

[Shri G. M. Banatwalla]

would be ascertained, but I am sure that this Government will come forward with an unequivocal assurance to this House that all the recommendations of the Gujral Committee will be duly implemented in the shortest possible time.

I am sorry that the President of India has not specifically referred to the various riots that have taken place. I am sure that the matter will receive full consideration, protection will be afforded to the persons displaced in their riots and complete rehabilitation of the innocents will also be assured.

Before I conclude, I must express our sense of shock and disappointment at the President of India refraining from an unequivocal condemnation of the unabashed, and blatant military intervention by the Soviet Union into the affairs of Afghanistan.

AN HON. MEMBER: Has it got any bearing on the minorities?

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA: The Soviet Government says that the Soviet troops were sent to Afghanistan in response to the request made by the new Afghan regime there, but that is not a fact. As you know, about four to six thousand Soviet troops had been flown into Kabul beginning from December 24, at least three days before the Government of Amin was overthrown. Our own national interests and international interests are involved in this. Let there be a clear and unequivocal condemnation of this unabashed incident and also a call should be given to the Soviet Union for the withdrawal of its troops from there. I wanted, to say a few more words about the Assam situation. However, I will try to take some other opportunity to speak on this issue.

There are various economic questions also. It has been tried to be made out in the House that there were surpluses of savings, foreign exchange and foodgrains. But the

fact is that there is a narrowing of the domestic market; and unless and until that problem is solved, our economy will not revive, and the various problems are not going to be solved.

With these words, I conclude, with all best wishes to the new Government; and hope that in the interests of the nation, the Government succeeds in solving the various problems that are there to-day.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI): Mr. Speaker, Sir; before I begin my reply, may I say a word to the hon. Member opposite who raised a question regarding the Republic Day Parade? I want to inform him that the programme for the Parade, the items and the details were decided long before our Government came in. We did not interfere with it in any way. In fact, I did not know what it was till we saw the Parade. Anyhow, the part of the NCC does not come before the Government. But I agree with him that such details should be looked into. I hope he and all other hon. Members will join me in congratulating our Defence Services on the excellence of the Parade and the Retreat. All our foreign visitors and others were most impressed.

Mr. Speaker, Sir; I have tried to be present during the debate on the President's Address, and specially during the speeches of the hon. Members of the opposition; but certain unavoidable engagements have prevented me from listening to them all. For this I am sorry, but I do get the main points put before me day by day.

I mean no disrespect when I say that the debate, from the Opposition side, lacked any heart or conviction. Most of the arguments made were feeble. Many Hon'ble members are still continuing to flog the dead horse of Emergency. They are still to find their way out of the trauma of the past. 1975 and 1977 now belong to history. We have entered 1980, a new decade which has started with

challenges of gigantic proportions, internally in the shape of economic and social problems, and in international affairs, the threat to non-alignment and to our very security. The President's Address was written when the Government was about 4 days' old. Therefore, it is not very realistic of hon. Members to expect that we would, at the time, be able to give details of how we are going to tackle these various problems. It was physically impossible to get any precise view of the state of the nation at that time.

Anyone who tries to belittle the achievements of the Congress rule during these 30 years can do so only by shutting his eyes to reality. In 1947, we were a country newly emerging into Independence after a long period of colonial rule. We had a political structure which was fragmented and an economy which was, in many ways, primitive. Different parts of the country were existing in different countries. Hon. Members will perhaps remember—and specially those from Bengal—of one of the last articles written by Gurudev Tagore. He said: "I know the British will leave India. The question before us is, in what condition will they leave the country." And we are all aware of that condition.

We laboured hard for 30 years to build a nation that was politically viable and economically sound. We achieved a strong political unity in spite of the immensity and diversity of our people. We developed democratic traditions that survived through years of political strife. From a subject state, we grew to a free nation whose voice was listened to with respect in the councils of the world.

The Opposition has chosen to rake up the past. I have preferred to look to the future, but, because they have referred to certain things, they have left no option for me but to deal with some of the issues with which they seem obsessed. Firstly,

I would like very briefly to deal with the question of persecution. What did the Janata Party—in the Janata Party, I include both; the Janata and the Lok Dal which is Janata (S)—do after the elections? My party had offered full cooperation in any nation building activity, in any programme for the welfare of the people. In fact, my hon. friend opposite and former colleague will forgive me, one of the reasons for our quarrel was that we felt that he was bending over backward to support the then Ruling Party.

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN (Satara): Question!

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: That was my view, Chavanji. That is why, I said, we differed. But what was the response of the Janata Party?

