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FELICITATIONS TO THE SPEAKER

23 May, 1996

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I feel extremely happy while felicitating you as the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. You have been elected unanimously. It is indicative of your popularity. But at the same time, it also signifies the fact that in spite of political differences, Indian democracy and this highest representative institution of the Indian democracy can unite on important matters and can take decisions unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you have the privilege of being born in independent India. You belong to that part of India which is known as North East. This region is an important part of India but somehow feels itself neglected. Sometimes, people living there feel that they are not only far from Delhi but are far from hearts also. There is no reason for nurturing such a feeling. I am sure that your election will help in lessening this feeling.

You have shouldered many responsibilities. We have seen you working in many capacities. Perhaps there has been no such issue related to the Central Government which has not been solved with your skill. You have been popular as the Labour Minister and even your opponents have appreciated you. You have also been the Chief Minister of Meghalaya. Your election has enhanced the dignity of this august House. You are a devoted follower of the great religion, Christianity. Your sense of tolerance, feeling of fraternity and quality of taking all together are the assets which will now be available at national level.

I am confident that under your leadership, the rights of this House as well as that of the Member will be protected. People of India have elected their representatives. Now, it is the turn of these representatives to prove their mettle. As I said, Lok Sabha is the highest representative body. We have to maintain the dignity of this House and keep the democracy intact. I have noticed that some of our old friends have been re-elected. Now, their charm to move towards the middle of the House, instead of sitting in their seats will certainly be less. There is a need to run the House with dignity. Wherever we deviate, you can guide us to the right path. You have to take all together. We wholeheartedly wish you success. We assure you of our best cooperation. I once again congratulate and felicitate you.

BACK NOTE

I Felicitations to the Speaker, 23 May, 1996

NIL

MOTION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

27 May, 1996

I move :

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

Before I move a motion of confidence on the floor of the House, I would like to pay my humble tributes to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru whose death anniversary is falling today—

When I was first elected to this House, Pandit Nehru was the Prime Minister of India at that time. I had seen him at work for several years. In those days I used to sit on that side. I have not forgotten that side even now. But I used to sit far behind because our number was very small. Today, a change has taken place and BJP has gradually increased its strength and influence and thus first became the main opposition party and now it has emerged as the single largest party in this election. This change did not take place all of a sudden. It reflects the changing process of history.

In the elections held recently, the people have given their mandate. It is high time that we ponder over the mandate seriously. We have emerged as the largest party. We should keep in mind the position obtained by other political parties as well. The Congress party had 260 members in the House when the Lok Sabha was dissolved. Now their number has gone down to 136. This is due to the mandate given by the people. This mandate should be accepted gracefully. It needs some introspection. Their strength has come down to half. The strength of Left Front has also come down from 57 to 52. In West Bengal their strength has dwindled in terms of votes in Lok Sabha as well as Legislative Assembly. Their strength has also gone down in Bihar. The strength of Janata Dal in the previous Lok Sabha was 56 from Bihar which has been reduced to 44 now.

The BJP contested Lok Sabha elections in Bihar in alliance with Samata Party and it has got massive success. On the other hand, the strength of Congress has gone down not only in Lok Sabha but in several other States also where they have lost people's faith. Other parties have formed their Governments in those States. Why this change has taken place? What does it indicate?

This should also be noticed that the parties which are united together to express lack of confidence against my Government today, had contested the elections on different planks. They contested against one another. They contested the election by levelling serious allegations against one another. There was no alliance among these parties before the election.

Even today there is no common programme of these allies, first the Government will be formed and the programme will be devised later on.

What is the basis of your alliance? What is its conceptual basis? This controversy is going on for so many days as to why the President has invited me to form the Government. It has disturbed the sleep of so many people, some people have uttered such words for the President which should not have been used. But what else the President could do in the post election scenario? Whether he should have called the Congress which was defeated in the elections and lost the mandate and whose rule the people had rejected? Whether he should have called a weird assortment of heterogeneous elements which had not come into existence till then?

If the hon. President has invited the BJP as the largest single party he has acted according to the constitutional propriety and the democratic norms.

I have been asked to seek a vote of confidence by 31st of this month today, it is 27th. We could have waited till 31st if we had so desired, and could have brought this motion on 30th. This would have been in accordance with the directions given to us. But, we have come forward with the motion on 27th itself because we have faith in the democracy and it is not our way to build majority somehow. This is not our way.

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Mr Speaker Sir, I have come with the motion today. Three days are left. However, the previous Lok Sabha is witness and the record of the House is a proof to show how the minority was transformed into majority overnight. When the voters were unaware as to what was happening, the honour of democracy was being robbed, at that time honesty was being bargained and horse trading of Members of Parliament was openly taking place. Since that matter is still *sub judice*, I do not want to say much on it. But we saw how a minority Government turned into a majority Government. We too could have resorted to that method. But we refused to go that way. We would like to

assure you that we will not commit the sinful act of adopting unjust method of resorting to corrupt practices or bargaining honesty for coming to power or for remaining in power.

Democracy rests on moral values. Basically that is a morality based system. The previous Government had the option of entering into alliance honestly. There was no need to split opposition parties. There was no need to overstep anti-defection law. The alliance should be formed honestly and transparently. If political parties propose to come together with authentic transparency, they should do so but on the basis of a common programme and not on the basis of their share of participation in the Government. They should not deposit lakhs of rupees in the banks for this purpose. If the country has really entered into the phase of coalition Governments, then the old experiences of 1977 or 1989 should not be repeated. Is it not the demand of the hour? Should not we resolve this?

It has been the history of Congress that first they extend their support, then soon after they draw it. This is the sequence which is coming down from Travancore days. If there is a change in the ideology of the Congress, then we will welcome it. But its history till date speaks a different story. The coalition Governments collapse on such issues that have no bearing on the national life. At the moment we need to learn the art of working together. This does not apply only when different political parties come together. This applies within the party as well. I do not know what curse is there on this country. I do not know what is plaguing us today. Whenever there is crisis in the country, people unitedly face it but as soon as it is over, they indulge in fighting one another and create unnecessary and irrelevant issues to undermine others.

I am not an exception to it. My party is also not an exception. This is the work which no single party can do. We tried to do but we did not succeed. This is for all of us to decide collectively. I do not know what political configuration the nation will acquire tomorrow onwards. But one thing is clear that the Government should follow the middle path, irrespective of whether there is a one party rule or multiparty rule. The Government should be dedicated to the cause of people. Each and every conduct of the Government should be marked by transparency and authenticity. This did not take place. This did not happen during the last five years. Why it did not happen? Are we sure that this will happen in future?

If United Front comes forward with a programme and assures us that because of political ambition and obsession for power no bitter experiences of the past will be allowed to repeat, only then people may feel a bit assured. Otherwise people are very unhappy. There is an apprehension of instability looming large. There is a concern for the future of India. On 29th May, 1964, as a member of Rajya Sabha, I made a speech while paying my tributes to Panditji. I would like to quote. I had said that Pandit Nehru was a fighter for the cause of freedom and was its saviour. Today, that freedom is in peril.

We will have to protect it with all our might. The national unity and integrity which he championed stands endangered today. We will have to maintain it at all costs. Today, apprehensions are being raised about the future of Indian democracy which was established and made a great success by Pandit Nehru. We have to make democracy successful by maintaining our unity, discipline and self-confidence. That leader has gone, leaving behind his followers. The sun has set. We will have to make our way under the starry nights. This is the period of great test. If we all manage to dedicate ourselves to a noble cause that could make a strong, capable and prosperous nation and contribute with a sense of self pride to the restoration of world peace, only then we will be able to pay our real tributes to that great soul. I conclude this part of quotation from my speech.

During the last 50 years we have made enormous progress. Nobody can deny it. At the time of election campaign I had enough materials to launch a tirade against the policies of the previous Government. But everywhere I had said that I was not one of those who deny the achievement of last fifty years. To do so would be tantamount to nullify the achievement of our nation. That would be injustice to our farmers and our labourers and infact it will not be a good gesture towards the common man of this country. At this moment, when fifty years have already elapsed since independence, and we are going to celebrate the golden jubilee of our independence, the question that arises in our mind and that should indeed arise is as to what is the condition of this country— and why we have lagged behind? Those countries which came into existence after us, have left us far behind in the race of development. Today we are regarded as one of the poorest country of the world. Here more than twenty per cent of the people live below the poverty line. The President's address refers to the villages where there is no drinking water available. We

have not been able to make primary education compulsory. Women education is being neglected. To this day the birth of a female child in the family is considered to be a curse in this country. Is it not possible that the Government take steps to mobilise public opinion and create awakening in the society? This is the work which has no room for party politics. Can we not change the curse of our nation. There is no dearth of resources in our country and if at all there is, then it can be mobilised properly. We can add to our resources. The revenue collected by imposing taxes on the people is not utilized for the benefit of the common man. But whatever resources are available with us they are also not being utilized properly. Where does that money go? By whom it is pocketed? In whose lockers this money goes? Why money is being deposited in the foreign banks even now. What steps have been taken to check it? We are making efforts for getting foreign investment. Foreign capital is welcome. If the foreign capital comes for bringing better technology, infrastructure and for promoting export-import, then we will have no objection to it. I am sure that our communist friends will also not object to it. But the point is whether we are making the optimum utilization of indigenous resources available in the country. Is it not a fact that the menace of corruption has assumed national dimensions. I remember the late Rajiv Gandhi had said that when he sent one rupee from Delhi, only 19 paise reached the people targetted for this money. I asked him as to how that miracle was taking place? He laughed and said that when rupee begins to trickle, it passes through a process. And in that process it continues to get smaller. Then it becomes difficult to identify it. Also, it may disappear. The present condition of rupee is not very good. On the one hand, the Governmental expenditure has gone up and still the trend is going unabated. We need support of all the parties for curtailing Governmental expenditure. No particular party can do it. Yes, had our former Prime Minister Narasimha Rao ji having achieved stability of his Government, made some efforts in this direction, then we would have definitely succeeded in this mission. But he was engaged in such activities that these problems failed to draw his attention.

