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14.26 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

FOREIGN POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT – Contd.

Title: Discussion regarding foreign policy of the government raised by Shri S. Sudhakar Reddy on 7 December, 2004. (Discussion concluded)

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House shall now take up discussion on Foreign Policy of the Government. Shri Natwar Singh to speak.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): Sir, yesterday, the House debated foreign policy of the UPA Government for three hours and fifteen minutes and I am grateful to each of the 12 Members who participated in the debate and made valuable suggestions.

For the last 57 years, there has been a broad national consensus on India's foreign policy. This does not mean that we are conducting a rigid or sterile or outmoded foreign policy. Our foreign policy takes account of the changing world scenario, of the changing international agenda, to adjust itself to those, without in any way surrendering our independence of judgement and our vital national interests.

The distinct element of our foreign policy has been to combine firmness with flexibility. And foreign policy, in a democratic country is, by its very nature, evolutionary and not revolutionary. The foundations of India's foreign policy were laid not in 1947 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru but as early as in 1927 when he represented the All India Congress Committee at the Brussels Conference against anti-colonialism. Our foreign policy, that is, of the UPA Government, reflects the Common Minimum Programme. The UPA Government has completed more than six months in office. I, therefore, welcome this opportunity afforded here to discuss the Government's foreign policy and to explain to the hon. Members what we have been able to achieve and what we see as the task ahead for us.

India's foreign policy has graduated from its event-oriented to a process-oriented approach. Our foreign policy is based on a careful consideration of the contemporary challenges, which India faces as well as the capabilities, which we can bring to bear in dealing with the challenges successfully instead of being satisfied with mere announcement of fresh initiatives. We have put in place a multi-dimensional and consultative process of thought in action.

Our Foreign Policy today has a clearer focus, a sense of maturity and a pro-active character, recognising that the lines dividing the domestic from the external, the political from the economic, are becoming increasingly blurred. Today, there is a general recognition that India's destiny is being guided by steady hands, backed by both experience and wisdom and demonstrating a confidence that we can deliver.

Sir, India's emergence as a compulsory destination in the itineraries of leaders from every part of the globe reflects the high standing and credibility that the UPA Government under Dr. Manmohan Singh and its leadership enjoys.

It will be recalled that amongst the earliest crisis that our Government faced, was the kidnapping for ransom of three of our citizens in Iraq. After more than a month long patience and delicate effort, we were able to ensure safe return of our hostages without sacrificing any of our principles. Here, I would like to place on record the splendid work done by my colleague, the Minister of State, Shri E. Ahamed, who is sitting behind me. The successful and mature handling of this crisis set the stage for a reorientation of our Foreign Policy in the service of the nation in a rapidly transforming and ever more challenging global environment.

The UPA Government has re-focussed India's Foreign Policy giving high priority to relations with our neighbours. I chose Nepal for my first visit after taking over as India's External Affairs Minister. A number of high-level visits have been hosted from our neighbours, including both the President and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. The Prime Minister of Nepal and the Foreign Minister, the

Commerce Minister and the Finance Minister of Bangladesh have been amongst the recent visitors. We have received the Prime Minister of Pakistan and His Majesty, the King of Bhutan last month. His Majesty, the King of Nepal and the President of Maldives are expected to be here in the next few weeks. A major landmark has been the visit of the Head of the State of Myanmar to Delhi last month, the first such visit in 26 years. This has resulted in important cross-border projects being taken up and co-ordinated action to deal with insurgency and extremist activities in our border areas. But I must here, say, that at the same time, we continue to encourage the process of democratisation in Myanmar. We have the highest regards for Aung San Suu Kyi. But it will be unhelpful if we were to go public with our pronouncements and views. It is better to do so in a quiet diplomatic manner behind the scenes.

Our engagement with our neighbours has not been limited only to the Government-to-Government level but has consciously encompassed different sections of society and across the political spectrum.