Instead of allowing my party to function as an Opposition, a campaign of repression was unleashed against me, my family and my associates.

There were a series of politically motivated commissions set up. Now how many were there, I think.....

AN HON. MEMBER: Who is keeping the account?

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Apart from commissions, there were other enquiry authorities. We are told by the Home Ministry that there were 34 commissions. Tailored evidence was produced before them. The atmosphere in the proceedings, as I know from personal atmosphere, reminded one of Medieval Britain when malicious pleasure was derived in harassing the accused and also the days of McCarthyism in the USA when public hysteria was whipped up and distortion, concoction and intimidation was practised on a large scale through government controlled media. Heads of commissions, judges and others were having meetings with the Prime Minister and the Home Minister. Dozens of cases were started against my son. Officials close

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

to me were harassed and intimidated; and not only they—if they were guilty, well there is some excuse—but their relatives, their old parents, their sisters who had not very close connections with them over the years, all of them were bounded and persecuted. Indiscriminate searches at their premises were made. Large scale sealing of bank lockers, freezing of bank accounts of relatives, impounding of passports, income tax cases of relatives; officers were subjected to investigation by Special courts. Even there was a query; parents were asked to explain about expenditure which was incurred before 1947! I was asked how I got a certain cheque from some university in 1960. Arrests of former Ministers such as Shri Gokhale, Prof. Chattopadhyaya, Shri Bansi Lal, Shri Malaviya, Shri P. C. Sethi and others, top businessmen were also not spared arrest. I am going through it very briefly. If I went into details, we could tell you some harrowing tales.

During the period from the end of March 1977 to the middle of January 1980, ten CBI officers visited foreign countries in connection with the investigation of eight CBI cases. They visited the United Kingdom, Switzerland (Berne & Geneva), Stockholm, Frankfurt, Bonn, New York, Washington, Paris, Singapore, Bangkok, Tokyo and Osaka. It was said the main purpose of these visits was to obtain evidence against me, my family and my close associates. But you all know what was the outcome. I have no doubt that it gave an opportunity of combining business with pleasure. But apart from this, the attitude! Our ambassadors were told immediately after the government came into power to burn any pictures or any writings by me or my father Jawaharlal Nehru...

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (New Delhi): I challenge that statement. It is not true.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I can understand the hon. Member's embarrassment. An ambassador himself told me that he got these instructions.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: From whom?

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA (Bombay North): Yet the order be placed on the Table of the House, if it is true.

(Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I am prepared to undergo any punishment if it is proved that such instructions were issued by me.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. Please take your seats.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Let her disclose the name of the ambassador.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I have no hesitation in disclosing the name. I will do so to Mr. Vajpayee.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Why to me alone? Why not to the House when you are making a public allegation?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: There is a limit.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Yes, there is no limit to what you have done.

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: The Prime Minister has no right to say this. If it is true, let the order be placed on the Table of the House...

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I do not know who gave the order. I am only repeating what I was told. I am not interested in who issued those

orders. I was told this by an ambassador and I have no reason to disbelieve him. I can also share this information that he is not a member of the Congress Party.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: So what?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: His reply was that he would not burn them; if he was not allowed to keep them, he said he would shut them up in a cupboard, and he did lock them up in a cupboard.

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: Another skeleton in the cupboard.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: This was only in external affairs—the way the pictures were torn, trampled upon. One Air Force officer told me that right in the beginning, he had a picture of my father, me and himself. He was told—I do not know at what level—by somebody who visited the office to remove it. He said: it is entirely a personal matter. I am not keeping it as a political gesture, it is a personal memento. Very soon after he was transferred, whether the transfer was connected with it or not, I do not know, but he felt, in his mind that it was connected. It is not just one case. There are thousands of cases like this, not just one. Every effort was made to humiliate me in every possible way. Foreign ambassadors have told me. I am not going to reveal their names, Mr. Vajpayee. It is only fair that the House should know. They are respectable people of high position in their countries. They have told me that they were hauled up for visiting me. Many of those who came to see me, came in taxis or walking. So, this was the atmosphere created. Anybody who visited me, if they had anything to do with the Government, whether they were in University or any department which remotely had some Government help, they were hauled up.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): What does hauled up mean?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Well, they were called and asked, told whether they wanted government support to continue.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Raipur): You are describing emergency conditions.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Thank you very much indeed. That is exactly what I am saying. These were carried out by those people whose main slogan was their belief in democracy and in the freedom of the individual. We did not bring emergency through the back door. We brought it openly. We did not arrest anybody from the back door. Everybody knew that these people were being arrested. As I said, if any wrong things were done....

