

16.59 hrs.

***WALK-OUT BY INDIAN CHARGE
D'AFFAIRES IN PEKING**

Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha (Barh): Sir, this is a very unusual half-hour discussion. Usually a half-hour discussion is meant to draw the attention of the Government to matters not only of public importance, but of concern to this House.

17 hrs.

This discussion has come after an earlier half-hour-discussion on the same subject. Parliamentary conventions have been laid down, and it is very very necessary for each and every individual in this country to maintain those parliamentary conventions with great seriousness and consideration and also with great respect. When discussions are held and when the feeling of this House is so strongly expressed either in questions or in discussions—it may be that Parliament may not authorise the Government to change the decision—it is understood that the Government should give it a serious consideration and do something about it. The Government cannot just afford to sleep over it.

As I said, this discussion has come after the earlier discussion on the same subject. There was a reception, as you may remember, in Cairo, by Mr. Chou En-lai and our Ambassador there had cabled to Indian Government asking their permission to attend that reception. Our Government was so generous as to grant him permission to attend that reception. I am reminded of the question which speaks about the humiliation. The House has heard it. It is in the Hansard of the House. Shri Hem Barua asked the question and he mentioned in the House:

"Information has now come that in Algiers the Chinese excluded

*Half-an-Hour Discussion.

the Indian delegation from the reception to the members of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Council and that was given great publicity with a great deal of fanfare in the Council meeting."

That question was answered by the Minister of External Affairs, the Prime Minister himself, and he said, in answer to the question, that due consideration would be shown in future not to commit the same folly. But what happened? Again our Charge d'Affaires in Peking had to undergo very sad and tragic humiliation. Unfortunately, the Charge d'Affaires himself was not at all keen to attend that reception. On the earlier occasion, possibly, the Ambassador had expressed keen desire and therefore they had to spend foreign exchange in sending cables. They had not the commonsense to know what to do and what not to do and therefore foreign exchange was spent on sending cables and receiving back orders, which they were very happy to receive, to attend that function. In this case, we understand that the Indian Charge d'Affaires was not very keen to attend that function, but because he had to conform to the code of conduct laid down or instructions received from the External Affairs Ministry he attended that function, and again the same thing was repeated very viciously and more sarcastically. India was abused, India's stand was criticised, not only was criticism voiced but India's stand was criticised in a very abusive language by the Chinese leaders. All this was done in order to humiliate India and to make Pakistan happy because it came just at a time when we were having a very bad time with Pakistan.

That is why I have brought this discussion. I have not been able to understand the explanation given by the Ministry of External Affairs, that under the usual code of conduct or diplomatic behaviour such a thing is

done. The diplomatic code of conduct must have some reason. The diplomatic code of conduct reflects internal feelings, sentiments, dignity and respect of the country. The diplomats there are the ambassadors of this country expressing their feelings, their sentiments and their dignity which India wants them to express. They also represent the nerve sensitiveness of this country, the respect of this country. Therefore, any insult to an individual is an insult to this country. Now, what is the gain that we derive by attending such functions? Why is this done? By just avoiding those receptions we save so much of humiliation for this country. Other countries have been doing so. When lesser occasions have demanded it, other countries like Uganda have done so. They have refused to go and attend those receptions because China sometimes played bullying tactics with them; not that China committed aggression on the African countries but China has played bullying tactics with them and that it has become intolerable for them to accept that kind of attitude from China. So, they boycotted Chinese receptions and made it known to the whole world.

But here is a country which, I am pained to say, honours China, an enemy country, since December 1962, even though we have called China an enemy country. Since then there has been no improvement in the behaviour of China; it is still the same; if anything it has actually gone from bad to worse. What is the code of conduct that we are maintaining with China? What is the need and what is the benefit to this country by attending those receptions? I could understand it if our Ambassador, or our Charge d'Affaires or the personnel of the Embassy could get some information by attending those receptions. But we know very well that no information will be available in the Chinese receptions, in the Pakistani receptions. On the other hand, what information could have been

normally available would not be available if we had such contacts, such open contacts with them by attending their receptions. I have not been able to understand its significance at all especially when Parliament has been consistently and persistently demanding that this question should be considered from the point of view of the dignity of this country. Why is it that no concern has been shown to this demand of Parliament?

