11.05 hrs.

MOTION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this House expresses its confidence in the Council of Ministers".

Sir, with your permission, I would like to move a Confidence Motion for the second time in the last ten months.

On the 12th of June 1996, in this very same House, a Confidence Motion was moved and it was carried by this very same House. Today again, I have come before this House to take a vote of confidence because of certain new developments which took place.

On that day, that is, 12th June, 1996, when the Confidence Motion was carried though, 13 parties including the national and regional parties combined together formed the United Front and, at that time, the United Front had got only about 192 Members. The supporting party, the Congress (I), under the leadership of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao on the 12th May, 1996, took a unanimous decision—the decision was spontaneously taken by the Congress that: 'If the third Front is prepared to form the Government, we are going to extend the support'. That was on the 12th May, 1996. After that, all the regional and national parties got combined, they elected a leader among themselves—and the new political force, the third force, which we called the United Front was established—and on the 15th May, 1996, I was elected as the Leader of the United Front. Rashtrapatiji called me after Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had tendered his resignation on 28th May, 1996. He called me to form the Government and he gave me a deadline that before 12th June, 1996, I should go before this House and obtain the mandate of the House.

Sir, I do not want to blame anybody or cast aspersions against any individual or any political party. But I would like to just narrate as to what has happened.

On the day when the discussions took place on the Confidence Motion, the then C.P.P. President and the Congress (I) leader, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao had categorically mentioned the following in his speech.

I would just like to quote from his own speech:

"Anyone, any forces or combination of forces on the basis of secularism, on the basis of accepted principles, we are prepared to cooperate, we are prepared to support from outside."

Now it so happened that after 3-4 days of suspicion, Deve Gowda was chosen and was called by Rashtrapatiji to form a Government. Then he said:

"My understanding about Shri Deve Gowda is that this party will not allow this Government to fall under any circumstances. History will not say that it was because of the Congress Party that Gowda's Government had fallen."

I am quoting this just to draw the attention of this august House to the stand taken by the then Congress President and the CPP leader on that day and to the assurance given to the nation. I am only trying to refresh the memory of this august House about what had happened on that day. I do not want to narrate what had been said by other friends. Shri A.R. Antulay had said at the very same place that "the question of withdrawing the support from our side is ruled out. We will stand by him, stand by this Government till the end". I think I am correct. What Shri Sharad Pawar, while addressing this House on the Motion of Thanks on Rashtrapatiji's Address to both the Houses, had said in his speech, I do not want to narrate again. A copy of his speech is with me.

In the last ten months, the Government, with the support of thirteen parties, was asked to run this Government. Subsequently, the National Conference also joined. Mainly two supporting parties from outside, the Congress and the CPI(M), extended their cooperation in the last ten months. Otherwise, whatever achievements we have made in the last ten months, we would not have been able to make. Some of the achievements I am going to spell out, taking advantage of this Confidence Motion. This achievement is not by me, this achievement is not by my colleagues alone, this achievement in particular is because of the cooperation extended by the supporting parties and the parties which are in the Government sharing power, and in general, the House also has extended its full cooperation to achieve some of the objects to which we have committed ourselves in our Common Minimum Programme.

On the day when the supporting parties and the other national and regional parties came together, there was some sort of a natural suspicion in the minds of the people in the country whether the national parties or the regional parties could go together, whether they could discharge the responsibilities, whether the regional parties had got the experience about the national issues or the national outlook, as they had no experience of running a Government at the national level and may try to confine to their own States.

This was the sort of suspicion in the minds of the people of this country and some of the intellectuals also expressed their feelings while we were asked to shoulder the responsibility. I am glad to say that in the last ten

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months all the steps that we have taken have clearly proved that the national parties as well as the regional parties, combined, had run the Government better than the previous regimes. I can say this without doubt. In the last ten months and on the day when I replied to the Confidence Motion—I repeat on the day when I replied to the Confidence Motion—I said:

> "How long will I continue in office is not my concern—whether it is for five days or five months or five years. I am not going to worry. But my concern is that as long as I am going to be here, I must work to the best of the ability with my experience to solve the problems of the nation'.

You can also go through my speech. With this background I started my work with the cooperation of my colleagues.

Sir, I would like to just narrate to this august House all the steps that we have taken in the last ten months because it is very essential to know where I have gone wrong and betrayed the confidence of the people of this country or betrayed the confidence reposed by the supporting parties in this Government. I would like to bring this to the notice of this hon. House.

Sir, the first decision that we took was to revive some of the institutions which were very much essential for cooperation between the States and the Centre while running the administration. A meeting of the Inter-State Council was not held for six years. We tried to revive the Inter-State Council meetings and we had two sittings. In the two sittings the main issue that was discussed was the Sarkaria Commission's report. The recommendation of the Sarkaria Commission was to share not only political power but also economic power. Some of the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission were accepted in the Inter-State Council meeting and where we were unable to come to a unanimous decision, in the Chief Ministers' Conference we have agreed to constitute a Standing Committee under the chairmanship of the Home Minister.

Why I am mentioning this is we tried to revive some of these bodies which were very essential for a proper understanding between the States and the Centre. With this background the first decision which we had taken was that we want the cooperation of the Chief Ministers of all the States, within the Common Minimun Programme.

There was a peculiar situation after the general elections to the Eleventh Lok Sabha. With the mandate given by the people of this country in this very same House there were about 32 political parties. If you take the smaller parties, regional parties and national parties, all put together, it may be that 32 or 33 political parties are there. With this background, it is rather difficult to face the House and it is not a simple task to run the country also.

When we accepted the challenge for a smooth functioning of the Government, we had adopted the Common Minimum Programme by all the parties including the C.P.i.(M) which is a supporting party and which is not participating in the Government, barring the Congress.

After adopting the Common Minimum Programme, we took a decision that to implement this, the cooperation of all the Chief Ministers was to be solicited. That is why, I called the Chief Ministers' Conference. The Chief Ministers' Conference was held for two days and a decision was taken unanimously about the areas where we could implement this Programme without any difference of opinion. The decision was taken unanimously by identifying about seven priority sectors. I am glad to say that almost all the Chief Ministers agreed for these seven priority areas, to be completed in a time-bound programme by 2000 A.D.

The other issue was that the National Development Council had also not met for several years. We called a meeting of the National Development Council. There also, we took a decision about the Ninth Plan. The Approach Paper for the Ninth Plan was also approved. Of course, it is not brought before this House because of the other formalities to be completed. For the first time, the Approach Paper for the Ninth Five Year Plan was finalised in a short span of four or five months. The document was placed before the Cabinet and the Cabinet had taken a decision about the Approach Paper for the Ninth Plan. The NDC had also met and we adopted the Approach Paper for the Ninth Plan. Of course, this has to be discussed in the very same House to give it a final touch.

We have agreed in the Common Minimum Programme about the Lokpal Bill. The Lokpal Bill was also introduced. It is now before the Standing Committee, if I am correct. We were very much anxious to pass that Bill and I also requested you that this Bill should be passed in this Session, but anyway in the present political situation, it may not be possible for me to get the Bill passed unless the House agrees.

The issue of stability was one of the issues which was in the mind of everybody. In the last ten months, I have never felt that there is any instability in the Government. I must be fair. The Congress Party or the supporting parties have never interfered in our taking any decisions. Almost all the decisions which were taken in the Cabinet in the last ten months were unanimous. There may be some expression of difference of opinion by my colleagues or by the supporting parties. It is quite but natural. The supporting parties must have their own say because with different political ideologies and with different manifestos when they have come together under a special circumstance, they have got their own rights. Their manifestos are different and the ideologies differ from one party to the other.

When we had all come together with a specific purpose to strengthen the secular democracy in this country, then, naturally, we had agreed for a certain minimum programme where there should not be any difference of opinion. So, when we had accepted that Common Minimum Programme with regard to other issues, it is quite but natural for them to express their difference of opinion on a par with their party manifestos or ideologies. I do not find fault with that. I must say that in all the decisions which we had taken in the last ten months, there was no interference. That is why, I was able to achieve something in the last ten months.

