

DR. DATTA SAMANT : If this is the reply you are giving, then I have to walk out, Sir.

Dr. Datta Samant then left the House

12.30 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

[*English*]

**Hijacking of Pan-American Aircraft at
Karachi**

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Bhattam Srirama Murty.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY (Visakhapatnam) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of External Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :—

“the recent hijacking of Pan-American aircraft at Karachi airport and the killing of a large number of passengers including several persons of Indian origin due to inept handling of the situation by the local authorities and the action taken by the Government in that regard.”

12.31 hrs.

[**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER** *in the Chair*]

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) :** On 5th September, 1986 Pan Am flight PA-073, originating from Bombay at 0415 hours, was taken over by four hijackers at Karachi airport. The identity of the hijackers is yet to be established. The flight on leaving Bombay carried 416 persons including crew, comprising amongst others over 200 Indian nationals. A little after 9.30 P.M. (IST)

the lights in the aircraft failed while, at the same time the tarmac lights were also off. Shortly thereafter the hijackers appear to have panicked and started shooting the passengers. As a result 20 persons, including 13 Indian nationals were killed and about 117 persons including 76 Indian nationals were injured. The information about Indian casualties was obtained through our own initiative and efforts and a formal report in this regard has not been received from the Government of Pakistan as required under the Chicago Convention of 1944.

Immediately on learning about the hijack, Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, who was attending the NAM Summit at Harare along with President Zia, sought and obtained an assurance from the latter that the Pakistan Government would strive to ensure the safety and release of the Indian passengers. Our diplomatic missions in Islamabad and Karachi were also in constant touch with the Pakistan authorities in this regard. Following the shoot-out, the Prime Minister expressed his profound sorrow over the death of the passengers and started that the Pakistan authorities had bungled very badly and it has caused the death of a number of people.

He referred to Pakistani involvement with the earlier hijackings of IAC aircraft and pointed out that such hijackings would continue to occur as long as Pakistan encourages hijackers and does not take stern action against them.

India has called for a thorough investigation into the incident and expressed the hope at a meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) on 23rd September, 1986 at Montreal, that appropriate stern action will be taken against these found responsible for having caused excessive casualties. India has also demanded an authentic report on the incident from Pakistan.

Pakistan has set up an enquiry into the incident. Despite the lapses of two months no report on the results of the investigation has yet been made available.

[Shri K. Natwar Singh]

At Prime Minister's behest, Shri K.C. Pant, Minister for Steel and Mines, and Shri Jagdish Tytler, Minister of State for Civil Aviation went to Karachi in special aircraft along with a team of Doctors on 6th September, 1986 with a view to ensuring that the Indian nationals were accorded the best possible treatment, and that those who wished to return to India could do so expeditiously. Our diplomatic Missions in Pakistan also remained in constant touch with the Pakistan authorities during the entire incident, though cooperation from the latter was not always forthcoming. After the shoot-out the officials of our Consulate General in Karachi visited the hospitals and hotels where the passengers were lodged. They did their best under difficult odds and were able to provide some relief and succour to the Indian nationals who were on the ill-fated Pan Am flight.

Government is thoroughly dissatisfied about the manner in which Pakistan handled this incident, particularly as the Indian casualty toll was so heavy. Despite Pakistan's assurances at the highest level, little concern was shown for the safety of the passengers by those handling the incident in Pakistan. It is also regrettable that the Pakistan authorities failed to keep us properly informed, leave alone consult us about the negotiations with the hijackers.

Government expects Pakistan to speedily complete the investigation, furnish us a full report and punish those found guilty of this crime.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Bhattam Srirama Murty. 10 minutes for you.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY: I know that. You are not laying down a new procedure.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I am reminding you.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY: It is not necessary either. I think, you can also help people, if it is possible.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I just had reminded you.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY: If you cannot afford to help, it is all right. Otherwise, you apply brake at the end, not at the beginning.