In December 1962 we declared China an enemy country. In February 1963, within six months of the Chinese aggression and China being declared an enemy country, for the first time our Charge d'Affaires attended a function given by Mr. Chou En-lai in honour of Mr. Bhutto. And what was the reception for? 12,000 sq. miles of our territory which Pakistan has taken in her possession illegally and called Azad Kashmir was given to China with the generosity of Pakistan and Mr. Bhutto, after giving that territory, signed an agreement. This was an elated reception by China to Pakistan. We became a party to that by attending that reception when 12,000 sq. miles of our territory went to the lap of China. I have never been able to reconcile myself to this conflicting attitude of the External Affairs Ministry.

Then, again, let us see what has happened. I do not know what is the lurking softness on the part of External Affairs Ministry to those receptions. What is special about those receptions? I do not know. I have attended some of the Chinese receptions when we were having good terms with them. Nowadays I do not. They do not invite us; rather, they dare not invite us. I have seen nothing new in those receptions. They are rather stale receptions. I do not know the attraction which the External Affairs Ministry finds in persistently and consistently attending those Chinese receptions.

[Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha]

Shri Chagla is also a member of the Cabinet. I know Shri Swaran Singh well and I congratulated him for his performance in the United Nations. His performance was great. He showed that India will stand with dignity and that we will, if necessary, stand alone and fight our battle alone. We will not compromise even if somebody wants to bully us. He has become a great Foreign Minister since he has come back from the United Nations. Why has he not been able to show the same spirit, the same dignity and same force in these two cases? Probably these cases have not come to his notice. I would appeal to him to remember that it causes great hurt to the dignity and prestige of this country. They reflect us in a poor light. Any indignity caused to them is an indignity caused to this country. The wound is so deep that words do not come to heal them.

I will again come to one of the incidents. Shri Chagla, when he was at the UN, refused to attend a reception given by Mr. Patrick Dean because Mr. Dean equated Pakistan and India on a communal basis. Shri Chagla refused to attend that reception. There was so much effect of that refusal that many things were done and probably the British representatives would have thought twice before they would comment so irresponsibly again.

His own coming out of the Security Council has been appreciated in this country tremendously. He has shown guts and these guts have given so much prestige to this country. Even people, who were so critical of us, have been talking with a little more mellow voice. They know that talking to India like this is not going to pay them results.

China is today trying to break everything that we have been doing. China is trying to break our relationship with the Soviet Union; China is trying to break our relationship with African countries; China is trying to break our relationship with middle

eastern countries and we are keeping a thin link with China by attending prominent receptions by China! I would appeal to him, through you, that we should make it a point that till China is an enemy country to us, there should be a total boycott of China so far as receptions are concerned. The minimum diplomatic necessities may be carried on. I am not one of those people who go by sentiment and emotions in diplomatic matters, but it is a cold, calculated fact that it is hurting this country very much and very deeply. Therefore I would appeal to him that, while carrying on the minimum necessary diplomatic relationship with China because of some other reasons, or with Pakistan, such formalities should be completely dispensed with. Look at the humiliation of the person who attends the reception. God forbid, anybody should go and attend that reception. A person so lonely, so left alone, nobody bothering about him, no Chinese giving any attention to him and yet he is going to that reception as if he had no tea at his home in the evening! This kind of humiliation and this kind of pain should not be caused to those people who are the representatives of the country. They are individuals and they have all the sensitiveness of human beings. Anybody, who has been insulted, only can feel the pangs of that kind of humiliating existence. We should not cause our ambassadors or Charge d'Affaires to undergo that kind of humiliation.