The Cabinet had taken almost all the decisions unanimously which, in my opinion, was a progressive step. I am going to place the steps taken by us and the achievements of this Government in the last 10 months one by one before this House and, through this House, to the nation.

Sir, the 1997-98 Budget was appreciated by almost all the sections of the society. We have not taken care of any particular section only in this Budget. But we have taken sufficient precautions not to neglect the industrial sector, not to neglect the agricultural sector and not to neglect the social welfare sector. At the same time, we also gave sufficient initiatives to give encouragement to the private investments. We have given sufficient scope for that in our Budget. The reason why I am saying this is, we need resources to successfully achieve some of the programmes which we have launched. The resources have to be mobilised by our own internal resource mobilisation programme and in addition to that, the private sector and the global investments should also be attracted on the basis of the new economic philosophy. The new economic philosophy has given a wide scope for attracting private and public investments. With this background, the Budget was presented this time before this House and, through this House, to the whole nation.

Sir, the Budget presented by the Finance Minister of the United Front Government reflects our commitment to the economic reforms, but ensures that the poor and the disadvantaged sections of the society are not by-passed in the process of development. The 1997-98 Budget, in many ways, represents a watershed. With this reference point for the reform process on which India has embarked and has shifted from 1991 to 1997, in a bold move the Budget has significantly reduced the corporate and personal income tax rates. Domestic company tax rates have been lowered from 43 per cent to a fairly competitive 35 per cent. Foreign companies will be taxed at the rate of 48 per cent which is less by five per cent than before. The individual tax payers will now pay 30 per cent tax at the margin which is a hefty reduction of 25 per cent.

Sir, coupled with the rationalisation of the direct tax rates, the Budget has also announced a 20 per cent reduction in customs duty across the board. The dual philosophy underpins this approach to increasingly allow the tax rates in India to be in line with those prevailing in other Asian countries and a conviction that lower tax rates will encourage increasingly greater level of compliances. The Budget has a number of measures aimed at stimulating the vital infrastructure sectors through a combination of fiscal and policy initiatives. The Government has sought to attract private investments in telecommunication, oil and gas, roads and tourism. These are some of the areas which we have tried to open up for the private sector.

Sir, the import duty on coal has been reduced. Some of the decisions that we have taken in our Budget proposals are from the point of view of growth and I would again highlight them. The telecommunication service providers have been accorded the infrastructure status and granted a complete tax holiday for a period of five years with 30 per cent tax holiday for a further five years' period. The licence fee can now be amortized and licences can be assigned clearing the way for a number of projects to reach financial closure. The oil and gas sector has been subjected to a comprehensive review. An attempt has been made to further revive the capital market. Major amendments in the Companies Act are proposed and the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1973 is to be replaced. There ought to be statutory measures to deal with money laundering.

Similarly, the Budget reflects our concern for the poor and the disadvantaged section. There are enhancements in the provision for the basic minimum services. The outlays for the rural areas, employment and for social services have been made. The provision for the basic minimum service has been increased from Rs. 2,466 crore to Rs. 3,300 crore. This includes Rs. 330 crore for slum clearing. The provision for the accelerated irrigation for which we had provided Rs. 900 crore in the last year's Budget has been increased to Rs. 1,300 crore in 1997-98. Rupees two hundred crore has been provided for small irrigation projects and works like Ganga Kalyan to help the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, weaker sections of the society and the small farmers. We have provided Rs. 250 crore for Kasturba Gandhi Shiksha Yojana. We wanted to start 258 residential schools for the girls living in the tribal areas and where the literacy rate is below national average.

I am only mentioning some of these highlights and the achievements of this Government in the last ten months. We have been committed to the assurances that we had given to the nation through our Common Minimum Programme. We tried to take certain steps by making necessary provisions in the Budget for the year 1997-98. We have launched rural housing programme wherein about 50,000 houses are to be given in the rural areas

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This scheme has been launched for the first time. Hitherto there was no such scheme for the farmers. Funds will be provided at the rate of Rs. 2 lakh per house. This was one of the new schemes that has been launched for the rural housing programme. The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and Ambedkar Awas Yojana are meant for the weaker sections or the homeless people or the siteless people. We have launched this scheme for the farming community also.

In addition to this, there are some of the other important issues like PDS and fertilizer subsidy. All these steps which we have taken in the last ten months are only from the point of view of helping the farming community and for helping the weaker sections of the society. In the PDS itself, only two-three States had all along been implementing the scheme of providing subsidised essential food articles. We took a decision that this scheme should be enlarged and the whole nation should be covered. For this scheme under PDS, we have provided about Rs. 7,500 crore. This scheme is going to cover a population of about 32 crore of this country.

The fertilizer subsidy has been increased. We had made an additional allocation of about Rs. 2,500 crore last year for the fertilizers to help the farming community. This year also it has been further increased. Even on the imported fertilizer, we have given a subsidy component of Rs. 1,700 crore.

The total worth of the PDS system and the subsidy on agricultural sector comes to about Rs. 17,500 crore. The very purpose of taking certain steps is to help the agricultural sector and also some of the poorer sections of the society, who are below the poverty line and who have no purchasing capacity. We have taken the decision to launch the new scheme nation-wide.

Sir, there are other issues, and I am going to deal with them after the views from all sides of the House are expressed.

In the end, I am going to cover all other points. Now, I would request the House to deliberate on this Motion, which I have just now moved with your kind permission. I would request the House to ponder over this issue—whether any skirmishes were born by our decisions in the last ten months, where this Government has gone wrong, and how we have betrayed the assurance that has been given to the nation. I would like to request the hon. Members to come out with their views in this august House. If we have done anything wrong, we are prepared to set it right. I would like a free and frank expression, particularly on the omissions and commissions of this Government in the last ten months.

With these words, I request that the hon. Members may kindly express their views on this Motion of Confidence.

MR. SPEAKER: Motion Moved:

"That this House expresses its confidence in the Council of Ministers."

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Chittorgarh): Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I must comment upon the near total air of unreality in which this debate is taking place. Just before the commencement of the debate, the air was suddenly thick with rumours about the resignation of the hon. Prime Minister, about a last minute change, and about the partners in this arrangement having now settled their dispute. I was very relieved when the hon. Prime Minister finally arrived, even though somewhat belatedly, to at least, for the moment, set that rumour to rest.

The hon. Prime Minister rather coyly referred to certain new developments that have taken place, which require this debate to take place. I do wish, Sir, that the hon. Prime Minister, who with admirable restraint and ambiguity called them 'certain new developments', had specified what these new developments were. The debate has not been occasioned because we have moved a Motion of No-Confidence. The hon. Prime Minister has himself sought confidence of the House because, as he explained, there are certain new developments. What are those new developments?

If you recollect, Sir, I had appealed to my friends in the supporting party, the Congress, who, according to the Prime Minister, gave them support so spontaneously, who also said in the House that they would not withdraw their support, and indeed, Sir, who also said that they would stand by them till the end...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK (Phulbani): Till then, they were standing up for them.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: I have appealed to them that the debate would be rounded off and that it would be better informed had the Congress explained what these new developments are. Indeed, we would know, the House would know and the country would know and we have a right to know them. But the Congress declined. Why they declined, I am still unable to fathom.

SHRI A.C. JOS (Idukki): You resign and join the Congress!

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : The hon. Prime Minister quite rightly pointed out that when he took over office, there was a lurking suspicion about the effectiveness and the survivability of this Government.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): Survivability?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Yes. That is the word the hon. Prime Minister used. He used the word survivability. I am not responsible for the choice of words. I am trying to be analytical.

SHRI A.C. JOS : It would enlighten the House itself!

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: A very good follower.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: As far as the effectiveness is concerned, the hon. Prime Minister catalogued the achievements of his Government for the last ten months and, even though I might not be in agreement with all the claims that the Prime Minister has made, I do sincerely sympathise with the air of bewildered perplexity with which he read out his achievements and I wonder as to what is the occasion for this certain new developments causing this illustrious and once upon a time great political party to suddenly decide to withdraw support.

