

by fighting the elections, myself and Mr. Laskar have proved it. When elections were fought all over Assam, people of Cachar stood by the national parties and the national stream. But we demand a university, not to disturb the universities of others. If Manipur can have a university, if Assam can have a university, if Gauhati and Dibrugarh can have two universities, why should not the people of the North-Eastern region who are linguistic minorities, get a university? This university is meant for Tripura. I don't mind if it is in Tripura. If necessary, give it to Tripura, or Cachar; but there should be a university with three media of instruction, viz. English, Hindi and Bengali.

Before I conclude, I would also like to tell the Minister, Mr. Laskar that there is now a climate in Assam for a solution. This should be availed of, because unless we have elections in March, there will be a constitutional breakdown. And unless there is a popular Ministry, I am sure that this problem cannot be solved.

Our friend Mr. Mohendra mentioned about Manipur. I was in Manipur. I went to the meeting he referred to. Sir, you will be surprised to see, if you go to Manipur, that you are in a battle-field. In every corner, there are the Police and the Military. The same thing in Mizoram; the same thing in Assam.

Mr. Thungon has gone. Arunachal was a State where there was no jail till now, because there was no crime. People were so peace-loving, and so good. But now in Arunachal also, the same forces which are creating instability in Assam, Meghalaya and Manipur, have gone and started agitations. So, I must say that the Assam problem must be solved immediately, with an iron hand in this sense, i.e. by taking the views of the national parties into consideration. The views of the Government, and whatever the consensus of the national parties are, should be adhered to.

With these words, I support this Bill; and I also support the demands voiced by the other Members.

श्री राम बिलास पासवान (हाजीपुर) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, आज पूर्वांचल की जो समस्या है,...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You can continue next time because we have to take up now Half-An-Hour Discussion.

17.30 HRS.

HALF AN HOUR DISCUSSION

AGREEMENT WITH FOREIGN FIRM TO DESIGN AND PRODUCE PROTOTYPE HELICOPTER AT HAL

SHRI B. V. DESAI (RAICHUR) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is Half-An-Hour Discussion on the points arising out of the answer given on the 9th July 1982 to my Unstarred Question No. 353 regarding agreement with foreign firm to design and produce prototype helicopter at HAL. This is the story of an armed light helicopter, an agreement being entered into with a French Firm and the fate of the whole story. In fact, in 1969, an Aeronautic Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Subramaniam had recommended to equip the IAF with ALHs. At that time, it was found that in 1980 we may require this helicopter for combat purpose to replace certain other SA-315 and ALT-III. So, this was the recommendation. Accordingly, the Defence Ministry entered into an agreement with a French Firm in 1970 called SNIAS : and they had to design and develop and indigenously produce the prototype here and the production was to start by 1980. It is now 1982 and July ends. Till today, it has not seen the light of the day and the agreement expired in September 1980. The hon. Minister is very young and energetic. I have got all regards for him. He looks like a military General. While replying—probably, I do not know,—he could not catch the entire points which I wanted to focus—he gave a little narration in his own way instead of adhering to the points which I have mentioned in a, b, c, d, e and f. He has gone through 1, 2, 3 and 4. Somehow, some information he has given thinking that it is written reply; probably it can go. Actually, the question of the combat helicopter is so essential that as far back as 1969-70, it was envisaged and it did not come through. The reason the hon. Minister has given us due to serious financial constraints in the wake of 1971 conflict." Exactly, that is the reason why we should be more careful to see that some more money is spent and this project

[Shri B. V. Desai]

ought to have come through. Instead of telling that, he said, there were financial constraints. A lot of money has been spent on that and we learn from different quarters that a lot of stories are there regarding this also. In fact for this project by the Defence Ministry, the Inter-service Team of the IAF was not consulted; and previously when the agreement was signed, it was for two engines ALH. Later on, in 1976, it was changed to single engine. In fact, the recommendation and the agreement were for double engine; and that is the requirement in 1980 that was envisaged. Now, we have crossed 1980. During 1980, it has become probably out of date: even twin engine helicopter has become out of date. With this we have spent a lot of money but no results have been achieved.

