

MR. SPEAKER: If it does not arise, then you should not answer it.

श्रीबरी बलबीर सिंह : यह एक व्यापक प्रश्न है। यह जो काम है उसको यह और बढ़ा रहे हैं और जो पिछला काम है वह धूम होता जा रहा है (स्ववचन) यह डिपार्टमेंट को पालिसी का साल है। यह कह रहे हैं कि नये खोलेंगे लेकिन उससे पहले जो चल रहे हैं उनको ठीक करने का इंतजाम करेंगे ?

MR SPEAKER It does not arise out of the question

श्री मोहन लाल पिपिल : मैने माननीय मंत्री जी को तीन पत्र लिखे जेवर, रघुपुरा और दनकौर बम्बो के टेलीफोन कनेक्शन को ठीक करने के लिए। उन्होंने यह आश्वासन दिया था कि उनको इम्प्रूव करेंगे और उनके इन्स्ट्रुमेंट्स बदले जाएंगे लेकिन वहाँ उनका उलटा हो रहा है क्या यह सत्य है ?

MR SPEAKER Do not avoid answer if you can answer it

Consultation with Nations of Indian Ocean Re. U. N Resolution

*144 SHRI P K. KODIYAN:†
SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH
MALIK-

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has made any consultations with countries of the Indian Ocean region regarding the practical implementation of the United Nations resolution to keep the Indian Ocean as Zone of Peace,

(b) if so, the reactions of these countries, and

(c) what other steps are being contemplated by India to keep the Indian Ocean free from tension and military conflicts?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJ-PAYEE). (a) The Government of India is in constant touch with other like-minded states and the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean as well as other members of the Non-Aligned Group on the implementation of the U.N. Resolutions on the Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean, in the U.N. and other international forums as well as bilaterally.

(b) The overwhelming majority of the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean as well as other states-members of the Non-Aligned Group-share India's concern on the early implementation of the U.N. Resolutions on the subject

(c) The Government of India propose to continue to utilise all available forums for securing the cooperation of the Great Powers and maritime users of the Indian Ocean for the implementation of the proposal. The Government of India feel that the concept can be translated into reality only with the active support of all peace-loving peoples of the world and the cooperation of the international community as a whole.

SHRI P K. KODIYAN: This question is vitally interesting to us. Our very security is in danger so long as military conflict and tension prevails in the Indian Ocean. The hon. Minister, in his reply, has said that "Government of India is in constant touch with like-minded states and the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean as well as other members of the Non-Aligned Group." So far this constant touch has not produced any concrete results. In the last part of the reply, he has said that the Government of India will continue to make use of all possibilities of getting cooperation of the great powers in implementing the U.N. Resolution

May I know whether it is the policy of the Government that unless the

great powers come to an understanding regarding demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean, nothing concrete can be done by countries like India and other concerned countries? What is wrong with our policy in this regard? Is India not in a position, irrespective of the stand taken by the great powers, to convene a conference on the Indian Ocean as suggested by the UN resolution?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

The *ad hoc* Committee of the United Nations of which India is an active Member, has already decided to convene a conference of littoral countries—not exactly a conference but a meeting of littoral countries which may lead to convening a conference in which all countries including the big powers are expected to participate. Therefore, there is no difference of opinion between India and other nations particularly the littoral and hinterland countries, on the question of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace. What is the use of merely calling a conference? The Hon Member is interested in concrete results and so is the Government.

SHRI P K KODIYAN It is not only a question of demilitarisation and reducing tension. So far as we are concerned, it is a question of dismantling military bases like Diego Garcia and the talks which the Soviet Union and USA are having, particularly with regard to the Indian Ocean, I understand, do not include the question of military bases like Diego Garcia. It is also reported that they are interested only in reducing naval presence in the Indian Ocean. I would like to know the reaction of the Government of India to such limited talks and such limited reduction of naval presence by these powers while at the same time they are retaining military bases like Diego Garcia. Is Government of India going to take up the specific question of Diego Garcia?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
The Government of India has made its

position clear that we would like the Indian Ocean to be free of all foreign military bases including Diego Garcia.

