

[श्री सिद्धेश्वर प्रसाद]

जो वातावरण उत्पन्न हो गया है उस से ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि हमारे देश में राष्ट्रीय अथवा भावात्मक एकता की कमी नहीं है। हमारे जवानों ने पाकिस्तानी चुनौती का जिस साहस के साथ, जिस बोरता के साथ, जवाब दिया है और इस खतरे का मुकाबला करने में हम जिस हद तक सफल हुए हैं, उस से ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि वस्तुतः हमारे देश में एकता की जड़ें काफी गहरी हैं :। फिर भी इस से इन्कार नहीं किया जा सकता है कि मीके मीके पर ऐसा वातावरण उत्पन्न हो जाता है, ऐसी परिस्थितियाँ उत्पन्न होती हैं जिन की वजह से इस एकता में कहीं न कहीं कोई दरार पड़ जाती है और ऐसे खतरे उपस्थित हो जाते हैं जिन की वजह से ऐसा मान्य पड़ता है कि हमें राष्ट्रीय और भावात्मक एकता के लिए और भी गहराई तक जा कर प्रयत्न करना पड़ेगा।

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. There is too much noise in the House. If it is only my responsibility and of the Reporters to listen to the hon. member who is speaking, then we might be allowed to listen to him.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath (Hoshangabad): Members are getting impatient to hear the Prime Minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker: I thought the hon. member would finish.

Shri Siddheshwar Prasad: I have just begun.

Mr. Speaker: He might resume his seat now.

16 hrs.

PROPOSED MEETING OF THE PRIME MINISTER WITH PRESIDENT AYUB KHAN AT TASHKENT AND OTHER MATTERS

The Prime Minister and Minister of Atomic Energy (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri): Sir, on 18th September, I received a communication from the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. Kosygin, proposing a meeting in Tashkent between President Ayub Khan and myself under the good offices of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, if the parties so desired, for the re-establishment of peace between India and Pakistan. I sent a reply on 22nd September to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR in which I agreed to his proposal for a meeting between President Ayub Khan and myself in Tashkent, to discuss the question of restoration of peaceful relations between India and Pakistan. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR had sent a similar communication to President Ayub Khan. As could be gathered from President Ayub Khan's communication to Mr. Kosygin a summary of which was later published in the Soviet press, the Pakistan President thanked the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for his proposal and made reservations to the effect that the talks could only be held after the ground had been prepared and that this could be done first in the Security Council. I informed the House on 22nd September of Mr. Kosygin's proposal and our acceptance of it.

On November 16, I was informed by Mr. Kosygin that he had received a communication from the Pakistan Foreign Minister on behalf of the President of Pakistan, urging that talks between President Ayub and myself should take place in Tashkent as proposed by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

The Chairman asked for my views on the proposed meeting and as I stated in the House on 16th November. I did not say no to the proposal. At the same time, I made it clear that so far as the Kashmir question was concerned it was not possible for us to deviate from the position that Kashmir was a part of India and that there was no question of parting with our territories.

Following upon this, there were informal consultations in Moscow between our Ambassador and the Soviet Government and I was also met by the Soviet Ambassador. I received a communication on November 27, from Mr. Kosygin in which I was informed that the Pakistan President was prepared to have the proposed talks in Tashkent without any pre-conditions. Certain tentative suggestions were communicated to me about the date of the meeting. I replied to Mr. Kosygin agreeing to a meeting in the first week of January 1966, and it has since been announced that this meeting will commence on January 4, 1966.

We on our part have agreed to the Tashkent meeting as we believe in establishing peaceful and good neighbourly relations through discussions. I have made it clear that our discussions in Tashkent should cover the totality of relations between India and Pakistan so that the two countries can live on the basis of enduring peace and mutual cooperation.

The facts of history and geography make it imperative that India and Pakistan should have harmonious and mutually cooperative relations. We have always believed that war and military conflict cannot provide a real solution to any problem between nations. If Pakistan has agreed to these talks with a genuine realisation that peace is preferable to conflict, the coming meeting at Tashkent may be worthwhile.