Sir, the Pakistan Government has mishandled the situation and has bungled the situation, with the result that there is unfortunate mass massacre of men, women and children which has taken place in the merciless manner. The Prime Minister went to the extent of saying that Pakistan was responsible for the hijacking of the plane Pan Am Jumbojet at Karachi and also the consequent killing. They should hold themselves responsible. This is the view of this country. I fully support this. This is our view. They have not only bungled but they, in fact, are completely responsible for the massacre and killing of innocent men and women and children. In fact, Prime Minister went to the extent of saying that Pakistan has encouraged the hijackers. It was sought to be made out by pak that other elements, the Lebanese, are responsible for this. Earlier it was stated that some Urdu speaking people were involved in this. At that time, the Prime Minister himself very clearly stated that in this sub-continent only people who can converse in Urdu will be available. I do not know why this version has been changed by Pakistan officials. Many contradictions and different statements come from time to time from the officials of Pakistan Government. This has also got to be gone into.

The hijacking at Karachi on 5th September, 86 is the bloodiest incident of its kind in the aviation history of this sub-continent. In the carnage and massacre that followed, 23 persons of Indian origin—that is the figure which I have now. The Minister says it is 20—were gunned down and 130 people were grievously hurt. Out of the 15 cases of hijacking in the sub-continent since 1971, only 2 have been known for loss of life one on each occasion. It has been the most glaring instance of security lapse here at the airport where desperados stormed their way to the targeted aircraft with huge quantities of arms and explosive materials.

It was for the first time in the history of civil aviation that a grounded plane was sought to be hijacked. Aviation pandits should coin a new word for Karachi episode. The hijackers, it appears, wanted to divert the flight to Cyprus in order to negotiate the release of some of their colleagues who are interned there. If that was a fact, obviously what could have been imagined was they could have first got into the flight and allowed the crew to take position and the rest of the passengers also to take their seats and allow the flight to airborne. Then the entire drama could take place. But then that has not taken place here. That is the reason why I say a "drama" has been enacted.

In any case, it is now very clear that Pakistan had advance knowledge of the impending drama. It was known to the Pakistan Intelligence. It was very clearly published in the newspaper. Even in London Times "Sunday" flashed it. More than a week in advance it was stated that such a thing as the hijack operation is on the cards. Despite this fore-knowledge, Pakistan Government has not acted on it. The Prime Minister himself has stated very clearly that India was informed, well in advance, that Pakistan intended to storm the aircraft. That is our intelligence report. Pakistan wanted to do that. Pakistan itself was informed that some such thing was in the offing. It was going to happen. But they did pretty nothing about it. Apart from this what did the Pan American Jumbo authorities do? The N.S. State Department instructed all airlines to take extra precautionary measures against the terrorists. Why did the Pan American authorities ignore this? Pan America advertised on the 12th June 1986 that it was alert against high-jackers. But they did pretty nothing. The hijackers committed arrange, a blood bath mercilessly and indiscriminately.

We have before us the earlier incident. The complicity of Pakistan in the earlier incident of highjack of an Indian Plane was established. We have got full evidence. We have raised the matter before the international community. Further, the weapons used in the hijack by the terrorists had been supplied to the Government of Pakistan by a German firm, which

had vouched for it. It may also be seen that the Government of Pakistan failed to take strong action even on that occasion. Earlier hijackers are still being tried.

Coming to the other aspect, I must state that the auxiliary power unit to the aircraft was deliberately switched off. One cannot believe that the fuel for the plane's power unit just ran out. Our Prime Minister stated so at that time. I do agree with it.

Shri Jagdish Tytler went to Karachi. He presented a report to the Prime Minister. We had a Press report on this issue. The seizure of the Pan Am Jumbo at Karachi was part of a design and the commando action was a force. No commando action had taken place as claimed by Pakistan. This version is very reliable and dependable. I go by this version.

The Press in the U.K. states that the commando team trained to storm the aircraft was not present in the vicinity of the Pan Am aircraft. It was practising exercise in another aircraft. According to the Pakistan authorities, as quoted by the Press, in the U.K., the Commando team was told that its services would not be needed for two or three hours.