(Interruptions)

Please keep quiet because I am going to take a long time. I do not mind if you want to sit on. I have plenty to say. The more quietly you listen, the sooner it will be over. I am not going to cut out anything because of your shouting, I am not going to sit down because of your shouting, let this be very clear.

(Interruptions)

I have heard that some of the films taken when I visited the forward areas were also destroyed by the Information Ministry. So far as I know, the hon. Minister at that time acknowledged that they were lost.

The hand of the R.S.S. was clearly visible in the administration, the manner in which the hon. Member here has spoken about riots and various other incidents that took place, the manner in which the RSS infiltrated into various strategic positions, in education, in administration, in the police force and various other areas.

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

Was not my expulsion from Parliament, immediately after winning election was an insult to the people of Chikmagalur? And to the democratic process itself. Was it not bulldozing by the majority?

We have said that we do not want to be vindictive. But the facts must come out.

An effort was made to distort even the previous history, not to talk of recent history. We know the hon. Members from the Jan Sangh.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We have nothing to do with the Jan Sangh.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I think the gentleman who has been busy trying to prove for some years as to how the Taj Mahal was a Hindu temple belongs to Shri Vajpayee's party. This may be an extreme case. But there are many things in between which are equally dangerous to the survival of the Indian tradition, which is a tradition of absorbing, of synthesis and of great tolerance, it does not believe in falsehood or in rubbing out something which some do not happen to approve of because it does not suit their picture of India or what they want to do.

Now, the neglect of fundamental development by the Janata Government was matched by equal irresponsibility in the day-to-day management of the affairs of the country—political and economic.

Members have spoken about the sharp deterioration in the law and order situation and the sense of insecurity, particularly among the weaker sections.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA:..Among women also.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Specially of women; I have mentioned all this in my speeches outside.

Some have said that they have continued. Of course, they have continued. Can we change it suddenly? But certainly I think that already there is a slight change.

With regard to communal clashes, during the last three years the minorities have suffered because of the increase in communal incidents. In 1975, there were 962 people injured and 33 killed. In 1976, there were 794 injured and 39 killed. The very next year—1977—the number of people injured goes up to 1,119. In 1978, the number of injured people were 1,853. In 1979, the number of injured was 2,346. The number of dead was 260.

Casteism and caste feeling have been features of Indian society for centuries. At the beginning of the post-independence period, there seemed to be a lessening of aggressive caste feeling, but with the coming in of democracy, it came up again because people looked to caste support. However as soon as they realised that this support was not enough to balance the hopes of other castes, again we found a lessening of caste dependence. During the Janata and Lok Dal rule, not only did we find caste in our political life and in our public life, but casteism and communalism were injected into our institutions of higher learning. Our civil services and even such innocent-looking programmes like adult education were vitiated. Even in the Lok Sabha elections, the effort was to fight on the basis of casteism and communalism in the vain hope of winning elections by misleading the people. I think this election has proved that our people are much more broad-minded with an overall national outlook than many of our friends opposite would like them to be.

Crime against scheduled castes between 1975 and 1979—The number of cases reported in 1975 was 7,781. I am skipping the middle portion. In 1978, the number was 15,059. In

1979, upto September, the number was 10492. Crime in Delhi went up again from 23,105 in 1976 to almost the same figure in the first half of 1979—21,307. Figures are sometimes boring but since the others have quoted some, I think I am going to bore you with them. The hon. Member, Chaudhuri Charan Singh, said something about foodgrain production. In 1950-51, the production was 52.58 million tonnes. In 1973-74, it went up to 104.67 and in 1975-76 it went up to 121.3. We certainly did import foodgrains because we were determined that our people should not starve.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: During Janata rule it went up to 126.5 million tonnes.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Production did go up. We are not belittling that. But you had excellent rains whereas in the other periods, we had faced serious droughts. You had years of very good rainfall. What is the result this year? This year, food is not available for the drought-affected area, although when we left a surplus, we were then told that there was enough for 2 consecutive years of drought and there would be no difficulty in the country.

Coming to irrigation, we started off with a mere 22.6 million hectares of utilised irrigation potential in 1951. By 1977-78, there was an increase of 26 million hectares. I have not got the middle figure. But the figure for 1973-74 was 42 million hectares. There was an increase during the Janata rule, but I think hon. Members will realise that this is the result of the investments in the years before 1977 on irrigation projects. May I ask, how many new irrigation projects were put up and would they yield results immediately even if you had begun them up in 1977? At least in one place a bridge that was built by us was listed as an achievement of the Janata government because it had not been formally inaugurated during the Congress regime.