We believe, it is important that there should be frequent and regular contacts and wide-ranging discussions with our neighbours at all levels to take forward and to maximise opportunities for mutually beneficial co-operation. At the same time, this Government has not hesitated to address issues where there may be differences, but has done so in a spirit of friendship and in a constructive search of practical and mutually acceptable solutions. This will be our approach to the forthcoming SAARC Summit, which is being held in Dhaka next month. We remain committed to a collective future of peace and prosperity for the entire South Asian Region. I have just met the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister this morning. Our security related issues *vis-à-vis* our neighbours are very much on our agenda and are appropriately being taken up at the BIMSTAC (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Thailand apart from India). An important decision was taken by the leaders of BIMSTAC to co-operate on issues of counter terrorism, and the first meeting of the Joint Working Group is to be held in Delhi tomorrow.

Now, I come to Pakistan. Having been the Ambassador of India to Pakistan more than a quarter century ago, I have naturally a very great interest in having good neighbourly and cordial relations with our northern neighbour. Indo-Pak relations are accident-prone. We have, therefore, to deal with this matter with great restraint, with great wisdom and patience. With Pakistan, we have put behind a reactive policy, which frequently oscillated between euphoria and despair.

We are engaged in a sustained and comprehensive dialogue process. This process, I must record here, started on the 6th January 2004, when Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and President Musharraf made an announcement that they would have a composite dialogue. Previous to that, there had been ups and downs in the then Government's policy with regard to Pakistan. But I am not going to spend any time on that; that has happened in the past.

As I told, we are engaged in a sustained and comprehensive dialogue process. I hope that the future of Indo-Pak relations does not lie in the past now. We will not be deflected by transient developments and often contradictory pronouncements from the other side of the border. Our confidence in taking this process forward is reflected in the number of wide ranging Confidence Building Measures that we put on the table, including several on a unilateral basis. Our Prime Minister has clearly enunciated the parameters within which we seek peace with Pakistan.

It was mentioned here yesterday that we are not taking any initiative. We have offered Pakistan 72 Confidence Building Measures for them to study. A number of meetings have taken place at the official level, at the ministerial level and also at the Head of the Government level to deal with all aspects of our relations with Pakistan, with interaction. I am aware of the fact that from time to time, statements are made in Pakistan which sound a discordant note, but we have to go on trying very hard and take a view in the larger interest. I must say that the atmosphere between the two countries has considerably improved and it shall be our endeavour to see that it remains so.

Differences there will be, when there are complicated issues going back to many decades; there are no quick-fixes and there are no magic solutions available for them. All that I would like to do is to try and improve our relations with them, whether it is in the field of transport, railways, buses, easy visa regime, opening of our Consulate Offices in Karachi and theirs in Mumbai, and exchange between scholars, students, journalists, and even bus service between Sri Nagar and Muzaffarabad. Talks are going on; there are some hitches, but we are hoping to resolve these initially at the expert level and later on, probably at the ministerial level. But I do not wish to give a picture saying that all is well. It is not. But we are emphasising the aspects which are positive and trying to solve aspects which are negative.

In six months, we have managed to intensify our relations with China. Our Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh recently met the Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao during the ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, a few days ago. The Chinese leader said that the most important item on his agenda in 2005 would be his proposed visit to India in the month of March. Two rounds of talks have already been held between the Special Representatives of the two countries on the boundary question. The importance of this relationship is also reflected in the visits recently of two senior Chinese State Councillors and my own meetings with the Chinese Foreign Minister four times in three months in Qingdao, Jakarta, New York and Almaty in Kazakhstan. During his visit to India, State Councillor Tang Jia

Xuan recognised the active role that India could play in international affairs and in the UN Security Council. I will have something more to say as Members have raised this question.

For India, relations with the US are special because we are both vibrant democracies. Our relations are being expanded across the board. The Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh met President Bush in New York in September 2004, which resulted in a strong reaffirmation of the strategic partnership between our two countries. Secretary of Defence, Mr. Rumsfeld will be here tomorrow. He will meet the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister and myself. Our perspectives on specific issues may be different and that may lead to differences in policies. For example, we have differences with US with regard to the situation in Iraq and we have made our views known. There is a unanimous Resolution of both the Houses of Parliament which has given our views categorically about Iraq and our policy of not sending troops to Iraq.

However, we share a great and enduring affinity as peoples wedded to democratic values and today, there is such a broad range of interaction between the two countries across the board, that changes in the US administration have not resulted in any uncertainty or doubt. India-US relations are beginning to acquire a degree of stability and predictability. We are ready to work together on shared concerns. Our two million diaspora is a strong factor in our relationship.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY (DHENKANAL): They can predict us but we cannot predict them.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: This is what you think but this House does not share your views.