In matters like hijack, negotiations take a lot of time. We wait for two or three days. But Pakistan did not do so. In this particular case, they have not showed enough patience. Pakistan should have been in communication with the high jackers and should have played for more time. What exactly had happened at the time of negotiations? It was not known with whom the discussion took place? Nothing is available. Normally Pak authorities should have taken time. But that did not happen. It is a deliberate act.

Further, let us see what has happened to the dead bodies and injured passengers? In such circumstances, formalities like checking of passports, identification of papers and other documents are processed with exceptional speed. What did the Pakistan authorities do? They took 48 hours to complete the formalities with the result that the first batch of 98 injured and

[Shri Bhattam Srirama Murty]

6 bodies reached Bombay 48 hours after the hijack. Peculiarly, none of the Pan Am officials visited the Indian passengers in various hospitals in Karachi. That is the most pitiable aspect. Of course, our own Ambassador visited them.

At a time when the Pan Am airlines authorities blamed Pakistan for security lapses which enabled the terrorists to seize the plane, President Reagan and Mrs. Margaret Thatcher congratulated Pakistan on this bold and courageous action specially at a time when India was mourning the dead. This is a most pitiable aspect. We have been told that the Prime Minister himself is exchanging correspondence with President Reagan. We do not know that it is about and what are the contents. And what in the position now as might be revealed by such correspondence? What has the U.S. President to say in this regard? I would be very thankful if the hon. Minister can throw some light on this.

The U.S. Defence Secretary has said that he believed that the Abu Nidal Group, a terrorist faction of Palestinian activists, was behind this hijack.

Pakistan has declared that the hijackers who were arrested, while being taken in police vehicles, shouted, "We are Palestinians from Lebanon". Will anybody do that? Will they proclaim their identity from housetops? Will they do that? But the U.S. Defence Secretary and the Pakistan authorities come out and say that these people themselves have announced this.

Why does not the Pakistan Government disclose the antecedents and the names of the hijackers? The Pakistan officials said that two hijackers were killed. They said this in the beginning. But later they changed the story and said that one was killed and one was injured and that the total number was four. Originally they said that the number was five. Now they say, it is four. From time to time they shift the ground and change their version.

The aircraft was American. The people massacred were Indians. The scenario was Karachi. The hijackers are said to be Lebanese. Therefore, several nations are involved in this. It is not exclusively an internal affair of Pakistan. In fact, the international community has to take note of this situation. So, rightly, the Indian Government has urged that an impartial and dispassionate inquiry and investigation into the matter should take place by an international agency. We have no faith that correct information and truth will come out as a result of the investigation conducted by the Government of Pakistan. Whatever they may say ultimately about their nationalities it may not be dependable and reliable. It cannot be taken for granted that correct information will be forthcoming. Pakistan refuses to share the interrogation report and investigation findings with the others on the ground that Pakistan's sovereignty is involved. The investigation is going on at a very slow pace. The hijackers are not brought to trial. The investigation was sought to be completed by the end of September, but nothing has come out. This is the situation. The Indian Government had asked from Pakistan for an authentic and chronological version of the series of developments. But nothing has been given...

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please conclude.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY: I am concluding.

The Chief Pakistan spokesman on the hijacking said that they knew that the lights inside the aircraft would go off at about 9.30 p.m. He also said that the tarmac lights were put off to facilitate the commando action. But the next morning he totally denied both the versions. This is how it has been happening from the beginning. The Pakistan authorities have claimed that there was a loud explosion inside the aircraft. The exact number of the hijackers is not clear.....

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please wind up.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY: The crew is responsible for the safety of the passengers. The hijackers did not choose to enter the cockpit on boarding the aircraft. How and why did the cockpit crew leave the aircraft leaving the entire thing in the hands of the teenaged Neeraja who put up a valiant and brave fight and in the process succumbed to death. The role of Pakistan is dubious. It is very clear...

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please wind up.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY This is a situation where we will have to take more firm, more stringent and more determined action with a view to safeguarding the interests of this country in future.

