

SPEECHES BY
PRIME MINISTER
CHANDRA SHEKHAR
IN PARLIAMENT
(1990–1991)

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PREFACE

CONTENTS

Sl. No.	Year/Date	Subject	Page No.
		Preface	i
1.	16.11.1990	Motion of Confidence in Council of Ministers	3
2.	7.01.1991	Statement on Fifth SAARC Summit at Male	17
3.	22.2.1991	Decision about Stoppage of Refuelling of U.S. Planes	31
4.	25.2.1991	Statement Regarding Situation in Gulf Countries	39
5.	25.2.1991	Incidents of Atrocities on Scheduled Castes in various parts of the Country	42
6.	6.03.1991	Constitutional Crisis in the Country	48

MOTION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

16 November 1990

I beg to move:

"That this House expresses its confidence in the Council of Ministers."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I regret that the non-formation of the council of Ministers has shocked many of my friends and they are very keen to see as early as possible the new faces of the members of the Council of Ministers. They have become so habitual of seeing the faces of Ministers that Parliament is meaningless to them without Ministers. They want to know the reasons. There are many reasons for not forming the Council of Ministers.

Sir, very humbly we have undertaken this responsibility and many of our friends have raised their voice that we do not enjoy majority support in the House. I never wanted to give them an opportunity to say that I expanded my Council of Ministers in a big way without obtaining their consent or the consent of this august House. The only reason was that the Cabinet was to be expanded after obtaining vote of confidence. I feel that they should have visualised it much earlier but if they failed, it was their fault like a particular bird who cannot see anything in the sunlight. The fault lies with the eyes and not with the sun. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to submit that today we are passing through a crucial phase and the condition of the country in every respect is bad. I do not want to level allegation against anybody here.

Neither I intend to level charges against anybody nor I am interested in delivering a long speech. I would like to reply to only a few questions which are raised repeatedly. The question which is often asked is whether we have got the mandate of the people or not, whether people have supported us or not, and this is a genuine question. Last time when we won elections and people elected us to form the Government. Shri Advani, Shri Somnath Chatterjee and Shri Indrajit Gupta supported us and our strategy was to form a Government which could prove a viable alternative to the Congress. Advani ji had clearly mentioned in the election manifesto that no compromise will be made in regard to Article 370. Similar other issues were also raised by Shri Advani but I would not like to go into them. We along with our parties had also made it clear that no compromise will be made on certain specific issues. At that time,

we had also given an assurance to run the Government for five years. It was also a basis to seek public support. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from my friends whether I was involved in toppling the previous Government ?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, just now Shri George Fernandes reminded me that we voted against the Government which had become lifeless since the day Shri Advani withdrew his support. You may not find even a single example in the history that a Prime Minister ever stuck to the Chair even after losing majority. Political morality is Questioned here and I am being accused that I toppled the Government. I never concealed the fact that I opposed the then Prime Minister but I was not involved in toppling the Government. If the Government was toppled, It was only due to the misconceptions created between those friends who at present, are sitting together. If the previous Government relied only on their support.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I did not want to raise these questions here, if my friend sought the reply, he must be prepared to listen because in my opinion, these questions have no significance at all. The basic question is what challenges does the country face, in what condition the country is at present. We also have certain constraints and I would not like to relate how the country was administered for eleven months and in what condition the economy of the country was when the Government changed. However, I would certainly like to relate the prevailing circumstances at that time. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I seek the permission of the House as well as yours to put that situation before the House. The condition of the country during these six days has not deteriorated to the extent to which it was when we took over. I don't want to mention it. The economy of the country is on the verge of collapse today. But Mr. Speaker, Sir, we know that despite all this, the country will not break. Crores of people of this country, where thousands of years old culture persists, are its saviour. What direction was given, what policies were adopted during the last eleven months? These faulty strategies and policies have put a big question mark on the fate of the people, the economy, the stability, unity and integrity of the nation and the only way to remove this question mark is that we should enlist the cooperation of the people. The people are capable and the economy of the country is strong enough to face any challenge. I would like to appeal to all the countrymen that we are passing through difficult and challenging period and thus we would like to have their cooperation and strength. Mr. Speaker. Sir, through you, I would like to submit to the leaders of all the political parties

that I am free to say a few things but I am ready to say only what I can, through you, and if there is any exaggeration in what I say, I will be ready to resign not only from Prime Ministership but also from the membership of this House. Mr. Speaker. Sir, I was already aware of and I would not relate this in the House today. I have been continuously urging Shri Advani, who is present here, that the path on which the country was being taken is that of destruction. I also warned leaders of leftist parties of the same and made utmost efforts to avert it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is true that we sought the Congress support and there is nothing to be ashamed of it. I want the similar support on all other friends, who consider our actions to be shameful. Mr. Speaker, Sir, this issue is not related to the prestige or pride of an individual. It is related to the protection of the country and on this issue we want everybody not only the Members but all the citizens to unite to strengthen the country.

Sir, through you, I would like to submit to them that there was a time when they respected Shri Advani like a saint and now they consider him as "Rakshas". This is a fall out of your political approach. Today the leftists feel that they have full authority to declare anybody progressive or reactionary suiting their whims. I do not need an certificate from them. Mr. Speaker, Sir, my submission is that I have also passed a considerable time in politics and observed these stalwarts quite closely. Before pointing towards me, they, particularly the leftist leaders who participated in the national movements and who have created a history due to which I respect them, should do some retrospection. They seem to be unaware of the prevailing circumstances.

They are not aware of the circumstances through which the country is passing today. I would like them to update themselves and think whether the need of the hour is to extend cooperation and support in the interest of the country or not. It is often asked as to who is the Prime Minister? At present you are ignorant of it, in a few days you will very well come to know about it.

The issue of Prime Ministership is not related to an individual. Prime Minister is the person who enjoys the support of the House, whom the country has approved as such in accordance with the provisions in the Constitution. Therefore, there is no need to be concerned about the Prime Minister. Think about the future of the country and about taking it out of the present miserable condition. I would like to submit that in spite of the

fact that the country is in bad shape, it retains its strength. Our farmers and labourers have got the capability to rebuild the country. Crores of citizens of this country even today take pride and love their country. I would like to have their cooperation also. I belong to that category of people who believe that in order to save the country support of people is a must. That is why we took this initiative. I am confident that we will get the cooperation and support of all. With a view to throw a challenge to anybody but to make them realise the facts I would like to reiterate that while speaking they should exercise caution and restraint lest I am compelled to reveal certain things which may make it difficult for you to face the people. Therefore, my submission is that you ponder over the matter. I leave everything to your wisdom. If you want to know the facts and hold the responsibility, I, being the Prime Minister of the country, would like to put all those facts before you due to which I opposed the previous Government, and joined hands with all the forces.

The people who are concerned about the future of the country, who have full faith in the eternity and dignity of the country will certainly support us in order to give new strength to the country and to infuse inspiration, vigour and encouragement in its masses. Instead of discord goodwill should be generated. Blood should not be shed. Every life is precious, whoever dies is either a son or a daughter of the country. I would like all of us to make efforts to unite on the issue of communalism and poverty and find out a way to soothe the hurt feelings of people and to boost a new strength in the country. With these words I would like this House to support my motion.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I feel sad after hearing the whole debate. I shall not say a word about the speech of my friend, Mr. Sathe, because he has been kind enough to extend his support I am glad that in spite of all anguish and anger, my friend from the CPM and CPI friends have raised the level of the debate. I shall not go into the acrimonious accusations; nor shall I like to answer them. But, definitely they have raised a very valid question. What is the programme before this Government? Or what are the issues on which we are going to run the nation in the coming days? In the very beginning of my speech this morning I said that we should not indulge in personal accusations. I really feel that times are grave, we have reached a perilous point in our history. I do not want to be prophet of doom because I know that because of cultural heritage, civilization and vitality of our people we can over come all the difficulties with cohesion and hardworking. But, Mr. Speaker, we have to find the areas of

agreement, not areas of confrontation and conflict. This is true for all the countries which are fighting against poverty, squalour, misery and disease. This is true for the whole world and more true for this sub-continent. This is why I say that at this moment we should try to agree to work together on specific issues.

My friend Shri Somnath Chatterjee asked me what will be the manifesto. I shall like to keep aside the manifestoes of all the political parties. Today, can't we agree on three, four, five points where we can say that we shall work together in order to retrieve the situation? For that a new political climate has to be created in this country and that political climate can be initiated by understanding each other's problems, each other's aspirations. No use trying to call names. I know, sometimes, that in the heat of the moment all of us lose our temper, try to call others names and I am sorry that in the course of this debate I also once or twice lost my temper. But when I see the problem as it comes, unfolds before me every day, I think that we just cannot afford and I cannot afford to lose temper while sitting in this chair, because, I want everybody's cooperation, everybody's support. If you want me to express my political philosophy, Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, I am not a progressive man, I am a conservative person and as a conservative, I do not change every day. My philosophy is the same, what my friend Shri Chitta Basu says, when I was being called a Young Turk. And there is no alternative before this country, because we are a scarce resource society. The resources are limited, we have to decide how to use our resources. We have to decide what is our asset and what is our strength. Nature has given us a fertile land, a good climate, all the types of fruits and crops can be produced in this country, almost all the minerals are found in this land, and above all there are more than 85 crore people in this country, who have got the strength to bring prosperity and progress to this nation. What has been our fault in the past? We have not been able to provide opportunity for these people, unfortunate people, who are ready to work hard, to utilise their strength for producing more. How can we do it? In a democratic society, Mr. Speaker, we cannot force them to work. We have to create their will power and how can you create that will power? That will power can be created, can be inspired, only by assuring them that what they produce will not go for the ostentatious living of the chosen few but for meeting the basic needs of our people. So, our investment has to be made in the areas which are essential for meeting the basic needs of our people and we

will have to invest in man. When I talk of investment in man, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I shall like to emphasise that the child is the strength of today and the hope of tomorrow. Every child who is born has the right to get from the society clean drinking water, necessary calories to develop as a healthy citizen, elementary education, primary health services and when he grows into a citizen, 18 years of age, he should not be discriminated against on the basis of caste, creed and religion. If you take these five points as our manifesto as our destination, as our goal. Is there any difference in this House? There cannot be any difference. Why can't you work on this? But if you work on these principles, we will have to make many changes in our approach towards the economic problem towards the social problem and Mr. Speaker. Sir, I shall like to emphasise if the resources are scarce and if the country is poor, every section of the society will have to share this poverty. It cannot be that those who are the toiling masses, our peasantry, our workers in the field and factories, they will be asked, they will be called upon, to go on making sacrifices. In the first four decades, since our independence we have been asking them to make sacrifices. How long more? They will have to be assured that this poverty will have to be shared by those who are the privileged in the society. So, I shall like to make this appeal to those who are elite, who are privileged. My friend Mr. A. K. Roy told me that they are very cooperative with me. I am very happy. If they want to cooperate with me, they should learn to make sacrifice in order to make the people, our poorer sections, happier and richer. That is a must that we should do. In this context, we shall have to revise our approach. Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee asked me, "are you going to revise the Industrial Policy"? Was there any Industrial Policy adopted by the previous Government? Certain broad lines were given. I had some objections to that. And I think, Somnathji you had also those objections. Those objections are not based on personal prejudice. I have no preferences. I have no prejudice. But I think that in this country we cannot hope to be bailed out by forces outside. I do not say that we should not take help from outside. In today's world we will have to depend on outside help and support. In critical areas, we will have to invite new technology, modern technology and we shall have to open up those areas for those who can do better. But are you going to open up our whole area for producing more cosmetics, more ice-creams? Please see the collaboration arrangements that had been made during the last many years and even during these few months when we ruling this country. My objection is not against liberalisation. This question is being raised everywhere. If liberalisation means less of red-tapism, if

liberalisation means no hurdle, no corruption, bureaucracy should not interfere, then liberalisation is a must. If liberalisation means to squander away the scarce resources for ostentatious living, I shall only plead with all humility, we are not in a position to afford it. I hope that we shall realise these limitations.