Over two million Indians live in US. On missile defence, we have given no commitment about our participation. At this stage, we are being given technical briefings and presentation on missile defence by the U.S. The U.S. Administration has approached the U.S. Congress for the supply of a weapons package to Pakistan, including surveillance aircraft and anti-tank missiles. The UPA Government has expressed its strong concern over this move at very high levels of the U.S. Government. We have pointed out that supply of arms to Pakistan at a time when India-Pakistan dialogue is at a sensitive stage, would have a negative impact. We have also conveyed that U.S. arms supply to Pakistan would also have a negative impact on the goodwill the U.S. enjoys in India, particularly as a sister democracy. On the possible supply of F-16 aircraft to Pakistan, the U.S. Government has conveyed that no decision has been taken and is not imminent. We have cautioned the U.S. against such a decision. I would like to assure Members that in case of U.S. arms supply to Pakistan the UPA Government will not hesitate to take steps to ensure that our defence preparedness is not compromised in any way. There are currently no Indians being held hostage in the Gulf. We were successful in obtaining the release of three Indian citizens held hostage in Iraq precisely because of the immense goodwill and credibility India enjoys in the region.

With Russia, we have a strategic and time-tested relationship which has stood the challenge of a changing global and regional environment. President Putin's recent visit to India provided us an opportunity to take forward these relations to a much higher level of interaction. Significant successes in the field of space and energy cooperation have strengthened the strategic nature of the relationship. The signing of four agreements and six MOUs is indicative of the breadth of our relationship. A declaratory phase in our relations has given way to concrete steps to put substance into our professed intentions. We are also gratified that President Putin supported India's candidature to the United Nations Security Council with veto power.

A certain amount of misunderstanding has been caused by the report which has appeared in our Papers a day after President Putin held a joint Press Conference with the Prime Minister, Shri Manmohan Singh. When I saw him, he was leaving for Bangalore. The Press met him there and he clearly indicated what he had in mind. I told him, "Mr. President, I am thankful to you and so are we all". He said, "No, Mr. Minister, it was necessary for me to give this clarification because I wanted to avoid all this misunderstanding".

There is a growing recognition of India as an indispensable partner by the international community and this is reflected particularly in the European Union,

now consisting of 25 members, seeking a strategic partnership with India. This was the theme of the visit of our Prime Minister to The Hague in November. The declaration on strategic partnership will now be followed by a Political Declaration and an Action Plan to be adopted at the next India-EU Summit next year. This will provide a new focus and add substance to our already wide-ranging relationship with the European Union.

Sir, India's "Look East Policy" which was conceived and initiated by a Congress Government has now been given a new dimension by the UPA Government. We are looking at our partnership with ASEAN countries, both within BIMSTEC and the India-ASEAN Summit dialogue as integrally linked to our economic and security interests, particularly for our East and North East. The hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, flagged off the first India-

ASEAN car rally from Guwahati that has drawn enthusiastic support from within the ASEAN countries as also from our North-Eastern States. The adoption of a document on "Indo-ASEAN Partnership for Peace, Progress and shared Prosperity" at the Indo-ASEAN Summit on November 30, symbolises that India now forms the inner core of countries in ASEAN's political relationship with the rest of the world.

The importance which West Asia and the Gulf enjoy in terms of India's interests cannot be over-emphasised, particularly when you consider that more than three million of our citizens live and work in this region. Recognising this, we have intensified our relations with all key countries in the region, as well as with the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) with which we have signed a Framework Agreement of Economic Co-operation. For our citizens in the region, we have recently established 24-hour Helpline Centre in Saudi Arabia and will extend this to other capitals. All our Missions and Posts in the Gulf observe an "Open House" once a month to enable our nationals to meet senior officials without appointment, to seek any assistance. The UPA Government has taken a decision not only to increase the number of Haj Pilgrims from India but has also restored the subsidy which had been reduced by the previous Government. Myself would be visiting some of the Gulf countries later this month and I would be holding a meeting of all our ambassadors in that part of the world.