Secondly, the technical capacity or capability of SNIAS also is questionable. Because, what we are told is—I do not know, the hon. Minister has to explain or contradict—that the Defence Ministry was obliged to enter into an agreement with this SNIAS firm because they were already associated with the French company in connection with the Chetak Helicopter manufacture and prior to this agreement they had agreed to go into an agreement for this also, that is, not only for Chetak, but also this ALH. Therefore, judging from that angle the Company with which they have entered into an agreement is not also technically competent and the Defence Ministry has not taken the views of the Inter-Services Team into consideration while concluding the agreement and again revising it. Therefore, practically, what I feel is, these two ignorant parties put together have not produced anything till today. Now, as per the requirement of the IAF, we have to find an alternative for the Exocet air-to-surface missile which our neighbour possesses. This of course, possibly must be known to the hon. Minister also, I do not know this scheme, as it is envisaged here probably, has been dropped because the last para of his reply says,

'Foreign collaboration proposals for design, development and manufacture of Advanced Light Helicopter with contemporary state of art technology

are presently under consideration of the Government'.

That means, I do not know what happened to the fate of the previous agreement with SNIAS firm; whether it is continuing or whether the agreement which has lapsed, which came to an end in September 1980 still continues or they are thinking of some other collaboration agreement also—because initially while entering into an agreement in 1970 they never searched for collaboration with any other country also. Therefore, it is surmised that in the earlier collaboration agreement which the Government of India had entered into with SNIAS they have not taken into consideration the other collaborators also. It is also possible that they were handicapped by the previous agreement. That is what is said. All these factors taken into consideration, I would like to ask the hon. Minister a few straight questions because after he replies I will not be having any chance to request him for any further information. Therefore, I would request him to be a little bit elaborate to see that this misconception is removed and we would like to know from him,

(a) an explanation regarding point nos. 3 and 4 of his reply.

In point no. 3 he says,

'An expenditure of Rs. 11.87 crores had been incurred on the project until 31-3-1982 including Rs. 61.95 lakhs (equivalent to US Dollars 7,50,000) paid to the foreign firm'.

With this expenditure, I would like to know whether the same agreement continues and we are going to get the prototype of the helicopter. That is one point.

Secondly, in the fourth point he says,

'Foreign collaboration proposals for design, development and manufacture of Advanced Light Helicopter with contemporary state of art technology are presently under consideration of the Government'.

Both are contradictory in the sense that this much amount is spent and if the agreement is continuing, then where is the necessity for finding out other collaborators for the same type of helicopters? This requires an explanation.

Thirdly, while entering into an agreement with SNIAS, whether the technical competency of the firm was established or not; because it is said that there are other and better equipped companies and global tenders or collaboration was not envisaged at that time. Why was it omitted? Were they bound by the previous agreement while entering into an agreement with the Chetak manufacturers? In case they are not going to have this type of helicopter; is the Government of India purposing to have an equal for the Exocet i.e. ASM with our neighbour?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO): I am thankful to the hon. Member for having raised this Half-an-Hour Discussion arising out of the answers given to him to his Question No. 353 dated 9-7-82. If you kindly bear with me, there have been 8 points given for raising this Half-an-Hour Discussion. These are :

1. What was the total expenditure that Government had to incur on this project?
2. An expenditure of Rs. 11.87 crores had been incurred on the project up till 31-3-1982.
3. How much of the amount was spent in 1970-1971 and 1972-73?
4. Part (f) has not been answered and also whether this project was set up with the foreign collaboration or assistance has not been clearly answered.
5. An expenditure of Rs. 11.87 crores has been spent so far and what is the outcome thereof has not been mentioned.
6. What is the foreign firm connected and what were the terms with them and whether they have charged any fees for delay in getting the project?
7. By what time this project will be completed is also not stated in the answer.
8. The questions from (a) to (f) have not been separately answered and they have been mixed and confusion has been created.

The original question was :

- (a) whether it is a fact that an agreement was signed with a foreign firm in 1970 to design and produce a prototype helicopter at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited;
- (b) if so, whether according to the agreement this was to be ready by 1980;
- (c) if so, whether the armed helicopter project has failed to take-off;
- (d) whether it is also a fact that several crores of rupees had already been spent over it;
- (e) if so, the main reasons for its failure to come up and steps being taken to prepare the armed helicopter which was urgently needed by the Indian Air Force; and
- (f) the amount so far paid by Government to the foreign firm from 1970?"

The answer to this was given in the statement instead of a, b, c, d, because some of questions were contradictory in nature and some of them were complementary. The statement was laid on the Table of the House. There was no intention, as the hon. Member apprehends, that because it is an Unstarred question, anything will do for an answer. We do not believe in that in the Defence Ministry. The answer given was :

"A 10 year design collaboration agreement was signed in September, 1970 with Aerospatiale of France for creation and development of a helicopter design organisation in India and for designing, developing and productionising a helicopter as a successor to Alouette III and SA-315. The pace of development was to be such that production of the helicopter could be commenced within the 10th year.