That is why, I certainly do have to comment that quite an exceptional distinction devolves upon the 11th Lok Sabha in now debating the third confidence vote in just over nine months. I think it has to reflect on this fact and what lies at the core of it all. I submit that this 11th Lok Sabha taking up the confidence vote for the third time reflects in essence the thwarting of the people's mandate when the elections were first held and it is a consequence of this artificial legislative arrangement that was created in May or June of last year. It is entirely up to the Government to agree on this and indeed I do not expect them to agree with me. A huge untruth was then inflicted upon India. I said this earlier also and that untruth is now coming unstuck. The untruth is coming unstuck in this inglorious and ignominious manner, a manner that brings disrepute upon India, which brings disrepute upon this august Assembly which we have the honour of serving; it brings into disrepute without any doubt the entire political class that appears only to be hankering after office and chair. My first charge against this motion is on both these counts and it is a collective charge upon both the defender and the offender.

SHRI SAT MAHAJAN (Kangra): You might say that as a pretender!

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: We are not pretenders. We do not pretend because if anything is to be said explicitly, it is only we that have said it. If at all there is a pretender, the true pretenders in this artificial arrangement is the Congress Party and my distinguished friends, the CPM. They were the pretenders because they pretended. There is something about the oldest profession in the world. They pretended to wield power. They pretended to no responsibility. They wielded power but without responsibility. They wanted to run this Government but without any accountability. They were the pretenders. Therefore, I charge both the defenders and the offenders of bringing about a wholly artificial, spurious and avoidable crisis, a crisis born entirely of mendacity, double cross, double speak, double standards and it is a dishonest crisis.

I do not wish to say much about the kind of rumours that became thick, about all this drama and the charade about talks, talks about talks, informal talks, then, formal talks of Steering Committee and of Core Group and of yet another Core Group or whatever controlling Group. We were told when these talks, double-crosses were going on that those who were entrusted with actually doing the talking were more interested in ensuring that the talks failed so that their leaders who were at the helm, could, in turn, be defeated and the second rank could come forward and take over. The charade, the mendacity of what we have been subjected to today was entirely avoidable. It is a crisis born of treachery within parties and it is also the treachery of arrangements between parties. That is why now when this debate takes place, the air is befouled with a suspicious individual conduct. I will not go into that now. But I earnestly searched in the hon. the Prime Minister's initial intervention as to what is the great issue of principle involved? What was that issue, what substantial matter that has created this new circumstance for the offender to take such an offence? I fail to find anything in the hon. the Prime Minister's intervention. All that we have read and heard is that personal pique, blind, unseeming self-interest seem to have motivated the bringing about the crisis. It appears in all this that personal interest seems to have taken the first place always and every time. Every kind of consideration of national interest has been relegated to the background.

My second charge is that this is a farce upon Legislature. It is not a farce upon Legislature simply because of the frequency with which we are doing this. It is a farce because of the atmosphere in which it is being conducted. Till the last minute, we have been told that something is being arranged. They said: "We are changing the personality." we read statements in the newspapers about this. They said: "We have objection only to a certain personality. If the personality changes, then, we will work together again." Is the Legislature to be reduced to an arena for settling personal disputes between individuals? As a Legislature, are we to become the victim of a certain party's pique against a single individual, however high the office that he held? ...(*Interruptions*)

After all, we have opposed the hon. the Prime Minister. Our opposition to him is open, is clear, is categorical and is unambiguous. Mr. Prime Minister, Sir, we are your opponents. Your enemies sit behind you and beside you. We are your political opponents. We make no bones about it. It is a farce because it is a sad imposition upon a trusting and unsuspecting nation. I remember with vividness the fluency and the ability with which my good friend the hon. Finance Minister debated

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the issue when the Confidence Motion was considered, perhaps in June. He said: "There are three reasons why we are here. It is because of the verdict of the people—it is a false assertion now—that we stand for social justice and we are the forces of secularism." What has happened to this verdict of the people? Where is the social justice and where is the secularism? I submit again as I submitted then that all these three were flimsy excuses, a cloak only for keeping the BJP out at any cost. This is an untenable assertion which now visits upon this arrangement at this governance.

My third charge is that you propounded a wholly artificial, untenable and indeed an irresponsible thesis about the support from outside. What we are witnessing today and what we are experiencing today is entirely on account of this arrangement. You do not want to be in Government, yet you want to govern; you do not want the responsibility, the accountability of Government yet you wish to tell the Prime Minister what to do. When you want him to stand up, you want him to stand up and when you want him to sit down, you want him to sit down. No self-respecting arrangement can wok like this. We have struggled together for years with some of the constituents of the United Front. I have had the pleasure and privilege of sitting here with some of the constituents of the United Front, indeed with the Leader of the House, Shri Ram Vilasji. I see all these faces and many of them had been our partners in the many struggles that we fought together. Our political differences, our political opposition to the Congress have been categorical, unequivocal and totally unquestionable. You chose to join this company; you chose to work with them and you chose to agree to this wholly, unacceptable arrangement of support from outside. We had even then said that this was untenable and this would not work. This is indeed now being proven as right and the circumstances have brought shame upon India.

As far as the Congress Party is concerned, I am not at all astonished at their conduct because I remember distinctly that we had been witness earlier to the Congress Party suddenly taking umbrage at two wandering Haryana policemen outside a certain house. And because, those two Haryana policemen were casually wandering outside a house, a Prime Minister had to step down ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Ballia): I did not wait for the withdrawal of their support. I knew their inclination and I withdrew. We cannot expect a gentlemanly behaviour from them...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: From two Haryana policemen, we are now witness to this transformation of a bolt from the blue suddenly transforming into a button hole of allegiance.

I am astonished that the distinguished leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, the hon. Member from Baramati speaking from Pune finds the announcement of his Party President about the withdrawal of support, as a 'bolt from the blue.'

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Here, the spirit of Shivaji was guided. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: I enquire of the hon. Prime Minister, whether this is the new development about which he was referring? If this is the "certain new development", then, I do sincerely wish, you had also gone and explained how this 'bolt from the blue' became a baton for beating them into allegiance and whipping them into coming into obedience? What had suddenly change between Pune and Delhi—a flight of only a couple o hours? (*Interruptions*)...I appeal to the hon. the Prime Minister, the Mover of the Motion to also explain to us the conduct of the Party, a very great political party, the Communist Party (Marxist). They have exemplified this question of wanting to wield power without having any responsibility.

I find, Sir, that they were the ones who were most active remaining out of the Government, not wanting the responsibility of it but all the time, they must be ordering everyone including you. I am astonished, how you have suddenly become Mamataji?

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Calcutta South): Sir, may I know what he wants to say?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : Sir, I have said what I wanted to say. More than that I do not wish to say.

I am also struck. I am actually struck by a sense of poignancy. I am struck by the remarkable prescience of my distinguished friend. He is indeed the seniormost Member of this Assembly whom I have the honour of calling my friend, the hon. Home Minister. He, in a different context spoke of "chaos, anarchy and destruction."

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Mavelikara): Are you forgetting that your party was the supporting party to Shri V.P. Singh when he was the Prime Minister? What do you say about that?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: The hon. Prof. Kurien, who is a very good friend of mine has asked me to talk about our support to Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh. Yes, of course, we supported them.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Without responsibility you wanted to wield power at that time.

SHRI PRADIP BHATTACHARYA (Serumpore): Why are you narrating the story when you had supported them?... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: The hon. the Home Minister is a distinguished parliamentarian. I remember a phrase which was used for him in a function that I attended, by a very great Indian Shri P.N. Haksar. If I recollect right, he said: "The hon. the Home Minister, Shri Indrajit Gupta is a man of untradable integrity." Without doubt, he is. And, if he used the words that describe our state as bordering on chaos, anarchy and destruction then, I am struck by the relevance of these words because that is precisely what the offender has now brought about for totally inexplicable reasons. They have indeed created the situation of bringing about chaos, anarchy and destruction and, I wonder whether the prescience of the hon. Home Minister persuaded him to say what he did earlier.