श्री बड़े (सारगोन) : महिलाओं को
तो गुस्सा घाता है, घादमियों को गुस्सा
नहीं घाता ।

Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha: I will tell you another example. I was so surprised that the Chinese had the cheekiness. They came to one of the functions on the 26th January. That also I find from the questions asked in Parliament. The Chinese representative came to attend one of the functions on the 26th January at which the President was going to

award the Param Vir Chakra to two widows, one of Major Thapa and the other of Major S. Singh. The moment they were called and were being given the award, the Chinese representative had the cheekiness and affront to leave that reception. It is not done in the diplomatic code of conduct. When the President of a State is attending a function, he is representing his country on a very formal occasion and this thing is not done. 26th January is a very, very solemn day for us. That is never done in the diplomatic code of conduct in the world. But why bother about persons who do not have any diplomatic code of conduct? We can certainly bother about ourselves. If we can maintain our self-respect and dignity, the world will understand us. If we go on humiliating ourselves and impressing upon other countries of the world that we are such a people that we do not have self-respect and dignity, nobody would bother about us.

With these words, I appeal once again, that something should be done so as to avoid these mishaps in future.

श्री मधु लिवये (मुंगेर) : यह जो मामला है वह स्वागत समारोह का था वहाँ जाकर चाय या शराब पीने का नहीं है। प्रसन्न में कूटनीतिक स्तर पर हमको बार बार प्रपमानित इसलिये होता पड़ता है कि चीन के आक्रमण का उट कर हम मुकाबला नहीं कर पाते हैं। एघर कुछ दिनों में हमारी भूमि पर उन्होंने फिर हमले किये हैं। चार दफा सिविकम् में, दो दफा उर्बशीघ्रम् यानी श्रेफा के दलाके में और लहाब में भी वे दन दिनों घुसे हैं और दोस्त बेग घोल्दी के दलाके पर उन्होंने कब्जा कर लिया है। जब तक चीन के इस आक्रमण के सामने हम झुकते रहेंगे, दबते रहेंगे यह जाहिर है कि कूटनीतिक जो कार्यक्रम होते हैं, उन में हमारी प्रतिनिधियों को प्रपमानित होता पड़ेगा। इसलिए मैं मंत्री महोदय में जानना चाहता हूँ कि हमारी भूमि का यह जो प्रतिक्रमण किया जा रहा है

और हमारे जो राजदूत हैं उनको जो प्रपमानित किया जाता है उसको खत्म करने के लिए क्या चीन के साथ कूटनीतिक सम्बन्ध तोड़ने के लिए सरकार तैयार है और जिस तरह से एक घस के बाद पाकिस्तानी आक्रमण का हमने डट कर जवाबी हमला करके उत्तर दिया, क्या उसी तरह इस वक्त उत्तरी सीमा पर जो हमलें हो रहे हैं उनका भी हम जवाबी हमला करके उत्तर देंगे ?

Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur): May I know if the diplomatic code of conduct to which reference has been made so often on the floor of this House is a written code of conduct recognised internationally or it is a code of conduct which depends only on conventions and, if it depends on conventions, may I know if the diplomatic code of conduct is such as supersedes our national interest or is meant to serve our national interest?

Shri S. N. Chaturvedi (Ferozabad): In view of the great importance attached to diplomatic propriety even at the cost of our self-respect, may I know how long are we going to expose our representatives in China and Pakistan to insults and indignities and giving the world the impression that whatever one may do to India, India will not take any action beyond lodging protests?

The Minister of External Affairs (Shri Swaran Singh): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I fully appreciate the depth of feelings which the hon. lady Member has shown on this issue. I am completely one with her in so far as sentiments of Indian people, sentiments of Parliament, sentiments of hon. Members of this House, in relation to China are concerned. We cannot express too strongly our sense of indignation and our sense of disappointment at the aggressive manner in which the Chinese have been behaving particularly at the time of the Indo-Pakistan conflict. The highly provocative note, couched in very insulting language, that was given to us at that time was something which is

[Shri Swaran Singh]

not normally heard of in diplomatic exchange of notes even though there may be strained relations or bad relations between countries. The feelings of indignation and unhappiness on this score are fully understood by Government and I would like to assure Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha and other hon. Members that we are fully conscious of the strong feelings that are held, quite rightly, by our people on our relationship with China.