About industrial production, we built the sinews of industrial strength through the development of the core sectors of coal, steel and oil and the expansion of the transport infrastructure and induction and generation of a wide range of technologies. The index of industrial production in 1951 was 100. In 1977 it has gone up to 389.2. Similarly, coal production in million tonnes: In 1973-74 it was 81.8, in 1976-77 it was 100.8, in 1979 up to November, it was about 65 million tons. Saleable steel in million tonnes: 4.47 in 1973-74, 7.41 in 1976-77, and the provisional figure for 1977-78 is 5.08. Railways: 1973-74 it was 162.1 million tonnes. Originating net tonne kilometres: 1,09,391.

In 1976-77 it goes up from 162 to 212. In 1977-78 it comes down to 210 and in 1978-79 it comes down to 199. In the first 8 months of 1978, 19 million mandays were lost and in the corresponding period of 1979, about 30 million mandays were lost due to industrial disputes.

Chaudhury Sahib made a statement about India going down from 1966 in the list of countries. I am told that this is because the number of countries has increased and looked at it from that angle, the position in 1976 had considerably improved compared to that in 1973.

Export trade: From 1974-75 to 1976-77, the average annual rate of growth was 26.8 per cent, from 1977-78 to 1979-80, it was 6.2 per cent.

The Janata Party increased our import bill: In 1973-74 imports were Rs. 2,955.4 crores; in 1977-78 they rose to Rs. 6,025 crores. This was partly due to the need to go in for heavy imports of items such as steel, cement, coal and aluminium to meet shortages in domestic production which had been allowed to develop due to inefficient utilisation of existing capacity.

That is how there is a rapid widening of our adverse balance of trade and

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

we are ill-equipped today to pay for the petroleum and other costly imports which we desperately need from abroad.

It is not true that the large buffer stock of foodgrains was built up with imports of food. We did import food when it was necessary, but gradually we had built up stocks to make us self-sufficient in foodgrains, that is how, the Janata Party Government was able to export some soon after coming into power.

In March, 1977, the national buffer stock was 18 million tonnes. This was the result of a massive domestic procurement which itself was a consequence of the steps taken by the Government in my time to make Indian agriculture more productive.

From 1966-67 to the period when my Government laid down office in 1977, the national income at constant prices increased from Rs. 27,298 crores to Rs. 40,534 crores, yielding an annual compound rate of 4.03 per cent. In 1978-79 the growth rate was 4.06 per cent which is similar to the growth of ten years. A long-term growth rate of 4.03 per cent in ten years with fluctuations in agricultural production is much more difficult to achieve than 4.6 per cent in a year of good monsoon.

Export of engineering goods increased from Rs. 356.6 crores in 1974-75 to Rs. 566 crores in 1976-77.

Many Members have expressed their concern over the problems of agriculture. The hon. House knows how very anxious we ourselves are. Choudhury Saheb has been pleased to state in his election speeches that I cannot tell the difference between a cow and a buffalo! Hon'ble Members can themselves judge the seriousness of such remarks. I am not called upon to be a judge at either cattle shows or buffalo shows, but I was concerned during my years in office to see that our farmers get remunerative prices. Their complaint

was that the experts who sit in the Agricultural Prices Commission know nothing about the difficulties at the field level and that our Government always accepted their opinion. Well we went into this in great detail, and we had many discussions with the hon. Members, and on the whole we tried to give farmers a fair deal. But whatever price was agreed to was regarded by us as a support price. But what happened in the last two years? The peasants did not get a proper price for sugarcane, or for other crops. When I went to the Faridkot constituency—I do not see the hon. Member here—from a distance I thought snow had fallen seeing the piles and piles of white Narma cotton. Nobody was buying it. In U.P. I was told—I have not ascertained this from Government sources—it is what the farmers told me before the election and during the campaign, that they were not able to get the price declared by the Government. It was when most of them had sold their produce at a lower price, almost at distress rates, that the Government came forward and announced the higher price. What happens? Those farmers who had already sold their stock could not get that price. So, that money would go....