On the economic front, I think that those who are poor and especially those sections who had been neglected, remain oppressed and exploited, they should have our special preference. I know there are many doubts, there are many apprehensions. But, Mr. Speaker, through you I want to assure this nation. I may make any compromise but no compromise on the question of dignity of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. There will be no question of any compromise on the feeling of the backward and oppressed sections about their urge to get a life of dignity in this society.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, about minorities, minorities all over the world feel apprehensive. I shall beg of those who say that there should be no discrimination between the minority and majority. Why the founders of our Constitution inserted a minority clause in our Constitution? Minorities all over the world, whether they are religious minorities or ethnic minorities or linguistic minorities, react in a sharp way because they have apprehension and fear in their minds. If we go by the dictionary meaning of what they say, we shall always reach a wrong political decision. We should try to understand their aspirations, we should try to understand their apprehensions, we should try to understand that they have a psychology, a psyche where they feel that they are not assured about their security, about their prosperity and about their future. It is the responsibility of the nation, it is the responsibility of the State and more so the responsibility of the majority community to see that this fear is eliminated from their minds. This we will have to do.

I say that in the matter of religion everybody is free. Secularism does not mean that we should discard religion. Religion is a instrument of communion between man and God. As long as religion is used for communion between man and God, for religious pursuits, we should not quarrel.

We should be proud of our religious heritage in this country. I am a Hindu. I am proud of Rama; I am proud of Krishna; I am proud of the Vedas and our Aryan civilisation. But equally I am proud of the contribution made by other religions which came to this country. And this is the superiority of the Hindu religion over others because we have got the compassion and we have

got the tolerance. If this tolerance and compassion go, the Hindu religion will lose its power, its superiority over all other religions.

I am not against building the temple. I shall not go into any controversy. But it is an emotive issue. The building should be constructed. In the birth place of Rama there should be a temple, magnificent, glorious and as big as we can make. But I shall appeal to my friends that in their enthusiasm to build the temple, do not try to demolish the mosque, because I tell you, no other matter can come in the way. Build the temple as you like and all of us will contribute. And if I remain Prime Minister, Mr. Advani, after a few minutes. I assure you that I shall cooperate in every way to build the temple. But the only thing is, assure the Muslim community that their pride, their self-respect will not be hurt.

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I know, in this House and in the other House many a times I have seen people taking an extreme view. But parliamentary democracy means dialogue, discussion, persuasion of each other to come to some understanding. This is the essence of parliamentary democracy.

My friend, Somnathji asked me what is my understanding with Advaniji or the BJP. The only understanding is—I again repeat inspite of all protestation by the lady Member sitting on the front bench—that I consider Advaniji to be a patriot. I do not agree with his thinking about the social and political life of this country. And I shall go on appealing to Mr. Advani and his colleagues—I have gone to their houses and tell them that the country cannot afford to have confrontation, the country cannot indulge in fighting with each other. I am sorry for what happened in Ayodhya. Nobody wants that even a Single man should die. I assure you that even if a single man or woman dies in this country, I feel that a son or daughter of Mother India has died. Death is death whether it comes by the knife of a rioter or by the bullets of the police. There is no difference in death. So, I cannot say that death by rioting is wrong and death by police bullets is good. But, sometimes, the State has to perform unpleasant duties. I never said that Mr. Mulayam Singh should have done it in a more vigorous way. I ask you Mr. Speaker, Sir, if sometimes decision has to be made in order to protect the lives of thousands, in order to protect millions from going in the street and killing each other, if some action has to be taken it is with regret and if the lady Member thinks that my regret makes any

difference, I express regret that what has happened should have been avoided. But the responsibility is not that of the State, this responsibility should be shared by all those who are concerned. I tell you that on this question I do not want to stand on false prestige. I do not want to stand on prestige whether I should meet X, Y, Z or not. Whoever can contribute to peace, whoever can contribute to understanding I shall go and knock at his door. If the Muslim community agrees to build the temple on the very spot where the mosque is, I shall be very glad. But this should be with common consent. It should be by their mutual understanding. It should not be coerced on them. I shall appeal again to the religious leaders of the Muslim Community and also of the Hindu Community that they should sit together, try to find a solution. Let us not politicise this issue. This is not a political issue. This is a human issue. This is an issue which is going to have its bearing on the history for a long time to come.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, on this question I am very clear. In the name of religion please do not kill each other, that is an antithesis of religion, that is against religion, whether it is Islam, whether it is Hinduism, whether it is Christianity or any other religion. This is why I say that traditions should be respected unless and until they come in the way of progress. My friend Prof. Madhu Dandavate was kind enough to refer to my stand taken at the time of operation Blue Star. I was one of the saddest persons at that time. I did not make any big statement. When some press men asked me. I just said, I still remember that sentence—it is unfortunate that we had to send the army to the Golden Temple and better withdraw it soon. This is what I said. There were comments all over the country. Editorials were written against me. Political leaders came down on me heavily and not only Rajivji who subsequently became Prime Minister but even the leaders of my own party condemned me. Mr. Dandavate, in all humility I shall say Shri Rajiv might have asked that action be taken against me. The former Prime Minister whom I supported for eleven months went to Ballia in the 1984 elections and said, "why this gentleman is contesting election from here? He is a Bhindranwale of Ballia. He should go and contest election in Punjab." I did not take it as something personal when I supported him at the time when we chose him to be the Prime Minister of this country because I thought that personal matters should not prejudice our political judgements. I might have criticised Rajivji and the Congress. He might have criticised me. But does it mean that when the country is in peril and in my assessment I may be totally wrong that elections at this moment—as many

friends have said—will bring disaster to this country, I am not going to finish the work which has been started by the previous Prime Minister. I am not going to be a disaster to this country. I refuse to be so. And if it is a crime, I am ready to commit this crime. But in all humility I should like to say that I do not want cooperation from one section or one person or one party, I want cooperation from everybody. About other issues I am not finding myself to be free. But, I ask Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, through you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, eleven months back when we formed the Government, he was quoting our manifesto. Has he gone through that manifesto? What happened in Punjab? Has the situation brightened up there? What has happened in Kashmir? When Rajiv Gandhi left Kashmir....

I shall tell you. When Rajiv Gandhi left the Government, at least 25-30 per cent people were openly associating themselves with India. When our Government came, the first thing I got from the newspapers was that Mr. Jagmohan was going to be appointed as Governor. I wrote a slip to my Home Minister saying: "It will be a disaster, don't do it." Comrade Surjeet and Farooqi, and I pleaded with him saying don't do it. I said it not for personal reasons. I had no friendly relations with Shri Farooqi. I tried to persuade the Home Minister that we have gone all over the world telling that there is an autocratic regime in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, while we have got an elected Government. I had strong views about the Rajiv Gandhi Government. I never met Shri Rajiv Gandhi for five years when he was the Prime Minister. But Shri Rajiv Gandhi left the Government with all his virtues and vices. We could not afford to make the same speeches which we were making during the elections. This is not the way to run a nation—condemning Shri Rajiv Gandhi that there was rigging in the elections. And, rigging in the elections was known by Mr. Mufti when he became the Home Minister.

When he was in the Congress, he never remembered about the rigging. Is it the way to run a nation? When I talk about Bofors, Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, I want to tell you—this is not what I am saying today—that this is a peculiar country where you say that the Prime Minister was dishonest, the Finance Minister who framed the deal was the symbol of honesty.

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Should I take it that after having the contract approved, the Finance Minister never had a look at the file or he was denied to have a look into the

file? Either the Prime Minister was so innocent that he did not know the implication or he was a collaboration in the whole deal. If he was innocent, the country was not safe in his hands as the Finance Minister. And this was proved subsequently that the country was not safe in his hands as the Prime Minister. It is nothing personal and I am saying this just because at that time I was not in the Government. I was not under the path of secrecy. Don't ask about the files. I shall never mention about files in this House. Unless and until, Mr. Speaker, you direct and this House wants the files, on my own I am not going to divulge the secrecy of this Government. But I want to tell you and assure you, Advaniji, that on Bofors or on any case of corruption, there will be no compromise. But I also want to tell very frankly that State power is not for personal vendetta. Nothing will be done against anybody because of personal prejudice. Nothing will be done in order to protect anybody for personal friendship. This is what I feel should be the right course for a Government to adopt.

About Bofors I have said enough. What is the situation in Kashmir? What is the situation in Assam? What is the situation in Tamil Nadu? Assam, Kashmir and Punjab we inherited from Shri Rajiv Gandhi but who has brought about the situation to the brink in Assam and Tamil Nadu? A friend from that side asked me to do something. I assure you, Sir, and to the whole country that no compromise will be made about the integrity and sovereignty of the nation, whatever the consequences are there. I am already in touch with the Chief Minister of Assam and Tamil Nadu. I am going to discuss with them. I want that there should be proper action taken by them in order to restore peace and law and order in that part. Otherwise things will take their own course. I do not want to conceal anything because the Government of India is not so helpless. And if the Government of India here in Delhi is sitting helpless, there is no right for any of us to remain here, even for a minute. It is not the question of prejudice. It is not the question of challenging anybody. It is the question of discharging our duty I would not like to say anything more about that. All these questions I have tried to cover.

About the economic position, gross mismanagement of the economy—I cannot say anything more and I can say, Mr. Speaker, that we have given wrong signals to our people, to our industrialists, to our workers. People feel frustrated and desperate. The international community feels that India is on the verge of collapse. Our citizens who are outside Indian shores think that

there is no hope for India. But I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that with your cooperation and the cooperation of these people, we shall lift this country from the muddy mire of misery, and we shall restore it to the glory that this nation deserves. We only require the open support from our tolling masses, from our peasantry, from our workers. We want the cooperation of all Indians who are outside India because they are as patriotic as we are. We want cooperation with all friendly nations, but I tell you, Mr. Speaker, we can steer through this crisis only by tightening our belts. Austerity is a must. The slogan of austerity given by Mahatma Gandhi was not a slogan, it was a part of our economic strategy. Swadeshi and swavalamban—self-reliance and Swadeshi. By Gita Mukherjee I was asked this question. We had no other option but to resort to Swadeshi and swavalamban as much as is possible. But in critical areas we will have to get the cooperation from other nations.