SHRI G.S. BASAVARAJU (Tumkur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir: The Pan Am hijacking to Pakistan is one of the worst incidents that has happened in the history of hijacking at the international level. Whatever hijacking have so far taken place in any other country, great restraints had been observed by those countries in dealing with the hijackers and it is always found that the countries which tackle this problem have tried to save the lives of passengers. But in this case, an inhuman attitude was adopted by the Pakistan authorities, which the whole world has condemned.

I would like to know from the Minister whether the Pakistan authorities contacted the hijackers to know what their demands were, and whether the Indian Embassy officials present there were consulted any time during that period.

There are certain doubts whether the jeep used by the hijackers has been seized or not and whether the identity of the hijackers has been revealed by the Pakistan authorities. Where were the so called commandos when the four armed hijackers began firing on the passengers? If the commando action was indeed ordered, how did they enter the aircraft? What were the so called intense negotiations that the Pakistan authorities and the American consultants conducting with the terrorists and

why were the Indian officials not allowed to enter there? Why were the Indian officials not allowed to enter control tower and kept ignorance or the negotiations?

The two member team from the US Federal Airport Administration arrived recently in Bombay and only last week in Karachi with security arrangements. What was the finding of the team, has the team submitted the report to the Government, what are the details of the same?

Sir, now it is a known fact that the Western Intelligence Agencies have sent an advance warning to Pak authorities about the impending terrorist strike. So, all sensitive installations, airport included, were put on alert. Then, how was the airport perimeter reached without the knowledge of the airport authorities?

In view of Pakistan's attitude not to give facts about the incident, does Government of India consider it possible to have a full fledged inquiry about the tackling of Pan Am hijackers by the Pakistan commandos? Has Indian Government obtained full facts of the incident with their own information centre? What are the security measures taken by Government of India in various airports in India to check hijacking? Will these measures give a sufficient provision to deal with the hijacking incidents in the country? If no action is taken by Pakistan, stern action should be taken by this country.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura) : Before going into the question, I would like to pay deep respect and compliment to the young Indian woman Miss. Niraja Mishra, the flight purser, and I offer my condolences to those who have died.

The statement itself has said that our Government is not satisfied with Pakistan's explanations. A number of questions have already been covered as to the suspicious circumstances in which these things have taken place. In this connection, I would like to add a new dimension which has not yet been covered and which has not been spoken by the Press. I would like to understand what is the information actually given by the team consisting of Shri Tytler and

[Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee]

Shri Pant, our Ministers, who went to Pakistan on behalf of the Government. What actually was their information with regard to it? I think this should be shared with the nation as a whole.

While there is absolutely no doubt that there was unpardonable failures on the part of the Pakistan authorities the question arises whether these failures were intentional and whether this was in complicity with certain other powers. These are the two relevant questions I would like to ask. My impression on the basis of whatever information we have got is that there are grounds to suspect that the hijacking was stage managed by Pakistan military dictatorship in collusion with American Imperialists with the definite political motive to malign the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, to malign Libya and to jeopardise Indo-Arab relations in the bargain. These were the three political aims they had for stage managing this thing and this is not only by Pakistan authorities but also in close complicity with their great mentors, the American Imperialists. I would like to know whether it is true that the American Consul General in Karachi and other senior U.S. Embassy personnel posted in Pakistan were in constant and close contact with the Sind Governor, Mr. Khan who behaved in this despicable manner in dealing with this situation caused by the hijacking? I would also like to know whether it is also true that this control room which was guiding the operation for the so-called release of the passengers and these American officers were seen there walking with walkie-talkies? Is it also a fact that this control room in Karachi was on a direct hook-up with crisis management group of the State Department in Washington? On the basis of these facts which have been presented in the Indian newspapers and elsewhere whether the Government of India has considered this question of complicity because it is very interesting that the Pan Am authorities themselves say that they asked the cabin crew to leave the plane immediately. Pan Am authorities also say that this is according to the long-established procedure. I would like to know if in the hijacking history it is the long established procedure that the cabin crew immediately leaves the