SHRI CHANDRAJEET YADAV (Azamgarh): It has been a regular feature for the last so many years.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: The farmers told me that this did not happen before. Why should they come specifically to tell me if this was an earlier experience?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Every year they are suffering, why should they not tell you?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Regarding many other matters, people have not hesitated to state: "This is our problem, it is a long-existing problem, please look into it", but this time they did not say so and because of their experience with sugarcane, people today are not in a mood to plant sugarcane, and we are threatened with a

shortage of sugar in the coming season. This sort of thing has not happened before. Farmers were planting more and more because they were getting a proper price. When you do not get remunerative price, you are bound to feel that since it is not a paying crop why should I depend on it? This is just what I am saying, Mr. Gupta. What I am trying to put across is, had this happened in the previous years at the same level, those farmers would have been discouraged than also from planting those particular crops. But they were not discouraged, they planted more of sugarcane, more of everything. Now for the first time they are saying that since this is not a paying crop, they will not plant sugarcane. This is the fact.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE (Howrah): This has happened in the case of jute, tobacco and cotton.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: No.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Because you visited that place, they came up with this problem.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: They also came here to visit me. All I can say is we shall certainly look into this problem. We do not want our farmers to suffer. I do admit that these policies have to be planned in a far more long term perspective. We tend to take decision in a somewhat adhoc manner, dealing with immediate problems. If I go wrong somewhere, I have no hesitation in admitting it. Somehow we were always caught in last moment decisions and this caused some problems. Now we must attempt a long term perspective. My colleague, the Minister for Agriculture, has already dealt with the measures which we propose to take to alleviate the sufferings of our people in the drought affected areas. I should like to mention particularly that we shall arrange for close monitoring of the drought situation and take an active interest in the proper implementation of the food for work programmes. The protection of cattle will also receive greater attention.

Several hon. Members have spoken about unemployment. It is indeed a matter of grave concern and it is at the root of many other problems which arise. Whether it be a law and order problem or even, I would say, the very serious situation in our North Eastern region. We can certainly have short term measures, but basically, employment can be created when the economic problems are solved and not just by having deadlines. Many hon. members on this side have spoken about the rolling Plan and how the whole process...

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: What about unemployment relief?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: All those things will come up later. I am not in a position to say anything concrete because we have to know what exactly it involves. There is no point in my announcing that I will do something and find later that I cannot do it.

The numbers in India are so vast that many programmes which are most urgent and necessary are beyond our capacity, especially at this moment when the economy is in a bad way. But we will certainly look into the problem in depth and give it our urgent attention.

We have always regarded planning as a tool for economic and social change. During the entire period of the Janata and Lok Dal rule, the Five Year Plan could not be finalised even by the Central Government, let alone having consultations with the States. I am astonished that any Indian should ignore all these achievements in agriculture and industry, which have taken place. As I have said in my speeches, I am not responsible for them, it is the Indian people through their labour and sacrifice, the farmer has increased his production, the industrial worker also through his own work. I am not going to belittle their contribution because that is the main thing. But how were they able to do so? Because we gave them a policy, because we gave a definite direction. The same is the case

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

with our young scientists and technologists. Today, India has the third largest reservoir of engineering skills in the whole world and one has only to look around us and compare our political and economic situation with those of the countries which have acquired freedom in the post war period, to judge our record in a proper perspective. Those who try to decry our performance, show an utter lack of national pride and faith in our people.

I have mentioned drought relief. Just today, I had a very large contingent from Madhya Pradesh also MPs from Madhya Pradesh, from Rajasthan, from Uttar Pradesh, from Bihar and other States which have been suffering from drought, who came to see me regarding the inadequacy of relief work and the low wages which are being given to them. They have repeatedly complained about the lack of availability of various essential articles and that recovery of loans was being done even when farmers were in such deep distress.

There are two matters which have nothing to do with drought but which I must mention here since my attention was drawn to them by the large crowd that came from Madhya Pradesh; they were also mentioned by MPs from Rajasthan and yesterday my hon. friend and colleague, Shri Kamalapati Tripathi also told me that this was happening in U.P. also. The State Governments in these places have begun a vigorous programmes of sterilisation and demolition and they are propagating that "We told you, when the Indira Gandhi Government comes back, sterilisation will be renewed. These are instructions received from the Centre."

श्री मती बिद्यावती वर्तुबंदी (बजुराहो): उन्होंने रहम-कार्य भी बन्द कर दिये हैं। कहते हैं कि जाओ इन्दिरा माँ के पास।

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I should like to tell this honourable House that no such instructions have gone from the Centre. This is typical of the manner in which they were pre-

viously spreading falsehood and now also they continue to do so.

My hon. friend has raised the question of stoppage of relief work. During the flood situation in Delhi—I forget whether it was 1977 or 1978—when I visited the affected areas, we found that those areas which had voted for our members to the Corporation and the Metropolitan Council, were denied their rations. It was only when we made a big noise that the rations were resumed. I am not going into all these things. It just shows their attitude.