Our longstanding friendship with the Palestinian people and our support for their cause was reaffirmed when I led a multi-party delegation to Cairo to pay homage to the memory of Yasser Arafat, the much revered leader of the Palestinian people. I am glad that I had the honour to have Shri Lalu Prasad Yadav as a senior member of our delegation. In September, my colleague, Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri E.Ahmed had visited Ramala with a goodwill message from our Prime Minister reiterating our unwavering support to Palestine, which was greatly appreciated by the late President Arafat.

Sir, our Government has made a clear-cut enunciation of our policy of not sending troops to Iraq which has been endorsed by Parliament, as I said earlier. At the same time, we have maintained our engagement with the friendly people of Iraq. This has taken the shape of humanitarian and reconstruction aid and more recently support for the forthcoming election process in Iraq. The restoration of political stability in Iraq is of direct concern to India, which depends upon this region for a substantial part of our energy supplies and also because 3.5 million of our citizens live and work in this region.

One of the key achievements of the UPA Government has been the 'Focus Africa Policy'. In the last few months, in India-Africa relations, in terms of more and greater exchanges of high level visits, greater economic and technical co-operation, both bilateral as well as within the context of the African Union, and India's contributions to peace-keeping in several African countries is to be noted. Illustrative of this is the announcement by our President, while visiting South Africa in September, 2004, of an ambitious project for linking all 53 African countries through a satellite as well as a fibre optic based network. This would be the backbone of services such as tele-medicine, distance education and IT-enabled services. I myself, in the last few months, have met a large number of African

leaders and African Foreign Ministers and our talks have been friendly and cordial.

Central Asia is not only a strategic region, but also our extended neighbourhood with which we enjoy longstanding, historical and cultural relations. We see Central Asia as an important economic partner, particularly in terms of our energy requirements. We are moving quickly to intensify our relations with countries in the region through high level visits and improved communications and increased economic and commercial relations. I myself visited Kazakhstan in October and we also hosted the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan.

We have also intensified interaction with Latin America and the Caribbean both at the bilateral level and with the regional groups. Ministerial visits of Foreign Ministers of Mexico, Venezuela, Surinam and the visit of MOS, Shri Inderjit Singh Rao, to Panama, Colombia, Dominican Republic and El Salvador have maintained high level interaction with the countries of the region. Our commonalities with Brazil have continued to grow as we collaborate with them on Security Council Reform and the WTO. We are in the process of finalising a Preferential Trade Agreement with Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay and are negotiating one with Chile.

Let me now turn to the United Nations. The efforts of the UPA Government have ensured India's claim today to be a permanent member of the Security Council within the context of overall reform of the UN. It has been well established within the international community. Take any criteria, and India will fulfil the obligations and criteria for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council with a veto. It was, thanks to intensive diplomacy on our part, that we were able to create a common platform of the four most credible aspirants for permanent membership of the Security Council. India, Brazil, Germany and Japan are mutually supportive of each other and have agreed to work together to realize their shared objective. We also support African representation in the permanent membership. Africa has two to three countries who are members of the UN but that have no representation in the Security Council or in the permanent list. Recently, the panel appointed by the UN Secretary-General on "Threats, challenges and change" has submitted a number of recommendations on institutional changes in the UN including the composition of the UN Security Council. We will study them and in consultation with other member-States

decide how to take the process of reform forward during the next year. Intensive discussion will take place between mid-January towards the end of March. Next year, the UN will celebrate its 60th anniversary and it is hoped that by that time, we will be in a position to indicate whether the UN has to be expanded and who are going to be its members

As I have stated before, Foreign Policy today cannot be divorced from domestic developments. In order, therefore, to ensure a more consultative approach in our Foreign Policy, I have initiated mechanisms for coordination with other Ministries and agencies as well as with the State Governments, particularly those which border our neighbours. For example, we are closely coordinating our diplomacy with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in respect of securing energy supplies for India in different parts of the world. We are also engaged in a major programme for the upgradation of cross border infrastructure for our neighbours, working together with the Ministries of Home and Surface Transport and also with the State Governments.

I am grateful to the hon. Members for the valuable suggestions that have been made in the House in the course of the debate. I have repeatedly emphasised that India's Foreign Policy has traditionally been based on a national consensus. As I said earlier, it is our intention that this consensus should be maintained and strengthened.

