

Indo-US relations on March 3, 1999, to House International Relations Committee.

(c) Government make all efforts and our Missions take every opportunity to make clear our national interests and concerns and this effort is also directed at the US Congress Government has a positive approach to Congressman Ackerman and members of the Congressional India Caucus and looks forward to working with them on issues of mutual interest.

Agricultural Production

2301. SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to double its agricultural production and make India hunger free in 10 years;

(b) if so, whether in the Ninth Five Year Plan more thrust has been provided on the agricultural production;

(c) if so, whether any 3-pronged strategy for food security has been worked out to meet the basic food requirements of the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. The agricultural development strategy for the Ninth Five Year Plan is essentially based on the policy of food security announced by the Government to double the food production and make India hunger free in ten years. Food production would include not only foodgrains *i.e.* rice, wheat, coarse cereals and pulses but also major food items including oil, sugar, fruits and vegetables, egg, meat and fish. While the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying is evolving an Action Plan for achieving accelerated growth of livestock for doubling food production in the next ten years in consultation with the Planning Commission, the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is preparing an Action Plan for doubling the production of foodgrains in the next 10 years which envisage promotion of cropping system approach for increasing production and productivity of cereal crops, encouraging use of green manure, greater propagation of newer location specific High Yielding Varieties as well as propagation of improved crop production technologies etc.

Nuclear Weapons

2302. SHRI A.C. JOS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether China has urged the five nuclear powers to sign a treaty of not to use their nuclear weapons against each other;

(b) if so, whether India has also been asking for the same;

(c) whether China had proposed this policy in 1994 and agreed to hold a discussion on this issue;

(d) whether in view of the tests by India and Pakistan these nuclear powers are agreeable to treat India and Pakistan also as one of the nuclear States; and

(e) if so, whether this is likely to reduce tension in South Asia?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) India has announced a policy of 'no-first-use' and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. We have also indicated our readiness to negotiate binding agreements on no-first-use, bilaterally or multilaterally.

(c) Yes Sir. In March 1994, China renewed an offer it had made on December 23, 1993, wherein it had called on the nuclear weapon State to begin negotiations, in Beijing, aimed at concluding a treaty on the no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

(d) and (e) These states have taken the view that India and Pakistan can not be treated as nuclear-weapon States because of the legal definition contained in the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). However, India's dialogue with key interlocutors, including US, France, Russia and UK, is based on the premise that India is a state possessing nuclear weapons and will maintain a minimum credible nuclear deterrent in accordance with its assessment of its national security requirements. Government believes that the validation of India's nuclear capability corrects an imbalance and thus promotes stability in the security environment, regionally and globally, and could provide an impetus for concrete progress towards nuclear disarmament.