I am not mentioning the names of all the members who have spoken. But I should like to express my appreciation of the note of sobriety which Shri Jagjivan Ram brought to the whole debate. He referred to the need for radical changes in the system for the abolition of poverty and the solution of our economic problems. I wish he had spelt out his ideas and told us what radical steps he had in mind consistent with the sort of democracy that we have in India.

Another friend from the Marxist party opposite underlined the need for fundamental changes in the system. He cited the example of China. It is interesting to see how international politics move. During the war in Vietnam when we were supporting the Vietnamese, we were consistently told by the United States and other Western authorities that they were fighting in Vietnam only to protect us from China, that the great threat to India was China and, therefore, it was very wrong of us to support Vietnam since the Chinese were also helping the Vietnamese against U.S.A. We were consistent in our policy towards China. In spite of the fact that we had suffered aggression—at that time not only were there no relations, there was hostility—we continued to support China's entry into the United Nations for the very simple reason that a large nation whose population is 1/6th of the world cannot be left out of any international decision. Whether we like their viewpoint or not, is an entirely different

matter. We were not at all opportunistic; we were consistent in our policy.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: I spoke about the economic system. *(Interruptions.)*

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I am just telling you the whole story. *(Interruptions.)* I shall come to that aspect.

I wanted to give the whole picture because suddenly, almost overnight, we found that China was said to be a great friend and we had to be protected from the Soviet Union and Vietnam! It is a little difficult for me, a simple person, to understand such things! *(Interruptions.)*

I am coming to the economic part.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: You are jumping from one thing to another. *(Interruptions.)*

MR. SPEAKER: She will come to that point.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: With all due respect... *(Interruptions.)* I do not know why the Hon. Members opposite should be so sensitive. I have not said a word about his party: I am trying to give the background of a particular situation.

Now let us come to the socialist system. From violent hostility the western world and some friends from the Jana Sangh and others sitting opposite switched over to a feeling of euphoria, saying that everything was perfect in China—unemployment has been wiped out, everybody had food and everything was perfect. Not long afterwards we read of unemployment riots in some cities—in Shanghai and other cities. Then we read that this country, which was supposed to have attained high industrial development, is now totally dependent on western help for its industrial development. Furthermore they are partners with the USA—I do not know, if the USA is a socialist country! Does the Hon. Member want us to go back to that position?

Perhaps we have moved slowly. We have not been able to eradicate poverty—nor did we ever say it could be eradicated so soon. All we are saying... *(Interruptions.)*

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: She knows perfectly well why we prefer, on some issues, the Chinese Government. She knows that. What I said was about their economic system. They have solved the unemployment problem; they have solved poverty. *(Interruptions.)* The question is, China has begun a programme of being the first modern country within this century. That is why they are taking the help of technology from all countries including India. That does not mean they are dependent on western countries mainly. It is not correct.

AN HON. MEMBER: He is more Chinese than the Chinese!

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: The hon. Member may have greater inner information than I have but, so far as I understand the situation, the Chinese have not been able to make much industrial development. They have got a number of atomic bombs, but their industrial base is not a strong one and the various experiments they carried out with regard to small scale production of steel etc. are now regarded to have been not as successful as they were thought to be at that time.

AN HON. MEMBER: May I ask a question? *(Interruptions.)*

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. No question is allowed. Please take your seat.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Furthermore, those other Members of the Opposition who are now so loud in their condemnation—I am going to talk about this later, so don't ask questions about it—of Soviet troops in Afghanistan had not a word to say when Chinese troops entered Vietnam.

14 hrs.

Now, Sir, even in the very short time that we have been in office, there

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

has already been a marked change in the perceptions of foreign countries of our willingness and ability to play a useful and constructive role in international affairs.

In recent months the world has moved dangerously closer to thermo-nuclear confrontation among the big Powers. The atmosphere of the cold war has been revised with all its negative consequences. We hear even quite responsible people being carried away by emotion and indulging in talks of mobilisation for war, limited nuclear war, flexible response, and so on.

We must realise that, in this armed-to-the-teeth world, the slightest miscalculation may end in an unprecedented catastrophe for the entire human race. Therefore, in what we say or do, we must take into account all the factors and in our own humble way try to defuse the crisis.

We are convinced that, only in an atmosphere of universal peace, can the resources of the world, both financial and technological, be available for the mutual benefit of humanity. Therefore, we are anxious that the present drift towards a hot war should be stopped by the combined efforts of all right-thinking people in the world.

