

October 24, 1977

**Telegram from K. V. Rajan, First Secretary (Pol),
'Agha Shahi's meeting with [Cyrus] Vance'**

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Summary:

Reported comments by Agha Shahi's on relations with the United States, India, and nuclear weapons.

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FROM: K.V. Rajan (First Secretary, Pol)

TO: Shri N. Dayal, Counsellor, Embassy of India, Islamabad

...From the accounts we have received here it would appear that Agha Shahi's meeting with Vance was a brief one which was considered neither particularly useful nor productive from the US (and perhaps Pakistan's) stand point.

In contrast to the meeting between Aziz Ahmed and Vance which took place in Paris a few months ago, which was acrimonious in a bilateral sense, the recent New York meeting at least observed conventional norms of courtesy and politeness, no doubt due to the change of regime in Pakistan as well as the different personality of Agha Shahi as compared to Aziz Ahmed. For example, Agha Shahi utilized India's South Asia policies which were repeatedly categorized as "hegemonistic" (Bangladesh allegations about India's involvement in the recent abortive coup were mentioned in this regard) and question the justice and rationale of what is perceived to be a new US approach to Indo-American relations. President Carter's Delhi visit was described as a development which was painful and disturbing to Pakistan, one which confirmed the worst apprehensions about US intentions in the sub-continent in the average Pakistan mind. Agha Shahi also took strong exception to Ambassador Goheen's speeches (one is not aware of details, but one presumes that they were speeches in the sense of the Christopher statement on India's role in the sub-continent).

Agha Shahi also brought up the question of a declaration by countries of the sub-continent renouncing nuclear weapons, which in the brief time that was available to them for discussion, he was able to project to Vance as a reasonable "proposal." (As a result of Vance's promise to Agha Shahi the US Embassy in Delhi expressed its interest to us and asked for our reaction, which has since been conveyed to them. Apparently the argument against precipitate acceptance of the idea, which has impressed the US is not that a sub-continental declaration has little meaning geopolitical terms but the impact on the atmosphere of the Carter's visit to Delhi if US interest in the Pakistan proposals is leaked out or exaggerated).

On the nuclear reprocessing question, there does not appear to have been any detailed discussion in New York. Agha Shahi said that no substantive discussion on this or other subjects could take place since the Government in Pakistan is a transitional one, and Vance did not argue with him. It is, however, interesting to note that here in Washington at the INFCE conference the French strongly reiterated their right to proceed with existing agreements and commitments., and the Pakistan Ambassador in his statement applauded the French (and West German) position in this regard. The assessment in Congressional circles dealing with nuclear matters is that the French-Pakistan deal is far from dead, and that the best hope of the US is that implementation can be staggered over a long period, to enable a new set of nuclear ground rules on reprocessing plants to be formulated.