I would like to take this opportunity also to make a brief report to the

House about the present situation on our borders and to inform the House about certain visits abroad which I am scheduled to undertake during the coming weeks.

A situation of uneasy truce still continues on our western borders with Pakistan and, despite a ceasefire agreement, Pakistan is committing violations at different places at different times. Our armed forces have been dealing with this situation with considerable restraint, though naturally they have defended their positions.

In Rajasthan sector, as the House is aware, Pakistan has occupied certain isolated posts subsequent to the ceasefire becoming effective, in complete disregard of the agreement which she had accepted. This situation could not possibly be countenanced. Accordingly, action has been taken to rectify the situation, and some progress has been made.

The Chinese also have stepped up their activities on our frontiers. They attempted intrusions at a number of places. What their real objectives are, it is difficult to say. It is apparent, however, that they want to maintain an atmosphere of tension all the time and to keep up their pressure.

Altogether, the situation on our frontiers is such as to call for continuous vigilance and the country must remain on guard against the collusive activities of Pakistan and China. Our armed forces are alert and vigilant. We must remember, however, that the situation that we face will not be short-lived.

I would like to inform the House that in the coming weeks I propose to visit the United States of America and the Union of Burma, at the invitation of the Governments of these two friendly countries. I am looking forward to meeting President Johnson and the friendly American people. Between India and the United States

[Shri Humayun Kabir]

of America, there are many things in common. I am confident that my forthcoming talks with President Johnson, which are scheduled to commence on February 1, 1966, would lead to a closer understanding between our two countries and to a better appreciation of each other's point of view. I should like to express my sincere thanks to President Johnson whose decision in regard to accelerated food aid would help substantially in tiding over the present difficult food situation.

The House would recall that, some months ago, we were honoured by the visit of General Ne Win, President of the Union of Burma. At that time, the President had very kindly invited me to visit Burma and, ever since then, I have been looking forward to visiting this friendly neighbour of ours. I am very glad, therefore, that I would now have the opportunity of doing so very shortly. I shall leave for Burma on the morning of Monday, December 20, and will return to India on the morning of Thursday, December 23.

Important tasks lie ahead, and I have no doubt that I shall carry with me the good wishes of all the Honourable Members of this august House. To the people of the countries that I visit, I shall convey the warm good wishes of the people of India. It is our duty and our responsibility to explain our attitudes and our policies to the peoples of the world in an endeavour to gain their understanding. I think it is necessary for us to reiterate that India stands firmly for peace and for international amity. We seek friendship with all, more especially with our neighbours. We want to devote our energies to the vital task of developing our economy and improving the living standards of our people. The monies that we spend today on defence, we would much rather spend on fighting poverty, were it not for the serious threat to our territorial integrity all along our frontiers. The

problems that will arise will be challenging, and these, I need hardly tell the House, will be attended to with every caution and care.

The country is still passing through critical days. We have to face and overcome difficult internal problems of our own on the food front and also in the matter of resources. I have no doubt that this challenge of the time provides an opportunity for us all to put forth our best. There is fresh thinking every where on the part of individuals and also on the part of the nation as a whole: There is a new realisation that we must do on our own as much and as far as possible. Recent months have shown that our greatest strength is the unity of our people. Where national problems are involved, the people of India stand together as one man. I am very thankful indeed to all the political parties for the very cooperative attitude they have adopted in these difficult times. It is my sincere hope that this feeling will continue to be sustained. Let us continue to work together and thus shape our common destiny.

Some hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: I had certain calling-attention notices also. Now, either I can treat it as a call-attention notice and call only those Members who gave notice or, if it is so desired, I can give chance to one Member from each party, whoever likes.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta Central): Would not you rather think it appropriate for Parliament as a whole, as far as the groups are concerned, to express themselves very shortly in regard to the statement, because if it is a matter of calling attention, I do not know—you can put it that way.....

Mr. Speaker: I would endorse the views expressed by Shri Hiren Mukerjee. It would be much better if we