Recognising that there is much wisdom which lies beyond the corridors of South Block, I have set up a Foreign Policy Advisory Group to get inputs on important contemporary issues from experts and academics outside the Government. We have also been hard at work to make the Ministry of External

Affairs a much more effective instrument for implementing our Foreign Policy. Today, there is much better morale in the Indian Foreign Service and a much more collegiate style of work with the result that the quality of our diplomacy has improved considerably. This effort, of course, will continue and we cannot afford to be complacent and I do not intend to be so. I agree with the hon. Members that the practice of diplomacy must respond to the needs of the times as was asserted by Mr. Prabhu.

Accordingly, our Ambassadors abroad have not only become active in economic diplomacy but have also been reaching out to the Indian diaspora with a view to involving them in the exciting task of building a new India. Our Heads of Mission are also mandated to look after the interests and security of Indians abroad. Regular training courses for different levels of our Foreign Service personnel are conducted by the Foreign Service Institute. I am acutely aware of the fact that the world has changed drastically since I joined the Foreign Service in 1953. At that time we were told that we should keep away from the media. There was no television. An Ambassador was told that a good Ambassador thinks twice before saying nothing. Now, if you practice that, then you are going to lose out. It is because media's intervention in national and international affairs is a fact of life. This intervention is irreversible. So, it is essential that our diplomats should learn as to how to handle the media.

You will agree that within a short span of six months, the UPA Government has given us a foreign policy which is purposeful, result-oriented and pro-active. While it has been the endeavour of this Government to follow the basic principles of our foreign policy which have guided India since its Independence, we have re-oriented and re-adjusted it wherever necessary in response to the new challenges that we confront today. But there is no substitute for the broad framework of India's foreign policy laid down by Jawaharlal Nehru decades ago. You can change the details here and there. But the basic framework is that we will remain a non-aligned country, we will remain a country which judges each issue on its merits and takes its decision; does not tilt this way or that way and stand erect.

It is a matter of satisfaction that today India enjoys a unique profile in the international arena as a factor for stability, a model for plural and secular democracy and an economic power house that is destined to play a greater role in the international affairs. We acknowledge that many difficult challenges lie ahead and our resources are limited. However, there is now a sense of assurance and confidence with which we continue our journey towards a destiny which was eloquently articulated by India's first Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1947, a destiny in which India, "attains her rightful place in the world and makes her full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and welfare of mankind." ...(*Interruptions*) Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Members, just a minute. You can seek clarifications one by one.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mohan Singh, please take your seat. Now, Mr. Swain may seek his clarifications. Please be brief.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (BALASORE): I will be brief. I will only seek clarifications.

I thank the Government and the hon. Minister of External Affairs for having expressed the Government's concern to the US about supplying arms to Pakistan. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am allowing clarifications only.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (CHANDIGARH): Sir, there has been a regular debate. ...(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): It should not turn out to be a debate again. Already there was a debate. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the harm in just seeking some clarifications?

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : It is very surprising. You were doing the same thing when you were here. ...(Interruptions) I thank the Government on this issue that it has expressed our concern to the US authorities about supplying arms to Pakistan. I am also very happy that India now forms inner core of ASEAN countries, the effort which was started by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the previous Prime Minister.

I have just two or three clarifications to ask. Will India accept membership of the Security Council if veto power is not given to us? This is my first question. My second question is: What will be the response of the Government of India if a formal proposal to divide....(Interruptions)

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : Sir, this is not according to the procedure. The rules are very clear. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal, you are a senior Member. There are many instances when Members have asked clarifications.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, it is very surprising. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Swain, please be brief. I am allowing you to ask only one clarification.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : I would have sat within a minute. But he has objected to it three times. ...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Swain, please address the Chair.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : I am addressing the Chair.

15.00 hrs.

What will be the response of the Government of India if a firm proposal to divide Jammu and Kashmir into five sections is sent by the President of Pakistan?

The third question is about Bangladesh. What is his view, the view of the Government about Bangladesh which is harbouring the North-East terrorist group like the ULFA and some other terrorist groups? That is my question....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, Shri Mohan Singh to seek clarification.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Swain, please take your seat. I have called the name of Shri Mohan Singh.

Nothing should go on record except Shri Mohan Singh's version.

(Interruptions)* â€

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Swain, please take your seat. Nothing should go on record.