This is in a broad way what we want to achieve. Whether we shall be able to achieve or not, only the future will tell. I do not want to make any tall claim. I know the limitations of this Government, but I tell you, my friend—Advaniji, you know me for quite some time. I can be anything, but I cannot be a puppet. I have not seen a person who can use me as a puppet. I have dealt with much bigger people in this country. So far if I was not reduced to a puppet, with your blessings and support, rest assured that even in future, nobody is going to use me as a puppet. But because some people are crying hoarse. I am not going to condemn those people who have come to support me, to help me in an hour of crisis, not my crisis, but the crisis of the nation and those who stand up to support me, I am grateful to them and I acknowledge that support. I do not want to do things in a clandestine manner. If I meet people, I meet them openly. Somebody said that I was meeting secretly. Why should I meet anybody secretly? Shri Rajiv Gandhi might have some hesitation in meeting me. But I had never any hesitation in meeting Shri Rajiv Gandhi. If I can go to anybody and everybody after becoming the Prime Minister, before becoming the Prime Minister, what was the hesitation before me to go to anybody's place? If occasion comes, I shall go to the doors of my worst critics. But I assure you, whether you are a critic or a supporter, don't try to remove me from the path which I have charted for myself. I shall like to use an Urdu couplet here:

*"Mere Kadam Ke Saath Hai Manzil Lagi Hui,
Manzil Jahan Nahi Wahan Mere Kadam Nahin."*

You must start, I know my destination, I know my goal. If I cannot go to the goal, I am not going on any path just for the courtesy of a walker walking all alone.

Mr. Speaker, the last point that I should like to touch upon is defection. Morals have been given about defection. So many things have been mentioned, I don't want to go into them. But, Mr. Speaker, when the Anti-Defection law was passed, there was a moral in it that if one-third people go out of a party, it will not be treated as defection. It was not a concession to those who want to leave the party because it is not the defection. People should understand that there is another word which is called, 'dissent and protest.' Societies move forward only because of dissent and protest. If dissent and protest are not allowed, then society will stagnate and stagnation means sure death. When we see that something is going basically wrong and the whole country is being taken towards disaster, it is our national duty that we should dissent, that we should protest, and I am proud that my colleagues on this side protested against the things that were happening.

I shall not go in to greater detail, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I crave the indulgence of all our Members.

I ask for your support in this great endeavour, in this great task which is ahead of us in order to give this country the glory and prestige that it deserves. Thank you all.

BACK NOTE

1. Motion of Confidence in the Council of Ministers, 16 November 1990

1. KUMARI UMA BHARATI (Khajuraho): The Vishwa Hindu Parishad have decided in their meeting that unless you condemn the massacre in Ayodhya and unless you show your regret for the praising you did of Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav, Vishwa Hindu Parishad people will not talk to you on this Ayodhya issue.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Even if they do not talk with me I shall go on trying to talk with them because I want to make it very clear that I shall talk with every citizen of India howsoever on a wrong path he will be, but only on one condition that there will be no compromise with the sovereignty, unity and integrity of the country. This is the only one condition. If a son or a relative of my family goes wrong, do I say that I shall discard him all of a sudden?

2. SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: For the Prime Minister's information, if he looks at the file, the clearance was subject to commercial, technical and other clearances. After that, the file never returned to me.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: I agree with him and I accept what he says.

STATEMENT ON FIFTH SAARC SUMMIT AT MALE

7 January 1991

I visited Maldives to participate in the Fifth SAARC Summit from the 21st to the 23rd November, 1990. The outcome of the Summit is incorporated in the Male Declaration and the Joint Press Release issued at the end of the Summit. Copies of these documents are laid on the Table of the House.

During my stay in Maldives, I had bilateral discussions with former President Ershad of Bangladesh. President Gayoom of Maldives, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and Prime Minister Wijetunga of Sri Lanka. I also had the pleasure of meeting in Male, His Majesty the King of Bhutan and Prime Minister Bhattarai of Nepal, but detailed bilateral talks with them were held after their arrival in New Delhi immediately after the Summit.

India took a number of initiatives at the Summit and the meetings preceding it, all of which were accepted and are reflected in the Male Declaration and the Joint Press Release.

At our suggestion, regional cooperation under SAARC has been extended to the field of biotechnology. Our proposal to create a Fund for the identification and development of regional projects, to be financed by national development banks of the member-countries, was also accepted. We will host a meeting of the representatives of these banks to work out the precise modalities for the operation of the Fund.

India will also host the Second Ministerial Meeting on International Economic Issues to review the outcome of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations and to coordinate the positions of the member-countries at the forthcoming UN Conference on Environment and Development. It was agreed that the same Ministerial meeting would also prepare a strategy for mobilising regional resources which would encourage and strengthen individual and collective self-reliance in the region.

We also suggested, and it was decided that measures for establishing joint ventures in the field of cottage industries and handicrafts should be taken forthwith to set a stage for promoting collective self-reliance in the region.

A major decision taken at the Summit was to establish three additional regional centres, namely, the Centre for Human Resource Development in

Pakistan, the SAARC Documentation Centre in India and the SAARC Tuberculosis Centre in Nepal. We are taking necessary steps expeditiously to set up the SAARC Documentation Centre in India.

There were several other significant achievements at the SAARC Summit. We agreed to increase tourism in the region. We decided to facilitate greater contacts among our newspaper federations. We announced the 1990 as the Decade of the Girl Child. We launched a SAARC Travel Document to enable visa-free travel for some categories of people. Our Foreign Ministers signed an important Regional Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

My discussions with President Gayoom were very cordial and friendly. We have no bilateral problems between us and mainly discussed some of the major projects of mutual cooperation on which there was complete identity of views. President Gayoom was kind enough to accept my invitation to visit India. The visit will take place soon.

In my bilateral talks with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, I was impressed by his positive approach. He showed an awareness of the cost of both the countries of continuing an adversarial relationship as well as of the benefits inherent in a cooperative relationship. I fully reciprocated his sentiments and sought his cooperation in restoring trust and confidence between our two countries.

I expressed our concern at continuing support from across the border to terrorism in the States of Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir. I emphasised that this is a serious irritant in our relations. We agreed that all differences between India and Pakistan should be resolved peacefully and through dialogue and that the process of reconvening discussions on the various pending issues should be resumed.

Consequent upon our meeting, the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan have met and made progress towards reaching agreement on several confidence building measures to reduce tension in our relations. They have also determined the time-table for the resumption of discussions on issues such as the demarcation of the land boundary at Sir Creek, the Tulbul Navigation Project and the meetings of the Sub-Commissions.

In my meeting with the Prime Minister Wejetunga I expressed our concern at the continuing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, involving heavy casualties

on both sides, including civilian casualties, and the resultant influx of refugees into India. I also emphasised that the Government of Sri Lanka should take measures for arresting and reversing the flow of refugees to India and create conditions for their early return to Sri Lanka. We also discussed the possibility of expanding our cooperation in the trade and economic field.

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate India's commitment to South Asian cooperation under SAARC. This is essential for accelerating our economic development, for building individual and collective self-reliance and for enhancing our bargaining power in multilateral negotiations. Such cooperation has become all the more necessary in the context of the present trend towards economic integration in the world. The Male Summit has substantial achievements to its credit. *SAARC is now poised for launching itself upon the path of cooperation in the hard-core economic areas like trade, industry, energy, money, finance and environment. What is needed is the political will to move confidently in these new areas.* Consistent with its size, resources and stage of development, India would continue to assume responsibility, and even make sacrifices, where necessary, to make SAARC an effective and full-fledged venture of regional cooperation.

Male Declaration

The Male' Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Member Countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 23rd November, 1990.

The President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, His Excellency Mr. Hussain Muhammad Ershad, the King of Bhutan, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuk, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Mr. Chandra Shekhar, the President of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, the Prime Minister of Nepal, the Right Honourable Krishan Prasad Bhattarai, the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif and the Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr. Dingiri Banda Wijetunga met at the Fifth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation at Male' on 21-23 November, 1990.

2. The Heads of State or Government reiterated that cooperation among the countries of South Asia was necessary for improving the quality of life of

the peoples of the region. They recalled their conviction that the objectives of peace and stability in South Asia could be best served by fostering mutual understanding, cooperation and good neighbourly relations. They reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and renewed their resolve to intensify cooperation under its aegis in pursuit of their common objectives.

3. The Heads of State or Government stressed their desire to promote peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Non-aligned Movement, particularly respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, national independence, non-use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and peaceful settlement of disputes.

4. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction that the launching of SAARC in 1985 and the initiatives under the integrated Programme of Action for strengthening regional cooperation in South Asia had generated much enthusiasm and hope in their peoples, and that the South Asian consciousness necessary for the success of regional cooperation was gradually permeating the region. They reiterated their resolve to make optimal use of the positive forces of goodwill, trust and understanding existing among their people and to turn SAARC into a dynamic instrument for achieving its objectives and creating an order based on mutual respect, equity, cooperation and shared benefit.

5. The Heads of State or Government reviewed the status of children in South Asia and noted that the recent World Summit for Children had imparted a new impetus to the ongoing efforts in this field. They believed that relevant recommendations of the World Summit could be usefully incorporated into a Plan of Action in the South Asian context and its implementation should be reviewed annually. The guidelines for such Plan of Action could be prepared by a panel of experts to be appointed by the Secretary-General and examined by the Technical Committee on Health and Population Activities. They also welcome the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its entry into force. They expressed the hope that those Member States, who have not already become party to the Convention, would do so at an early date.

6. The Heads of State or Government endorsed the recommendations made by the Second SAARC Ministerial Meeting on Women in Development

held in Islamabad in June 1990. They noted with satisfaction the enthusiastic response in all Member States to their collective call for the observance of 1990 as the 'SAARC Year of the Girl Child'. They decided that in order to maintain focus on the problems of the Girl Child, the years 1991-2000 AD should be observed as the "SAARC Decade of the girl child.

7. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the growing regional cooperation in combating the problems of drug trafficking and drug abuse. They expressed serious concern over the growing linkages between drug trafficking and international arms trade and terrorist activities. They agreed that observance of 1989 as the "SAARC Year for Combating Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking" had had a profound impact in drawing attention to the menace and to the need for its elimination. They expressed satisfaction that following the decision of the Fourth SAARC Summit, the SAARC convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic substances had been signed at Male'. They urged the Member States to take early measures to ratify the convention for its entry into force. They were convinced that the Convention would help in making SAARC efforts in this area more effective.

