

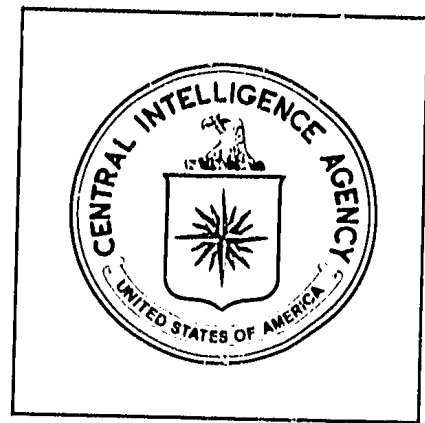
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MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA - SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Iran

Anti-Israeli Vote Explained

In a meeting on Tuesday with the US embassy's political officer, an Iranian foreign ministry official explained Tehran's vote for the resolution adopted at the Islamic Conference in Jidda last week that calls for Israel's expulsion from the UN.

The official stated candidly that Iran did not agree with the resolution, but decided not to oppose it because of Tehran's efforts to achieve closer relations with the Arabs. He added that his government believes it would be impossible to expel Israel from the UN. If the issue is raised there, however, Iran would most likely abstain; it could not oppose expulsion outright. He said Iran's position has been explained to the Israelis and they "understood."

Prime Minister Hoveyda told visiting White House Fellows on the same day that Iran had made clear to the Arabs that it did not agree with the suggestion that Israel be expelled because it would serve no useful purpose. Iran's national policy, he added, was to support UN Resolution 242. He regretted it had not been carried out, but expulsion was not the remedy.

Although the Shah wants to indicate to the US and Israel that Iran is not fully embracing the Arab side of the Middle East dispute, he would not be unhappy if the net result of the expulsion move is to increase the pressure on Tel Aviv to be more flexible. The Shah, who has thought for some time that Tel Aviv is too intransigent, believes the Israelis should seize the opportunity they have at present to make peace with President Sadat. The Iranian monarch is expressing this view with increasing frequency and vehemence.

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United Arab Emirates*Soviets Resume Diplomatic Probe*

The Soviet Union, eager to strengthen its position on the Arab side of the Persian Gulf where its only embassy is in Kuwait, is again attempting to establish diplomatic relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE). At the moment, the ball is being carried by surrogates on behalf of Moscow.

The most recent Moscow-sponsored effort to get an exchange of diplomats with the UAE took place in early July when Warsaw sent a special envoy to Abu Dhabi.

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The Soviet diplomatic initiative suggests that Moscow may be hoping for a more favorable political climate in the Gulf since King Faysal's death in late March. In 1972, Sheikh Zayid--the UAE president--and several other Gulf rulers appeared to be ready to exchange ambassadors with Moscow, but backed off in deference to Faysal's strong opposition to an expanded Soviet presence in the region.

Whether the UAE embraces the current Soviet-inspired overtures may depend on how Zayid reads the Saudi position. Those UAE officials who look favorably on ties with communist governments--UAE Foreign Minister Suwaydi heads the list--have undoubtedly been heartened by some signals of a softening by Riyadh on the issue.

Saudi Crown Prince Fahd has recently stated that his country follows an open door policy towards all countries and wants "good relations with both East and West." It is highly doubtful that the Saudi government will itself make any abrupt policy changes, but Fahd may be signaling a long-term shift in Riyadh's traditionally strong anti-communist policy. This could certainly encourage Moscow to pursue its efforts in the Gulf.

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Pakistan

Sind Chief Minister Increasingly Prominent

The successful handling of a recent kidnapping incident by the Chief Minister of Sind Province, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, appears to have added to Jatoi's reputation as one of Pakistan's more effective high officials. Jatoi could well become one of the main contenders for the prime ministership at some future date when Prime Minister Bhutto leaves the scene.

Jatoi's intervention following the kidnapping of the Sind provincial transportation minister by disgruntled students last week led to the minister's release, unharmed, two days later. Jatoi agreed to consider the students' demand for better transportation facilities, but he refused to yield to their other demands, which included a call for the release of a detained Sindhi separatist leader. He threatened the kidnapers with "stringent punitive action" and showed he meant business by having the police raid dormitories and arrest about 100 students.

Jatoi has been chief minister of Sind since December 1973. Before that he was a minister in Bhutto's federal cabinet. Now 44, he is, like Bhutto, the scion of a prominent Sindhi landowning family and has been active in Pakistani politics since the 1950s. Bhutto named him to the Sind post to replace Mumtaz Bhutto, the Prime Minister's cousin, who had antagonized some regional and ethnic groups in the province. Mumtaz is Jatoi's main political rival in Sind.

Jatoi is generally viewed as having done a reasonably good job as chief minister. Under his stewardship the province has been relatively stable, and the local popularity of Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party, of which Jatoi is a leading member, appears to have been maintained. Jatoi has been described by US officials as an effective conciliator, apparently honest, and decisive when necessary.

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Should something happen unexpectedly to Bhutto, Jatoi appears to be one of the few persons who might be able to garner enough support within the nationally dominant People's Party to become leader of the party and the government. As a Sindhi, Jatoi is not enmeshed in the factional bickering that divides the party in Punjab, Pakistan's most populous province. Although he was embarrassed recently when one of his two wives, an Anglo-Indian, engaged in a flagrant love affair in Karachi, his political standing does not appear to have been seriously damaged.

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