to deal directly [with Iran], and Iran was willing to make such arrangements.

He talked about the possibility of delivering crude via a pipeline through the USSR, and the other possibility was to build another pipeline through the Adriatic Sea, crossing through Yugoslavia and Hungary, towards Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Of course, the construction of these pipelines would be raised when the crude quantities supplied by Iran exceeded 20 million tons, the Shah underlined. In our discussion, he showed [more interest] towards the pipeline through the USSR, so as to avoid [dealing] with the Suez.

Regarding the political dimension of [Iran's] relations [with the USSR], the Shah said that Iran also bought weapons from the USSR, although the West reprimanded Iran for doing so. 'We are not asking other [countries] whether we should do this or that, but I would like to see whether the USSR still helps Nasser now, Nasser who wants to turn Iran to dust,' the Shah underlined. Then, he added that Nasser was arming [Egypt], causing tensions through his deeds, although the economic situation in Egypt is bad.

3. He also said that 'our American friends reprimanded us for developing our relations with socialist countries too much, but I am not willing to discuss with them the policies of my country.'

I know, the Shah added, that US [governmental agencies] in Iran, because they dislike my policies, have ties with the enemies of my regime, both in Iran and in the US. They are probably thinking of exterminating me, but they will not be able to install a more stable regime than mine in Iran.

Then the Shah said that the Americans had killed Diem in Vietnam, because Diem started a rapprochement with North Vietnam. 'What did they achieve through this [assassination] other than anarchy and war in Vietnam, a war which they cannot even end, and from which they cannot pull out either?', he added.

4. On a different topic, the Shah said that the West always chided him that, although he had good relations with socialist countries, he did not ask them to stop communist propaganda and the radio broadcasts of the Tudeh Party. 'I told them, he said, that I would never ask for such a thing, and I have serious reasons not to ask for such a thing.' The Shah explained these reasons by saying that those who speak on the radio were rarely listened to in Iran, but he personally listened to their broadcasts because that was how he found out about what others thought about Iran. The Shah added that even if he had had the best spies, he could not have known better what the Kremlin and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union thought of Iran. Those broadcasts express the thoughts and plans of the Kremlin more accurately, so they were actually doing me a favor [the Shah said].

Moreover, he said, many of those who fled Iran want to come back, some because of their nostalgia towards their homeland, others because they wanted to continue their efforts against me, and others because they had lost hope in the success of their fight [against me].

Upon my departure, the Shah asked me to send his best regards to Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu, Comrade Chivu Stoica, whom he would soon have the honor to see, and Comrade Ion Gheorghe Maurer, saying, once again, that he had the most fond memories from the meetings and conversations he had held [with the Romanian leaders].

The meeting lasted for 55 minutes.

Signed: I. Dranceanu