8. They endorsed the decision of the Council of Ministers in regard to the time frame for completion of the Regional Study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment. They noted with satisfaction that the methodology for undertaking the study on the Greenhouse Effect' and its impact on the region was likely to be finalized in the near future and desired that the Study itself be completed for consideration at the Sixth Summit. In this context, they noted that the destruction of rainforests, the world over, was contributing significantly to adverse climatic changes and this aspect should also be covered in the proposed Study. They expressed the hope that these Studies would lead to an action plan for meaningful cooperation in the field of Environment and Disaster Management.

9. Recognizing that environment had emerged as a major global concern, the heads of State or Government noted with alarm the unprecedented climatic changes predicted by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). They urged the international community to mobilize additional finances and to make available appropriate technologies to enable the developing countries to face the new challenges arising from climate changes and sea-level rise. They agreed that Member Countries should coordinate their positions at international fora on this issue. They also decided to observe 1992 as the "SAARC Year of Environment".

10. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that the national studies on Trade, Manufactures and Services had been completed. They underlined the need for expeditious action for completing the Regional Study within the time-frame stipulated by the council of Ministers. They expressed the hope that it would open new avenues of cooperation for the prosperity of the peoples of the region.

11. The Heads of State or Government approved the recommendations of the Council of Ministers regarding Special SAARC Travel Document and decided to launch the scheme.

12. The Heads of State or Government expressed concern that Member States were compelled to divert their scarce resources in combating terrorism. They called for expeditious enactment of enabling measures for the implementation of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. They also urged Member States to continue to cooperate in accordance with the Convention.

13. The Heads of State or Government noted that as their countries stood on the threshold of the next millennium, the world was undergoing profound transformations characterised by popular upsurge for democracy, liberty and exercise of human rights, lowering of ideological barriers and the relaxation of global tensions and progress towards disarmament and the resolution of a number of regional and global conflicts. There was also a welcome trend towards the opening up of the global economy and integration of national economies into the mainstream of the world economy. They further noted the trend of increasing integration of the pattern of global production, consumption and trade, growing multipolarity of the world economic structure and integration of the markets of the developed countries in order to maintain their technological lead and competitive edge. These changes presented new challenges and opened up new opportunities to the South Asian countries, as to the rest of the developing world. The Heads of State or Government were convinced that their mutual cooperation can be a critical factor in enabling them to pursue these objectives more effectively.

14. The Heads of State or Government, noting the vital importance of biotechnology for the longterm food security of developing countries as well as for medicinal purposes, decided that cooperation should be extended to this field and, in particular, to the exchange of expertise in genetic conservation

and maintenance of germplasm banks. In this connection, they welcomed India's offer of training facilities and agreed that cooperation in the cataloguing of genetic resources stored in different SAARC countries would be mutually beneficial. Taking note of the proposal made by the Group of Fifteen Developing Countries (G-15) for the establishment of a gene bank for developing countries, they agreed to participate in this venture.

15. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the idea of setting up of a Fund for regional projects which could make available, credit on easy terms for the identification and development of regional projects. They agreed that representatives of the national development banks of the Member Countries should get together to work out the precise modalities for the source of funds and the manner in which these could be related to joint venture projects. They accepted India's offer to host this meeting.

16. The Heads of State or Government regarded the recent developments in the Gulf as the most unfortunate aberration from the present trend of detente, cooperation and peaceful settlement of disputes. They reaffirmed their adherence to UN Security Council Resolutions on this issue. Emphasizing the need for a peaceful solution of the issue they called for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of its legitimate Government. They stated that the Gulf crisis had dealt a severe blow to their economies. They needed massive international assistance to compensate the loss suffered by them due to a sharp decline in remittances, setback to their exports and severe strain on their balance of payments position imposed by increased oil prices. They recognized the potentiality of cooperation among themselves for mitigating the impact of these adverse consequences.

17. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that the initiative of the Government of the Maldives for the Protection and Security of Small States at the UN in 1989, which they all supported, had also received overwhelming support of the international community. They agreed that, because of their particular problems, small states merited special measures of support in safeguarding their independence and territorial integrity.

18. The Heads of State or Government expressed the hope that the talks between the two Super Powers on arms control would culminate in the conclusion of an agreement for substantial reduction in their nuclear arsenals leading to

the total elimination of nuclear weapons. While welcoming the measures being considered for arms reduction at the global level they were convinced that the objective could be best achieved through the promotion of mutual trust and confidence among the Member States. They underlined the inherent relationship between disarmament and development and called upon all countries, especially those possessing the largest nuclear and conventional arsenals, to rechannel additional financial resources, human energy and creativity into development. They expressed their support for the banning of chemical weapons and early conclusions of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. In this context, they welcomed the convening the UN Conference in January 1991 to consider amendments to the Partial Test Ban Treaty to convert it into a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban treaty.

19. The Heads of State or Government expressed concern that the international economic environment for the developing countries had been characterised by negative resource flows, high trade barriers, serious external debt problems and high interest rates. The need of SAARC countries for increased concessional resources and technology as well as access to markets for their exports could not, therefore, be under estimated. They called for collective efforts based on mutuality of interest and felt that regular North-South consultations were essential for ensuring equitable management of global inter-dependence.

20. The Heads of State or Government recalled the usefulness of the first Ministerial Meeting on International Economic Issues held in Islamabad in 1986. They agreed that the second such Ministerial Meeting be held in India in 1991 to review the outcome of the Uruguay Round and to coordinate positions at international conferences including the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development 1992.

21. Notwithstanding the continuing efforts on the international economic plane, the Heads of State or Government emphasised the pressing need for the Ministerial Meeting to address itself vigourly to the objective of self-reliance. They directed the Ministers to prepare a strategy for mobilising regional resources which would encourage and strengthen individual and collective self-reliance in the region.

22. The Heads of State or Government expressed their support for the Paris Declaration (1990) and the Programme for Action adopted by the Second

United Nations Conference on the Least Developed countries. They called upon the international community to contribute to the successful implementation of the Programme of Action which is of special importance for the socio-economic development of the region.

23. The Heads of State or Government recognized the imperative need for providing a better habitat to the peoples of South Asia through optimum utilization of indigenous technology, knowhow and material, and decided that 1991 be observed as the "SAARC Year of Shelter".

24. The Heads of State or Government noted that millions of disabled persons lived in the "SAARC region and immediate action was required to reduce their sufferings and improve their quality of life. They decided to observe 1993 as the "SAARC Year of Disabled Persons".

25. The Heads of State or Government were particularly happy that the Fifth SAARC Summit coincided with the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Independence of the Maldives which provided them with the opportunity to express their solidarity with the people and the Government of the Maldives. They expressed their conviction that the Male Summit had helped in consolidating the gains of regional cooperation and in strengthening the institutional base of SAARC.

26. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host the Sixth SAARC Summit in 1991.

27. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka expressed their deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which the President of the Maldives had discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of the Maldives and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Issued on 23 November 1990

At The End of The Fifth SAARC Summit, Male

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of the Maldives, the Prime Minister of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka met at the

Fifth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation at Male' from 21-23 November 1990. The Meeting was held in an atmosphere of warmth, cordiality and mutual understanding.

2. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives of SAARC and reiterated their resolve to intensify cooperation under its aegis. They issued the Male' Declaration.

3. They welcomed the signing of the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances by the Ministers at Male' and undertook to take early measures to ratify the Convention.

4. The Heads of State or Government decided to launch the Special SAARC Travel Document which would exempt its holders from visas for travel within the region. They decided that Supreme Court Judges, Members of the National Parliaments, Heads of national academic institutions, their spouses and dependent children would be entitled to this Document.

5. The Heads of State or Government endorsed the decision of the Council of Ministers to launch the Scheme for the Promotion of Organised Tourism during the first half of 1991. They also welcomed the proposal for institutionalised cooperation among the tourist industries of the Member States with a view to attracting more tourists from outside the region.

6. They noted with satisfaction that all Member States had completed their national studies on Trade, Manufactures and Services. They underlined the need for completing the Regional Study within the stipulated time-frame.

7. They decided that measures for establishing joint ventures in the field of cottage industries and handicrafts should be taken up forthwith to set a stage for promoting collective self-reliance in the region. They directed the Secretary-General to appoint a group of 2-3 Experts selected from within the region to prepare a paper suggesting the modalities for the setting up of joint ventures, sources of funding and other necessary details for consideration at the next meeting of the Council of Ministers.

8. The Heads of State or Government noted the proposal for the establishment of a SAARC Regional Fund and directed the Standing Committee to submit its recommendations on the proposal for Consideration at the next session of the Council of Ministers.

9. The Heads of State or Government emphasized the importance of cooperation among the SAARC Member States in the field of mass media and directed the Secretary-General to facilitate under the auspices of SAARC, increased interaction among federations, associations of journalists, news agencies and mass media of the region.

10. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the decision authorizing the Secretariat to share information and exchange reports, studies and publications with the European Community (EC) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), to begin with in the identified areas of cooperation.

11. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction that the work was well under way for the setting up of a nucleus Centre for Human Resource Development in Pakistan. They were of the view that the Centre would contribute towards optimising regional cooperation in this vital field.

12. They called for early completion of regional plan "SAARC 2000 — A Basic Needs Perspective" to facilitate activities within a broad framework of a long term perspective.

13. They directed that the theme of 'Poverty Alleviation' Strategies be discussed in depth by Planners for formulating suitable recommendations.

14. The Heads of State or Government decided that in order to maintain focus on the problems of the Girl Child the years 1991-2000 AD would be observed as the "SAARC Decade of the Girl Child". They were deeply moved by the SAARC Girl Child's appeal for love and care for them and their right to childhood. They reiterated their resolve that the welfare of child in general and the girl child in particular would figure at the top of their list of priorities.

15. The Heads of State or Government emphasized the importance of regular exchange of views among the representatives of the SAARC Member Countries at international economic fora with a view to concerting positions, as far as possible, on matters of common concern. They decided to hold the Second Ministerial Meeting on International Economic Issues in India in 1991.

16. The Heads of State or Government underlined the imperative need for providing a better habitat to the people of South Asia and decided that in order to focus attention on the problems of the Homeless, the Year 1991 be observed as the "SAARC Year of Shelter". They decided that each country

would organise a series of events on this theme and share their experiences in order that the people of the region could derive practical benefit from the "SAARC Year of Shelter".

17. They directed that the Regional Study on the Causes and consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment and the Study on the Greenhouse Effect' and its impact on the region be finalized before the next Summit. They stressed that, pending the completion of the studies, Member States should take necessary steps at national levels in this vital field. They decided to observe 1992 as the "SAARC Year of the Environment".

18. The Heads of State or Government stressed that immediate action was required to reduce the sufferings of the millions of disabled people who lived in the SAARC region. In order to focus attention on their problems and to improve their quality of life, they decided to observe 1993 as the "SAARC Year of Disabled Persons".