Having said that, so far as the present incident is concerned, I would like to give some factual information. In the first place, I would like to inform the hon. House that we have made a distinction between the reception or function organised by Chinese Ambassadors in other capitals from the reception or function that might be organised by the Chinese Government in Peking.

Our instructions to our Heads of Missions and diplomats in other Capitals are clear that they should not and need not attend the functions that are organized by Chinese Ambassadors in other Capitals. However, about the functions that are being held in China, we have said that our Heads of Missions—our C.D.A. or Ambassador whoever he might be—should normally attend such functions.

I would like to clarify one point. I am giving only factual information which, I think, the honourable House would like to know. It has been wrongly suggested by the lady member and also by certain other members on an earlier occasion that our Charge d'affaires had objected and had suggested that he might not be asked to attend these functions. That is not correct. Any diplomat functioning in any Capital would normally like to have as many contacts as possible. It is in the national interest that our Heads of Missions in any Capital should remain in touch with as many diplomats and as many other people in those Capitals, as possible. That is the normal function of a diplomat and I would strongly urge that we should not be influenced too much

by our deteriorating bilateral relations. We should not create an atmosphere in which our diplomatic representatives may find themselves completely cut off from the life there and to forego occasions when they can meet not only Chinese representatives but also other diplomatic representatives from other countries. I would like to assure the hon. members that there is no particular attraction in these diplomatic functions and let us not have this impression that the diplomats are anxious or are keen to attend these functions; if anything, it is a very boring affair. I agree with Mrs. Tarkeshwari Sinha when she said that there was nothing particularly attractive about these receptions. So there is a point to be borne in mind that it is a duty that is performed and certainly it is not a pleasure to attend many of these functions where a large number of people come; it is not particularly pleasing to participate in these functions.

As pointed out by the Prime Minister when he intervened while replying to some of the questions when the main question came up before the House, our normal practice has been that our Charge d'affaires in Peking should attend those functions which are organized by that Government and there was no suggestion either by him or by any one else that he finds any particular difficulty in attending these functions.

I would place another aspect before the House. That is, it is more honourable to attend and then to register a strong protest in the presence of a galaxy of Chinese leaders. I claim that it is definitely more in favour of advancing our prestige and it shows greater courage on our part if our representative attends the function and as soon as anything is said which is derogatory to India's honour or dignity, he adopts a dignified course of staging a walk-out; by that visible means he registers a more effective protest which is noticed more both by the Chinese leaders and by every one else—maybe, all over the world.

So, I maintain that it is easy to be away from the meetings or from the reception or from a banquet, but it requires greater courage to be present there. This might itself have some effect upon others, and at the point when anything is said which is inconsistent with India's honour or dignity, that person gets up and registers a protest by walking out from that place. That to my mind is really more courageous and it registers a greater impact and effect upon the minds of not only the Chinese leaders but others.

In this particular case, on the 30th September, as soon as the Chinese Premier was making reference to the so called "Indian aggression" on Pakistan and to the right of "self-determination for the people of Kashmir," our Charge d'Affaires upheld the honour and upheld the dignity of our country by registering a protest by walking out of that banquet in the presence of a large number of the top-most Chinese leaders. I think that there could not be a more vivid and more honourable and more effective way of registering our protest, and we should be really proud of the very dignified behaviour of the members of our Mission who notwithstanding a great measure of awkwardness that is entailed in staging a walk-out did have the courage and the guts to stage such a walk-out.

Shri Bade: Pleading the worst case in the best way.

Shri Swaran Singh: I am grateful to the hon. Member that at any rate the way of dealing with it appeals to him, and if he is a little more responsive he will certainly find that the way the affair are being conducted is really not something about which the House or the country should have any regrets.