Our foreign trade has gone down. At the beginning of the century it was 10 % then it came down to 2.5% and now it stands at 0.5%. This is the factual position. This is not for the sake of criticism. The people of the

world do not look at us as different political entities. Our neighbouring countries do not make any distinction among us. Whenever we fail, the world laughs at us. Our neighbours pass their comments on us. There is no objection if we fight sometimes. One must fight. It has been said that "Munde Munde Mattir bhenna". All the people have their different lines of thinking. But we should speak out our views fearlessly. But there are some such values of life which cannot be compromised. One such value is the question of honesty of politicians. We need impeccable leadership. Do you know the extent to which this corruption has permeated to the grass root level. There has been fodder scam in Bihar. I do not want to go into it as the matter is under investigation. Thus there is no end to it.

Just now, a Chief Minister told me that when he was going to appoint the Chairman of a State Electricity Board, some officers came to him, who wanted to grab the post of Chairman by offering me Rs. one crore, Rs. two crore and Rs. five crore. I did not ask him whom he selected for this post. But I believe his statement. Today, there is shortage of electricity in the country. We are inviting foreign capital, and we are signing agreements but we are not able to produce electricity required in this country.

I was told that a meeting of the Chief Ministers was convened but they could not arrive at a consensus apparently because of excessive political rivalry. As a result the interests of the country have taken a back seat in the field of power generation. We had fixed a target of 33 thousand megawatt. But the data that we have got to this day reveal that we have been able to add only 13 thousand megawatt to the existing capacity. Uttar Pradesh is complaining of power shortage. When I visited Bihar on an election campaign the people of that State and Mr. Nitish Kumar told me that the State remains without power four days in a week, I do not know. Our ancestors used to pray 'Tamsa ma Jyotirgamay', lead me from darkness to light. But their able successors are preparing to take the people from light to darkness. Does it not strike us at the core of our heart? Does it call for party based politics?

We have not done anything during the last ten days that would invite criticism against us and if we are given a five years tenure, we will provide a spotless administration. But there is a question of bringing about orderliness in the system of administration that we have inherited. The President's address says that we will take up the work of electoral reforms that has been pending

for the last so many years. Where from the expenses in the elections will be met? If black money is accepted for contesting elections then one cannot get out of the Web of black money even after elections. This tendency of accepting black money needs to be changed.

The Goswami Committee was constituted. It decided upon the issue of State funding and made recommendations to that effect. During the last session of the previous Lok Sabha, the Minister of Home Affairs of the erstwhile Government, Shri Chavan had stated in a meeting of the leaders of the opposition parties that the Government had in principle, accepted the proposal regarding state funding and that it was under consideration of the Cabinet and the same would be implemented prior to the ensuing elections. It is not known what fate did that proposal meet and whether the meeting of the Cabinet was held or not? It was not a recommendation of large magnitude. I do not claim that it would have plugged all the loopholes of the electoral system. There are many aspects involved in it. But, a step should have been taken in this direction. At times, some friends seem to be in favour of *status quo* in the present corrupt and costly system in order to serve their vested interests. This should not happen. Stringent measures should be taken to curb the use of black money in elections. We are ready to lend our support in this direction. You, too, should be ready to cooperate if we initiate the steps. The Lok Pal Bill has been gathering dust for several years. Is the Prime Minister above law? Which door should one knock at when one has a grievance against the Prime Minister or allegations are levelled against him. The issue whether the Prime Minister should be brought under the purview of the Lok Pal Bill or not has been discussed for years together.

That day Shri Narasimha Rao had stated that he had given his clearance to bring the Prime Minister under the purview of the Bill. When I asked about the Bill. Why it was not presented. After the adjournment of the House, that Government was ready to promulgate ordinances on matters which could have inflated its Vote Bank but not with regard to Lok Pal. An ordinance could have been promulgated in this regard also. The other day, my friends were complaining about excessive interference of the courts of law. Perhaps Comrade Indrajit Gupta had talked about the judicial activism that day. If the Prime Minister does not discharge his duties, the Executive does not take

decisions and keeps matters in limbo and in reply to a question asked about his indecisiveness, the Prime Minister says that not taking a decision is also a decision, then it does not augur well. I am saying this on the basis of newspaper reports. If the news reports are not correct, he can intimate the correct position. Considering not taking a decision as a decision, is a state of culmination of Karmyoga. Country can be administered without taking decisions. **At times the Government banked upon procrastination in order to avoid new areas of dispute and left everything to the judgement of the Courts. Now the courts have started giving verdicts in matters which ought to have been decided by the Executive and the Parliament. Why cannot the Parliament discharge its duties and responsibilities? Why the Executive cannot discharge its responsibility? In order to achieve this, the Executive should be honest and vibrant and it should not delay matters.** But, it has not been so. We want to work in this direction. Any Government that comes to power shall have to achieve that end. Otherwise, one Government may last for 12 days and the other for 6 months. That will be a great injustice to the people of the country. People have performed their duty. The electorate is not responsible for a hung Parliament. We could not probably convey to the voter our message in a proper manner. Sometimes, the poor turn-out of voters caused concern as to whether democracy has lost credibility in the eyes of the people? They think that the things will go on like this, whosoever forms the Government, Manthara had said, 'Koyi nrip hoye, hamein ka hani'. These words of Manthara will not be quoted throughout the country. Governments will be formed on the basis of horse trading and defections. The Governments should be based on programmes and assurance should be given that injustice will not be done to the people. Now people will have their say against injustice. The hon. President invited us because we emerged as the single largest party on the basis of our ideology, programmes and policies. Some of our policies have found mention in the President's Address. Mamata ji objected to only one point and I hope she agrees to the rest of the Address. I would also like to know from my other friends if there is anything objectionable in the Address. Is it not the need of the hour to take unanimous decisions, run the Government on minimum common programmes and strive to concentrate on them, leaving aside other issues. However, certain issues need to be deliberated upon.

The biggest allegation levelled against us is that we are a communal party and we lack secular credentials and as such let all the guardians of the so called secularism unite and vote the BJP out of power.

Democracy is a game of numbers which is not in our favour. We have got the largest popular mandate.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, this aspect should also be debated. Once we had a strength of only two Members in this House. First time, we had four Members.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx³**

Today, people are engaged in deep thinking. The direction of contemplation is now changing in the country. People are retesting the old conventions. I wonder whether the recommendations of the Constitution framers to secure uniform civil code for the citizens and asking the State to uphold them, were motivated by communal factors? Is that a communal issue? Why cannot we have a uniform civil law when we have a uniform criminal law. Goa has a uniform civil law. Our Muslim friends can apprise us of any difficulty they might have with regard to uniform civil code. They may seek some more time to prepare their society for the same. The other parties are also not inspiring them to change with the changing times and amend their Personal law. Personal laws are being amended in Islamic countries. There is a need for some change here also. It is an issue of gender equality but suppose they do not agree to it that formulation of a Uniform Civil Code is in accordance with the spirit of the constitution and now that the Supreme Court has vindicated it. Shall we be put in the dock and branded communal because we are saying so? This matter has nothing to do with communalism.

I felt shocked to learn, from whatever has appeared in the newspapers and I am saying on its basis that as a Prime Minister, Shri Narasimha Rao ji was delivering a speech in Uttar Pradesh before the Muslim Community and he had said that he was nothing to enact such a law against their consent I do not like, if the hon. Prime Minister of the country speaks such a language. If the Prime Minister has no power in this regard then who has the power in this country? He is the supreme representative of the people.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to cite one more example. I would not like to go into the details on this subject.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am going to cite one more example. The infiltrators are coming in a large number from one of our neighbouring countries. There are no proper arrangements at the border. No enquiry is made available. If someone comes for a job and returns after completing it, then it is a different thing. The arrangement of work permit can be made for such people but the report of the Home Ministry says that the infiltrators come in lakhs through the rivers and by hiding in the bushes. This gives rise to a serious situation. This is not the report of our Home Ministry. It is an old report that the people are coming. Now they are raising voices that it should be stopped because it is changing the shape of population in the bordering areas. The discontentment and tension are mounting there. The old rickshaw pullers in Delhi are complaining that they are getting less fare on account of these people since the incoming people are ready to work on cheaper wages.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has its own impact. Now it is said that do not speak on it and keep mum as it is related to the votes of the minorities. I am at a loss to know, why the other parties do not speak on it. None of the countries can tolerate illegal immigration in such a large scale. It is alright that it cannot be stopped fully but it is a problem and it should be checked. If we raise the voice, it is in favour of the nation and not for the votes. The people should understand it.