19. They decided that appropriate programmes should be worked out for observing the SAARC Year of the Shelter 1991, the SAARC Year of the Environment 1992, and the SAARC Year of Disabled Persons 1993. In order to derive the maximum benefit and to sensitize the peoples in the region in the above vital fields, they noted that Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Pakistan respectively will circulate the recommended Plans of Action for implementation at national level.

20. The Heads of State or Government noted that SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC) was already functioning at Dhaka. They decided that the SAARC Tuberculosis Centre and the SAARC Documentation Centre would be set up in Nepal and India respectively. They directed that necessary steps to establish the two Centres should be taken up urgently.

21. The Heads of State or Government stressed the need for adopting a more business-like and functional approach in the conduct of meetings held under the aegis of SAARC. They requested the Chairman of the Fifth SAARC Summit and the President of Bangladesh to initiate consultations with the Member States in this regard.

22. The Heads of State or Government directed the Chairman of Council of Ministers to prepare recommendations on rationalizing SAARC activities with a view to promoting effective functioning of the Association.

23. The Heads of State or Government expressed appreciation for the pioneering work done by Ambassador Abdul Ahsan, the first Secretary-General, during the formative years of the Secretariat. They welcomed his successor, Ambassador Kant Kishore Bhargava, and appreciated his valuable contribution to the on-going activities of SAARC.

24. They expressed profound happiness that the Fifth SAARC Summit coincided with the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Independence of the Maldives which provided them with an opportunity to express personally their solidarity with the people and the Government of the Maldives.

25. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host the Sixth SAARC Summit in Colombo in 1991.

26. The Heads of State or Government highly appreciated the exemplary manner in which the President of the Republic of Maldives conducted the meetings of the Association as the Chairman of the Fifth SAARC Summit.

They also expressed their sincere gratitude for the gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of the Republic of Maldives and for the excellent arrangements made for the Conference.

BACK NOTE

II. Statement on Fifth SAARC Summit at Male, 7 January, 1991

NIL

DECISION ABOUT STOPPAGE OF REFUELLING OF U.S. PLANES

22 February, 1991

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we had a long debate. The matter concerns the whole nation. Not only the whole nation, the whole world is looking to our nation on this issue.

I also know that some of our Hon. Members are exercised over this problem. I can well understand their sentiments and emotions. I shall not like to go into all the details of the questions that have been raised. I shall try to refrain myself from going into the past. I shall not like to apportion blame to any other person or any other regime. I think that what has happened is the responsibility of this Government. The only thing is that I shall like to clarify certain points that have been raised by important Members. Otherwise, it will be considered as if I am trying to conceal something.

First, I shall take the speech made by Hon. Shri Narasimha Rao. About the free corridor given to US planes in this country, I tell this House that since this Government came, there is no free corridor to any Government anywhere. Why this free corridor was given at that time, I cannot answer. And I am not entitled to say about the past.

I shall like to tell my friend, Shri Gujral. He knows that it is customary in the international norms that every over-flight has to have a transit landing. Some Hon. Members said, transit landing gives the facility to the country concerned to check what is going in this particular aeroplane. This point was emphasised by Hon. Shri Narasimha Rao. If you give a free corridor and transit landing is not compulsory, in my opinion, that is not a very happy situation. Free corridor is given only to the VIPs, Heads of State, Heads of Government or very important military personnel whose movement is notified before-hand. This is the custom, I am not very much conversant with the traditions and nuances of diplomacy but this has been the routine practice all over the world. And this is being done not only in relation to US but to many other countries. We have been allowing such facilities to almost every country—whether of one bloc or the other bloc. It has nothing to do with our non-alignment. It is the tradition which this country has been following for quite sometime. Mr. Speaker, Sir, whenever we allow a plane to go on our air space, we make it compulsory to land at one place. What we call as "transit landing". It becomes compulsory also

to give them the refuelling facility because if a plane lands, refuelling is a must and every country gives it. Our planes and Air force planes are perhaps flying, even at this moment, over 24 or 20 countries and we are getting that facility. There are bilateral arrangements with some of the countries that we do not ask them for having this transit landing but not with the USA. I want to make it clear. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is true that a situation was developing in the Gulf and everybody knew that a war-like situation was there. We also knew that the situation may deteriorate and war may take place. And this is why when we gave them the permission we took from them the guarantee that no lethal weapon will go. It is for the first time that the Government of India has insisted for this type of guarantee. I do not want to make tall claims. But this was done and the Government of the United States of America agreed to this.

The other question which is very relevant and I agree with Mr. Narasimha Rao that it was in the normal times and times of peace. When the war started, at that time, it should have been stopped. Mr. Speaker, I may very frankly say that I did not see any serious departure from our old policies; I did not see even any departure from the old traditions or the old practices which have been followed during the last 40 years. I also did not see any threat to our non-alignment nor we got from any quarter any whispering doubt about our tilting to one side or the other. It has nothing to do with our policy of non-alignment. I say that the Government of India, as of the old, is sticking to non-alignment of course, with certain amount of flexibility depending on our national interests and that has been the practice again from the very beginning. My friend, Mr. Jaswant Singh told what happened in 1962 and 1971. He was in the war theatre. He knows more about it. I do not know. That is why, I shall not like to talk about it. Mr. Dinesh Singh was at the helm of affairs in those days. He might be knowing about it. So, it will not be proper to say that at that time there were not certain adjustability or adjustment in our policy in allowing people to fly or to refuel or to do things. But there was no agreement with any Government at any time. It was just a tradition that was being maintained and has been maintained. Mr. Speaker, when I saw the opinion developing in this country that this refuelling facility should not be given, I convened a meeting of the Opposition parties immediately. And I told them. "If you want, I can ask them to stop it today itself". But this is again not done in international dealings. My friend, Mr. I.K. Gujral knows, Mr. Narasimha Rao knows and Mr. Dinesh Singh knows. It is just not like saying "I allow you", "I do

not allow you", because national interest is again involved. The only thing we can say is that "the situation is such that if this facility cannot be used by you, it will be better", immediately, when I came to know about the opinion, not of all sections of the House but important sections of the House, I immediately conveyed to the US Government that they should discontinue it. It takes some time. If I am at fault on that, you can blame me. But some of my friends have been trying to point an accusing finger and I feel sad, Mr. Speaker, when Mr. Gujral said whether the decision is being taken by this Government or by some extra-Constitutional authorities directing this Government. Mr. Gujral and myself have been friends for a long time. Mr. Speaker, you know that Mr. Gujral might have been getting directions from extra-Constitutional authorities at one time or the other. Never in my life I have taken any instructions from any extra-Constitutional authority. I shall not like to bring personal matters in this House. I would not have taken up this personal matter if it would not have come from Shri I.K. Gujral. I would have ignored any other comment, but not from Shri I.K. Gujral, whom I know for a long time and for whom I have got great regard and respect, and he at least knows me for quite some time. I may be lacking in anything, may not have his wisdom, or his nuances of foreign policy, but one thing I do not lack is courage and that is why when somebody asked whether we have given this facility, I said, yes. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I shall leave that matter there.

The other question was raised, and a very important question, by my friend, Shri Indrajit Gupta. He said whether the Government of India was doing something about the Gorbachev formula or whether they were sleeping over it. Shri Gujral also said that — he was very much awake and we were sleeping. But I do not know that. During the last one month, I have exchanged views with Mr. Gorbachev five times. Even today, at this moment, we are in constant touch with him. It does not mean him personally, but with the Government of USSR. Our permanent representative in the United Nations since yesterday or day before yesterday has been contacting all the members of the Security Council and of the nations of the non-aligned movement to see that we are able to restore the authority of the Security Council and the peace proposal is not left to certain people. We have said it clearly and categorically that we support the move made by the President of USSR. Not only this, we have been taking all measures, all initiatives; I shall not go into the details of that. During the last one month, envoys from all important countries who are

supporting Saddam Hussein have visited Delhi and had discussions with me. None of them was as exercised as my friend, Shri Gujral is exercised.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, everybody says that we have gone against Saddam Hussein and we have destroyed our relations with Saddam Hussein. I categorically want to say that our stand on the Palestinian question remains the same and I told everybody that on the Palestinian question there cannot be any compromise. We also said that our friendship with Iraq is there. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you will be pleased to know that in Egypt when the Iraq Embassy was closed, the President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, chose none else but India, the inimical country, to look after Iraq's interest! This is the situation. But if people think that giving statements or trying to find bold words or pointing accusing fingers is part of the international politics, I do not know that.

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Even today I say that while the Government is making efforts, I was talking of our permanent representative and I was talking of our Deputy Foreign Minister who is going to Tehran and Baghdad. Shri Rajiv Gandhi, along with Shri Narasimha Rao and others, is going tomorrow to Moscow enroute to Tehran in order to find a solution to this problem, it is not only Shri Rajiv Gandhi, I shall request Shri Gujral also, because he seems to have cordial relations with Saddam Hussein and others. I shall be ready to get his support. The efforts of anybody who is ready to contribute to establish peace in that area will be appreciated. When I said that I did not want to divide this nation on this issue, I sincerely meant it. We have many problems.

Sir, if I cannot make myself, intelligible to them, I cannot help it because I can give arguments and I can give facts, but I cannot give the brains to understand.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri Narasimha Rao asked a question. And the same question was asked, in a different language, by my friend Shri Indrajit Gupta. I assure you on the questions of policy, non-alignment is still relevant. It is relevant because we do not want that any power, whether one or the other, should take the responsibility of restoring peace in a particular region. If it is allowed in one region, it will affect us also. We are conscious of our interests.

Shri Chitta Basu said that we should condemn the United States. I have not run the politics of condemnation. It is his Government which does it. I do not condemn people. I condemn the action of particular people and of particular nations. He would know it if he has tried to read the newspapers. The day when there was a statement by the U.S. Vice-President that he would have to keep his options open to use nuclear weapons. I said that it was a crime against humanity. I said any talk of using nuclear weapons and any talk of chemical war would be a crime against humanity. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we oppose it. But there are certain methods in dealing with the situation. Some people feel that they should talk very boldly against some people. And some people have the instinct of self-condemnation and self-pity. They say that India has not been able to do anything and that India has been relegated to background. What has happened to France? What has happened to China? What has happened to Iran? What has happened to USSR?

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The details of their proposals are with me. I shall just read out the points:

1. Iraq announces a full and unconditional withdrawal of its forces from Kuwait.
2. Withdrawal begins on the second day after the cessation of hostilities.
3. Withdrawal of forces will take place in a fixed time-frame.
4. After withdrawal of two-thirds of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait the economic sanctions imposed by the UN will cease to apply to Iraq.
5. At the end of the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the causes would cease to exist, as also the causes for the corresponding resolutions, so those resolutions would cease to be in effect.
6. Right after the cease-fire, all the prisoners of war would be immediately released.
7. Withdrawal of forces would be monitored by countries not directly involved in the conflict, being so entrusted by the Security Council.
8. The work on determining the details and specifications continues. The final outcome of this work will be made public today to member countries of the UN Security Council.