(Interruptions)* â€

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Swain, please take your seat. Nothing should go on record except Shri Mohan Singh's version.

(Interruptions)* â€

* Not recorded

श्री मोहन सिंह (देवरिया) : सभापति जी, इराक के बारे में माननीय विदेश मंत्री जी ने बहुत विस्तार से अपनी बातें कही हैं। हम सिर्फ इतनी सफाई चाहेंगे कि जो इराक में चुनाव होने जा रहे हैं, उन चुनावों में कुछ देशों ने अपेक्षा की है कि भारत का चुनाव आयोग जाकर उसमें सहयोग करे और उस चुनाव को कंडक्ट कराने में भारत सरकार मदद करे। मैं साफ तौर पर माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या इलैक्शन कमीशन की कोई टीम वहां भेजने पर अभी भी आप विचार कर रहे हैं? नेपाल के बारे में भी साफ बात नहीं कही गई कि वहां लोकतंत्र की स्थापना के लिए भारत सरकार का क्या स्टैन्ड है।

श्री रघुनाथ झा (बेतिया) : माननीय सभापति जी, माननीय विदेश मंत्री जी ने सदन में हुई चर्चा का विस्तार से उत्तर दिया है। हम नेपाल की सीमा पर रहने वाले लोग हैं और नेपाल में जो हलचल हुई है और जिस तरह से वहां की डेमोक्रेसी को समाप्त करने की साजिश हो रही है और जिस तरह से माओवादी इनसरजैन्सी का असर हमारे इलाके में और देश पर पड़ रहा है, क्या माननीय विदेश मंत्री जी मंत्री पद ग्रहण करने के बाद स्वयं नेपाल गए थे? उन्होंने कोई इस तरह की बातें की हैं? इधर अखबारों में आ रहा है कि बंकर बनाए हुए हैं जिनकी सीडी मेरे पास मौजूद है, जब कहेंगे मैं उनके सुपुर्द कर दूंगा। बंकर के मुंह को माओवादी इनसरजैन्सी नो मैन्स लैन्ड में लगाकर इंडिया की तरफ खड़े किये गये हैं। इन चीजों को ध्यान में रखते हुए तिब्बत फिर से नहीं दोहराया जाए, क्या सरकार कोई कदम उठाएगी?

सभापति महोदय : माननीय मंत्री जी, यह बहुत संवेदनशील मामला है। अब श्री सुरेश प्रभु पूछें।

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU (RAJAPUR): Sir, there were several suggestions which we have made during the course of the discussion. I hope the hon. Minister has taken note of them. I thought he would say that he is going to act on some of those suggestions which he finds suitable. One of the suggestions that was made was this. Of course, I am not repeating the points which have already been mentioned.

One thing that we said was this. Why do you not encourage the students from the developing world, from the erstwhile friends in the Non-Aligned Movement to come to India and spend more time? When they go back, they actually would go back influenced by the Indian traditions and knowledge gained here. That will be very much useful to us.

The second important point is this. We have already been saying that. We have offered some Confidence Building Measures to Pakistan. I think he has mentioned as many as 72. So, 72 CBMs have been offered. Suppose this is one among them because we want to build confidence to attain something more. What, in the opinion of the Government, is the ultimate solution to the trouble that we have with Pakistan? What would it lead to when the Confidence Building

Measures would be actually put on place? What is it that we will we be able to build upon the Confidence Building Measures?

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI (HYDERABAD): Mr. Chairman, Sir, day-before-yesterday, the US Embassy in Jeddah was bombed and in that incident seven Indians were injured and one Indian from Hyderabad Shri Bashiruddin has died. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what steps are being taken to protect our countrymen who are working in Saudi Arabia, especially in sensitive embassies. What is the state of those Indians who were injured? This incident is highly condemnable.

Sir, Saudi Arabia is a friendly country and so I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what steps are being taken to ensure the safety of Indians who are working in sensitive US and Russian Embassies over there.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri C.K. Chandrapan – Not present.

