

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:444

ANSWERED ON:22.02.2006

INDIA- US TECHNICAL TALKS

Chaudhary Shri Pankaj;Chaure Shri Bapu Hari;Dhotre Shri Sanjay Shamrao;Gangwar Shri Santosh Kumar;Malhotra Prof. Vijay Kumar;Satpathy Shri Tathagata;Singh Kunwar Rewati Raman

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India and US have concluded recently their third round of technical talks on the plan of separation and safeguarding of Indian civilian nuclear facilities;
- (b) if so the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Indo-US agreement on nuclear co-operation has since been signed;
- (d) if not the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether several countries have assured assistance to India in its civilian nuclear energy programme;
- (f) if so, the names of such countries and the details thereof;
- (g) whether several top nuclear scientists and military experts of the country have raised apprehensions over India's decision on the separation of nuclear facilities; and
- (h) if so, the details and the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (ANAND SHARMA)

(a)-(b) The third meeting of the India-US Working Group on civil nuclear energy cooperation was held on 19-20 January 2006 in New Delhi. Indian side was led by Foreign Secretary, while US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs led the US delegation. The meeting focused on steps by both sides to implement their commitments and responsibilities as agreed in the India-US Joint Statement of 18 July 2005.

(c)-(d) India and US have not signed an agreement on civil nuclear energy cooperation. The two sides are continuing their discussions to fully implement the nuclear understanding. There are outstanding issues that are being addressed.

(e)-(f) The Government is engaged in a dialogue with several countries including Russia, France, and Canada, who have agreed on the need to have full international civilian nuclear cooperation with India. The Government is engaged in discussion with these countries as well as with others to further deepen bilateral cooperation in this sphere and to achieve the objective of full civilian nuclear cooperation.

(g)-(h) The Government has seen reports of nuclear experts and former diplomats expressing a wide variety of views on the extent and implications of the separation of nuclear facilities. The Government has consulted all relevant organizations in addressing the issue of separation. The India-US Working Group on civil nuclear energy, led by the Foreign Secretary, has representatives from the National Security Council Secretariat, Department of Atomic Energy and Ministry of External Affairs. The separation of the Indian nuclear facilities would be done voluntarily by us based on India's national interest.