2. Due to serious financial constraints in the wake of 1971 conflicts, the project was accorded a low priority. The project was finally sanctioned in February, 1976 at an estimated cost of Rs. 41.05 crores. The Air Staff Requirements were reviewed thereafter

[Shri K. P. Singh Deo]

and it was decided to substitute a single engine by a double engine configuration. This necessitated a revision of the project.

3. An expenditure of Rs. 11.87 crores had been incurred on the project until 31-3-1982 including Rs. 61.95 lakhs (equivalent to US Dollars 7,50,000) paid to the foreign firm.

4. Foreign collaboration proposals for design development and manufacture of Advance Light Helicopter with contemporary state of art technology are presently under consideration of the Government."

This clearly answers all the points (a) to (f).

Thereafter, further questions have been asked by the hon. Member, in which he has referred to points 3 and 4 of the answers given specially, and he has made certain comments on the Aeronautics Committee, the reply whether more funds could have been made available, that the Inter-Services Technical Team did not go into it, that two ignorant organisations i.e. the foreign firm and HAL have joined together to produce nothing and that there were collaborations available which we did not take advantage of.

Since he has referred to the Aeronautics Committee of 1969 i.e. the Subramaniam Committee, I would like to start off by saying that at that time, in 1980, the same Aeronautics Committee had said that there was no other alternative but to have collaboration with Sud Aviation, which later on was converted to SNIAS. With your permission, I would like to quote para 6.1 from the Aeronautics Committee Report :

"The collaboration scheme proposed by Sud Aviation is *prima facie* attractive. The terms would have to be further negotiated by Government. There is no alternative to collaboration with Sud Aviation in the design of the helicopter."

This is from the Subramaniam Committee in 1969 regarding collaboration, and this was before the Government had an agreement with the same firm.

I would also like to point out that right from 1962 there have been agreements with Aeorospatiale for the famous Cheetah and Chetak, which are in service with the Indian Air Force and the Navy, which probably run into multiples of hundreds, which have been produced by the same collaboration agreement. So, these two ignorant organisations or collaborators i.e. HAL and the firm which has been referred to, they have produced multiples of hundreds of helicopters—I would not like to give the exact data here for security reasons which are very much in service and which are going to remain in service for quite some time.

He had made a point that the Inter-Services Technical Team had not been consulted. Here I would like to point out that the Inter-Service Technical Team went into the entire matter in 1974. It was reviewed in the aftermath of the Arab-Israel conflict, the Yomkippur and 1973 American Vietnam war. When the result of the survivality of the helicopters was made available, then it was changed from a single-engine to double-engine configuration. Hence the delay. Keeping the hostile environment and the threat to the security of the country, the armed forces in their wisdom though fit to go in for this and this was also the view of the HAL authorities during that time. It was in April 1974 that the HAL suggested that there should be a twin-engine configuration, which in September 1977 the Air Headquarters confirmed.

Therefore, at no stage has any action been taken in isolation of the services, or which has been taken divorced from the reality, or the requirements of the exigencies of the situation, or keeping the futuristic requirements away from our vision.

Now, Sir, about points 3 and 4 of the answer given to him, which the hon. Member has referred to, one was the technical competency of SNIAS about which I have already mentioned that we have already manufactured more than multiples of hundreds which are in service and are going to be in service. So, there is no doubt about them and as the Aeronautics Committee had recommended, there was no alternative at that time but for

the collaboration with this. Therefore, we had gone in for the collaboration with SNIAS. There is nothing binding at the moment.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : Has it been reviewed at any time ?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : In 1980 we did not extend it because of this very reason that we kept the futuristic requirements in view and we did not want to tie ourselves down, although according to the agreement we could have a two-year extension.

SHRI B. V. DESAI : Now it has become obsolete and you are in search of a better alternative. Am I right in this ?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : The helicopters in service have still not life expectancy as well as useful service ahead of them. I do not agree with the hon. Member when he says that they are obsolete.

