

[Shri Ravi Prakash Verma]

Power can be generated through ocean waters and through wind energy. We have many such resources. Hence, we should reconsider the ways in which the nation can progress so that every Indian feels proud of his country. His Excellency, the President has said many times that India will be counted amongst the developed countries by 2020 and it would not need anyone's support to achieve this. It will achieve this through its own efforts. I thank you for giving me time to speak.

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH):

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am grateful for this opportunity to intervene in this debate on an issue of high national importance. I pay my tribute to Members who have participated in these discussions. This debate does credit to our democratic ethos and principles. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition has tried to paint a scary picture, which has no relation with the facts of the matter. In process, he has sought also to divide the UPA alliance in the expectation that perhaps he may succeed in toppling this Government. I can assure Shri Advani that he will have to wait for a very-very long time. In any case, he will have to seek the permission of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in this debate, there are certain basic issues. What is it that we are trying to seek in this Civilian Nuclear Cooperation with the United States and other members of the international community. I would like to emphasize that this is programme about Civilian Nuclear Cooperation. We have never discussed with the United States or anybody else about the content and scope of our strategic programme and I gave assured the House before, and I repeat the assurance that our strategic programme will respond to our own decisions and will not be subjected to any international scrutiny of any country. I have also assured the House before that in going forward with this programme of Civilian Nuclear Cooperation, we will do nothing which will hurt the ability of our Department of Atomic Energy to pursue research and development; to pursue the development of Fast Breeder Reactors; and to pursue the complete three stage cycle programme from Uranium to Plutonium to Thorium. I can assure the House that I stand by that commitment.

Then, the question arises: why all this turmoil? It is certainly true that the Act that has been passed by the United States Congress has several features which are in our favour. The fact that the United States Government has gone to the US Congress to seek a waiver for India speaks volumes for India's recognition in the world community as a power to be reckoned with.

There are elements in the Act which we welcome and there are other elements which cause us concern. The United States Administration has assured us that they will be able to fully comply with their commitments as outlined in the July 18 Statement and the March 2 Separation Plan but whether this thing materializes or not will depend much upon the content of the 123 Bilateral Cooperation Agreement which we have to negotiate with the United States Government. I believe you can judge us from the content of that Agreement when the time comes. But right now, quite frankly, it is premature to pass the type of verdict that the Leader of the Opposition has sought to do.

Our primary concern has been the lifting of international restriction on international trade with India in nuclear materials, nuclear equipment, and nuclear technologies which has lasted for nearly 35 years. Our nuclear scientists have done us proud but it is also a fact that the nuclear programme which Dr. Bhabha had envisaged was intended to generate immense power. That objective has not been realized. I was a member of the Atomic Energy Commission and it was in the seventies that we had laid down the objective of 10,000 megawatts capacity. We are in the year 2006 and entering 2007. Our total capacity is only about 3600 megawatt. I am not saying that nuclear power is a panacea for all our ills on the energy front but the purpose of government intervention in the nations affairs must be to widen development options. I do believe that if you have access to international trade in nuclear technologies and equipment then it will widen our development options with regard to our energy supplies. That is the primary objective that we seek and that is the primary objective by which we should be judged. At the same time, of course, if, in the process we make compromises which hurt our national interest, if in the process we make compromises commitments which interfere with the pursuit of our national interest or the independence of our national foreign policy, the House can take legitimate exception and I would be the last one to plead to the House that we should live with an arrangement where India's foreign policy is made in Washington or any other place.

Therefore, I do believe that a sense of proportion is necessary in dealing with a sensitive matter which has a vital bearing on not only the future of development in our country but the future of our relations with major powers in the world.

I was in Japan three days ago and the amount of enthusiasm about India's development prospects that I

found in the Japanese government, in Japanese Industry and trade, I have never seen before. I say with humility that it is partly the result of the recognition that has come our way. Despite the fact that we were till yesterday a pariah in the nuclear world, today we have acquired a place in the nuclear order which protects our essential interests. We must not, therefore, ignore the transformation that has come about in the world's view of India in the process of these nuclear negotiations.

Sir, as I was saying, the first important stage to cross was the waiver that has been granted by the US Congress to the US President. Despite the fact that we have a nuclear weapons programme the US is willing to co-operate with us in the development of our civilian nuclear capacities. That, itself I think, is a great advantage. We may not be considered a nuclear weapon state in the sense of the term in which the term is defined in the NPT. However, for all practical purposes we are being treated as such and this is a recognition which has come from the US, Russia, France, United Kingdom and many other countries are willing to recognize the reality that India is a nuclear weapon State. That this nuclear weapon programme will not be subjected to any extraneous, intrusive supervision or monitoring is a commitment which I gave on many occasions and I repeat that assurance. An important stage has been reached in the process of civil nuclear co-operation with the United State with the Passage of legislation by the US Congress with substantial bipartisan support. Shri Advani ridiculed that bipartisan support. I do not minimize its importance.

Shri Advani's Government was negotiating in secret with Mr. Strobe Talbot for umpteen number of months. They never had the courage to tell Parliament what they were negotiating. I have at every stage taken Parliament into confidence. After July 18, after March 02 and at every stage Parliament has been fully kept in the picture. This was not the case with the NDA. We do not know till this day what is it that Shri Jaswant Singh discussed with Strobe Talbot. We had to find out from Strobe Talbot's book that there was a promise to deliver India's signature on the CTBT by a particular date. If my friends in the NDA value the words of Mr. Strobe Talbot more than mine, he was shown on channel – a few days ago saying that he was opposed to this deal with India because it gave India too much. He said that if India were now to say that we reject it, then, he said, that would not be in India's interest. But what is in India's interest is not something to be determined by Mr. Talbot. It has to be determined by this Parliament and this

Government and we will not do anything behind the back of our country. We will keep the country fully informed of all these matters.