12.00 hrs.

The conduct of the Congress Party really baffles description. The hon. Prime Minister quite rightly pointed out that up to the President's Address, up to the question of the budgetary debates, up to and inclusive indeed of that very shabby situation that had developed in Uttar Pradesh—on all these and on every fundamental issue—up to the 21st of March, the Congress Party had no difficulty.

The Congress Party indeed struggled and quarrelled with us on every occasion but we found fault with them openly and clearly. Suddenly, on the 30th of March, this 'bolt from the blue' arrives. I do find it necessary to mention that because the hon. Prime Minister has not explained those 'certain circumstances'. I tried to make out what those 'certain circumstances' were from the rather curious phrases of the somewhat repetitious letter.

Here, we are told that the Congress Party which was entirely satisfied with everything on the 21st of March, on the 30th was suddenly concerned over 'deteriorating law and order situation, drift in the economy—they have supported the Budget though we have differences—leading to rising prices'. They condone rising prices up to the 21st and suddenly on the 30th rising prices becomes sufficient ground for them to pull the leg of support. I would be very grateful if the very distinguished and the very able Minister of Finance would specify whether in that nine-day period he saw such a spurt in prices that the Congress Party had no other option but to withdraw support from them.

Next, there was a 'growing communal menace'. They have simultaneously said that the land is at peace and all is well. And suddenly, the Congress Party discovers that there is a 'growing communal menace and a lack of cohesive functioning of the Government'. To the best of my recollection, between the 21st and the 30th, the most that happened was that everyone went away on a holiday for Holi and there was hardly anyone in Delhi. How is it that, in that long period of Holi holidays, suddenly the Congress Party discovers that there is no 'cohesive functioning'?

Here is a more serious allegation that has been made. The more serious allegation concerns that 'The sensitive defence issues and security requirements of the country have not been properly addressed; there is an overall demoralising effect in the civil services and the various organs of the Government; lack of coordination'—this is a repetition—'direction and will to govern had created a situation of drift...' This is a very serious allegation.

The hon. Minister of Defence is here. I do not remember the Congress Party ever questioning him about the security issues. If there has been any questioning, it was indeed by my Leader, who stood up and said that some decisions were taken for the first time about the Defence issues. This is a very serious charge. The Congress party owes an explanation not simply to the defenders; they owe an explanation to us, they owe an explanation to Parliament, they owe an explanation to the entire country. Such charges cannot be lightly made. If we say that concerns about the state of the nation, about the state of the Defence preparedness of the country, such matters cannot be spoken of lightly. Such matters should certainly not become issues of partisan consideration simply because you are displeased with one person or another. I charge the Congress Party of treating even the security of the country as a tradeable issue, as an issue that could be traded as a charge between Parties.

I am amazed at their irresponsibility. I do not wish to comment on the utter debasement of debate and public discourse that was displayed by hon. the Congress President when he referred to the hon. Prime Minister in certain terms. It shamed all of us. It shamed all of us collectively. You can hold whatever views you wish to hold about Shri Deve Gowda, but you cannot refer to the Prime Minister of the country like that. We have difficulties with the Prime Minister, the premiership of the country. We have open political differences. But never in my party, Sir, has anyone debased our differences to public discourse of that kind to that level. In a public speech the President of once-upon-a-time great party traded charges in a language and in a manner which is utterly shameful. I am also, Sir, most intrigued by the timing of this letter. What has persuaded this timing? Somebody owes an explanation. Either you, Mr. Prime Minister, must explain as to why it was on 30th March that support was withdrawn or someone from the Congress must explain that to the nation.

[Shri Jaswant Singh]

Sir, I must now list the catalogue of failures, as I see, of the United Front. The hon. Prime Minister, while I was listening to what he has said about the revival of institutions, spoke of Inter-State Council, National Development Council, the Ninth Five Year Plan, the Budget, the Lokpal Bill etc., etc. I submit and I charge the United Front Government of deliberately, knowingly and repeatedly misusing Article 356 despite what had happened in the National Development Council and despite the opinion of the Chief Ministers. I do not wish to run over the entire sorry debate of Uttar Pradesh and what had happened in Uttar Pradesh and what did not happen, but the misuse of office of Governors as evidenced by incidents and developments in the State of Gujarat and the State of Uttar Pradesh is the direct responsibility of the United Front Government and they are to be held accountable and because the Congress acquiesced in this misuse of the office the Congress is also to be held accountable.

Sir, I do not wish this to be converted into a debate on the international situation or the security situation of the country except to leave a word of caution. Please do not create a world of make-believe. My leader had categorically said that we stand for good relations with our neighbours and we stand for good relations with Bangladesh. But we cannot countenance an unreal relationship based on illusions that which we could not achieve for the last thirty years, is suddenly converted into a water sharing agreement. Why could it not be done for the last thirty years? Has Ganga suddenly started giving more water? We question the Government on the mistake which is now evident in what is happening in the scarcity of water both in West Bengal and Bangladesh.

I do not wish to go into any lengthy analysis of the security situation. But instead of doing that I do wish to leave a thought with my distinguished and able Minister of External Affairs that hugs and false bonhomies are not adequate replacement for a sound foreign policy. I do also wish to share a thought with the hon. Defence Minister. I leave a thought with him that I apprehend a situation, though I have no categorical reasons why I apprehend so, somewhat similar to what had happened in the country before 1962, may recur.

I say this with seriousness and I say this with a sense of responsibility. Let us not be complacent and I do charge the United Front Government of neglecting to make adequate arrangements for Defence, to make adequate Budgetary arrangements for Defence. For the eleventh year in succession, the needs of the Defence were neglected.

My second point about the United Front Government relates to the economy. When the Budget was presented by my distinguished friend, we called the Budget as 'the *chalia* Budget'; that this was *maya jaal*, an illusion of well-being, prosperity and growth. But everyone on that side was happy. We cautioned you there itself. I say that our differences on the Budget lies principally on the ground that this illusion of prosperity and growth is combined with actual disparity and division of India from Bharat.

I do wish to refer to agriculture; I do wish to refer to the question of foodgrains; and I do wish to refer particularly to the mismanagement by the UF Government on the wheat front. We are informed that some millions of tonnes of wheat are to be imported into the country. For those millions of tonnes of wheat, the UF Government is going to pay Rs. 650 per quintal... (*Interruptions*) I wish we had been told that the Government is going to import 20 million tonnes.... (*Interruptions*)

SOME HON. MEMBERS: It is only two million tonnes.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Are you happy that two million tonnes should be imported?

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumdum): We are happy with your mistake!

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: You are happy with my mistake? Well, having corrected it, are you happy that instead of 20 million tonnes it should only be two million tonnes which is going to be imported at Rs. 750 per quintal when the domestic producers—the farmers—are going to get only Rs. 550? (*Interruptions*)

SOME HON. MEMBERS: It is Rs. 450 only.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Again you have slipped.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: How do you know that I did not actually want you to correct me, to point out the huge disparity between Rs. 450 and Rs. 750?

I appeal to the UF Government to reflect on what they are doing in this regard. I do not wish to sound pessimistic; I do not also wish to draw your attention to what is happening in our neighbourhood—in Pakistan or in Afganistan—on the food front. But I do appeal to you not to treat this casually and I do appeal to you to take a stand that whatever may be the procurement price, it would be the price at which they would supply wheat to all the consumers.

I do not agree with the management of the Government on agricultural front and I certainly cannot condone the UF Government on the neglect of the energy sector. I charge this Government of continuously neglecting the petroleum sector. The situation is perilous; if energy is security as it is, then the nation's energy security has been endangered by this Government.

I will conclude by submitting that the Government of India is not an arrangement! It is not a mere convenience based on personal prejudices and needs. You like a certain person and you dislike another person in which only Office counts and nothing else! I am also not impressed by the undignified manner in which this scramble has taken place about changing, not changing, altering, we will continue to give support if you replace personalities, etc.