Our relationship with China is what all of us know, and we have to function in the various fields and in the various international forums; it will not be in our national interest to run away from the points of contact or

the points of confrontation; we shall have to meet the Chinese in the international field and in the diplomatic field and even where our soldiers are facing the Chinese soldiers. This is a type of confrontation not of our seeking but forced on us, and in this whole atmosphere, we have to safeguard our honour and dignity and hold fast to our position and to put up resistance rather than run away from resistance.

So, I would urge that we should view this problem in the true perspective and should not be carried away too much by emotion.

The question then asked was whether it was in our national interest to do so. I have given very careful consideration and for a variety of reasons, including those which I have mentioned just a little while ago, the most important one being the opportunity to establish contacts, I feel that it is in our national interest to do so; the opportunity of establishing contacts is to our national interests also, our registration of a protest by a dignified walk-out is definitely in our interest and enhances our prestige and we should not have any other view in this respect.

Then, mention has been made about some other important leaders not attending receptions. This is not uncommon in several receptions. Even at the last UN General Assembly, I myself did not attend a large number of receptions, particularly the ones held by those in regard to whom I thought that their attitude was partisan and not objective; I did not have any hesitation in attending those functions which were organised in other capitals by the Ambassadors or by the Ministers in those countries. But we should try to make a clear distinction between receptions by other diplomats or Ministers in capitals other than the Government headquarters to which the diplomat from India is accredited. Otherwise he will find himself in almost complete isolation

[Shri Swaran Singh]

and will have no opportunities of meeting others.

It was mentioned by Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha that the Chinese would not be paying attention and he would be completely alone and forlorn. That is not correct. These are functions where representatives from all the countries accredited there are invited in large numbers and there are large numbers of opportunities which I would like to say are not as frequent as in a society like ours. If there are some opportunities of contacts, we should make use of them.

Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha: What I said was that they were disowned by the hosts.

Shri Swaran Singh: If they were disowned, they would not have been invited. The fact that they are invited shows that they are not disowned.

Shri Madhu Limaye asked whether we are proposing to break off diplomatic relations with China. That is a matter about which I have said more than once that that is not our intention. His second question was whether it is our intention to meet aggression by China and whether we are determined to defend our independence and territorial integrity. I need hardly repeat what has been stated here on the floor of the House in very categorical terms both by the Prime Minister and by the Defence Minister, and there was no necessity to put such a question. It is the normal function, normal responsibility, a responsibility which Government knows is squarely theirs, and they have to carry that responsibility of defending the territorial integrity of our country.

Shri D. C. Sharma put three questions. He asked whether there is any written code of conduct. There is no such written code of conduct. This is all based on the normal conventions, and it depends upon the assessment that each country makes keeping in view its own national interest. Our national interest is our foremost

consideration and we should not do anything merely as a sort of compliance with some code if it does not fit in with our own national interest. That we should always keep in mind. But in this particular case, our national interest does not in any way come in conflict with the international convention on this issue.

Shri Chaturvedi asked how long is it our intention to expose our diplomats to these insults. There is no question of exposing our diplomats to insults; it is the function of diplomats representing any country to face both pleasant situations and also unpleasant ones. Really, the capacity required of a diplomat to face an unpleasant situation and to function effectively in an atmosphere where there is not great understanding of his case is even of a higher order, and requires a better judgment—his capacity to take the right decision at the right moment, when he does not know what is going to happen, what is going to be the type of speech that is going to be delivered. For him to react according to the situation calls for a high degree of acumen, courage and experience. And I am very glad to say that our present Charge d'Affaires in China has carried this responsibility with great credit, and we are proud of his functioning there. It is wrong to suggest that he has said that he is facing a great difficulty and therefore, he should be saved this inconvenience of attending these functions. I do not know wherefrom hon. Members have carried that impression. He is one of our very experienced and very suave diplomats; at the same time, he is a very determined diplomat; he is functioning there in such a manner as to keep India's honour and dignity high. He has discharged his duties well.

17-35 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, November 30, 1965/Agrahayana 9, 1887 (Saka).