This is what has come.

Mr. Speaker, it may be just a coincidence. I do not want to claim any credit. Out of these eight points, four points have been taken up by our U.N. Representative from the very beginning for the consensus in the Security Council and outside. It must be just a coincidence or it must be just a luck for the Government of India. That is what you may be saying.

So, this is what you have been doing.

If you want our reactions, we are for supporting this move. I have been told that the President of the United States of America has certain reservations on this. Though I am told that at one stage, they said that they will be discussing with their allies and they will come to some decision but at the lower level, somebody has said that they would reject this formula for this proposal by the Soviet Union. It will be a grave mistake. I may make an appeal from this House that Mr. George Bush should take this opportunity— should not miss this opportunity—in order to establish peace in that area. It provides a beginning for a meaningful dialogue, for a talk, to come to some conclusions. I have got certain information about his reservations but I do not think it will be prudent to talk about reservations of the President of the United States of America. I hope and trust that he will be able to discuss with allies and come to some understanding because in war nobody triumphs. In war only humanity is defeated. It is the agony, it is the suffering of the people that makes us think about it. We are more concerned about it. Mr. Faleiro told perhaps that we have special concern because our citizens are involved in it. More than 5,000 of our people even today are in Kuwait and we feel concerned about it. These were the people who refused to come out of Kuwait even till this last moment. I shall not like to go into the details, as to what initiatives we have taken; how we tried to see that the deadline should be postponed, something should be done. Repeatedly, we tried but when the stubbornness comes in the minds of certain people, not only the voice of India was not heard, the voice of USSR, the voice of China, the voice of Iran, the voice of even very friendly persons like Mr. Yasser Arafat and others and even the French voice did not carry any conviction with them. I do hope and trust that now the atmosphere has changed and I agree that India has to play a very important role because we are concerned with the developments in the Arab world. We have our relations for a long time. I shall not like to go into the history, otherwise, again I shall jump into the controversy raised by Mr. Jaswant Singh and Mr. Gujral. I am not that good a student of history but our recent history with the Arab

world and especially with Iraq has been that of cordiality and friendship. We shall never like to see that dismemberment of Iraq. We want that their political unity and integrity should be maintained. My friend Mr. Indrajit Gupta wanted to know whether we stand by the U.N. Resolution or not. If we have to remain in U.N., then we will have to stand by U.N. Resolution but the question is that of interpretation, that of its area, how long it can be stretched in order to find convenience to have your move. It is a delicate issue. I shall appeal to Members that they should give some concession to the Prime Minister who has never been in the Government and has never been in the international affairs.

All other Members seem to be more knowledgeable about the international affairs and the happenings in the world. But what little I know through the good offices of our Ambassador, our Foreign Office and brilliant statements, sometimes issued by all of you, I have tried to take them into consideration and I have tried to live upto your expectations. If there are any faults why do you divide the country on this issue? Are there not enough problems? I shall appeal to the Members—I am told that in the other House, there has been a unanimous Resolution— through you, Mr. Speaker, that let us remain united on this problem, in the interest of world peace, in the interest of the rights of humanity, especially of the downtrodden, of the exploited, of the developing world, of the poor nations of the world, because they look towards us with expectations and hope.

BACK NOTE

III. Decision about Stoppage of Refuelling of U.S. Planes, 22 February, 1991

1. AN HON. MEMBER: You met Khashoggi also.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Yes, Khashoggi also. He is a diplomat in your eyes, not in my eyes. I meet so many Khashoggis. But i am not talking of Khashoggis, I am talking of Arafat, I am talking of Algerian President's envoy, I am talking of the Chinese Prime Minister, I am talking of the Iranian President and I am talking of the people who are concerned about the matter and who matter in this problem.

2. AN HON. MEMBER: What about Shri Rajiv Gandhi?

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: I do not know what you mean by Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Shri Rajiv Gandhi has been helping in finding a solution to this problem and I have been in constant touch and dialogue and consultation with Shri Rajiv Gandhi.

3. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Shri Rajiv Gandhi said so !

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: If Shri Rajiv Gandhi has said so, he has also been doing something. But some people are only saying all these things and doing nothing. That is the difference. If you do something, then you can say something.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my friend Shri Indrajit Gupta wanted to know whether the Government of India has any knowledge about the Soviet move or not. We have some knowledge. But there are limitations. If the Government concerned say that this is a secret thing, a confidential thing, then the Prime Minister of another country howsoever insignificant he may be, has not got the liberty to express it to the press. This is the limitation. But now, the Soviets themselves have come out through TASS today.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Not today, it was yesterday.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Yesterday?

STATEMENT REGARDING SITUATION IN GULF COUNTRIES

25 February, 1991

Mr. Chairman, Sir, as the Hon. Members are aware, all the efforts made by the Security Council on 23rd February to stop the war and restore peace in the Gulf region proved of no avail. The ground war has started and has been going on for the last two days. Its consequences are going to be really devastating. Iraq and Kuwait may be destroyed almost beyond recognition. Hundreds of thousands of the people of those two countries are likely to suffer and many more thousands of innocent lives are likely to be lost. The use of weapons of mass destruction, which I have already characterised as a crime against humanity, cannot be ruled out.

In the Security Council, which was convened at the initiative of the Soviet Union and where the Gorbachev proposals were submitted, the Indian delegation tried every possible means to seek reconciliation between the differing positions of the parties to the conflict and prepare a framework for bringing the war to an end. A majority of the Member-countries accepted our suggestions to prepare a paper as a basis for achieving this result. In fact, at one stage, the President of the Council even thought of entrusting the task for preparing a draft to India, Equador and Austria. Unfortunately on account of the rigid position taken by a few Members of the Council, that for the present the Council has no role to play, it became impossible for the Council to discharge its responsibilities under the Charter. The Council stands paralysed since then. We have approached Governments of the Member-countries of the Council in their capitals to sent instructions to their representatives in New York to activate the Council so that it can play its due role. We are awaiting their response. In the meantime, we are keeping in touch with all the representatives of the Member-countries in New York to see what the Council can do. The immediate task is to bring about a cessation of hostilities on the basis of the total withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait within a time-bound framework. The Security Council should, without further waste of time, take in hand this pursuit of peace. Thank you.

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BACK NOTE

IV. Statement Regarding Situation in Gulf Countries, 25 February, 1991

MR. CHAIRMAN: Normally such questions are not permitted.

1. SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY [Katwa]: Sir, even what the Prime Minister has said is a very serious matter. In the morning, we raised the issue and we wanted a unanimous resolution to be passed from the House to express our views on the out-break of ground war and tried to appeal to the world community so that there is cessation of hostilities. That resolution is there with the Chair. What happened to that?

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: It is true that there was a suggestion that we should have a unanimous resolution. There was some reservation from some sections of the House.

AN HON. MEMBER: Which section.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: But I had a discussion with the leaders of political parties and all agreed that the Government should make a statement. This statement was shown to them and it was agreed to by all the political parties. I think, on this issue of such a serious nature, we should not divide the House.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: We accept that position. I am glad that the Prime Minister is responding to us.

PROF. MAHADEO SHIWANKAR [Chimur]: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he is taking any steps to evacuate the Indian Nationals entrapped in Iraq?

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir 107 or 109 Indian Nationals are still there in Iraq and we are finding it difficult to evacuate them right now. Earlier when they were asked to leave that country, they were not ready to do so. But our main concern is about Kuwait where about 5000 of our nationals are still entrapped. Many of them were not prepared to come to India before the war broke-out and even immediately after the war broke out. The problem today is that it is very difficult to evacuate them if not impossible.

However, we have requested the parties involved in the war to extend whatever help they can to protect our nationals.

PROF. RAM GANESH KAPSE (Thane): How is it that our Embassy in Baghdad is closed?

SHRI T. BASHEER (Chirayinkil): Our Mission in Baghdad is closed. So, I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister as to whether or not any arrangement is made for our nationals in Iraq in this regard because it is reported that our Embassy is closed there.

PROF. RAM GANESH KAPSE: All other nations are having their embassies and only our embassy is closed.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: It is not correct that all other embassies are working there. No SAARC country, no Gulf country, no country from the Western world has an embassy working there. If I am correct, only two to three countries have got their embassies there. We are amongst the last three countries to evacuate, according to my information. I may be wrong also. Only Soviet Union and Cuba have got their skeletal staff there. We have not made any arrangement with any other country. We have asked our diplomatic staff to be stationed in Teheran and look after the interests of India from Teheran.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Mavelikara): What will be done to bring them here? Can you do something about that? There are about 4000 people in Kuwait also.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: As you know, as is the situation in Kuwait, evacuation is almost impossible. We are trying evacuation from Iraq. I cannot assure the House that we are in a very safe position to say that they will be evacuated because people are not ready to move out of their houses due to the war situation as it exists today.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): If you announce that you are going to evacuate, then there will be more trouble for them on the way.

**INCIDENTS OF ATROCITIES ON SCHEDULED CASTES IN
VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY,**

25 February 1991

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, discussion on this topic is going on since today afternoon. I seek apology of the House for not being present here. I understand the feelings of this House, but the situation is such that where on one hand, atrocities are being committed on the harijans, on the other hand, humanity is at stake in the Gulf. I had to go to the Rajya Sabha, where a discussion on the Gulf was going on.

Recently, when this issue was raised by Shri Madan Lal Khurana and Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra in this House, I have said that it is a matter of grave concern. The seriousness of the issue increases, when these atrocities are committed on the poor section of our society, who have been exploited and neglected. It increases more, when the units of the administration, which are responsible for their security and protection are under doubt. I am pained to say that in this incident, the behaviour of the police is not beyond doubt. This has been accepted by the State Government and from the information we have gathered it appears that some police officials have committed excesses and those were so grave that some innocent people lost their lives. I don't want to go into such figures as how many of them were guilty or were innocent, but whosoever has been killed wrongly, whether a innocent person or guilty person, it is a wrong thing. I assure this House that full investigation will be made in this regard and the guilty will be punished.

The Uttar Pradesh Government has taken steps in this regard and an enquiry is going on. I think that its report will be received soon.

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I cannot say it for certain. This is an information. It can be wrong also. I am saying it to the House, but there is one very strange question and I have no answer to it. If the court has given bail to anyone, the Government can do nothing in it and the intention of the Government in this regard. But if any negligence has been committed, we will see to rectify it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, our country is passing through a transitional period. A class of our society, which has been exploited and suppressed for thousands of years, is now taking a step to create a new history. The adivasis, harijans, poor and backwards belong to these classes of our society. But now an awareness is coming among the people of these classes and there are two

reasons behind it. Firstly, as we have democracy we go to them after every five years or sometimes and tell them... becomes glad? I am happy if you become glad by this.