Secondly, India is of the opinion that littoral countries are in a position to guarantee freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean and the big powers need not have their military presence there and certainly not rivalry. I am glad that the Hon Member, in his first supplementary, while asking whether India cannot do now something without the big powers' assistance has referred to the talks going on between USA and the Soviet Union. I am inclined to agree with the Hon Member that mere restraint on arms is not the solution but if the restraint on arms leads to limitation of armament and then demilitarisation and then elimination of all bases, India is prepared to give them a chance. If initiative is needed from us India can at any time take the initiative to call a conference of littoral countries but without the cooperation of the big powers which are actually involved in the militarisation of the Indian Ocean nothing fruitful will come out.

SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK

Sir the previous Government the Congress Government did not equate the two super powers in the matter of their presence or creation of their bases in the Indian Ocean, but according to the statement made by our Prime Minister recently in Moscow he has equated the two super powers in the matter of Indian ocean. On the other hand, the hon Minister for Foreign Affairs has time and again stated in the House and outside that there would be no change in the foreign policy of the Government of India. May I ask the hon Minister to clear the actual position about the two super powers in the Indian ocean and whether the Government of India has categorically told them at any stage to keep their hands off the Indian ocean in order to keep it as a zone of peace?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
I have already given reply to this

question, but I would like to add that both the super powers are present in the Indian ocean. Some other powers are also building up their naval strength and trying to make Indian ocean a field of their rivalry. That is why, India and other littoral countries are trying to secure an international agreement so that Indian ocean can become a zone of peace. Let us hope that our efforts will succeed.

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN: Sir, the hon. Minister has made one or two important points and I have no hesitation in agreeing with him that merely calling a conference is no solution, it will just be a mechanical sort of action.

AN HON MEMBER: Please speak in the mike.

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN: I am using the mike.

MR SPEAKER: Would you like the mikes to be put a little more down?

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN: I think so.

MR SPEAKER: These can be lowered down and more mikes can also be put up.

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN: As the hon. Minister has himself just now said merely asking the great powers or talking in terms of reducing the armaments is not going to solve the problem. The basic question is that the Government of India will have to assert itself after the experience of last three-four years, whether we have not reached a stage where we should give this question a higher priority in our bilateral relations. Certainly, we can continue our efforts diplomatically as far as the international forums are concerned; we can do that and we should do that. But in our bilateral relations, talks and discussions with the great powers, are we prepared to give this question a higher priority so that they can be

made ashamed of this militarization of the Indian Ocean? The difficulty is that sometimes it diplomatically suits them to say that we are discussing this question this way or that way, but the presence of military base in Diego Garcia is not just a reminder of their presence only, but it is a constant threat to the national security. And, we should create a public opinion not only in India but internationally that leading countries like India are so keen about that that in our bilateral relations we are prepared to give it a top priority.

My specific question is whether this question was raised in any discussions with the great powers so far, or whether Government of India proposes to give a priority to this question during the coming visit of President Carter to India and press this issue to a point where we will get some definite results.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: India attaches the greatest importance to the question of the Indian Ocean being made a zone of peace. The presence of any power in the shape of a military base in the Indian Ocean not only creates tension but it threatens the whole region. That is why we have been demanding that all military bases should be eliminated. We have been demanding this in all international forums. Whenever there are bilateral talks, whether they are held in Washington or in Moscow, this question is definitely taken up. In fact we have made known to these two big powers that though we are not opposed to the talks leading to restraint on armaments, what we want is elimination of all military bases. This question was discussed when our Prime Minister, Shri Morarji Deasai visited Moscow and this question will be again discussed when President Carter visits India.

SHRI YADVENDRA DUTT: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that due to the Indian diplomatic moves and the moral pressure generated through the

Non-aligned Group and other nations and even at the UNO forum, the super powers have agreed to freeze their status at the moment and it is further expected that they might come and take a second look for the demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean. Is this a fact or not?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: The two big powers have not agreed to freeze. They are talking about freezing but the pressure of the Non-aligned nations and the opinion of the littoral and hinterland countries is being increasingly felt by the two big powers and the ad hoc Committee of the United Nations to which the hon. Leader of the Opposition has made a reference, has already decided to call a meeting of the littoral and hinterland countries to discuss the question of the Indian Ocean and as I stated earlier, that meeting might decide to call a conference in which other power might be invited..