SHRI B. V. DESAI : I mean, technology.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : Technology is a relative term because it keeps on changing with the changing scenerio, with the changing requirements, with the change in the geo-strategic and the geo-political environment, the threat perception which we cannot bind, nor do we have control over it. So, as and when situation develop, the armed forces are continuously

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Technology is not static, it improves.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : . . . reviewing the requirements as well as suggesting modifications and modernisation which are being incorporated into these helicopters which are in service and for the helicopters which are to be induced in future.

SHRI B. V. DESAI : Will there be a match for this Exocet ?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : The hon. Member is very knowledgeable in these matters for he has been asking questions which are not related to helicopters. I am glad he takes interest in the subject. But these helicopters are meant for a certain environment, for certain require-

ments and even the major arms producing super powers do not also have helicopters or any equipment which is something that is needed for all season or for all requirements. Each and every equipment has a role to play and it has a particular place in that chain of requirements.

Sir, I would like to correct myself that twin-engined configuration was in April 1977 and not 1974. That was a slip of my tongue.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I think you have answered all questions because he seems to be satisfied.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : There was only one thing and that is that the collaboration with SNAS was for design and development and therefore, it would not be correct to say that we are bound to it because with the double-engined configuration it has to be a different agreement altogether. So, we are evaluating it and we are also considering other parties, other organisations which have modern techniques and which have facilities for training of personnel and for transfer of technology and therefore, we are not binding ourselves to any one. In one of the questions he had asked about Exocet. It has no relevance to this.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Harikesh Bahadur. Absent. Now, Mr. K. M. Madhukar may speak. Put a straight question. Sir. These are all very much technical matters.

श्री कमला मिश्र 'मधुकर'
उयाध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री जी ने कहा है कि टेक्नो-
लाजी ऐसी चीज है, जिसका बराबर विकास
होता रहता है। मैं उनकी बात से सहमत
हूँ। क्या आपके डिफेन्स डिपार्टमेंट ने इस बात का
गौर किया है या नहीं कि हेलीकोप्टर के
सम्बन्ध में लेटेस्ट टेक्नोलाजी का डेवलप-
मेंट हुआ है ?

अमेरिका ने पाकिस्तान को हथियार
दिये हैं जिसकी चर्चा इस सदन में और
बाहर भी होती रहती है, उसी संदर्भ में
आपने उसे दृष्टि में रखकर यह समझौता
किया या नहीं ? इस समझौते से क्या यह
संभावना पैदा नहीं हो सकती है, क्योंकि
फ्रांस नाटो का एक पार्ट है, अमेरिका ने
पाकिस्तान को तमाम हथियार दिये हैं जिसमें

[Shri Kamla Mishra]

हैलीकोप्टर भी शामिल हैं, तो उससे आपकी सुरक्षा का भेद खुल जाने की संभावना है ?

क्या इस ढील करने के पीछे कोई मोटिव थे ? 1974 से एक रिपोर्ट आई, फिर 1978 से एक्सपर्ट कमेटी की राय जानी गई, आज 1982 है, 4 बरस गुजर गये हैं, इस समय भी क्या उस ढील को जारी रखने की आवश्यकता है या और खोज करने की आवश्यकता है ?

पूरे विश्व के पैमाने पर टैंडर क्यों नहीं मांगे गये ? क्या इस बात से सत्यता है कि आपने उस बात का गंभीरता से अध्ययन नहीं किया ? फ्रांस की जिस फर्म से समझौता किया, फर्म उसको बराबर टालती गई। भारत सरकार इस बात के लिये तैयार है कि नहीं कि आगे खोजबीन की जाये ताकि हमारा देश हैलीकोप्टर के उत्पादन से आत्म-निर्भरता की ओर बढ़े, जिससे माडर्न टेक्नोलॉजी भी हो क्योंकि पाकिस्तान का खतरा है इसलिये उसके मुकाबले की हममें क्षमता हो ?

श्री राम विलास पासवान (हाजीपुर) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, हमारे साथी ने इस चर्चा को उठाया, मैं उनका शुक्रगुजार हूँ क्योंकि उन्होंने मंत्री जी का ध्यान लड़ा कि हैलीकोप्टर के माध्यम से खींचकर पूरे देश की रक्षा के दायित्व की ओर ध्यान खींचा है। स्वाभाविक है कि हिन्दुस्तान में जो लड़ाकू विमान हैं, उसमें रक्षा मंत्रालय का बहुत बड़ा योगदान है। रक्षा हमारे देश के लिये उतनी ही प्यारी है, जितनी हमारी जान प्यारी है, उस पर देश का भविष्य और सारी प्रतिष्ठा लगी रहती है। ऐसी स्थिति में मेरे साथी ने बहुत अच्छा प्रश्न किया है।