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Now I would like to raise one another issue.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**⁶

Mr. Speaker, Sir, India was not born during the last 50 years. It is an ancient nation. It is not a new country, that was born in 1947. The civilisation and the culture of this country is 5000 years old. It is for this reason that when the Constituent Assembly was discussing on the question of Secularism or the spirit of Secularism, different views were expressed on it. But the framers of the Constitution did not incorporate the word secular in the Constitution. The word 'Secular' was incorporated in the preamble of the

Constitution during emergency when several leaders were in jails and there was no freedom of expression. At that time amendment to the constitution was brought. Earlier, the opinion was that the preamble of the constitution should and shall not be amended but it was amended and India was declared Secular and Socialist Republic along with Democratic Republic. I have gone through the discussion on this subject carefully.

At that time every speaker belonging to the Congress Party especially Sardar Swarn Singh had emphasized that their secularism would be quite different from that of the Western countries. He said that since India is a multireligious country and secularism means that there should not be any discrimination against the followers of different religions and all religions should be equally treated. We whole heartedly accept this interpretation of religion. This is the quintessence of Hindu ideology. This marks our identity. India is a country of many religions and ideologies. There is no one religious book or prophet in this country. We have believers as well as non believers in God. Here no one was crucified or was done to death by stoning. This kind of tolerance is found in the soil of this country. They say “Ekoham Sadwipra Bahudha Vadanti” and now that philosophy has gone even beyond that. Ours is a country of different ideologies.

Shri Biju Patnaik has prevented me to raise this issue me. This is the difficulty. The Ayodhya incident took place later but we are being branded as communalists and nonsecular much before it. This sort of propaganda from your side is politically motivated and not based on facts.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is an ancient country and it has a way of life which is not confined to one particular community. That way of life is thousands of years old. Every one has contributed in building it.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, the time has come when we should see our old values in the context of changing situations today. Communalism is not of one kind. If one kind of communalism is stirred up then another kind of communalism will rise. This fact has not been realised to this day.

No call of oppression on the people on the basis of religion and ideological difference has ever been made in this country and will never be made and should not be made and if it is made then we will oppose it to the hilt. We want

to give you this assurance. India should remain a secular State. We will never make our country a theocratic State like our neighbouring countries. But does it mean that we do not have our own roots of civilisation? Does it mean that we have no values of life? We have inherited this ancient civilisation and culture which are 5000 years old. We are proud of it. This civilisation and culture have moulded our life. In what direction our life is going now a days?

I recall those days when Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru went to the Aligarh University to deliver a speech after the unfortunate partition of the country. It was a convocation function, I would quote a portion of his speech before you :

“I have said that I am proud of my inheritance and our ancestors who gave an intellectual and cultural pre-eminence to India. How do you feel about this past? Do you feel that we are sharers in it and inheritors in it and, therefore, proud of something that belongs to you as much as to me or do you feel alien to it? Was it without understanding that strange thrill which comes from the realisation that we are the trustees and inheritors of this vast treasure? You are a Muslim and I am a Hindu. We may adhere to different religious faiths or even to none but that does not take away that inheritance, that is yours as well as mine. The past holds us together whilst the present or the future divides us in a split.”

These are the views of Nehruji.

There is need to go through again whatever Nehru had written in his last document and which have become part of our curriculum. No one can brand Nehru as Orthodox. Nehru had mentioned that inheritance which we have got through centuries. He had showered praises that we keep our mind open. But it was also said that we are strong enough to stay firm on our feet. Whether this sort of common inheritance and cultural inheritance is permissible? Can we be proud of this past?

Several foreigners came here. They were accepted and admitted to our fold. We did not close our doors for those who were innocent and were uprooted. We accommodated every one. Those who were victims of oppression in their own country found shelter here. The first mosque was built in Kerala

with the permission of the Hindu king. The first Church was also built in Kerala, with permission. This is in our blood. This is in our system. There should not be discrimination on religious grounds. Everyone should have religious freedom. Everyone should be treated equally. But this is not happening. Therefore, problems are arising and people are becoming apprehensive. You will not remove these apprehensions, as you are interested in vote politics. But, I want to say that there is a need to arrive at a consensus on these matters. The Supreme Court gave its verdict on the Shah Bano case. Consensus could have been arrived at and steps towards this could have been taken. But it was not done so.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this was not discussed seriously. It should be done. We are understanding a stark truth. In this country, Hindus are in large numbers. But they are developing minority complex like feelings. If there is complex among the minority, then I can understand, as they are numerically less. They can talk of protection. And protection should be provided to them. This is the duty of the State. Therefore, when we stress on the nation's security, we also lay stress on the fact that life, property, honour and religion of every minority of the country should be protected. Along with this, it is also necessary to say that, life, property, and honour of every citizen in the country should be protected.

I was mentioning the foreigners who came to India after suffering oppression in their own country. How can the pains of those people be forgotten, who have fled Kashmir Valley after being oppressed. A large number of Hindus and also Muslims are suffering due to terrorism. But no party will speak on the need for their rehabilitation and soothing their wounds. If any one speaks, it is us, and therefore we would be branded communal. They are also citizens of the country. It is not their fault.

Sufism developed in Kashmir. It developed out of the interaction between the Hindu and Muslim thinkers. I am aware how the Muslims extend their help to the pilgrims going to Somnath temple. The pilgrims are taken on the shoulders. The financial offerings in Amarnath.

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The Muslim brothers get a share out of it. Who wants to break this tradition? This is being attempted in a planned manner. Attempt is also being

made from across the border. After all, why was Charare Sharif burnt? Those terrorists did not like that Sufism should spread in the valley of Kashmir, among the saffron beds. They did not want that people of diverse religion and castes should live in harmony. In the post-election scenario, in some quarters, it is expected that India would become weak, unstable and the nation would diverge from its objectives. I want to warn such external and internal forces that any change that would take place, would not be insurmountable. We would adapt and mould ourselves to those changes that would take place. But we would thoroughly safeguard the national interest.

There are some policies in the country, on which there is a broad consensus. The former Government also sought consensus. It has been from the days of Nehru. When I spoke for the first time on foreign policy, I told Panditji that the non-aligned policy was not his personal policy. Even if you had not been here, the country would have followed the path of non-alignment. The country cannot make the mistake of aligning with any particular group. We are a very strong and vast country and can not be cowed down. We fought for our independence and for the freedom of other nations. How can we align with any group? Non-alignment was the right policy which the nation has pursued.

But due to the end of the cold war, new problems are emerging. Security situation has deteriorated all around us. In such a transitional phase, pressures are expected to rise economic pressure as well as security pressure. As far as our Government is concerned, we will not succumb to any pressure. This assurance I want to give you. And I am sure that the entire nation and the House will extend its cooperation to me in this matter.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, while concluding my speech, I want to raise one issue.

There is unanimity in the House and in the country that due to historical reasons and due to the shortcomings in our social set up, justice has not been meted out to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Equal opportunity was not available to them and therefore they kept on lagging behind. They could not keep pace with the other groups of the society. The framers of our Constitution had reflected on this and provided for reservations, for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes, who are socially and educationally backward. All

decisions on reservations were taken unanimously. There has been a consensus on this. After the verdict of the Supreme Court on this issue, it has been decided that regarding reservations for the Backward Classes, *status quo* would be maintained, *i.e.*, in those States where reservation is more than 50 percent, it would continue. But in other States, reservations for the Backward Classes should not exceed 50 percent. Dr. Ambedkar also, in the Constituent Assembly supported the view that the reservation limit should be 50 percent. The remaining 50 percent should be left for competition. In this, the Supreme Court also discussed the issue of creamy layer. It was of the view that a Committee should be set up to identify the creamy layer. The backwards among the Backwards should be benefited first. Late Shri Karpoori Thakur of Bihar was concerned for the poorest among the poors. Those among the Backward Classes who are prosperous, who have lands, have influence in the village, are capable of progressing on their own. They are capable of standing on their own feet. There is no need for reservation for such people. But several States did not implement the Supreme Court's verdict on this issue honestly. Different reasons have been given and attempts have been made to make that verdict infructuous. In this connection there is a need to formulate a clear and definite policy after consulting all political parties and discussing different groups in the society.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is another aspect to this problem. We are committed to social justice. Justice should be done to those who have been denied it so far, and at a faster pace. Discrimination should end in society. Help of the law has been sought for this. While doing away with disparities it is essential that social ill will should not be tormented and casteism should not be encouraged. Today, the country seems to be divided on the issue of casteism. This poison of casteism is spreading in all classes of society. So much so that it can not be said with certainty that, services remain unaffected with casteism. This situation is worrisome for all. The nation is already beset with communal problem and if we do not take care of this problem, then a new problem will arise, which will harm the social structure and create problems in the villages *i.e.* in every corner of the country. We need social equality and social harmony also.