plane? If not why this is being claimed here. I would also like to know what is the reason that this plane was allowed to take off afterwards because with the plane remaining there the evidence would have been there? Is it not true that because of this plane was allowed to take-off before the completion of the inquiry and that amounted to destruction of the evidence? What is the real authentic news about it? Some say that the commandos did not get into the plane. They fired from the tarmac and that was actually a signal to the hijackers in the stage managed thing to fire upon the passengers because there cannot be any other explanation to fire from the tarmac. The most interesting thing is that there were three different versions by the Karachi authorities in a few days. All these create a great suspicion of collusion between the Pakistan authorities and the American Imperialists who do not take care for the lives of our people even when there were citizens of other countries also. They wanted Indo Arab relations to be worsened and wanted to malign our valiant brothers PLO. I would like to know the correct information with regard to these questions as far as it is available with the Government. Government should share that with the nation as a whole.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The discussion would continue when the House re-assembles after lunch.

13.00 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till Fourteen of the Clock.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at five minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *In the Chair*]

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
Contd.

[*English*]

Hijacking of Pan-American Aircraft at Karachi

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER ; Shri Nanja Gowda,

SHRI H. N. NANJE GOWDA (Hassan): Sir, no doubt, the statement of the Minister is strongly worded and that also shows the intention of the Government. But very unfortunate thing is that, even after two months, there is no authoritative report about the incident—about its inquiry/investigations. It appears that hijacking took place with the full connivance of the Pakistani officials. Sir, I wonder, it was reported, that one of the Hijackers came to Pakistan 18 days earlier. He got the uniforms stitched and got the van ready. They entered the Airport and not only that, they also entered the flight. There was no checking at all. Strangely enough, they have arrested the tailor as was reported, but not the driver.

Sir, there are not many things to be explained again. I just want clarifications from the Minister because my colleagues have already narrated the entire thing. I was wondering, President Reagan of America was so eager to congratulate the Pakistani authorities for handling the Pakistani authorities for handling the situation, but he was not eager to send his condolences to India on the incident, whereas Zia-ul-Haque, President of Pakistan himself admitted the security lapse. It appears that, President Reagan was convinced about their capacity which is highly strange and also when the Foreign Affairs Minister of Pakistan wanted to assure the United Nations General Assembly, that the hijackers would be tried and as soon as possible give stringent punishment, it appears, after he met the Secretary of State of the United States, he deleted that also. Sir, the whole trend of the episode and the manner in which it was handled, that too at a time when the NAM Conference was going on at Harare, it appears that both the Governments wanted to the NAM Conference.

Now, Sir, it was reported that President Reagan addressed a letter to our Prime Minister. We are eager to know the contents of the letter of the President of the United States, whether our Prime Minister had replied to that letter or not. If he had replied that letter, then what are the contents of the reply. We are eager to know that also.

Sir, as admitted by the Minister himself in his statement, the Pakistan Government have violated the Chicago Convention of 1944. We would like to know, what Government proposes to do in this matter because they have violated the Chicago Convention of 1944. Also, I would like to know whether the Government have examined any other provision for an Inquiry by an independent agency or whether they are persuading the United Nations to have an Inquiry in this regard. I wanted to know these things because, we are sure, that Pakistan Government, if they investigate and do these things, definitely they will cover it up. They have no intention of punishing the guilty. That is why our Government should seriously think as to whether we should approach the United Nations in this regard. I also wanted to know this. The Minister has stated that a meeting of ITOA took place at Montreal, and that this matter also figured there. We are eager to know which are the countries which joined in condemning this activity, and which are those who did not join in condemning this activity.