Then, where is, Mr. Prime Minister, the one which you have put across as the Common Minimum Programme? You should have put it instead as 'Common Personality Programme!'. Why do you have Common Minimum Programme? If it was to be based on 'Common Personality Programme', then that is what we should have been told earlier. Certainly, the Congress Party owes us much more than an explanation. So this is an insult, not simply to this House which is a distillate of the people of India but it is also an insult to the people of this country. It is besmirching of the fair name of our poor and benighted country There is only one answer both for the defender and the offender, that is, go depart for heaven's sake and leave this chair. You count these chairs as more and more worthy than the country. There is the only one solution for you now to come to terms with loss of office and to go back to the people.

Therefore, I oppose this Motion.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah): Mr. Speaker, Sir, today is the day when our party, the Indian National Congress, is now being tried from this side and that side and it is our duty to convey our message to the entire nation, as to what we stood for, how we stood for till now and for which we stand for. If we make a mistake on emotional grounds, I know and I am aware of the fact that the nation will not spare any individual in the House including the Indian National Congress.

Our responsibility is tremendous. It is not because we are in the Indian National Congress but because we were the sole partner from the very beginning in the process of making the nation as one nation alongwith everyone in this House as the forebearer of the nation...(*interruptions*)... We did realise the meaning of the mandate which was given to the Eleventh Lok Sabha. The mandate was certainly for not this side, to us and to them but the message of the mandate was, if you can, please try to avoid those who try to betray the Constitution and the mandate of the founding fathers to keep the people united and to uphold the dignity of secularism. That message alone provided the direction to the Indian National Congress on 12th May to take a decision and the decision was not taken by an individual. On that day, we did not know who was coming, whether 'X' or 'Y'.

12.18 hrs.

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

The decision was very clear and categorical. What was the decision? I quote:

"The Congress Party has decided to take positive steps in support of the process of the formation of the Government by political parties which are totally committed to secular, democratic, communal harmony, welfare, social and economically weaker sections and minorities and rapid growth of our country as well as to values enshrined in our Constitution."

So, we stood by that and we stand by that.

Respected Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda, while moving the Motion, had very rightly referred to a distinguished leader who was the President of our Party and the Leader of the CPP, respected Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao who said that our support was unconditional and we shall not betray. Sir, I again say on behalf of our party that our support to UF and the commitment for the secular order that we stood for, is still unconditional and not withdrawn. So, what is withdrawn? With what pain had we gone to the Rashtrapati Bhawan? With what anguish and agony had we gone to the Rashtrapati Bhawan? Is it against an individual? Shri Jaswant Singh may say anything to exploit the situation but one thing is very clear. We may do or die but we are not going to do anything to make a road for him, come what may. That is the message of Mahatma Gandhi to us.

You may say whatever you like... (*Interruptions*) I did not interrupt. Under what compulsion have we done it? About Shri H.D. Deve Gowda and the United Front colleagues and your Ministers, we have no individual accusations. You have a competent leader on the floor of the House, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, who is the Minister of Railways. He is not in our party. But I congratulate him about the manner in which he is trying to unite the oppressed and the suffering humanity of the nation. I look at him from a distance. I adore him and his contribution. He was not in our party. He is not in our party even today.

There is your competent Minister of Finance, Shri P. Chidambaram. In spite of all the difficulties and differences—where we do not agree and they do not agree he has tried to steer the Budget...(*Interruptions*) I did not disturb you.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : When Shri Jaswant Singh spoke, not a single Member from our side intervened... (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please maintain decorum in the House.

SHRI DATTA MEGHE (Ramtek): Is BJP a disciplined party? ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI: We have very competent Ministers. We do not regard Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav as a Minister of Defence. We consider Shri Yadav's role a crucial one to defend secularism in the country in a

[Shri P.R. Dasmunsi]

crucial hour—in Uttar Pradesh. We know it. We can go against you today. That is a different thing. But history will write continuously that the role played by Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav to save the nation and the destiny of the nation cannot be forgotten. You try to understand our perception. We have withdrawn the support and sent the letter to Rashtrapati. For what? ...(*Interruptions*)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: We will also do the same thing.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You also please keep quiet.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please do not add to the confusion.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please sit down.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI: From the Congress' point of view, we did not raise an issue about personalities as referred to by Shri Jaswant Singh. The Government headed by Shri H.D. Deve Gowda is not merely a Government to head a Government in South Block. But with all regards to Shri Deve Gowda, I urge upon him to look at it. Was it the mandate of the House to elect you only as Prime Minister to do the nitty-gritty of the South Block every day and dispose of the files or to consolidate the secular forces of India to protect India from the danger that they are creating? What was the mandate to you? Was it not the mandate to you? You enquire about it as you like. You can choose any words that you like. What was said in our communique? Is it that we have done it suddenly? Shri Jaswant Singh suddenly found that on 30th—a holiday—we have done the most unholy things. No, it is not a fact. We did not do this hara-kiri on the 4th of November. You may recall, Mr. Prime Minister, that we did communicate to all your constituents our anguish, the decision of our Working Committee, the anguish about the manner in which the things were moving. Should I quote a few words? Should it be out of the context? What anguish have we expressed? We said.

> "In a given situation in the country, a Scheduled Caste woman, as a Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, would be further considered to consolidate the secular forces to prevent the communal forces to take over Uttar Pradesh.

Was it a wrong message from the Congress? Was it not a mandate that was given to you? Was it contrary to the desire of all of you? Did we quarrel on the personal issue? But we could not match you. We do not like to go into the debate. The Minister of Home Affairs, Shri Indrajit Gupta, is sitting here. I have no hesitation to say it.

I have no hesitation in saying that when I became a Member of the Fifth Lok Sabha, Shri Indrajit Gupta, the hon. Home Minister who is sitting here, was my inspiration—he is still my inspiration—not only as a Parliamentarian but for his way of thinking on the national issues and on the imperialist designs in the country which are there to destabilise the nation. We might use sarcastic words about his statements but even he felt about it in many ways. Is it not a fact that he felt sad that the things which are in our hands could not be consolidated just because of a few persons? Is it not a fact? Is it not an admission of fact, Mr. Prime Minister?

We did not elect you as the Prime Minister just for delivering a speech on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address. We elected you to draw the attention of the nation to the fact that communal forces are not a guarantee to the nation, but the secular foundations are gaining strength everyday. Did you, Mr. Prime Minister, try to step in that direction for a day? Did you try this before and after the elections?

I am not questioning you on Punjab. Distinguished Barnalaji is here. Do you not know how much sacrifice he made after the death of Shri Longowal when the Punjab Accord was signed? We knew that after the Accord, Congress would not win the elections there; we knew that after the Accord in Assam Congress would not win the elections there, AGP would win. But we said, let AGP win; let democracy win; let the power of bullets go. For that reason, you have lost Longowalji. Did we not lose Indiraji? A number of Sikh people were murdered in Delhi. We, the Congressmen of the second and third generation, appeal to you with folded hands to forget those days. We are rebuilding a new structure. We have no hesitation to say in future that the killings of Bhindrawalen and all those misguided youths who were equally our brothers are as painful as the assassination of Indiraji, who is a martyr. We do feel sad. You please try to understand the agony through which we passed. Is it not a fact that we fought against terrorism in Punjab? Is it not a fact that we simply stood stunned when we could not get the body of late Rajiv Gandhi and were left thinking as to how to place it on the funeral pyre? Are not all these cases of contribution and sacrifice? Is it all for power? Are all these not for a cause?

Mr. Prime Minister, at that time you were only given the mandate to act as the Prime Minister to unite the secular forces. Did you not behave in a partisan manner then? Did you not conduct yourself for individual interest to see as to who got what seat. What has happened today? When you became the Prime Minister, we all had a hope. We placed you as the leader at the top and rallied behind you without sharing power. We thought we would go ahead with this till the last. If we have done any omission or commission, punish us. We would rebuild a new Congress, come what may. The nation then would be protected from the threat of the forces of destabilisation and communal elements. Did we argue anything?