We took steps to institute and develop Panchayati Raj Institutions,

“Nindkache ghar asave shojari, *i.e.*

Nindak niyare rakhiye, aangan kuti chhabaye”

You should keep your critic near you, otherwise sycophants will spoil you. If you have a critic, he will keep you spotless without any cost. The hon. friends who.....

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to extend my special thanks to Sarvashri George Fernandes of the Samata Party, Sirpotdarji of the Shiv Sena, Barnalaji of the Akali Dal and Jai Prakash ji of the Haryana Vikas Party who have supported my Motion. Those who have criticised will get reply to their criticism. However, I would especially like to mention Shri Murasoli Maran.

I have a special word of gratitude for my dear friend Shri Murasoli Maran. Maran, I stand corrected. Despite our differences on certain issues, he was generous enough to set the record straight on the issue of horse trading by stating categorically that we did not use suitcases to convert our minority into majority. He has in fact demolished the baseless and politically motivated allegation levelled by some members. I am also glad that Thiru Maran has taken note of our resolve to restore the balance of resources in favour of States.

We have always held the opinion that the Centre cannot be strong if the States are weak. Thiru Maran is disturbed over our advocacy of one nation, one people, one culture. I am happy that he shares our perception of one nation. But I must say that he has got it all wrong on our interpretation of one people and one culture. I categorically state here that the BJP does not stand for uniformity. We recognise the celebrated India’s multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-ethnic character. This view is best reflected in a poem by none but one of India’s greatest Poets Subramaniam Bharati. That poem is entitled; “E Thaaai” *i.e.*, “My Mother” I would like to read it in Tamil. It says :

“Muppadhu kodi magamudaiyal Vyyir moimburam ondruiyal Lval cheppoumzhi pad inettudaiyal Enil Smdhanai ondrudaiya.”

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Mr. Speaker, Sir an allegation has been levelled against me that I have a lust for power and whatever I did during the last 10 days was nothing but lust

for power. This allegation has hurt me deep in my heart. Just now, I said that I have been in Parliament for 40 Years. The hon. Members have seen my behaviour and my conduct. I had been in the Government with my friends in the Janata Dal. I have never done anything wrong in pursuit of power Shri Sharad Pawar is sitting here. He was not present in the House when Shri Jaswant Singh was speaking. He said in his speech that Shri Pawar had caused split in his party to form Government with our support. Whether he formed the Government for the sake of power or for the good of Maharashtra is a different thing. But the tact remains that he caused a split in his party and cooperated with us. But I did nothing of this sort. During the course of this debate a remark has been made repeatedly that personally Vajpayee is a good leader but his party is not good.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, I won't name anybody. I did not want to name even Sharad ji. If I am offered power with a new alliance at the cost of a split in my party, I would be the last person even to remotely entertain such an idea.

“Na bhito maranadasmī kewalam dusthito yash” Lord Rama has said that ‘I do not fear death, if at all I fear, I fear bad name, I fear public odium’. My political career spanning 40 years has been as open book. But when the electorate voted us as the single largest party, should we have reflected their mandate? When the hon. President invited me to form the Government and told me that the oath of the council of Minister would take place the next day and the majority should be proved by the 31st, should I have run away from shouldering the responsibility? When I initiated the discussion, I had clarified this point also. Isn't it a fact that we have emerged as the single largest party? Now I shall come to the other arguments that are being given in this regard. On being invited to form the Government, should I have asked the Hon. President to give me some time so that I may have consultations in the party?

When the President told me that the oath ceremony will take place the next day and I was given time upto 31st May 1996 to prove majority, I offered to make best use of the time being given to me by talking to other parties in a bid to garner their support and try to create an atmosphere conducive to moving ahead on the basis of a common programme. What is objectionable in it? How does it indicate our greed of power? Moreover the decision to

form the Government was not just mine, rather it was that of the party.

Mr. Speaker, once the date *i.e.* 31st of May was fixed for a trial of strength and it could take place only on the floor of the House, We never subscribed to the view that this trial of strength should take place either in Rashtrapati Bhawan or Raj Bhawan. It therefore became necessary to summon the House and once the House is summoned President's Address is a Constitutional obligation. We could have listed some other business too for the sitting, at least we could have moved a Motion of Thanks on the President's Address but neither people on the Opposition benches permitted nor I, insisted on it, lest it should create any doubts. We looked for the earliest opportunity for the trial of strength. Hence the Motion of Confidence was brought on 27th May and today is 28 May and the matter will be decided. We could have insisted that since we have been given time upto 31st May and we will remain in power. Mr. Speaker, Sir, one should not be hit below the belt or be put under cloud. I never played this game not will ever play such a game in future. Democracy is a system. Now they are making a count of percentage of votes we got under the Westminster model of parliamentary system, that our country has adopted, number of votes or the percentage thereof which a party gets is not taken into account, what counts is the number of seats that a party wins. This system cannot serve the twin objective *i.e.* percentage or votes as well as number of seats. Our country has not adopted the List System of the proportional Representation. I, for one, have always been pointing out the defects of the Westminster system in which at times it is quite possible that a party getting lesser number of votes may get larger number of seats or the *vice versa* is also possible. In Kerala a coalition Government has come to power with just one percent margin of votes, dislodging the party in power. The difference in votes was of just one per cent but this difference which we are having presently has to be recognised. And now the total no. of votes you are having are being counted but I can make a count of your own percentage of votes which will be only to your disadvantage. They now say that they are uniting. Are they uniting for the explicit purpose of providing a stable and responsible Government in the country? I do not want to repeat, they have not chalked out a programme so far and nor they have approached the electorate with a common programme. The mandate received and the vote percentage

obtained about which they are now talking, is for different States and for divergent reasons. In Tamil Nadu it was the Congress that was fighting against DMK and not our party. The same situation obtained in Andhra Pradesh where we were nowhere in the picture. How can they say the mandate is against us when it was the congress that they were fighting against and not us. What sort of a mandate is this? Say explicitly what you are murmuring. Say openly that you will not let us come to power at any cost. It is proper to speak in such a vein. The spirit behind this speech is even more deprecable. A bogey is being created in this House that India is moving toward a Hitler type of dictatorship and fascism is raising its head in the country. This sort of tear is being created The persons who are debutants in this House and are quite unaware of even the dignity of the House. I am in Parliament for forty years now. We have been working as a party here on democratic lines and have been contesting elections.

The mandate is against the Congress. The strength of the Congress in the House stands reduced to just half of its previous strength here. The people have given their verdict differently in different States, disregarding which all other parties are now uniting and enlisting Congress support and the latter willing to extend its unqualified support to them. I do not want to reiterate what my friend Mr. George Fernandes said yesterday. The stand taken by the other parties seems to be that irrespective of whatever invectives they might have hurled at each other but now they should unite and let the BJP not form the Government. If this is your collective decision, then I would not say anything. Nonetheless, such a decision would be negative, reactionary aimed at the sole purpose of stalling us from coming to power and hardly conducive to the health of democracy.

I want to caution them today. On our part, we are ready to sit in the opposition. Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I joined politics I never dreamt of becoming an MP. I was a journalist. I am not keen in the type of politics being practised today.

I do wish to renounce politics. But politics itself refuses to part company with me.

Then I became the leader of the opposition, today I am the Prime Minister and after some time I shall cease to be so I was not overjoyed

when I became the Prime Minister and nor I shall have any qualms when I demit the office. However I would like to raise some issues.

Today a number of fresh allegations are being levelled against us that we have not included certain important issues in the President's Address. The President's Address makes no mention of Ram temple, Article 370 and Uniform Civil Code and so much so that Swadeshi slogan has also been jettisoned. All this is being said in a tone as if they are very much aggrieved on account of our putting aside these issues whereas these are the people who have all along been criticising us on these issues. They have been holding us guilty because we intend to construct Ram Temple and wanted abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution and ask us how we can keep the unity of the country intact. Even though it has been written in the Constitution and the Supreme Court has also vindicated this viewpoint that there should be a Uniform Civil Code. But how can you say that? If one says so then one would be branded as subverter of the unity of the country. If we say that these issues are not the part of our present programme because we do not have the majority.

We are fighting for majority. The people's mandate is not in your favour. They have not fully accepted us either and with the mandate we have received now, we are not in a position to implement all the Programmes. We wanted majority but we could not get. We have emerged as a single largest party and our endeavour is to evolve a workable system through consensus and that is why we did not touch upon the disputed issues. What objection do you have over it?

Now, United Front is being formed it is good if it has been formed but its programme is yet to be chalked out if that has been done, then have they assimilated the philosophy and the programmes of the Marxist party in it, in totality. If they have done so, then why the Marxist Party has been keeping a distance from the Government? When a United Front is formed, a number of parties come together.