With these few words, I thank you.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now the Minister may reply.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir I am grateful to the hon. Members who have tabled this Calling Attention notice on the hijacking of the Pan Am plane. The four hon. Members who have spoken, have agreed with the assessment of the Government of India about this very sad and tragic occurrence at Karachi airport. As I said in my statement, the Prime Minister himself talked to President Zia as soon as the event occurred—and I happened to be with him in Harare at the time when he spoke. Even at Harare we got, during the 24 hours, conflicting reports from our colleagues in the delegation of Pakistan with regard to the number of passengers, with regard to the number of hijackers, the manner in which the episode so tragically ended, about the time when the lights went off—at one time we were told that they have been deliberately put off, at another time that this was not the case;

[Shri K. Natwar Singh]

and there the number of hijackers was not known, nor the language they spoke. At one time we were told that all the four had died, and then that two had died. So, there were very conflicting reports ; and obviously they had really bungled it very badly. Really, the decent thing would have been to say that they would punish the chaps who were responsible for this. They did not say so at the time ; but an enquiry has been instituted. This event occurred nearly two months ago, and we have not got the details or the outcome of this enquiry. We have asked for it.

Even within Pakistan, this has been criticized by Miss Benazir Bhutto. Initially, as hon. Members have said, the action of the Pakistani authorities had been welcomed by President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher; but very soon a Congressman of the U.S., Mr. Tom Lantes made a statement in Sub-Committee of the House of Representative in which he derided the State Government saying—and I quote :

"I think you let the President down. You embarrassed him. You made him look ignorant, implying that President Reagan had been wrongly informed about the event and had publicly praised the Pakistani rescue forces, when these forces did not even take part in rescue operation."

So, even in the U.S., Congress, there was criticism of it.

Two or three other things I would like to mention : Mr. Gowda wanted to know if President Reagan had expressed his condolences. He had. He wrote to the Prime Minister. He had said :

"I write in sadness and in anger to express to you and to the Indian nation my condolences at the loss of life in the hijacking of Pan Am Flight 73."

The Prime Minister replied on the 17th September, thanking President Reagan for his message and saying :

"The traumatic event has caused great anguish and indignation. As new evidence comes to light, there is a feeling that there need not have been such a tragic toll of innocent lives..."

It is only a part of the letter that I have quoted here.

We have been asked as to what more Government of India can do.

Our Ambassador, Consul-General, Foreign Secretary is here. He had spoken to the Pakistani Ambassador here and they had spoken to the Pakistani authorities in Karachi and Islamabad, if I remember correctly. We had also a detailed report from my colleague, Shri Jagdish Tytler, who had gone with Mr. Pant. It is quite obvious that there is a tremendous amount of confusion, a tremendous amount of laxity with regard to security arrangement at the Karachi Airport.

Having served in Pakistan for a number of years, having visited Karachi a number of times, I find that it is not very easy for anybody to get into that airport or get into the tarmac in a borrowed jonga or a jeep or whatever it is and get near the aircraft as these people eventually got into the aircraft with arms and ammunition. Obviously, either there was a total failure of security arrangement which I find rather difficult knowing the character of the regime there. I am not calling it a martial regime, because technically they are supposed to have some kind of democracy there. Our ideas and democracy differ, but we need not go into them. Even then about the authority who was dealing with this thing there was a difference of opinion between the Governor of Sindh and the representative of Mr. Junejo who had sent my opposite Mr. Noorani. Different versions were given. There was obviously a conflict among authorities, and the result was that when there should have been a united and concerted effort to look after injured and take the dead bodies, it was not there. Certainly our two Ministers were there. They did not get the kind of cooperation one would expect. I am not, at the moment, suggesting that it was deliberate, but the fact is that the cooperation

was not forthcoming when it should have been forthcoming on a purely humanitarian tragic event of this nature. We did the best we could. We sent our plane from here; we sent our doctor. At one stage, it was not even known how many people had been injured, how many people had been killed, what the nationalities were; and to this day, there is no authentic information about the nationalities of these hijackers. Various countries have been mentioned. One does not know the motive of it. Some transcript was deciphered of the talks between the hijackers and the command post to say that they wanted to go to Larnaka in Cyprus. But we wanted to get the authentic information even with regard to the dead bodies. There was unnecessary delay. It was really incomprehensible.

Here again we want to ask our friends in Pakistan whether they could now make the report available to us as to which nationalities they belonged who were travelling in that aircraft. Even the Pan Am had criticised the security arrangement and the subsequent handling of this hijacking by the Pakistan authorities.