अभी अगर हम मंत्री जी से पूछेंगे कि हमारे देश में कितने तरह के लड़ाकू विमान हैं तो वह जवाब दे देंगे कि देश की सुरक्षा के लिये इस बात का खोलना उचित नहीं है। मैं उनसे इस बात से पूरी तरह सहमत हूँ, लेकिन कम-से-कम वह इतना तो बतला सकते हैं कि आज हमारा देश जिस दौर से गुजर रहा है, किसी भी समय कोई भी घटना, दुर्घटना हो सकती है, उसमें हमारा देश विमान के मामले में स्वावलम्बी है या नहीं ? किसी भी मुकाबले के लिये हम तैयार हैं या नहीं ?

हम विपक्ष के लोग रोज यह कहते रहते हैं कि टेक्नोलॉजी और सोफिस्टिकेटेड हथियार इस तरीके से बढ़ रहे हैं कि 1980 में जो टेक्नोलॉजी तैयार होती है वह 1982 में फेल हो जाती है और 1982 की टेक्नोलॉजी 1983 से इन्वेलिड हो जाती है। आज ऐसे मिजाइल्स बन रहे हैं कि हिन्द महासागर से बैठकर हमको नष्ट किया जा सकता है, इस मामले में हम कितना कंपीट कर रहे हैं ? उस दौड़ में हम कितना कम्पीट कर रहे हैं ? माननीय सदस्य, श्री मधुकर, ने आत्म-निर्भरता की बात कही है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि हम आत्म-निर्भरता की तरफ कितनी तेजी से बढ़ रहे हैं। मैं इस सदन में सुब्रमण्यम कमेटी के सम्बन्ध से कई बार चर्चा की है। आज सौभाग्य से श्री देव ने स्वयं उसकी चर्चा की है। मंत्री महोदय विस्तार से बतायें कि सुब्रमण्यम कमेटी ने क्या-क्या मुख्य सिफारिशें की हैं और सरकार उसकी रिपोर्ट से कितना सहमत हो पाई है ?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : I am very thankful to the hon. Members for asking these questions. I could not understand the entire lot of the questions by Mr. Madhukar but I have most of the points which he had raised and the other by Mr. Paswan, which are more or less the same. He referred to the Subramaniam Committee Report, self-sufficiency, obsolescence, and Pakistan acquiring sophisticated arms and equipments.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He has also stated, France is a Member of the NATO, how should we depend on it ?

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : You understand Hindi, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I am helping the Minister. It is left to him for replying or ignoring. I am only helping him.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : We should not depend on France on any one country for that matter. Firstly, Aeronautics Committee, i.e. the Subramaniam Committee had stressed the importance of our developing the competency for design and development in helicopter production in

this country. It was on this basis that the agreement was signed in 1970, as I had said in the reply to the original question as well as in reply to hon. Member, Shri B. V. Desai the purpose of this collaboration agreement was not with any specific kind of helicopter but for developing technical competence and getting technical assistance and training and for establishing the design capabilities in India so as to be in a position to achieve self-sufficiency and self-reliance. And, we have not tied ourselves down to any one party or one country. We are evaluating various countries and various parties who have developed various competencies in helicopters. Not only that. As mentioned earlier, multiples of hundreds of helicopters have been manufactured in this country under licence, thereby giving our technicians and aeronautical engineers, a chance to develop the capability as well as to develop indigenous capabilities in design and development.

Regarding obsolescence, as I said earlier, in the importance of national security, the rate of obsolescence is quite rapid and, therefore, our Armed Forces Headquarters in their staff requirements project to the

Government as well as to H.A.L., which is the manufacturing unit, keeping all these factors in view, that is obsolescence as well as the futuristic requirements and the threat perception. They keep this in view when they give their requirement to the manufacturing agency to produce or manufacture the equipment which is necessary for them.

As regards the danger from Pakistan because of the sophisticated equipment which the hon. Member Mr. Kamla Mishra Madhukar referred to it is not only Pakistan but Government always keeps in view the national security environment, geo-strategic and geo-political environment which is developing around us. Therefore, any induction or any development in armaments is taken note of and suitable modifications are done to the defence plan, to the defence preparedness and to the equipment which is sought to be inducted in the armed forces.

18.06 HRS.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, August 2, 1982/Sravana 11, 1904 (Saka)