What was done in Punjab and Kashmir? Thank God, Dr. Farooq Abdullah is there in Kashmir now. In Kashmir the battle was not merely as to how to win elections. The battle was for article 370, apart, of course, from the battle against the terrorists and extremists. It was a battle against the abolition of article 370. Mr. Prime Minister, was there any meeting in this regard with the representatives of the Parties that are sitting here? About Kashmir we are all together and we are against this malicious campaign against article 370. Did you respond to the political urges and to the demands of this nation?... (*Interruptions*)

Please allow me to conclude. I am not talking about election campaigns. I am talking about the unity and consolidation of the secular forces in this country. We do have differences in the States. In our State, we have differences. I am not bringing those things here. The day the Mosque was demolished, Shri Somnath Chatterjee who is here would recall, the moment it was done, the hon. Chief Minister gave us a phone call. We all—myself, Kumari Mamata Banerjee and others—sat together. What did we do then? We decided that there should not be any clash. Everything should be protected and no such thing should be repeated in Bengal. Did we not do that? This is not all for power. This is not all manipulations and machinations.

How did our anguish come? Mr. Prime Minister, really speaking, candidly speaking, honestly speaking and confessing, we consider that you have marginalised the basic importance and significance of the consolidation of the secular forces in this country. That day we felt that the United Front is okay but possibly the driver with the steering is not driving the vehicle in the proper direction. That was our anguish, Mr. Prime Minister, not against you as an individual, as Mr. Deve Gowda a gentleman, but against the Prime Minister, Mr. Deve Gowda.

It is not our charge. What was the agony? BJP has charged Congress saying, it owes an explanation as to what it means by the security concept. Yes, we will have to alert you, Mr. Prime Minister. I do not know who is advising in the PMO. You prepared a stage for security talks with Pakistan at the Secretary level delegation. It was a welcome step. Gujral Ji read out a statement in the House on the Senior Citizen Concessional Visa from Pakistan. Did we not applaud, did we not stand by him and support him? Had we got any intention to pull you down on the floor to suit our purpose, we could have joined the BJP in their Motion under Rule 184. Did we do that? On the contrary, the Speaker's ruling itself, Mr. Prime Minister, was directly or indirectly a stricture on the collective responsibility and functioning in the Cabinet. Did we make it an issue of debate? Did we embarrass you for a single day? We did not. We could understand what is happening.

I congratulate Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee for raising it in the House twice and alerting the Government to take cognizance of the game plan of VHP on Kashi and Mathura. At that time, Mr. Prime Minister, the Government was not formed in UP. We have contacts in UP. Our Party may not be in power in UP today. Our volunteers are spread all over the country. We have hundred years old roots throughout the country. My own friends and colleagues have been in Mathura. I have been the Youth Congress President for five years. Our colleagues spread over the country carry messages as to what is the threat and what is the preparation. What message you have taken out of it? How did you respond? You thought it was only a casual remark made by a Member in the House. Is that enough? Did you call all the Parties to discuss such a serious situation even if it comes under the Government of Ms. Mayawati today? If she is helpless and is under their pressure, we should think collectively as to how we should plan and help that lady. In what manner we should carry over the campaign? You may say whatever you may like but I may tell you, that campaign is alive. The preparation for the campaign is very strong. Did you respond to that Mr. Prime Minister? You did not. You took it casually.

Twenty four hours before, when the talks were supposed to be held with Pakistan, the Pakistan President from Islamabad publicly issued a statement saying something like the 'extremists in Kashmir are my friends'. I do not wish to read out the statement of the President of Pakistan. But there was not a single condemnation, nor a strong note from the Prime Minister went to Islamabad before the talks were to be held. Does it enhance the dignity and prestige of a nation called India in this sub-continent and in the whole world?

Mr. Prime Minister, we are all for solution with Pakistan. One of your interviews, possibly you may not have given that interview, was quoted or misquoted. You PR Department is very poor. I am glad that you have admitted that the officers and the Secretaries are not obeying you. It is enough for you, Mr. Prime Minister, to think that you are to quit. You have given one interview in the *Khaleej Times*. May I read out that interview? You have said, "Minor adjustment in Kashmir within the ambit of Simla Agreement could be conceived of". That message is a message of compromise on security. We perceive it as a message of compromise on security.

It is not the culture of the Congress Party, which has hundred years of experience behind it, to sit in the Working Committee over a cup of coffee and pass Resolutions. We do think. We do visualise. Are we happy to tell you all these things? We are not. That is why, Mr. Prime Minister we sent you a communication on the

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4th November itself to think over, talk, sort out, revise your policy and change your direction. This was done not on 4th November but on 16th February. But your whole approach was very casual. Today is the age of electronic media and we saw the nation carrying the message that to Mr. Deve Gowda, this is nothing. You have said, "So, what? I will go tomorrow".

His going back to Bangalore tomorrow, or his sitting here is not important. What is important is the mandate given to him and the responsibility entrusted to him. That is what is important. If he does not respond to that urge, is it not a problem for the nation? That is what has been done. We have not compromised on any principle or policy on that issue.

I would not like to say anything about economic issues. May be there are minor reservations on the Budget here and there. We could have taken care of them later on. I do agree with many of my friends in the constituent parties. But did the Prime Minister give enough thrust to the anti-poverty programmes?

We may have political differences with the Chief Minister of my State, Shri Jyoti Basu. In an article in his party daily *Ganashakti* on its thirtieth anniversary, he wrote as to how he was pained by the manner in which the Prime Minister had compromised on the basic poverty alleviation programme of IRDP and how he marginalised the whole programme. Is it not a fact that on the 16th of March, the senior members of the Left constituents of the United Front, Shri Bardhan, Shri Surjeet, Shri Chitta Basu gave the Prime Minister a signed memorandum asking him as to why the Bill for the agricultural labourers, the poorest of the poor, was not coming? Did they not express their anguish on many other economic issues? They did not withdraw their support, I am not saying that, but the widely accepted report is there that the Left expresses apprehensions on the sincerity in the implementation of the CMP. Through a signed memorandum, the Left warned the Prime Minister that things were going in a wrong direction. Those are economic issues and I am not bringing those things in now.

Politically, Mr. Prime Minister, you are not merely a Prime Minister of the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s or even the 90s. You are a Prime Minister of an era in which the collective wisdom of you people, about anti-Congressism has brought the other side of the House to this size. If you go on harping on the score of anti-Congressism again, we may be vanquished but they will cover the whole of that side. That is your desire, Mr. Prime Minister. To read between the lines, you go on doing it.

The Left gave you the alarm in terms of the memorandum. Shri Jyoti Basu gave you the alarm in terms of the article. Shri Biju Patnaik gave you the alarm in terms of his interview to the Home TV. We gave you the alarm on the fourth; we gave you the alarm on the sixteenth; and finally, when we found that things were going beyond to the extent that you were not addressing the real problems, and the dangers that were coming, we felt that it was time to ask our friends in the United Front, "Would you please try to change the leader?" You may argue, "If that was your desire, why did you stake a claim?" It is a technical matter. Even today we say that, Mr. Prime Minister, you search the heart of every Congressman in the country. We may have differences with all the regional parties in the States, that is altogether different. But none of us will say, that for our differences with the regional parties, or for our differences with the CPI(M), or for our differences with the CPI, we desire that the others be allowed to make a takeover and change the whole structure of the Constitution, the dream of Mahatma Gandhi, and the concept of the freedom movement in the country, as you desire. That is not our desire. That is not our dream. Our party sacrifices not a minimum.

Who said all these things? The people are saying, "In the midstream of the Budget you have done it." What is the midstream of Budget? I think, the Budget can wait but the threat to the secular foundations cannot be allowed to go on, shall be thwarted first and then everything can be done.