श्री रामदास आठवले (पंढरपुर) : सभापति जी, दलाई लामा कई वॉ से भारत देश में हैं। तिब्बत और चीन के सवाल पर दलाई लामा और चीन में कोई कंफ्रॉमाइज़ करने के लिए भारत सरकार को प्रयत्न करने की आवश्यकता है। दूसरा सवाल यह है कि बंगलादेश से कई लोग वैस्ट बंगाल में भी हैं लेकिन उनको नागरिकता नहीं दी जा रही है। उसके बारे में भी जिस तरह से भारत के लोग बाहर दूसरे देशों में जाते हैं और उनको नागरिकता मिलती है, तो भारत में जो लोग वैस्ट बंगाल में रह रहे हैं, कम से कम वे लोग जो शैड्यूल्ड कास्ट्स के लोग हैं, उनको नागरिकता देने के बारे में क्या सरकार कोई विचार कर रही है?

SHRI P.K. VASUDEVAN NAIR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): Mr. Chairman, Sir, this discussion is taking place at a very significant time because I understand that the Defence Secretary of the United States is, perhaps, already in

India. So, the hon. Minister is going to have very important discussions with the representative of the United States and it is reported in the Press that they would like to discuss issues of defence collaboration during his visit. The hon. Minister expressed his expectation that the United States will have an even hand policy vis-à-vis India and Pakistan in the matter of defence supplies. Can we take it that when the hon. Minister meets the Defence Secretary of the United States he will put the whole matter very forcefully before him?

श्री अविनाश राय खन्ना (होशियारपुर) : सभापति जी, मैं विदेश मंत्री महोदय से सिर्फ इतना ही जानना चाहता हूँ कि पाकिस्तानी जेलों में जो भारतीय बन्द हैं, उनके बारे में सरकार बताएँ। (व्यवधान)

सभापति महोदय : श्री अविनाश राय खन्ना जी, आप बैठ जाइए।

SHRI NATWAR SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, if I understand the Rules of the Lok Sabha correctly, then, after a full-fledged debate of three hours and 15 minutes yesterday and my comprehensive statement today, there should be no further discussion, but in your wisdom you have decided to do so. So, I shall try and respond to the questions that have been raised by hon. Members.

With regard to Nepal, I would like to use very careful phraseology because these are very delicate matters, these are very complex matters and all I can say is, rest assured that we are fully aware of the gravity of the situation in Nepal and we are addressing that.

With regard to elections in Iraq, no Indian personnel is being sent to Iraq. The Iraqis can send their people for training in India. We will not send anybody there.

Shri Suresh Prabhu has said that young friends from NAM countries should be called. The ICCR gives scholarships to foreign students to study in India in every subject, ranging from performing arts, science, diplomacy etc. and they can avail that.

With regard to the death of one person who died in Saudi Arabia, I would like to inform that he was employed in the American Embassy and there was another person who was injured. He was a contractor working with the American Embassy. Now it is impossible for the Government of India to guarantee the safety of employees of the American Embassy in any part of the world, including Saudi Arabia. Naturally, our sympathies go to the family of the person who died in this tragic event.

Sir, I have made a fairly lengthy reference to our relations with the United States, including the matter raised by the hon. Member and I would ask your indulgence and submit that it would be improper for me to elaborate any further before we meet the American Defence Secretary tomorrow.

With regard to Bangladesh also, we have been constantly in touch with them. The SAARC Summit is going to be held next month in Dhaka and all issues pertaining not only to SAARC matters but bilateral issues also will be taken up there because Heads of Government, Foreign Ministers and senior officials have bilateral meetings where a lot of work is done.

All I want to say is that this Government is committed to a Foreign Policy which advances the interests of India, takes care of our vital national interest and stretching its arms of friendship to all those countries with which we have relations, which means almost all countries in the world.

This is not to suggest that there are no difficulties, there are no differences. There are sharp differences. But we sit down, discuss them, and try and overcome them. There are some issues, which can be solved easily, there are some issues, which can be solved with difficulty, but there are one or two per cent of issues, which are difficult to solve. They have a tortuous background. There are complexities and ramifications which affect us, our neighbours and the community at large. We have to deal with these with skill, with patience and with diplomatic savvy because when we look after our national interest, there we must also have, as a great country, in our mind the national interest of other countries so long as they do not impinge on ours. Now, to do this, to safeguard our national interest and not to straighten the toes of national interest of other countries, it requires a great deal of skill.

I am glad to say that the Indian Foreign Service is up to this task and we shall continue to do so with the blessings of this House.