What has been passed basically is an enabling law in pursuance of the undertakings of the United States in the July Joint Statement that it would seek to adjust US laws and policies to achieve full civil nuclear cooperation with India. This Act is necessary for the United States to resume civil nuclear cooperation with India and is also an important step leading to the lifting of international restrictions currently applicable to India.

Let me say that we appreciate the efforts made by the US Administration and the bipartisan support in the US Congress which led to the passage of this legislation. This law has several positive features which take into account our concerns. However, I will be the last one to deny that there are areas which continue to be a cause for concern and we will need to discuss them with the US Administration before the bilateral cooperation agreement can be finalized.

What has been done enables the US Administration to enter into negotiations with us. The negotiations with India have yet to begin and the House has my assurance that the promises and the commitments I made in the House on earlier occasions, will form the basis of our guidelines for these negotiations.

Sir, the passage of the legislation enables the US Administration to follow up on another commitment made by the US in the July 18 Joint Statement, namely, approaching its international partners, particularly in the Nuclear Suppliers Group to lift restrictions to allow civil nuclear cooperation with India. We will seek to ensure that the Nuclear Suppliers Group takes action to permit full civil nuclear cooperation with India in terms acceptable to us.

India is interested in long-term, stable and predictable cooperation in civil nuclear energy with the United States and other members of the International community. Such a partnership with the United States can be facilitated if the legislation – its scope, content and implementation— were to strengthen the hands of the Administration to fulfill all the commitments agreed to by the US in the July 18 Joint Statement and the March 2 Separation Plan. On the other hand, this objective can be hindered by extraneous issues that were not part of the understandings in the July 18 Joint Statement and the March 2 Separation Plan. India will find it difficult to and cannot accept any

[Shri Manmohan Singh]

conditions over and above those already agreed to in the understandings with the US. I have mentioned it earlier also.

Our strategic programme was outside the discussions that led to the July 18 Joint Statement. There was no discussion on our strategic programme, in the talks which culminated in the March 2 understandings. Our strategic programme will not be subject to external scrutiny or programme, in the talks which culminated in the March 2 understandings. Our strategic interference of any kind. So, Shri Advani does not have to worry about the future of the nuclear programme.

Safeguarding the autonomy of the strategic programme is a solemn duty of this Government. Nothing will be done that may compromise, dilute or cast a shadow on India's full autonomy in the management of its security and national interests. I repeat that no legislation of a foreign country can take away from us our sovereign right to conduct foreign relations, be it with Iran or with other countries, solely in accordance with our national interest.

The US, for its part has assured us that the legislation, as passed by the US Congress, will enable it to fulfill all its commitments *vis-a-vis* the July 18 Joint Statement and the March 2 Separation Plan. We feel clarifications are necessary because there are areas in the Act which cause us concern. Therefore, clarifications are necessary and will be sought from the US on how this will be done.

International negotiations are a complex process. We recognize that the outcomes are not entirely predictable nor always under our control but I do affirm that compromises, if any, cannot violate basic principles. I believe that any calculation of risks and opportunities will need to be done in a reasoned and transparent manner but evidently we cannot agree to anything that is not consistent with our vital national interests, including protecting the autonomy of our strategic programme, maintaining the integrity of the three-stage nuclear power programme and safeguarding indigenous R&D, including the Fast Breeder Programme. This will be our underlying approach—and here I am replying to Shri Rupchand Pal—when we negotiate the bilateral 123 Agreement, which will form the basis of our civil nuclear cooperation.

Looking back, though the July 18 Joint Statement and the March 2 Separation Plan involved complex issues, I believe, we were able to achieve outcomes that in no way compromised India's interests. In fact, there was wide public support when the issues were fully explained. This has been made possible using innovative and creative

approaches to these complex issues. There is, I believe, a large measure of support within the country in favour of breaking out of our isolation, and for joining the international mainstream in a manner that secures for India full civil nuclear cooperation with the international community while protecting our strategic programme, maintaining the integrity of our three-stage programme and indigenous R&D. This is the objective set out as far as the bilateral nuclear agreement is concerned.

Parliament has my solemn assurance that while the Government will make every effort so that the vision of the July statement becomes a reality, this objective will not be achieved at the cost of our vital national interests. Clearly, difficult negotiations lie ahead. Our broad approach and expectations of these negotiations are a matter of public record. My August 17th 2006 Statement, dwelt at length on how India perceives the implementation of the July statement and the March Separation Plan. I stand by the commitments that I have made to Parliament.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhanjharpur): Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, the House is discussing an issue of national and international import *viz.* The Indo-US Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement. The interjection by our Prime Minister has clarified a lot of points. The Hon'ble Leader of Opposition had raised some questions and mentioned a few apprehensions in this regard. In fact the commitment of the Government towards maintaining the sovereignty of the country had been questioned. It was even said that our nuclear strength does not match the stature and size of our country and that the interest of the country was not kept in mind while making the deal. Many things were said. Hence, our hon'ble Prime Minister has now made it clear that the national interest would not be compromised and foreign policy would never be dictated by the USA. I think this would have laid to rest the doubts of the hon'ble Leader of Opposition. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK (Ahmedabad): Have your doubts been cleared? ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please address the Chair.

16.31 hrs.

[SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH *in the Chair*]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV: This matter does not relate to treasury benches or the opposition. It