When different political parties come together every party has to give up some of its programmes. In 1977 also we were supporting the demand of abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution. Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, who is present here, was with us at that time. In 1977 we were in favour of making

Atom bomb also but when we realised that democracy was in danger and there was a need to save it, we kept aside many of our party programmes. Due to the imposition of Emergency, the entire country was turned into a jail. We all decided to work together to stop the authoritarianism. At that time no one asked us as to why were we not pressing for the demand of abrogation of Article 370. In a way it was right. Now, you are forming a United Front so each one of you will have to forgo some of your party programme. The Hon. President has given us time upto 31st because he knew that we were not in majority. But the Hon. President called us to form the Government because we were the single largest party in the House. He gave us time upto 31st May so that we may talk to other political parties and make efforts to form a stable Government. Such things are happening in other countries also. It was being done here.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, the time which was given to me to mobilise majority support has been properly utilised by me. I have had talks with different political parties. Some parties have come to our support and some other parties expressed their difficulties. Some parties are of the opinion that they will lose some of their votes if they support us. I can understand if any political party is worried about its vote bank but how long and to what extent this game of vote bank will continue. Will they ignore the national interest for the sake of vote bank? When we talk about minority and say that they should get full protection, equal opportunities, equal rights, people level charges against us that we do not practise what we say. Such matters can be discussed in the House. Our party Government in the States is functioning accordingly and if you give us a chance in the Centre we can show you as to how all these things are implemented. I fail to understand that every political party is talking about the biggest minority community but no one is bothered about the Sikhs who are just two percent of the population. Just now you have listened to the agony of Shri Barnala. Nobody is bothered about them.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I remember those days when Sikhs were being massacred in Delhi riots. One of our BJP workers came to me in the cover of darkness. I could not recognise him because he had cut his hair short and had shaved off his beard. I asked him as to what he had done with his hair and beard and

why he had come surreptitiously in the cover of darkness? He told me that he could not come to me in the day light. He could not come out of his house with his long hairs. That was why he had sacrificed his hair. He had come to narrate his tale of woe to me. At that time we advocated the cause of Sikhs. That was why we lost elections at that time and the Congress Party captured power by exploiting anti-Sikh sentiments of the people. We did not do that.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to stress on the point which I mentioned in the beginning. There should not be polarization in the country, neither on the communal line nor on the caste line. The politics should also not be divided into two camps which *sans* dialogue and discussion. Today, country is in crisis. Whenever needed, we helped the Government to tide over the situation. Being the Leader of the Opposition, I was deputed by the then Prime Minister, Shri Narasimha Rao to represent India in Geneva. Members of the Pakistani delegation were taken aback on my inclusion in the Indian delegation. In that country the leader of Opposition is only interested in pulling down the Government. This has not been our tradition and moreover it is quite contrary to our nature. I wish this tradition to continue. The Governments will come and go but the nation will always remain there. The democracy of this country will live forever. Has it not become a difficult task in the present atmosphere? This discussion will conclude today but the chapter which is going to start from tomorrow requires some deliberation. The bitterness should not be allowed to grow. I do not know the basis on which the United Front selected Shri Deve Gowda as its leader because he was not the first choice of the United Front. He was their fourth choice. Now he is going to become their first choice for the Prime Ministership.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I regret that during the discussion the names of such organisations were mentioned here which are independent and are engaged in the task of nation and character building. I am referring to RSS. One can have differences with the ideologies of RSS but the kind of allegation levelled against RSS were not warranted. Even the Members of Congress and other parties respect and admire the constructive work being done by the RSS and they also lend their cooperation for the same. If they go and work among the poor

and work for spread of education in tribal areas they should be felicitated for their endeavour. All sort of cooperation should be extended to them.

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Mr. Speaker, I was saying that those who are patriots, rational in this country and those who wish welfare of the country from the core of their heart and have come in contact with RSS, know that this organisation is dedicated to the country for its well-being and just now.

I will cite a recent instance I am not mentioning that after the Chinese aggression, the voluntary organisations which were invited to participate in the Republic Day parade for showing solidarity with Pandit Nehru, RSS was one among them. Communists were not there. Where were they at that time. Even during the time of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, who was also a popular Prime Minister of the country, when we had a war with Pakistan, educated people were needed to control the traffic in Delhi and it was again RSS volunteers who offered their services to control the traffic. Recently a function was organised in Bangalore to commemorate the struggle against the emergency, which was called the second struggle for freedom. Shri Deve Gowda was also present there. I have with me the excerpts of his speech, which he made on the occasion, I am quoting it.

'RSS is a spotless organisation.'

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He has also underlined the extent of our relations with RSS. Now what views do people hold about the RSS. If persons of Shri Deve Gowda's stature hold the view then it should be given due importance. What had happened till date? Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the meantime it was said that it was wrong and at that time I made a submission that it was a function about 1977 held on 26.6.95.

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Mr Speaker, Sir, what Shri Deve Gowda said about the RSS is as follows:

"RSS is a spotless organisation. In my forty years long political life, not even once I criticised RSS."

The Chief Minister said that he was telling this with utmost responsibility. He said that he had no two opinions regarding RSS's active role during Emergency. Shri Gowda further said

"People who were with Mrs. Gandhi during Emergency, who praised her, who appreciated Emergency, they are today with us and are enjoying power, but RSS is the only organisation without any black spot Others have wavered this way or that way."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not saying all this for the sake of criticising Shri Deve Gowda. He has made a true evaluation of RSS for which I would like to commend him. But these people want that he should not be praised like this in the House. It had been published not in any single newspaper but in all the newspapers and as I had said that time nobody refuted his statement.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to reply to one more point which came up during the course of discussion. It has been said that the BJP did not receive wide support from the people. It was said that we got support from the cow belt. It is improper to refer this entire as cowbelt in the House. We won in Haryana. We received support from Karnataka. It is correct that we are not that strong in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. But we have our organisation there. We have also received a little less than 10 per cent votes in West Bengal. If you talk of votes, then talk of 10 per cent votes. In this House individual Member constitute a party and he is trying to dislodge us by mobilising people against us. They have every right to do so. Each of them has come alone from his constituency and got united here in Delhi. Why have they got united? Is it for the well-being of the country. If so, they are welcome. We are also serving the nation in our own way. Are we not patriots and rendering selfless service to the country for carving a niche for ourselves in politics. We have been sincerely making efforts for the last 40 years to reach at this position. It is not a sudden mandate. It was not a mircale. We worked hard. We went to people, we have struggled. Ours is a party which functions round the year. Ours is not like the parties which mushroom during the elections. Today we are unnecessarily being put in an embarrassing position just because we could not get a few more seats. We do admit that it is our weakness. We should have got majority. The President gave us an opportunity and we tried to avail it. It is another matter that we did not succeed. But do not forget that even then we are going to sit in the House

as a largest party in the Opposition and they have to run the House with our cooperation. I would like to assure them that we will extend our fullest cooperation to them in conducting the business of the House. But I do not know what type of Government they would form. On what programme it would be formed and how would it be run.

So far as Dalits are concerned out of the total of 77 Scheduled Caste Members 29 belong to BJP. While five members from CPI(M), 01 from CPI, 15 from the Congress Party and 7 from Janata Dal belong to Scheduled Castes. We have the maximum number. Similarly, there are as many as 11 Members belonging to Scheduled Tribes in the BJP out of the total 41 Members. Please don't say that we do not have popular base. We do not have wide support from people. If they think that they can form the Government without us and that Government will last, I do not see any such possibility. First of all, it will be difficult for the Government to come into being, it is hardly possible that it will survive. The question is how far this Government surrounded by internal squabbles is going to benefit the country. For each and everything they have to approach the Congress party. At present I cannot say but earlier there were some talks that the Congress party has laid down certain condition. Then there was a tale that a Cabinet coordinating Committee will be formed. They can also have coordination on the floor of the House. Without that the business of the House cannot be conducted. It is very good that they want to govern the country. Our good wishes are with them. We shall continue to serve the country. We bow before the numerical strength and we assure you that we will not rest until we achieve the national objective.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am going to submit my resignation to the President.

BACK NOTE

II Motion of Confidence in the Council of Ministers, 27 May, 1996

1. SHRI SIVAJI KAMBLE : The leader of the House is speaking and they are constantly interrupting him.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I do not mind an interruption here, and there, but I should not be prevented from speaking.

2. SHRI SURESH KALMADI (Pune) : Only 20 percent.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Kalmadi saheb, it is difficult for others to appreciate what you say.

3. AN HON. MEMBER : That day will come again.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : In that case, we will face the situation. Today, we are present in largest strength and you stand no where in comparison. But we are humble in our victory. Defeat should pave way for self-introspection.

SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK : You had emerged victorious what happened later?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : You were ruling, the whole country. What is the situation now? If you are content with this situation then I have nothing to say. I do not want to stretch it too far.

4. SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO (Berhampur) : I do not know why the Prime Minister is misquoting me, Sir. What I said was, right from Shrimati Indira Gandhi's days, there was a clear announcement from the Government of India, here in this House that the personal law of a section of people, any section of people, will not be changed without consulting them, without taking their consent and against their consent. This is exactly what I said at that meeting.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the community and the society in which the change is to be brought, should be made prepared for it and there should be no objection in it. This is easy and natural for the democracy but the veto should not be handed over in anyone's hands. Hindu society is dynamic, changes have undergone in Hindu society and the process of change is still going on. Memories have changed. The memory on the basis of which we

are working today is our Constitution and Dr. Ambedker, the maker of our Constitution. Our society is not static.

5. SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar) : Mr. Prime Minister, you started very well, I would expect that you would keep it on the track and that you would confine your speech to the Motion of Confidence. You have not brought any controversial point in the President's Address also. You should not bring it here also. It would be better, I am just appealing to you. Then we also would have to change our speakers for the Motion. We have to bring analogy. It is better if you could avoid it.

SHRI SATYADEV SINGH (Balrampur) : You listen the truth.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Calcutta South) : What is the truth?

It is not the right way.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have always been giving weightage to what Sontosh Mohan Dev ji says. He might have received the report when a big demonstration was held in Karimganj on the issue of infiltrators from Bangladesh. It was not the power show of our party. It was an expression of apprehension of the people. A large number of people took part in the demonstration since they felt that infiltration of foreigners should be stopped. Such a large number of infiltrators will put our future in dark. On that day I had said so in my speech and he had said that I had said right I had said that it is not the question of Hindu-Muslim. When we keep in mind that the increase in population has more serious impacts, the importance and seriousness of this question is increased. The fateful history of the division of our country is before us. It must be stopped. There should be unanimity on this issue. If you give cooperation then we can shoulder the responsibility of unanimity.

6. SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani) : Atrocities are committed on the innocent city dwellers in the name of migrants.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It is wrong.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : There is such a party with you, whose President has said and left it on the cadre of the Muslims of your party to find out those innocents and commit atrocities on them.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Who has left? It is wrong.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : You tell all the things in a right way but the fact is being neglected.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, action should be taken against only those who enter by violating the law. We are not in favour and there is no question of extradition of the citizens of our country, even if they belong to any religion or community, specially the Bengalese who are already settled here and the Bengali Muslims as well, who are in a large number in our country.

7. SHRI HARBHAJAN LAKHA (Phillaur) : All that the Hon. Prime Minister is saying about communalism is based on Manusmriti and these communal people are implementing the principles of Manusmriti.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : This country would remain noncommunal. India will not become a theocratic State.

SHRI HARBHAJAN LAKHA : It is the fundamentals of Manusmriti that have enslaved the *adivasis* of this country. Baba Bhimrao Ambedkar had condemned Manusmriti and gave a new Constitution to this country but you people profess something and in practice do something else.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, I admit that there are some controversial issues which excite the discussion. But infact discussion should take place in a systematic way. If I am interrupted again and again then I will not be able to complete my speech. You are more in number so you have come here with a decision not to let me speak.

8. KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : That is not Somnath, but Amarnath.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : All the Naths (God) appear same to me.

9. AN HON. MEMBER : It will be like that only.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Someone is saying from other side that it will be like that only. This voice is coming from the Congress benches. Other friends should remain vigilant.

10. SHRI RAM NAIK (Mumbai North) : It seems that mike is working there...

SHRI B.K. GADHVI (Banaskantha) : You are telling that this mike is working and that mike is not working Kindly listen to him perfectly. Why are you standing up and speaking like this?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : He is complaining.

11. SHRI N.V.N. SOMU : Thank you, Sir, for reading out the poem in Tamil.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: This is not for the first time. I had also read something in Tamil in my Address in the United Nations.

Its Hindi translation is this:

"Tees koti mukhmandal wali hai meri maan,
Ek hai uski kaya aur atma
Bhashayen wan atharah bolti hai,
Kintu ek hai uska chintan."

12. SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : That is correct.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Then what do you intend to do for a good Vajpayee?

13. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Then why did it not happen?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Because you did not allow it to happen.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Why do you not consider the fact that you are totally isolated in the country?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : We are not isolated

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Yes, you are.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : You are saying that no one is with us but if we say that the Akali Dal, which won in the recent elections, is with us.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : It is because he is not pro BJP, but he is anti Congress. 'That is why, he is with you.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Then, why can you not be with us?

SOME HON. MEMBERS : Then, are you proCongress?

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : You may ask your Members to behave. You are here for forty years and I am here for 25 years. I am also entitled for respect. What the hon. Prime Minister is saying all the time is, he thinks, it is our solemn obligation to keep him in power. That is what we have been trying to

find out from yesterday. If the majority of the hon. Members are not supporting you, is it the fault of the other Members who are not supporting you? I have got my own perceptions, I have got my own policies and programmes. He is all the time accusing, as if, we are entering into some combination. Does that justify him to remain in power, without having a majority? Is this what you are trying to say?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I have been listening to your criticism since yesterday and now you are not prepared to listen to a little bit of criticism. Is it my fault if the voters have not given a clear majority to any party? We have been given the chance as the single largest party because people wanted for a change. Is it also our fault ?

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Without having a majority?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not talking about West Bengal I have mentioned about it yesterday. It is a different matter that their number of seats and percentage of votes have decreased this time.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : But it is the only Government which has come back to power with two-third majority. Please do not forget that. It has come back to power for the fifth time. It is a record.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I fail to understand that.

KUMARI MAMTA BANERJEE (Calcutta South) : I do not want to interrupt him. because the Prime Minister is speaking. But, I have some reservations about what Shri Somnath Chatterjee has said.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Sir, two parties fought the elections against each other and now when they joined hand with each other they are saying that the mandate was against BJP and 82 per cent voters voted in their favour. It is a peculiar logic which is being given here.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : There is a logic behind it.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: You all have united. It is a good thing.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : Everything is before you.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : It is not before us.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : May I ask Shri Vajpayee one question?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : They do not listen to you, Shri Biju. Why are you trying to help them? They do not listen to you.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : What do you want? You wanted time till the 31st. But what is it that you propose?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Have some patience.

We held a large discussion on it. Earlier, you were not in favour of any discussion on this motion. But when a discussion was initiated, the hon. Members took keen interest in it and we have had a good discussion in the House. Now the time has come to take a decision on it. Even then you are feeling so perturbed. You are so anxious to come to power so soon.

I remember the day when you split the Janta Party and took Choudhary Charan Singh to South Block and stood in front of his chair.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : Let us set the record straight.

I have burnt three letters in front of Choudhary Charan Singh. It was done by none else than Biju Patnaik. I have not engineered any split in Janta Party.

How can you say all these?

14. SHRI ILIYAS AZMI (Shahabad) : You are here by flaring up anti-Muslim feelings of the people.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : This is wrong. But you do not condemn the atrocities committed on Sikhs.

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI : We do condemn.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Please look at the records.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : We have raised this issue a number of times.

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down.

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI (SHAHABAD) : We have condemned the atrocities committed on Sikhs a number of times.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : All the culprits have not been arrested.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : Who was responsible for putting Sikhs behind the bars under TADA. I got them released from the Jail.

SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS (Sitapur) : The BJP men looted the Sikhs in Lucknow in the guise of Congressmen.

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI : I myself witnessed dozens of such persons belonging to the BJP and Congress Party who were together in looting the sikhs.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : It will be better for my friend Shri Mulayam Singhji not to utter anything in this regard. During his tenure as Chief Minister of UP the women who were coming to Delhi for a rally in support of their demand for Uttaranchal were raped and this fact has been substantiated even by the court. And after that Shri Mulayam Singh ji has no face to say anything.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : It is a matter of shame. Some girls were disrobed in Kanpur. All these persons are sitting here.

SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS : Mr. Prime Minister, why do not you talk about the incident occurred in Surat where BJP men disrobed the Muslim women?

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI : It is Congress rule. Those women were disrobed in Congress regime

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, all these friends have been speaking for the last two days. Now I have got a chance to speak. They want to shut my mouth but this will not happen. If they try to do so on the strength of numbers we will be forced to take this war of ideologies to the streets.

15. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Who was Nathu Ram Godse?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Shri Deve Gowda whom you are going to elect you leader of United Front is well acquainted with the merits of RSS and moreover he himself has praised RSS for its activities.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : If it is so then Vajpayee ji, you should support him.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I would like to submit to the members of my party.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Why are you getting provoked by them.

Let them speak what they want. The final hour has arrived. Do not get provoked.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir. Sir, My friends should know that I have also come here after getting elected. They should also know that being the leader of the largest party. I have been appointed as Prime Minister by the President of India. It is at the directive of the President that I have come to seek the vote of confidence of the House.

Now, if discussion takes places and a senior leader like Biju Patnaik, interrupt me.

16. SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: He is not here. Shri Deve Gowda is not here to contradict it..... (Interruptions)

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: Sir, I am on a piont of order. In the absence of any person in the House...

MR. SPEAKER: Why do not you take out the Rule Book and read from it?

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: I am raising a point of order under rule 376(Interruptions)

MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : You may change your leader tonight..... (Interruptions) You cannot listen to even the praise of your leaders .. (interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Justice Lodha I have given time to him. I will come to you.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: I just want to draw your attention that any Member in the House has every right to quote any document provided .. [interruptions]. Just a moment, let me finish. But without any document, without authentication and without your prior permission and too if a person is absent. Nothing should be made public about him because he has no right to reply in this House, Sir..... [interruptions]

MR. SPEAKER. Under what rule?

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: He is quoting one Document.

MR SPEAKER: Under what rule you are raising your point of order?