Hon. Members are rightly concerned about developments in Afghanistan and the decision of the United States, China and some other countries to rush arms into Pakistan. I should like hon. Members to bear with me because once again I should like to give the background of the situation. I want to draw the attention of the House to the sequence of developments in Afghanistan. It is a strategically located country. Some years ago—we all know what happened when we were not free; I am not going into that period—the monarchy was overthrown and Afghanistan became a Republic. President Daud took over power. In April, 1978, ano-

ther revolution took place and President Tarakki came at the helm of affairs. In November last, he was overthrown by Mr. Amin. Again in December last, President Amin was overthrown, and now President Karmal is the Head of the Government.

To my hon. friend from the Muslim League, I would say—again I cannot vouch for this but we have been told—that it was in the time of Amin himself that help was asked for from Soviet troops...

AN HON. MEMBER: Told by whom?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: We have been told by the Soviet Ambassador.

There have been problems between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It was a legacy of the colonial domination of this sub-continent. What happened in Afghanistan was an internal matter of that country. For the past two years, the Afghan Republic has faced numerous internal and external problems. There have been reports of armed attacks from bases located outside the country. We are told that the Government of Afghanistan invoked the provisions of the Treaty it signed with the Soviet Union and asked for military help to meet the threat to the Republic. Whether the request for military assistance was right or not, whether the Soviet Union should have rushed military aid or not, is a matter on which there is division of opinion among the powers of the world. Each one is looking at the problem not at all from the point of view of the people of Afghanistan, but from geo-political and strategic considerations. This will further complicate problems without solving anything. I have stated our own view, which is that we do not approve of foreign presence or intervention anywhere in the world. However, we do not believe in a one-sided condemnation. We have been watching with

concern the build up in the Indian Ocean and some other countries, which is now being stepped up even further with Pakistan becoming one of the important bases for this.

It is necessary to reaffirm our commitment to non-alignment and to emphasize the independence of our judgement on each issue, which is not going to be affected by pressures from any quarter. Our geo-political situation, our commitment to certain fundamental principles, our historical experiences, particularly, since the days of Independence and above all our national interests will be the determining factors in our foreign policy.

As I said, there is a deliberate effort to label us as pro-this or pro-that. We are not pro-any country except pro-India and this is what we intend to remain. When we judge these issues, we judge them from the point of view of our national interest and from what we consider to be in the interest of world peace.

All our efforts are directed at securing the speedy withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Many big and small powers are involved. The training of armed bands, providing bases, entering of armed troops across the border and inhabiting another country and some other such activities do not create confidence among neighbours. They only prolong the misery of the people concerned and create conditions of hostility among the States. We cannot but feel disturbed by the reaction of some powers over these developments in Afghanistan. Billions of dollars have been asked for and hundreds of millions have already been committed to Pakistan in military aid by USA. Other powers are being persuaded to make their own contribution to convert Pakistan into an arsenal. The People's Republic of China has also pledged to provide arms and other necessary assistance to Pakistan.

Already, contrary to the expressed desires of the littoral States, a naval build up has been taking place in the Indian Ocean and huge armada is being deployed in the Arabian Sea. This is being done in the name of securing free flow of oil from the Gulf to the industrialised west. This is bound to have reactions, and the Indian Ocean in our region has become an arena of super powers. Old treaties are being invoked and new ones are being forged. Appeals have been made to the religious sentiments of the people of western Asia by outside powers. We know from experience how and against whom these weapons have been used in the past.

We have conveyed our views to Pakistan and the Governments of the United States, Soviet Union and other countries. We have once again told the leaders of Pakistan of our sincere desire to promote friendly relations and co-operation in every sphere in the spirit of the Simla Agreement. We hope that neighbouring countries will avoid getting involved in this geo-political game of one or another super power and respond positively to the hand of friendship and co-operation which we have extended to them.

We want to improve relations with China, consistent with our national interests and the five principles of peaceful co-existence.

As the President has stated in his Address, we shall further strengthen and deepen our friendly relations with the Soviet Union and consolidate our co-operation with the United States. I want to make it clear that our relations with one country is not at the cost of our relations with another. As a sovereign and independent nation we act in the best interests of our people and the cause of world peace and co-operation.

Some hon. Members have referred to the Islamic bomb, Nuclear bombs and other bombs are weapons of

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

mass destruction. There is nothing Christian, Islamic, Hindu, or Buddhist about them. The production of nuclear bombs, by any country in our region is bound to create a reaction in others which will increase the suspicion and fears of the intentions of the bomb producers. We have made it clear that India has no intention of producing nuclear weapons, but, at the same time we do not give up our right to use nuclear energy for peaceful and developmental purposes.

General Zia-ul-Haq has told us that he will not produce nuclear bombs. We can only hope that he will honour his assurance.