Once upon a time, Mahatma Gandhiji said, "Education can wait but Swaraj cannot." Today we feel that the Budget can wait but the threat of communal forces to hit the secular foundations cannot be allowed to go on under the circumstances. That cannot be done...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

Not people of your party but only we can say that You can see and review the developments that had taken place since the death of Mahatma Gandhi and keep on mourning for that. Please do not ask us anything. ...(*Interruptions*)

[English]

I know BJP's position. (*Interruptions*) BJP thought that Congress would split. No. We will not split...(*Interruptions*) You punish us. If you feel so you punish us. You throw us to heavens. (*Interruptions*) I appeal to you, and through you to the Prime Minister, that so far as I understand i was not in that movement. Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Jaya Prakashji led a movement with all of you and put them in the street to share the glory. Jaya Prakashji used to say—I heard one of his greatest speeches at the Boat Club, '*naitikta*'. Morality and conscience is most important than anything else. (*Interruptions*) And Mr. Prime Minister, my appeal is not to you. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: No running commentary, please. Please listen.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI: I feel, Mr. Prime Minister, the moment we had withdrawn you should not have taken it as a personal thing, you should have resigned and immediately asked, "Is it against my Government, my constituents and my constant belief in the CMP and the secular approach, or is it something in-between?" That I could understand. But you thought 'I will go to the floor to explain my stand'. You explain your stand. We have nothing against you personally. But you have failed. You have marginalised the importance of the nation in the international arena.

We are in total isolation in the international arena today. India is in total isolation in the globe today. Mr. Prime Minister, I shed my tears when the British Prime Minister came to Calcutta and you were the Indian Prime Minister. It was for the Indian Prime Minister to decide at what time the British Prime Minister should meet him. But you had to get the time from him to meet the British Prime Minister who was on his way to Bangalore. He was in your land, in Indian land. Has it ever happened in India?

The initiative of G-15 was taken by Malaysia, not by India. India was the giant. Did you ever try to discuss this matter with your Cabinet colleagues? Mr. Prime Minister, I appeal to you. You may say that our past achievements are bad and that your ten months' achievements are good. We are not questioning any of your achievements. We are not comparing your ten months and our five years. We can table many figures, that is not the debating point now. We know that your time is limited. How could you do wonders in ten months? We do not say that. But the casual manner in which you have handled, the approach you have taken, you only acted simply as a Prime Minister as any other bureaucrat feels, that they are the officers; you thought that you were the head of the constituents to run the South Block. But our aspiration was that you are the head of a secular democratic consolidation that will give a direction, the ultimate order, to the nation. Here, Mr. Prime Minister, you failed.

12.43 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

First you tried to marginalise the significance of the nation in the eyes of the world. Then, you tried to marginalise the consolidation of the secular forces. And then finally you tried to marginalise the Congress, the party you may like or dislike—that is not important—and tried to encourage the bogey of anti-congressism. I again repeat. The anti-congressism may pay a dividend, but anti-congressism will not pay, the ultimate order, in the country. Who will fight these people in Rajasthan, Mr. Prime Minister? It is the Indian National Congress. You may like it or may not like it. Who will fight them in Gujarat, Mr. Prime Minister, as per your secular order? It is the Indian National Congress, Mr. Prime Minister, and none else. Who will fight them in Maharashtra, Mr. Prime Minister? It is the Indian National Congress and a few friends from that side. Who will fight them in Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Prime Minister? It is Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav. He will be the leader and we will share him. Who will fight them, Mr. Prime Minister, in Bihar? It is your party. I agree. We will support your stand. Who will fight these people, Mr. Prime Minister, in Madhya Pradesh? It is our party. Who will fight these people in Delhi, in Himachal Pradesh, in Haryana and in Punjab? Have you ever conceived this total national perspective that your super anti-congressism would be at the cost of the destiny of the nation? Did you ever realise? That is why, you failed, Mr. Prime Minister. The time has come. The Left might have sent a communique to warn you on the economic issues.

Individually, he might have expressed his concern. But, Mr. Prime Minister, we would like to tell you that we have documented our view. We thought that this will help further reconsolidation of the secular forces. It is up to you, Mr. Prime Minister, to act. Do not think that we have charges against you. We have not brought all those things. We are not bringing any individual issue. It is not an issue to debate in that order. We had high hopes. Many times we failed. We have discussed it among ourselves. The BJP may be accusing us as if we are the one who have withdrawn the support and did a massacre of the nation. We do all bad things for democracy, and for the value of the institution. I do not like to repeat all those values. We looked forward to you as a focus point of the secular consolidation of Indian democracy at this critical juncture. I am sorry to say, Mr. Prime Minister, that you have failed to discharge the responsibility and to steer the nation in a proper order. I know today that we will not get any support from any quarter. Today we will be justified in saying what Tagore had said:

"Jadi tor dak shune keu ne ashe
tabe ekla chalore
Jadi sabai thake mukh phiraye
sabai kare bhoy
tabe paran khule mukh phute
tor moner katha ekla balore"

He said: "If any one comes to your call and keeps quiet, if everyone is scared and stands aloof, then speak out your mind fearlessly and go ahead. If there is no light, even the storm in the sky will show you the light and go ahead".

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Motion seeking confidence of this House in the Council of Ministers and the Prime Minister. I rise to support the Motion not only because I am a Member of the Council of Ministers but also because I believe what this Government did.

In a way I want it all open by reminding the House that we are, this year, celebrating the 50th year of Indian Independence, and I was hoping that in this 50th year of the Indian Republic, the debate that we would have would be of an order befitting the dignity of this House. I was hoping the speeches that were delivered here would not only enlighten us to decide the Government's policies wherever we need it but would also come under assessment in a correct perspective. Unfortunately, as yet, I find even now this point is missing.

My young friend, Shri Dasmunsi, is an old colleague of mine I would say.

I was saying that I heard with great and rapt attention the speech of my young friend Shri P.R. Dasmunsi. I call him a young friend because I was one of those who saw him coming in the Youth Congress with his fervor on all these days. But generally, he did not travel upwards. This, unfortunately, continues to be his accomplishment even now.

I was, all the time, trying to find out what he was trying to tell us, what he was trying to convey to us so that we from our side can also tell something in defence of that. The only point that I could pick up, and I will attend to it a slightly later, is that I think, he must be the single person in the whole of India who believes that India has been isolated in the world.

I do not know, if he was present this week in Delhi when the Non-Aligned Movement Conference was held. I hope, he knows that 113 countries were present in the Non-Aligned Conference; that 113 countries represent two-thirds of humanity and they had come here not only because they wanted to honour India, but they also came here to pay homage to Jawaharlal Nehru.

I was hoping that if not for my sake and if not for Shri Deve Gowda's sake, he would, at least, pay some compliments for Jawaharlal's sake, who was the author, mother and father of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Non-Aligned Movement Conference reiterated three things. It reiterated the unity of a developing world. It reiterated the unity of those countries which at one time or the other were victims of colonialisation. It reiterated the unified determination of those countries that would resist the pressures of those who were trying to hegemonise the country and create a new order which is not acceptable to the vast majority of the people. I was expecting a word of praise from him and I was hoping that while he may not, as I said, praise the Government or the Prime Minister, immediately he would, at least, try to recall Jawaharlal's legacy which we adopted in this Fiftieth Year of India's Independence. I believe that by isolation, if he means isolation from those who live in Washington, then, yes we are isolated.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Sir, it is not audible.

SHRI RAM NAIK (Mumbai North): What Shri Somnath Chatterjee is discussing with others is coming through his mike.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: He is always wrong.

MR. SPEAKER: I thought, that would be advantageous to you as you come to know of his secrets.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Sir, I am not going to give more of my time to what my worthy friend has said. I think, this debate is very important for us to keep in focus the issue that are involved and go on talking about the issues. If I may say so, when I talk about the issues, we must understand the policies which for the last ten months this Government has been trying to follow.

I say with satisfaction that the policies, in the sphere of Foreign Policy particularly, that I have been trying to focus on have been applauded the country over. It is a fact that the competence and achievements in these ten months had three basic dimensions. We were keen from the very beginning and we continue to believe that the Indian Foreign Policy must enjoy the consensus of the nation and it has enjoyed.

I pay compliments to my friends Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee on one side, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao on the other and on our side to many parties that are composed in that every major decision that we took was backed by the consensus.