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: Under rule 115. The Member is misquoting and unnecessarily making allegation against Mr. Deve Gowda and it is of no relevance. It is absolutely false and fabricated. He is trying to malign Mr. Deve Gowda in a manner that he is trying to create confusion among the United Front. That is his intention and the Prime Minister should not (Interruptions)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : It has appeared in a Southern newspaper in Bangalore which authenticates the statement of Mr. Deve Gowda when he told about RSS. "Nishkalankam Choritrnam" I can give Kannada Prabha and the Indian Express and it is authenticated (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I will allow you one by one (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Ahamed, I will come to you. Have you got your ears?

SHRI E. AHAMED : Yes, I am listening.

MR. SPEAKER : Sit down. I had given him the permission to speak first.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : I draw your attention to rule 353, No allegation of a defamatory or incriminatory nature shall be made by a member against any person unless the member has given adequate advance notice to the Speaker and also to the Minister concerned so that the Minister may be able to make..... (Interruptions) not only Ministers but Members also..... (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : That is, if you want to allege anything against the Minister..... (Interruptions) He is reading irrelevant rules ... (interruptions)

They do not know the rule and are reading the rule book.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: You read it.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : I need not read it. I learnt it by heart. I have read it, I have already read it well before you read I know it by heart. I can tell you each and every word..... (Interruptions)

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : Sir, Rule 352 categorically says:

“A Member while speaking shall not-

(i) refer to any matter of fact on which a judicial decision is pending.

(ii) [make personal reference by way of making an allegation imputing a motive to or questioning the bone tides of any other Member of the House unless it by imperatively necessary for the purpose of the debate being itself a matter in issue or relevant thereto]..... (Interruptions)

SHRI RAM NAIK : Sir, under Rule 353 it is very clear it says.

“No allegation of a defamatory or incriminatory nature shall be made by a Member against any person unless the Member has given a notice ..”

MR SPEAKER: Sir, it is neither an allegation nor it is defamatory to the person for whom it has been attributed ... (Interruptions). But what they have said about Guru Golwalkarji should be expunged from the record. Golwalkar who is no more in this world whatever has been said about him by a senior member like Shri Indrajit Gupta, who made and subscribed us oath should certainly not form part of the record. But what has been said about Shri Deve Gowda who is going to be their leader tomorrow, there is nothing wrong in it, it is in according with the rules ... (interruptions)

SHRI E. AHAMED : Sir, I would like to refer to Kaul and Shakhdar. On page 817, it is stated that :

“As a rule, no allegation of a defamatory or incriminatory nature can be made by a Member against any person unless the Member has given previous intimation to the Speaker and taken his permission ... ”

Sir, on page 818 Kaul and Shakhdar has stated about Rule Committee’s Observation. It is stated that :

“While proposing this rule, the Rule Committee observed : It was against the rules of parliamentary debate and decorum to make defamatory statements or allegations of incriminatory nature(interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, no, please. (Interruptions)

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : Have you heard anything? To whom Shri Deve Gowda has referred as “spotless character” ...

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : RSS.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : Did he say that BJP was of spotless character?

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : No, no, they are talking about RSS.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : You are not. He is not. He is not ..(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER. One at a time please.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : Sir, I will draw the attention of the House to Rule 349 (ii), which says:

"Whilst the House is sitting, a Member Shall not interrupt any Member while speaking by disorderly expression or noises or in any other disorderly manner;"

The Leader of the House is speaking. Our Prime Minister is quoting from the speeches of the future Prime Minister. Why should they object to that? The rule says that no Member will interrupt the Prime Minister while he is speaking. Sir, I urge you to kindly enforce this rule and ask them not to interrupt and particularly not to prevent the leader of the House to make his point of view. He is only quoting his statement(Interruptions)

SHAI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the issue merely is that RSS may be a reversed institution for them and for R.S.S. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have listened enough from your side, please do not make noise like this, it is not very fair.(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Do you want the House to run? I have already listened to the views of two hon. Members from your side. Let me listen to him. If you want to speak, I will allow you afterwards. Twenty Members cannot stand up and speak like this.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : The statement attributed to Deve Gowda ji Ji is wrong. Deve Gowdaji has denied this. As General Secretary of the party. I would like to say that whatever the Prime Minister has stated about Shri Deve Gowda which has appeared in the newspapers, is not correct.

R.S.S. is a communal organisation and Shri Deve Gowda has no relation. What-so-ever, with this organisation. R.S.S. may be a reversed institution for them, but, for us, R.S.S. is a communal organisation and R.S.S.(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER Order please.(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Sir, he had not supported RSS. I can tell you that.....(interruptions}

SHRI B.K. GADHAVI : Sir, kindly see rule 352(ii) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. The tenor of the speech of the Prime Minister was casting on imputation on Shri Deve Gowda, which is not permitted under this rule. Therefore, Sir, you have to go to the tenor of his speech. Referring to Shri Deve Gowda's statement for RSS amounts to an imputation, which is forbidden. The rule says.

“Make personal reference by way of making an allegation imputing a motive.”

Sir, he was imputing a motive to Shri Deve Gowda. Therefore, it cannot go on.....(interruptions}

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Sir, we want voting.....(interruptions}

MR. SPEAKER : I think it is a very important point which has been raised on the floor of the House. On this particular issue, there had been a lot of debate on the floor of the House. There were a number of occasions. Unless it fulfills the two criteria of allegation and defamatory, normally it is allowed.(interruptions}

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Not against the strangers(interruptions}

MR. SPEAKER: The question here is that the Prime Minister is quoting from the newspaper..... (Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDE'B ACHARIA : Sir, it has not been authenticated..... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER. Please listen to me. The Prime Minister is quoting a statement from the newspaper attributing statement of a particular individual who is not a Member of this House. The authenticity of that attribution of a

particular view is from a person who is not in a position to confirm or deny on the floor of the House. Whether that attribution of a particular statement by a person amounts to an allegation or not, is the question to be decided. I do not like to give a final verdict on that but if the Prime Minister can avoid it at the moment, it will be better.(Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I am sorry Sir. Will you allow me?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am referring to a function organised in Bangalore along with other people. Shri Deve Gowda was also present there. That function has been organised as a mark of protest against 'Emergency'. That function was held on 26 June, 1995. Had the statement of Shri Deve Gowda been misquoted, he would have denied it. Had all the newspapers published the wrong statement. (interruptions). Mr. Speaker, Sir, No body denied this statement. If Deve Gowda had felt that his statement was misquoted, then he could have contradicted the statement. But he never did so (Interruptions}

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : He has already contradicted it the next day. It was in the Indian Express, The next day, he contradicted the statement. I stand by That.

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : This statement has never been denied. It has never been contradicted. It stands as it is. We have never seen any contradiction. We have the statement with us..... (Interruptions).

MR SPEAKER : Mr. Prime Minister, the Hon'ble Member. Mr. Jena is now on record.

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT (Agra) : When Shri Indrajit Gupta was reading from a book nobody interrupted him (Interruptions)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : We have the audio and video cassettes of that programme. What is he saying/ I am ready to place it before the House. What is he talking? He is misleading the House. I have the audio and video or cassettes (Interruptions)

KUMARI UMA BHARATI (Khajuraho) : Mr. Speaker, Sir upto 30th (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Uma Ji, I understand, Please sit down.

PROF. RITA VERMA: He has deliberately tried to mislead the House. He is deliberately misleading the House(Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER : Umaji. let us conduct the(Interruptions)

MR SPEAKER : Your Minister is speaking..... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Let the Law Minister speak. (English]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : We have already contradicted what the Prime Minister has said ... (Interruptions). We have already contradicted it. But if the Prime Minister wants to read, let him read (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: All right. If the Prime Minister is willing to authenticate the document, it is all right.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : I want to say only one thing. If the Prime Minister wants to read a paper he should be allowed.....{interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER' A Member who quotes a particular sentence(Interruptions)

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to argue. But(Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: I modify my statement. If an hon. Member who is quoting is willing to authenticate that document, it can be quoted.

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (Shri Ram Jethmalani) : May I say something?(Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: No.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : Will you kindly hear me for two minutes?

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : We do not want this to go on(Interruptions).

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Shri Ram Vilas Paswan has already said that he had contradicted it. Even after that if the Prime Minister wants to quote, let him quote.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH : May I make it clear that the Prime Minister is reading a document(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Let the law Minister speak first.(Interruptions)

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES (Nalanda) : Mr Speaker, Sir, the members do bring newspapers in this House and all sorts of issues under the sun are raised here. Some members bring press clippings ... (Interruptions) ... What sort of drama has been going on, I fail to understand. Mr. Speaker, sir, you yourself have been a member of this House for the last so many years ... { Interruptions }, .. the members to bring newspapers and they quote from the newspapers and they want to discuss these issues during the Zero Hour. Is it not a regular feature. Now why such a fuss is being created? No body knows any rule.....(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Do not usurp my right to speak.....(Interruptions]

MR. SPEAKER: Even yesterday this issue was raised with regard to the speech of Mr. George Fernandes and since it was not defamatory and allegatory, I allowed him. I was only saying whether a particular sentence which was being attributed to a person who is not a Member, would amount to allegation or not..... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please listen. I am not sure about this. Therefore. I allow the Prime Minister to continue.(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have allowed the Prime Minister to quote it. Mr. Prime Minister, you can quote now. [Translation]

SHRI SATYA DEV SINGH (Balrampur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, whatever has been said about Shri Golwalkarji.(interruptions)

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : He is reading this document as a matter of right, not as a matter of grace from anybody.