I was saying that we go to them and tell them that they are builder of this society and this country. This is one reason behind the awareness and secondly, the society has a dynamism of its own, which is known as social dynamism. A society cannot remain as it is. It is always changing within itself, whether we want it or not.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the number of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students studying in universities and colleges is equal to the total number of students studying in the university at the time when we were studying. They are taught the history of revolutions in the world and they know that the God has not made anyone unequal, but it is the present social set up, that has exploited and neglected them. Therefore, they want their rights. Now, it has to be decided by us whether we will change ourselves according to their feelings and the policy and programmes of the Government will be formulated according to their wishes and expectations or we will try to suppress them through the suppressive forces of the Government.

We don't want to accuse anyone, but unfortunately, it is not easy to bring about change in the social set up. Those, who have full control of this set up of wealth, power and Government, do not want to give up their interests so easily.

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If you only want to make noise, I have no objection. Both the sides can make noise. It is true that only those who are coward, make noise. Those who have no fear, never shout. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, therefore, I would like to submit that we have to speed up this process of bringing about change and as one of my friends asked, I would like to say it specifically that if we want to improve this situation, we have to speed up this change. Attention has to be paid towards the welfare of these classes, who have been exploited and neglected till now. It is true that this issue is related with law and order situation also and it shows the weakness of the police and the administration, but it also shows the weakness of our social set up. We have to take steps to bring about change in that social set up. Those who are raising these issues of atrocities today, have atleast taken a step in the right direction. They have started to understand

the concept of social consciousness. Their social consciousness is demanding its right place and wants to change this social set up, under which such exploitation and suppression has taken place. I think this mentality will never change. When we will analyse our economic policies, we will take steps to bring about change in the society. We should not shirk from our responsibilities and we should not consider the human distress through individual incidents only, but should look towards it in the perspective of social change.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am confident that this discussion in the House today is going in the right direction. But we had to achieve the objective behind this discussion and it will be good if this House is prepared to bring about that social change, in which, no person belonging to the scheduled caste or scheduled tribe will remain helpless, will ever be exploited. But I am pained to say that although there is unity among our friends on this question, but there is a lack of unity in this House on the question of policies on social change. I will be glad if our friends sitting on both the sides will together work to speed up the work of bringing about social change and will try to take the country towards it. May be I am a conservative in your view, but I am mentioning about progressiveness.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, so far as the question of law and order is concerned, there is no difference in it, whether it is U.P. or Bihar I have observed that we link every question to party politics. Death can be linked to party politics. Wherever there is killing, it is the murder of humanity and so there is no question of any political difference. Therefore, I say that we should be united at least on some questions. It could have been understood if someone from Government's side would have said that whatever has happened is good. Many of our colleagues have raised their hands and in case it is claimed that the U.P. Government officials have done a great job then I shall be the first person to join you and say that we deplore the action of Uttar Pradesh Government. Whatever had happened there, whether in U.P., Bihar, Gujarat, Rajasthan or in Maharashtra, wherever it might have happened, whenever some innocent person is killed, it is a matter of shame for all of us.

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Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that we should unanimously condemn this action and that the question raised by Shri Vijay Kumar and Shri Khuranaji is very important. I respect their sentiments and appreciate

them for drawing the attention of the House and the nation towards this burning problem. Their inspiration will give us boost to work more effectively but it will be better if they refrain from doubting intentions of one another. We may not have as much affection towards them as they have but they too have some concern for them for the sake of humanity. They should keep it in mind. None should create any controversy on this issue, may it be the Central Government, U.P. Government or Bihar Government. It is our firm belief that all State Governments should work unitedly and try to improve the prevailing situation and our effort will be in this direction. The doubts and misgivings in the hearts of the Harijans and Adivasis should not be further enhanced because doubts and apprehensions created in the hearts of people further complicate the matters, I would request the hon. Members of this House to make an earnest effort to solve the problems and eradicate the prevailing evils and at the same time refrain from committing any such act which may give a feeling that any attempt of hatching a conspiracy against the Harijans and Adivasis is being made. If this sort of a feeling is allowed to go deep in to the hearts of Harijans and Adivasis, then they will not be able to look at this august House with any hope. In that case frustration and despair would prevail and that would have serious repercussions. If you look at Adivasis inhabited area from Tripura down to Tamil Nadu, you will find a sense of uneasiness, pain and agony prevailing and do not give air to this feeling. My request to all of you is to make concerted efforts to remove their sufferings.

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BACK NOTE

V. Incidents of Atrocities on Scheduled Castes in various parts of the Country, 25 February 1991

1. AN HON. MEMBER: No one has been arrested so far.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: I will reply to it. I have been told that one of the officials, who was to be arrested, is absconding and some others have managed to get bail. Therefore, no one could be arrested. No one has been freed deliberately, but....

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: A person, who has been booked under section 302 of I.P.C, has been bailed out in advance? A villager goes to the court. This clearly shows the Intention. No bail is given in a case under section 302.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The bail is given by the Court.

2. DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA (Calcutta South): I would appreciate if rather than engaging in generalities you be more specific and refer to the specific incident that is being discussed by all of us.

AN HON. MEMBER: Had you gone to Pratapgarh?

3. SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Prime Minister, Sir, he has been given a reward.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not in my knowledge whether he has been awarded or not as has been stated by Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan but I give this assurance that I shall look into the matter and if that person is found to be guilty he will be punished. There is no problem. To err is human and thus if we have committed any mistakes it might have happened, after all we are not angels. But there are some people who pose themselves as if they have come down to earth straight from heaven and they have no distress but we do not belong to that category. I am an ordinary citizen like you and therefore, I can also commit mistakes and I am prepared to own them. I do not say that whatever work I am doing is totally correct. I give this assurance to my colleague Shri Ram Vilas Paswan that if you point out our wrong actions.

SHRI SHARAD YADAV: Who has come to this world as an angel, I could not follow. Here no one claims to have come as an angel.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: I do not consider them angels because they have worked with us barely for two days. They are ordinary party workers like us but you know them better than us if you consider them angels.

4. MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Anything said without my permission will not form part of the record...

SHRI KHEMCHANDBHAI SOMABHAI CHAVDA: Sir, I would like to know what kind of preventive steps the Prime Minister of India is going to take to stop this type of incidents.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I assure this House that you convene a meeting of all the leaders of the political parties in this House, take a decision what steps are to be taken to prevent recurrence of this type of incidents and the Government will accept every word of that decision.

SHRI SATYNARAYAN JATIYA: The Uttar Pradesh Government and Central Government also can make an announcement in this regard. The Central Government can atleast provide assistance to them.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, though it is not proper for me to make this type of announcement, but as the Members are too much concerned and as it is a deeper agony, the Government of India will provide funds so that every deceased person gets atleast one lakh rupees. If the Government of Uttar Pradesh or Bihar has given something, that will be included in it.

SHRI BHOGENDR JHA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, our Minister of State for Home Affairs went to Musauri Thana area, we feel happy about it and have no objection. But neither the Prime Minister nor the Minister of State for Home Affairs visited Pratapgarh or Begusarai areas of U.P. where killings took place. Why this discrimination has been done and why they could not go there?

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the objection raised by the hon. Member is correct. I did not go there and the Minister of State visited the other place, if any other Minister or I visit this place too and it gives some sense of satisfaction and security to these people then we shall go there as well.

CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS IN THE COUNTRY

6 March, 1991

Mr. Speaker, Sir, for the last few days, a discussion was going in the House on the President's Address. Firstly, I beg your pardon for not listening to some of the Members. Several Members took part in this discussion and mentioned the problems being faced by the country. I don't find it necessary to discuss all those problems, because these have been already discussed in the House many a times. But I would like to say a few words about the basic problems which have been raised here.

First of all, I would like to take up the questions raised by Shri Ram Krishan Yadav. Although, he was the last Speaker, yet he has raised the basic questions regarding human dignity, poverty, distress and hunger, which are related to our country.

In the Constitution, framed after the freedom struggle, we promised to protect human dignity. We also said that our biggest wealth is our manpower and development of our country depends on this manpower. Mahatma Gandhi told us that we would be unable to build up a new India, unless we realise the dignity of labour. We have to pay attention to these issues and we should have done it earlier, but it is regrettable that we did not do so. But it is not proper to say that these issues have not been mentioned in the President's Address. When the President has proposed to set up a National Reconstruction Fund, the intention behind it was to utilise the manpower of crores of people properly. We also said that this manpower of crores of youths should be utilised to remove poverty, hunger, illiteracy, inequality existing in our country because this is the wealth which can give us biggest power.

Shri Ram Krishan Yadav has said that it is ironical that our thousands of years old culture is full of liberal ideals, even then the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backwards are not treated at par with others in our country. They are pained about this. To remove this inequality we will have to bring them at par with others by giving them special opportunities in the society.

He has also said that special attention need to be paid the backward classes and the poor. Some other Members also said that we have always respected all the religions in our country. Unfortunately communalism has been raising its head for the last few years, our country and people have become thirsty of blood of each other in the name of religion. No religion

teaches to fight each other. Time and again, we have repeated our resolution in the Parliament that we believe in religious tolerance. It is necessary to take steps in this regard.

Our country has been facing the problem of unemployment. The manpower is our wealth, but it is not being utilised properly. This is why, it was earlier said that the right to work will be made a fundamental right, but simultaneously, we will have to create new employment opportunities also and for that we have to properly utilise the limited resources of our country. We have to decide whether our limited resources are to be used for providing luxuries of life or to remove poverty.

We had said this and the President too had stressed in his address that we would have to take innovative steps to fill the over-widening gap between the prosperous and poorer sections of our society. We don't have any animosity towards anyone's prosperity, we don't have any clash or enmity with the prosperous, but if we want to light a candle of hope in the dark world of the poor and the helpless, then certainly, the affluent will have to make some sacrifices. Such policies will have to be formulated in our country, that is why we opted for a planned economy for our country the Planning Commission was established in 1950. My good old friend veteran leader, Shri Yamuna Prasad Shastri said that to reference to the Planning Commission was made. If he goes through the contents of the speech thoroughly, he will find that I had said that the draft of the eighth five year plan would be prepared by 31st March. We cannot brush aside or disregard the concept of a planned economy. If the aspirations and necessities of a large country is to be fulfilled with limited resources, then it is very essential to give priority to the idea of planning and the Planning Commission has been endeavouring to fulfil that dark and even today, it is working in that direction.