What were the major decisions we took? The first major decision which was taken by us pertained to CTBT. The idea of CTBT was born in this House itself. I remember that when the Vote of Confidence about the BJP Government or perhaps the Deve Gowda Government was going on, my dear old friend Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had drawn my attention and we had made a commitment on the floor of this House that we would uphold the dignity of the country. We have.

We have unified the nation behind the CTBT. We did not yield to any pressure from any side.

Many pressures came. Some punishments also came. And one punishment which came was in the form of defeating us in the Security Council. We took it in our stride because we knew it all the time that when you take a dignified stand and then the nation stand up like

this unitedly, then, of course, we can stand up and look after ourselves. Therefore, I say that the second dimension of Indian foreign policy has been continued. There is a continuity from Jawaharlal Nehru's days till today and this continuity includes the regime in which Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the Foreign Minister. I am not referring to 13 days of his Prime Ministership. That was also important. And, therefore, when Shri Jaswant Singh, just a while ago, was talking about the criticism of what is being done in our neighbourhood, I would like to read something, Sir, for your interest and also for the interest of the House. I quote:

> "Attempts to drag India's relations with other countries in election controversies by Shrimati Gandhi and her companions have been a serious set back to the process of evolving a consensus based foreign policy. Their allegations that the Janata Government—of which he was a Foreign Minister—sacrificed the national interest, became extra accommodative towards our neighbours with a view to earning cheap popularity is entirely baseless. The interests of different countries in this part of the world are independent and they can progress mainly on the basis of mutual cooperation. Being a large country, it is India's duty to set for the world an example of good neighbourly relationship with the adjoining smaller countries..."

This is the Resolution of the BJP and not my Resolution. Is it not a continuity of the policy that we have been following? Is it not something which Shri Jaswant Singh now sees flaws in?

When we signed the Bangladesh Treaty, I said it in the House with courage and assertion that very political party of India had backed us and, that is why, we succeeded in it. I take pnde in this, not because of a personal pride, it is a pride of India, it is a pride of a nation that it knows when to stand together and when to differ. We differ in this House on several things but increasingly and every time we have felt that while correcting the foreign policy and diplomacy, the legacy, the continuity and the consensus have to be preserved. We have preserved it. We have honoured it. Therefore, from the CTBT down to the Bangladesh Treaty or any other thing, I can claim—I hope that no hon. friend will differ—that on any issue where we have not consulted the Opposition on the one side and our collaborating partners including the Congress on the other. Therefore, the Congress friends to say that they were not consulted is neither fair nor true. They were consulted on every foreign policy issue in detail and also were shared the documents with. We also shared the documents with Shri Atalji, also with the parties that sit behind us. That is how, we have been building our foreign policy.

Let us, therefore, now keep in mind the fact that basically the foreign policy of India was neither born in 1980 nor is born now. It was born during the freedom struggle itself. I do not know whether my young friends had participated in the freedom struggle or not, I belong to that generation. I look at Shri Chandra Shekhar, who is sitting here. He belongs to that generation. We had the privilege of participating in the freedom struggle. During the freedom struggle we spelt out our foreign policy. What was the foreign policy that the freedom struggle spelt out? It was spelt out as independence of action, autonomy of choice. And, therefore, while the word 'nonalignment' may have been used later, this was spelt out in the freedom struggle itself. And, therefore, I say with a great deal of courage and assertion that that is the choice we have preserved. That is the choice we have preserved while rejecting the CTBT. You will kindly recall that there were those, outside the world, who look at the world as a whole hegemony. They thought that India will ultimately yield at 11 hours and 59 minutes. Eleven hours and fifty-nine minutes came and went by. India did not yield.

I think, this Government has a reason to feel proud of it that no pressure of any type, no cajoling of any type, no punishment of any type could make us bend. And for that, I would say this. It is not a personal credit to me. It is a credit to the nation. And also let us be fair and let us be honest that the credit goes to the Prime Minister who leads the country at this moment.

13.00 hrs.

It is because he stood for the foreign policy with me. My Cabinet colleagues also stood with me on this foreign policy. Therefore, I would also say that from day one, it was important for us and I think that we should keep in mind the fact that from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to Shri H.D. Deve Gowda, I repeat, a national consensus has been preserved and it should be preserved. Anybody from any party might come and sit here, it should happen and it can happen in a democratic polity that parties can change. But I know that no worthwhile person would change the foreign policy of India.

The former Prime Minister, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao is sitting here. What did Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao do in five years? He also followed the policy in the same way. As a leader, many times, he asked Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee to go the United Nations. Many times, he asked me to go to the United Nations. Many times, he asked us to go to Geneva. Why did he do it? Let us understand this. He was also upholding that legacy and that legacy was that when you come to foreign policy, do not look at it in the sense of one party versus another party.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Gujral, would you continue after the lunch? Or would you like to conclude your speech in 10 minutes' time?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Sir, I will come back after lunch.

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet at two o'clock.

13.01 hrs.

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

14.05 hrs.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at Five Minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.

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

[English]

MOTION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS—*Contd.*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri I.K. Gujral is to continue his speech.

[Translation]

No Minister is here to speak.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): He himself is the Minister, Sir.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I thought that it was Mr. Speaker who wanted to say something. Gujralji, you can speak now.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): Sir, before the lunch break, I was drawing the attention of this House and you, Sir, as to how the Indian legacy beckoned us to craft the Indian foreign policy. This beckoning is not coming to us today, it came to us during the freedom struggle itself. I was saying that the Indian freedom struggle, I think, had one unique feature and that unique feature was not only non-violence and *satyagraha* but also that we decided all our policy frameworks—thanks to the leaders of that time who were able to visualise as to what type of policy would the Indian foreign policy be. One of the important factors in that policy, they had believed, would be that the Indian foreign policy must be independent; it must not be influenced by anybody; all its decisions should be in the interest of the nation and what the Government of the time perceives and the nation of the time perceives should be in national interest.

I had submitted, and I repeat, that the fortunate part of our legacy also has been that ever since the days of Jawaharlal Nehru, all those who occupied the seat in the foreign office and also Prime Minister's office, upkept this legacy. This legacy basically was that we in India had suffered a great deal during the colonial era and, therefore, we had a great deal of affinity and friendship and cooperation with those who were also under the colonial yoke. That is why you will recall—and this is the 50th year of that—that fifty years ago, Asia Conference was held here. In the Asia Conference, Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhiji had visualised that Indian freedom would never be complete till all the colonies were decolonised. Not only that, they had also at that time associated themselves in the freedom struggle and in the independence of India, with the apartheid of South Africa where colour discrimination was taking place. Therefore, in these 50 years whoever came to office—and I pay compliment to all my colleagues on this side and opposite all of us primarily attached importance to this dimension of Indian foreign policy. The word 'non-alignment' was coined much later. But in the beginning also it was said that we shall not be influenced by anybody. We will decide on issues as they suit us. And we have done it. This is the legacy that we are trying to preserve. Therefore, I have said often in this House, and I repeat, that Indian foreign policy has to preserve that legacy and uphold it, and also, at the same time, stay in a strong element of continuity and also, more important, consensus.

I think whatever our differences may be, as I said a while ago, and I repeat, this is an interesting dimension of Indian democracy and strength that whatever differences we have been having on various issues, broadly speaking, on foreign policy this nation has been backed by the national consensus under all Governments. A while ago I had read here, and I do not want to read again, the statement even by the Jan Sangh at that time, in 1981, and, therefore, I see that as the central component of the Indian foreign policy, and it continues.

Having said that, I would also like to keep in mind the fact that those foreign policy legacies are something which have to be kept up.

Panditji had spelt out a great deal for us. I think this nation will always remain grateful to him for his vision, his commitment and his courage to stand up and fight back those who were trying to hegemonise him was always kept in mind. Some people felt that, perhaps, in the Cold War era we were on this side or that side. No. We were always on the side of India and not on this side or that side.

You will kindly recall, Sir, that Stalin had called Jawaharlal Nehru the running dog of imperialism. Dulles had also bestowed similar categorisation on Jawaharlal