

[Sh. P.V. Narasimha Rao]

strengthen friendly relations with all countries. That being our case, may be it was not quite in order to make this a bilateral issue. Never mind. You made it a bilateral issue. But I interpret it as something between India and US. I am entitled to interpret this arrangement or agreement or understanding, as something connected with what is happening in the Gulf today. In that view, the moment the Gulf war ends, the Gulf situation calms down, it comes back to normal, all these arrangements become unnecessary. If you want to conclude something with U.S. on the basis of national interest, that is a different story, that is a different chapter. But that need not be confused with this present Gulf situation. This is what I would like to say. So please make this distinction. Having made this distinction, treat them differently. What US and India do in order to help each other is bilateral. But this is not strictly bilateral as I see it. As I have said the matter has ended and all is well that ends well. But the question of over-flights, omnibus permission for over-flights would remain and you will have to deal with this.

With these words, I say that the adjournment motion has lost its punch. It is just like flogging a dead horse, not even a horse. So, it is totally out of place and I oppose it.

17.27 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR):** 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 emo-

tions. 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 Gujrat. 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 beforehand. 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. Narsimha 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..... (Interruptions) 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,

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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.

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.

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.

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. 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 Narsimharao 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... (*Interruptions*)

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. (*Interruptions*)

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?

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura):  
Shri Rajiv Gandhi said so (*Interruptions*)

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: If Shri Rajiv Gandhi has said so, he has also been doing something... (*Interruptions*) 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. (*Interruptions*)

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? 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 eco-

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conomic 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... (*Interruptions*)... That is what you may be saying.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA (Calcutta South): Certainly.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: 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.

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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 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 down-trodden, of the exploited, of the developing world, of the poor nations of the world, because they look towards us with expectations and hope.

SHRI A.K. ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir: The Government's action has already demoralized the country; and the Prime Minister's speech will demoralize Parliament. (*Interruptions*)

Sir: Nobody would be convinced by the

Prime Minister's argument, which clarifies none of the points raised in the House. It is aimed at confusing the confused, (*Interruptions*) and expecting that there should not be any person having a clear thinking on the issue.

There are two basic points. It is not simply a question of technicalities. Two basic points have been raised on which a country like India should react, and react with conviction. The first point is whether USA would be permitted to act as the international policeman; the second: whether the Monroe Doctrine should be applicable on this side of the Atlantic. These two basic points are there. Thirdly, his explanation on the question of refuelling will equal all the arguments against it. It has been said that it was continued. The point was made, that it was there as an old practice, during peacetimes. A question was asked whether it should continue during times of war also. There, no answer was given. The Government did not show guts to stop it, but it only appealed to that Government to discontinue this. Because of this spineless attitude of the Government of the biggest democracy in the world, and one of the staunchest supporters and a friend of the Arab world, India would cut a very sorry figure outside.

I would also like to say this: what my friend from the BJP said, also deserves some comment. He said that we have some special reasons for backing Saddam Hussain. Only a few days back, I was listening to the speech of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, as broadcast by the Pakistan Radio. It was justifying his taking sides with America, and said that Saddam Hussain had, on important issues like Babri Masjid and Kashmir, sided with India. So, he cannot be on Pakistan's side.

We are now finding a peculiar spectacle, wherein the fundamentalists of the Hindu variety and of the Muslim variety are in