The situation in South-East Asia continues to cause concern. We do not subscribe to the view that any country has a right to teach a lesson to any other country. Instead of using the refugees for interfering with the affairs of the other countries, conditions should be created in which those desirous of returning to their homeland may do so. Refugees should not be made use of as pawns in their power game. However, this new variant of the cold war is taking place in the setting of the international economic crisis fuelled by the higher cost of energy and rise in the prices of industrial equipment. While the situation requires expansion of the world economy by free flow of capital and technology, an ever-expanding world market and a new international monetary system, the cold war climax and the consequent military outbreak will close the avenues for their realisation. The Developing countries will be the worst sufferers; they will be subjected to pressures, inducements and even de-stabilisation; they will be drawn into military conflicts. In such a situation, there is a danger of the backward states and the extremist elements being drawn into an adventurist action. We have to keep all these matters in mind while dealing

with the extraordinarily grave and delicate international situation.

We believe that the best way to ensure world peace is to break down barriers East-West, North-South confrontation and try for the cooperation of all nations for economic development.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, an hon' Member spoke about the minorities. I don't want to go into the details. We are deeply concerned with the question of employment opportunities for minorities and their other problems. We are equally conscious of the need for economic development for them and the development of the Urdu language which I do not regard as a language of the minorities. People in every State speak Urdu. Initially I had considerable difficulty in understanding the Hindi broadcasts of our Radio or the language used by various Hindi Departments.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Mr. Sathé to note.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I said initially. Now, I have learnt it.

In the minorities there are not only our Muslim brothers, although they are the largest in number, there are also many other minorities. We are equally conscious of their problems and the need to help them, specially, towards their development.

While the hon. Member was speaking, my colleague Shri Shiv Shankar was telling me of the work done in Andhra Pradesh for the Urdu Academy. We started that programme and it has been well implemented in Andhra Pradesh in different cities. I should like to congratulate those young members who have made their maiden speeches here, specially, Shri K. K. Tiwary, Shri Madhavrao Scindia and General Sparrow. I congratulate them.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: What about those from the Opposition. Many youngmen from here also spoke.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I congratulate them also. I do not know many but I hope to know them soon. Some hon'ble Members did not get the time to speak. I am sure they will make an equally good contributions later on.

Mr. Speaker, some hon. Members have made the criticism that the President's Address lacks direction. I do not understand this at all. On every important aspect of our national life, the President's Address spells out new directions of Government policy and Government action, whether it be in the field of law enforcement or planning for nation-building or the management of the economy or the welfare of the weaker sections. Our objectives are clear and are surely national in content. I do hope that all Members of this House, whether in the ruling party or in the Opposition, will extend their full support and cooperation in this great task and in successfully meeting the challenges which confront the nation.

Many amendments have been moved on the Motion of Thanks. I have dealt with some of them in my remarks but I have not been able to deal with them extensively because that would take a longer time.

But the socio-economic measures which will be unfolded in the coming months in furtherance of the Government's broad objective will answer the amendments. So, I request the hon. Members not to press them but to withdraw the amendments.

Sir, I thank all those who have taken part...

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRIISHNAN: What about Assam?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I have spoken on Assam earlier. There is nothing specific I can say. Some groups are coming to meet me. We are trying to get in touch with the leaders of the political parties so that

they can also come before Parliament ends.

Perhaps you were not here when I informed the House that we had agreed to Shri Samar Mukherjee's suggestion that the Leaders of the Opposition and we should meet with the leaders of political parties in Assam to try and find a solution. We are fully aware of the difficulties and problems of the Assamese people and also of the hardships and the sufferings which some of them have undergone and the very brutal killing of some people. But anything that is said might aggravate the situation. That is why we think it is better to try to find a solution to this delicate problem and also to try and convince the people that however great the problems agitation is not the solution. If Assam deprives some region of some goods, then other regions can deprive it of other essential goods. Similarly, if there is reaction by non-Assamese, then that would only add to the suffering. So, at this time all of us must—however strong our feelings and I can fully understand the extent of your agony—show self-restraint and pool our energies to convince those who are indulging in wrong action and to assure them that the problems which are worrying them will be solved but it cannot be a one-sided solution. The whole picture has to be taken into consideration.

Sir, I commend this Motion to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: A number of amendments have been moved by Members to the Motion of Thanks. Shall I put all the amendments to the vote of the House together or does any Hon'ble Member want any particular amendment to be put separately?

SHRI RAMAVATAR SHASTRI (Patna): I want amendments No. 6 and 13 to be put separately.