MR. SPEAKER: You should be pressing for a meeting of that Conference..

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We are a part of the ad hoc Committee. We are active there..

MR. SPEAKER: Are you pressing for a Conference?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We are pressing and we are impressing.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: There have been certain encouraging developments in this behalf. The Prime Minister of our country is reported to have observed only recently on 1st of November that he is for a time-bound plan to reduce the big power military presence in the Indian Ocean and finally for the establishment of peace. In this context also, as the hon. Minister for External Affairs has mentioned, the USA and USSR are also engaged in certain talks and it has

been appreciated by the Government of India in the course of the joint communique between India and Mauritius that these talks are a first step towards making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.

Lastly, it has also been found that the *Isvestia*, the official organ of the USSR has also mentioned recently, only on the 11th November that the two sides could state that they have entered into a practical phase. Again it has also earlier said that a constructive solution of the problem is possible. It also refers to the promising turn of events.

Having all these things in view, I have mentioned that the situation appears to be a little bit more encouraging. May I know at this stage whether the government would take..

MR. SPEAKER: ..advantage of

SHRI CHITTA PASU: the initiative in the matter of bilateral talks instead of relying only on that ad hoc committee meeting as the Leader of the Opposition has mentioned. Are we in a position to have direct bilateral talks with the USA and also the USSR in the matter of evolving a time-bound programme or a time-bound plan as our Prime Minister desires and has any step so far been taken or what concrete measures do the government propose to take in this matter?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I have already replied to that question.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you going direct to both USSR & USA? He wants to know.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: More so, in the context of the remark made by the Prime Minister, he concedes the time bound plan going

MR. SPEAKER: Have you any more information to give.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
No

MR SPEAKER He says that he has no information to give

श्री वाजपेयी कि ज्ञापन में मेम्बर को सोंका नहीं देते हैं ।

MR SPEAKER Each Member is being allowed one question

PROF P G MAVALANKAR The Minister has been very clear specific and elaborate while answering the questions I want to further ask whether in this regard the Government of India are also not considering the possibilities (a) of intensifying diplomatic and direct summit talks between India and the concerned littoral ocean States when he has a chance and the Prime Minister has the chance of going to the neighbouring countries, (b) In the UN General Assembly, whether the Government of India is putting that particular matter on a high priority basis in order to strengthen international opinion The UN General Assembly now in session is a useful forum Obviously, world opinion is formulated in a much greater way at the General Assembly Session That is why I am asking this question on the one side, discussions with the countries in Asia, and on the other, discussions at the UN General Assembly to formulate public opinion against any super-power trying to interfere with the number of countries—whether such discussions are going on or not

MR SPEAKER He has said that all that is possible is being done

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
I would like to reply to the second part of the question first

I have already informed the House that the United Nations ad hoc Committee is at present seized of the matter The Committee is continuing

consultations It has prepared a draft Resolution which is to be recommended to the General Assembly suggesting that a meeting of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean be called as a preliminary to the proposed Conference on the Indian ocean India is a Member of the Committee and we are trying to exert ourselves to as much extent as possible

So far as part first is concerned, whenever bilateral talks are held whether they are held in Khatmandu or Rangoon or Kabul, the question of Indian ocean invariably is discussed and in some cases a joint communique is issued which refers to this problem In fact there is no difference of opinion between India and some of her neighbours on this question

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Distribution of Steel

*145 **DR VASANT KUMAR PANDIT**
SHRI NATWARLAL B PARMAR

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that the Union Government has made changes in the old routine of supply of steel to the Steel trading community,

(b) if so what are the changes and for what reasons

(c) is it a fact that Bombay Iron Merchants' Association has represented to Government for the sudden stoppage of steel supply by the Hindustan Steel Ltd and major changes in the policy without consulting the trading community, and

(d) have Government ascertained that the bulk consumers are misusing the Government policy while the common consumer is suffering due to wrong policy?