Now the President, Zia-ul-Aaque himself realised later that the way they were dealt with left much to be desired; and that is why, he had instituted an enquiry under an Air Marshal, Shubi Hassan Sayeed, as the name I have got. Now I just want to say how urgently we had dealt with this. As soon as the Prime Minister got to know about it, he immediately spoke about it. Then he spoke about it in the press conference. In Delhi, there is a crisis management group of senior officials which meets immediately. I have got minute to minute account of how efficiently they dealt with this crisis. They got the first information at 11.45 A.M. and the group assembled a little after 12; and from this, it was a continual session till the bodies and passengers had come back. So as far as we are concerned, we took whatever action we could, as early as possible and so did our colleagues in Karachi and Islamabad.

I would like to join Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee in the tributes she has paid to Neerja Mishra. The Government have of course given her a posthumous award of

Ashok Chakra. She was a young girl of 23 years and she gave away her young life to save the lives of a lot of people. It is a wonderful example of commitment to duty. It deserves our highest praise and our salutations.

I do not really have anything more to add, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : If he has nothing to add, I want a clarification for my question.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Let him take his seat. He is on his legs. Let him complete. He is answering your question.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : I have got your question. You were saying that the U.S. Consul had been contacting the Governor of Sind and wanted to know whether they were in touch with the control tower and the U.S. Government on the direct hook-up. I do not have any information to give. The Pakistanis and the Americans are unlikely to share this information with us. But if you could let me know the source, I will appreciate it very much. I will check it up further.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : What about the PAN AM directive to the cabin crew to leave ?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : I understand that the crew leaving the plane made it possible for the plane to be immobilised because if the crew had been there when the hijackers could have asked them to take off with the passengers on board and land in country A, B or C. We would probably have had a greater tragedy then, than we did. I am not sure of that. But that is what has been told by people who know about it, that the crew's leaving the plane would have immobilised it. But what is incomprehensible is that the plane was later allowed to take off,

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : But the President of the Pilots' Guild has said that the leaving of the crew was cowardice and nothing else. Allowing them to leave the aircraft was not good. I raised

[Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee]

this question. I said that it is curious. I have raised this question. You also say that it is very curious. But then, the earlier thing, that is the cabin crew leaving the cabin earlier, our Indian Pilot's Guild President himself has said that to it is not proper and it is cowardice and nothing else.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : I do not know whether you are aware, One crew is the operational crew the pilots who operate and the other is the flight purser and the air hostess and others. Miss Neerja Mishra did not leave; she gave her life.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : I am saying about the cabin crew. The Guild President said. . . (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : That is what he is saying. Had they continued they would have asked the cabin crew to operate the aircraft and asked them to take them to some other place and that is why they have left.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Is it correct ? (Interruptions)

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : This is a matter of technical detail. I do not have the information. I am not sure if there are any international guidelines. We will find out and I will be happy to convey them to you.

SHRI H.N. NANJE GOWDA : I want to know one thing, whether the Government have taken any action about Pakistanis punishing the guilty. What action have they taken to find out that ?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I cannot allow all the people to put supplementaries, please

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY: I want to ask . . . (Interruptions)

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER : In cannot allow. This is not the forum to raise a question.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY: Why do you not read the rules ?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I have read; I cannot allow.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY: Therefore, you must allow me. You allowed the rest.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I cannot allow.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY: This has been your attitude from the beginning. This is very unfair on your part. And I am the Mover of this Calling Attention.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I will not allow. I am going to the next item.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY: I am very sorry. This is a very strange attitude.

(Interruptions)

In protest I walk out.

(Shri Bhattam Srirama Murty then left the House)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : As regards Item No. 8 in the Agenda, the Minister has informed that he will make the statement tomorrow.

14.26 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Twenty-Eight Report

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY
AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SHEILA DIKSHIT):
I beg to move :

"That this House do agree with the
Twenty-eighth Report of the Business
Advisory Committee presented to the
House on the 4th November, 1986."