My hon. friend, Shri Somnath Chatterji has repeatedly raised burning problems like unemployment, poverty and the problems being faced by the working class. We feel that if the problem of unemployment is not checked, it will give rise to distress and sorrow in the minds of the unemployment. Poverty in itself is a curse, but the pain and distress in the minds of the unemployment will not only create disorder within the society, but will also fear the very fabric of our society. Some of my friends here raised question regarding Assam, Punjab and Kashmir. I am grateful to the leader of opposition, Shri L.K. Advani for he had rightly understood the importance of these

burning questions. Despite our all-out efforts, even today the situation in Punjab is not normal. Even today, killings are taking place, but we have shared no effort to change this atmosphere of bloodshed. We have always stressed upon the need to solve this issue through negotiations, but I would certainly like to add here that tension has lessened, even if there hasn't been a perceptible change. We did make efforts in that direction and we shall continue to do so in the coming days too. We don't claim that we have created a paradise on earth. I had never promised a paradise, nor do I promise it today also. However, I do believe that—

*"Maana ki hum chaman ko Gulzar na kar sake,
kuchh khaar tho hum kam kar sake Gujre jidhar se hum."*

Although we were not able to establish a garden of Eden, we certainly did remove some thorns from the path, unmindful of the fact that some of them did pierce our feet. My brother, Shri Indrajit Gupta has given a very wise counsel that Chandra Shekhar should think before he acts. I would like to say that I do think and I know very those whom I can trust and those whom I can't. My experience has been similar, with those sitting here and those seated there. I won't discuss it here. Each and every Member referred to the crisis being faced by the nation. I would like to ask whether under the circumstances and in order to face these problems boldly, is it not necessary that we should instill a sense of confidence and mutual trust within us, is it not essential that we would have faith in each other? We don't say that any single person is fully competent and omnipotent. I have learned lessons of sacrifice from many people. Many of our friends said here that we should restrain our aspiration and that our personal ambitions should not blind us. I feel distressed when I hear these things from the mouths of those who have knocked my doors many a time to achieve their long-cherished ambitions. I don't have anything else to say in this regard. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to tell you because through this House, I would like to tell my countrymen that mine is not a personal ambition. We wanted to create an atmosphere of confidence at a time when the country was passing through a crisis and if our detractors feel that we are in the wrong, then let them be happy about it. I have never cheated anyone. There is not a single great person in the world history, who has not been deceived at one time or the other. It is very wrong to deceive someone, but it is not a crime to be deceived. We have never deceived anyone, neither the people sitting here, nor the people sitting out there. If these deceivers try

again and again and succeed in their mission, I consider it an achievement in my life. One thing that Shri Advani or Shri Indrajit Gupta had said or perhaps both of them had said was that the opposition parties were responsible for the fall of the Government. I would like to clarify here that Governments do not fall due to opposition parties, rather it is the supporting party which is responsible for the fall of a Government. There should not be any misunderstanding about this issue and I do not know why they are doing so, how they are doing and what do they intend to do, but I would certainly like to add here that criticism or verbal attacks from the opposition side is understandable but inactivity, inaction and absence from the House on the part of the supporting party is perhaps unprecedented and unique in the annals of the history.

I understand it very well, but now standards are emerging. Please don't think that I am furious, many of our friends were heard saying that I am distressed and that I am furious. I am neither angry nor distressed. According to these well-wishers, I am incompetent to hold any responsible position and that the sacrifice, capability, competence and eligibility of some of those holding high position in the Government were such that they were competent enough to occupy this high office, but, according to these friends, I who was ignored and isolated by one and all thwarted these attempts and jumped into the tray at the first opportune moment. If you feel satisfied by saying such things, I would say that through your absurd thinking, you can expose your manners, but you cannot be tittle my personality.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would certainly like to say here that if I could exercise control over my ambitions and feelings from 1962, when I was elected to Parliament for the first time, then I could have done the same in 1990 too, but I couldn't do so for reasons, to which Shri Advani has already referred. I feel that the country is passing through crisis and it is moving towards a dangerous situation towards a constitutional crisis to which Shri Advani was referring. Perhaps, I may be in the wrong, my decisions may be wrong, but I have always wanted to foil the conspiracies intended towards taking the country towards destruction, with all the powers at my disposal. I am not the last person in history. The last persons of history are those with whom politics being and end. I am among those people who believe that if this country could run in the absence at such stalwarts like Gandhiji and Jai Prakash Narayan, then it can be definitely run without Chandra Shekhar too, but there are some 'principled' people without whom this country can't run.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is for the country and the world to judge my efforts and its results and they have judged it. I would like to tell my friends that it has been observed by many people that poverty, hunger, starvation, communal hysteria and a negative feeling in the minds of poor scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is not just a phenomena restricted of our country. Rather, this crisis is there all over the world. Moreover, such forces are emerging, which are passing a grave threat to world peace. I have already spoken in detail about the issue of Gulf War, which has been raised here many times. I had taken a decision on India's stand after giving a serious thought to the issue and I want to reiterate it here that we are in favour of self-determination to the people of Palestine, but we have never felt that to achieve this goal, it is necessary to conquer Kuwait. If there is any logic in this silly argument, then only they can understand it. Even today, after the war has come to an end, India is the only country in the world which stands steadfastly by the side of Iraq. The restructuring of the Iraqi economy, its reconstruction and its development should be in the longer interests of its people. Today, when assistance was sought from India for the first time, our country took the initiative and we shall provide all possible assistance to both Kuwait and Iraq to rebuild their war-ravaged economies.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that the responsibilities of protecting and defending a territory is the responsibility of the people living there. No third party can do the *mantle of la policemen* and interfere in the affairs of that country. We have never accepted it and we shall always oppose it tooth and nail, but there are some self-styled champions of world peace, who poke their nose everywhere and every time and claim that it is they who run this world. Here I would like to know from each Member of this House whether foreign policy is hollow idealistic imagination or flights of fancy. No, in my view it is a weapon to defend and protect the larger interests of the country. I had said earlier also that for us, the protection of national interests is of paramount importance and while doing so, we shall not deviate from our principles. I would like to say only this much.

I would not like to go in that, we have developed a habit of criticizing others and we have also developed a feeling of demoralisation within ourselves. We unnecessarily begin to cry and start feeling that we are ruined, none cares for us now, we lag behind the world etc. But the question is where are we lagging behind? Who will push this country back, which has a manpower of

85 crore of worthy population? We should have self-confidence. The power does not lie in Prime Minister's hands, but in those of the 85 crores of people. Sometimes, we may seek some help from America but at the same time we should not forget that America too needs our help. For a very minor issue some of us dreaded much and they began to cry that we became slave to America. There is no such thing. Actually, a man spells what is in his brain and some of us are possessing slavish mentality in themselves. So, I want to say that our country has great power and we may use it wherever it is necessary whether it is China, Pakistan or Iran. I have said it earlier also that almost all countries in the world have appreciated the role of India. But there are some self-imposed persons (Khudai-Khidmatgars) who see darkness everywhere. If in the bright sun-light a bird is not able to see anything, it is not the fault of sun-light but of the bird's eyes. I will not say more than this.

We shall have to choose the path, which India has to adopt. What role must be played by this country? Should it act as a blind follower of these powers? No, it is not a blind follower of anyone. It has an independent foreign policy we rely in the principle of the non-alignment. We want to maintain our relations with the backward and developing countries. Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I want to assure my friends that the people of India will always raise their voice with the oppressed against any sort of colonialism or exploitation anywhere in the world. We shall be with them whenever peace is disturbed. This is our policy and principle and we shall maintain it forever.

Sir, much has been said about the law and order here. It has also been said that my government is a puppet government and it has taken any decisions like that. I do not know much about other decisions but one is about Tamil Nadu, which is being much discussed now-a-days. You may add Pondicherry also to it. You may read the reports of situation in Pondicherry in the Newspapers if you do not rely on my report. But here I would like to talk about Tamil Nadu only. During the present session of this House and during the last session also I had a personal talk with some of my friends, who are the opposition leaders. An assurance of not dismissing the Tamil Nadu Government was ought from me. In response to that I told them that there would not be another option before me than to dismiss the Tamil Nadu Government, it did not change its attitude.

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I do not want to involve myself in such controversial discussion nor do I want to repeat those things which explain the causes of the Tamil Nadu Government's dismissal. In the records of the House there is statement of an opposition leader, Shri Gurupadswamy who belongs to the party of hon. Dandavateji. By reading that one may come to know as to what did I tell and what did he say? I do not say one thing at one place and something else at another place. The Congress is simply a political party which did extend its support to me in this House. I do not say that I cannot consider anything of that party.

But everything has a limit and I am not under any obligation to cross those limitations. Though, one may compromise many times for the country's sake. I fully agree with what Shri Advani said about the happenings in this House as well as in another House during the last two-three days. This is certainly highly deplorable and immodest situation. I was tolerating it because the discussion was going under your chairmanship. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I did not think it proper to interrupt and say anything. Sir, I would like to assure you that I was neither making any adjustment nor making any compromise. I know the extent to which I have to go. I know well what step should be taken at what time. They are welcome if they extend their co-operation; they are welcome otherwise also. They are masters of their will, and we have not any control over them. I don't say that they are bound to support us. But I would certainly like to say one thing to the members of the Congress Party that they should realize that just on the issue of two constables to endanger the constitution of India and to carry the Parliament into such an odd situation is not justified. Anyway, one does what one's sense allows him to do. I will say no more in this regard. That is why somebody from that side called me puppet. Their sense does not allow them to think more than that. A puppet will see a puppet only. They do not know that sometimes even a small Hanuman burns the whole Lanka. Hanuman, despite being small, drove out such misunderstanding from your minds. This is not an issue of an individual. The analysis of the persons is not required here. Rather, the country's circumstances and problems are important. We cannot overlook these problems. Now and then we all shall have to look into these problems unitedly. I owe my thanks to all the opposition leaders who have assured me their co-operation in resolving this constitutional crisis. I hope that some solution will come out with your cooperation. I believe

that all of you will co-operate in resolving this crisis. I want to say very politely that in the Parliamentary system of Government political reality depends much on the mathematical numbers. And this arithmetic cannot be avoided. The members of the Congress Party are not present here. I do not know where they are. I not even sure about whether I have their support or not. But it is sure that I cannot run my Government any longer with such type of their conduct. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I, with your permission, will call on the President to submit my resignation. And I request you to adjourn the House now. Now everything will depend upon the hon. President's decision. I have already taken the advise of my companions about it. We reached this decision yesterday that in such circumstances there is neither validity nor necessity to continue the proceedings of this House. In accordance with my decision this Government is going to resign. According to the conventions of the House its proceedings cannot continue after the declaration of my resignation. Sir, it is my formal request to you to adjourn the House as its proceedings cannot go on without Government. I am going to the President to tender my resignation. I assure my friends that there would not be any tactical politics from this side. It would be good if persons from that side also do the same. This is my wish that we all may head towards a fair and clean politics.

BACK NOTE

VI. Constitutional Crisis in the Country, 6 March, 1991

1. SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR (Barrackpore): You had not said this.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: When I raised the issue of Tamil Nadu, you did assure that you would not dismiss that Government. You said it clearly. You may change your stand now if you so like.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: I did not say that. I told that I would think hundred times before dismissing it. I have got such sense. I dismissed that government because it became unavoidable.

SHRI SHOPAT SINGH MAKKASAR (Bikaner): You did as the Congress told you to do.