MR. SPEAKER : I have allowed him to quote. How much time will you take, Mr. Prime Minister?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I am not responsible for these interruptions. I am sorry. I must have my say.

I have not come here by anybody's grace, no Would I speak with anybody's grace, I did not make any reference to the RSS in the discussion but Comrade Indrajit Gupta did so.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Yes, I did.

17. MR. SPEAKER : Let the Prime Minister speak, You must have confidence in your Prime Minister.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Mr, Speaker. Sir, with due respect to you, every time you say your Prime Minister.

MR. SPEAKER : Our Prime Minister.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Prime Minister is Prime Minister. You should not say your Prime Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. 'Prime Minister'.

FELICITATIONS TO THE SPEAKER

24 March, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wholeheartedly congratulate and felicitate you on your election to the post of Speaker of the Lok Sabha. You are not new to Lok Sabha. We are well aware of your abilities and contributions made by you as a Member of Tenth Lok Sabha. You took Special interest in rural development and agriculture and we heard your speeches on these subjects during tenth Lok Sabha. Before being elected to the Lok Sabha, you had been serving your constituency and the society through Zila Parishad.

You have been a student of Law. You have also been helping poor and dalits as an advocate. Today when the country is celebrating 50th anniversary of independence, it is a matter of great pride that an hon. Member of the Lok Sabha belonging to Scheduled Caste has occupied the office of the Speaker, It is symbolic of the changing era and times.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the responsibility which you have assumed today is arduous one and its timing too is crucial. People of this country have given their verdict. The situation that has emerged after the constitution of this House makes your work even more difficult. This seat was earlier occupied by the dignified personalities like Sardar Vitthal Bhai Patel and Shri Mavalankar. Two former Speakers of Lok Sabha, Shri Shivraj Patil and Shri Sangma are present in this House. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Chair of the Speaker has a quality.

The person elected to this office is supposed to discharge his duty properly.

All our old conventions, while occupying the throne of Vikramaditya had shown capability.

This House can help in making the arduous task easy if its proceedings are conducted according to the rules. We proclaim to be the largest democracy in the World and it is correct also, but.

Sir, I should be allowed to continue.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am standing here to offer my felicitations. It is not an occasion to heckle. They will get several opportunities to do so..

Please take your seats.

Sir, I should be allowed to complete.

Is he delivering a speech here ?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if congratulating the Speaker is a crime, I am a criminal.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have assembled here for the first time after the Parliamentary elections. I wanted to thank the Opposition, specially Mr. Sharad Pawar for helping in taking a consensual decision about your election. Governments will keep on changing in a democratic set up. Yesterday, I was in the Opposition. Except for a very short period in 40 years, I served the country and contributed in the House from the Opposition. The verdict of the people should be honoured. A very few Members should not have the right to disturb the entire business of the House. They should not be permitted to do so.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my submission is that if the business of the House is conducted according to the rules and if the Members maintain dignity in their conduct and speeches, the difficulties being faced today can be reduced. Today, the whole world is looking towards this House. The countries which have got independence recently and have adopted democracy, come here to learn from our democracy. I do not know what we are going to teach them. If they follow the things which have taken place here today, then the future of democracy is going to be dark.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I once again congratulate you and assure you that you will be getting our fullest cooperation in protecting the rights of all the Members of the House.

BACK NOTE

III Felicitations to the Speaker, 24 March, 1998

NIL

MOTION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

27 March, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move :

“That this House expresses its Confidence in the Council of Ministers.”

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move this motion with mixed feelings, for I am reminded of the day, the 28th of May, 1996 when I had moved the Confidence Motion in this very House from this very place on behalf of the then B.J.P. Government. Since then much water has flown under the bridge. It is imperative for a democracy to function smoothly. However at times, it seems as if smooth current of democracy is being hindered through creating a crisis in the form of expressing no confidence in the Government. At that time, I had tendered resignation because mine was a minority Government and before the umpires of democracy could direct me to leave the field, I preferred to quit. But the country has to think seriously about the cycle of events which took place after that. The scenario of democracy caught in the whirlpool of Confidence Motion since 1989 is a cause of concern.

The Confidence Motion was moved once again on December 21, 1989. The Government lasted only for 11 months. Confidence Motion was moved again on November 7, 1990. The new Prime Minister moved the Confidence Motion in 1990 but instead of completing its full term of five years, the Government ran only for five months. Lok Sabha was dissolved. Nobody managed to muster majority in 1991 elections. The minority Congress party Government was formed. Initially we tended our support to the Government. I do not want to go into details as to how the position of minority was converted into majority position as the matter is *sub judice*. That Government was not threatened by instability, however this Government was mauled by the alligators of corruption. That is why the Congress lost the elections. Congress has to face unprecedented defeat. The Congress had to lose power earlier due to the crime of imposing emergency in 1977, even then, the Congress emerged as a single largest party. But at that time, the Congress had lost its position of being the largest party. Bharatiya Janata Party succeeded in wresting the coveted status of being the largest party on the basis of increasing support of the masses. However, a period of instability was witnessed after the Congress lost the elections. Being short in number, we decided to withdraw from the field.

However, while addressing the House on 28th May, I had said that we will come back with a mandate and as promised, I am here in the House once again.

There is a sea change in the circumstances prevalent on that day and the present circumstances. In the meanwhile, the politics of untouchability failed and attempts at separatism have also failed. We have emerged as a single largest party and as largest coalition with the support of our allies. We are somewhat short of the required majority. We never tried to hide this fact. We did not go to the president to stake our claim. The President himself invited us for consultation and we informed him that our number is a little less than the required number. He said that he will be consulting other parties also and he did so. The President asked for the documents regarding the support of the parties claimed by us. Separate consultations were held. He talked to the leaders of the Telugu Desam Party and thereafter he took this decision. The Congress party did not stake claim to form the Government. The Chairperson of Congress and the Head of Congress Parliamentary Party, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi also met the President and informed him that they were not going to stake the claim to form the Government. There was no question of United Front staking the claim for they have suffered most in these elections.

The number of Congress members might have gone up but the number of United Front members has been reduced to one half. The Front also did not express its interest in forming the Government. Then the President directed me to form the Government and set a time limit upto 29th. I stand before the House to seek the vote of Confidence.

I would like to submit as to how long should we continue with this process of seeking Confidence year after year. It is not as if I am raising this question only because I am required to seek the Confidence of the House. But it is not so. Today, a question is agitating the mind of ever citizen and champions of democracy that why this country is capsized in the whirlpool of political uncertainty. As I have mentioned earlier also that it should not be allowed to continue. We hoped for a clear-cut decision in recent elections. The popular mandate today is in favour of the BJP and its allies. Congress party and United Front cannot claim that our opponents have also contested against each other. I therefore, asked the hon. President to explore the possibilities by inviting other parties also. Before taking up the responsibility, we want that you should

give an opportunity to other parties also. However, nobody was prepared to form the government. Today, I once again repeat my point. If all parties can unite against us and become successful in giving a stable Government, they should come forward. They had been united last time also and, the Congress Party was giving support from outside. However, it gave support for some months and later on withdrew it, as a result of which Shri Deve Gowda had to face lot of problem. Charges were levelled against him that he wanted to divide the Congress Party. I do not know that how far it is true. After that, my friend Shri Indra Kumar Gujral became the Prime Minister and after few months, Congress Party again withdrew its support. Now who will trust Congress? However, if people have expressed a new trust and if there is expectation for a new initiative, I will say that the country requires a stable and honest Government, and we will fulfil this requirement.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when the Hon. President invited us he had two things in his mind at that time. He considered on both these points. One is, Bhartiya Janata Party emerged as the biggest party and secondly the alliance between Bhartiya Janta Party and other friendly parties was the most powerful alliance. There was another characteristic that this alliance was forged before the elections and not after elections. We went before the electorate with this alliance. The alliances which are forged before elections have uniform ideology. Therefore, the Hon'ble President preferred the fact of forming alliance before elections and invited us to form the Government. We went to the public with two main objectives firstly, to give political stability to the country and secondly, to give the country a clean government. This alliance was formed before election, therefore, it is wrong to say that this alliance was formed with a view to come in power. Participation in Government is a natural phenomenon in democracy, it is essential also but one should understand the qualitative difference between the alliance which was formed before election and which was formed after elections. The Hon'ble President realised this fact and invited us to form Government.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to briefly mention about the election results. The election observers were surprised as AIADMK returned to power in Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Ms. Jaya Lalitha. In Karnataka, our alliance with Lok Shakti under the leadership of Shri Hegde has proved to be useful. In Orissa, Shri Naveen Patnaik, son of Shri Biju Patnaik, has changed the

political scenario by forming Biju Janata Dal. In West Bengal, the Trinamul Congress under the leadership of Mamataji has routed the Congress and Marxist Parties.

In Gujarat, the alliance devoid of sound principles was defeated and the people have again reposed their faith in us. We did not get the desired success in some states. We are deeply considering the reasons of failure. Our alliance with some parties is not due to this election, we were working with them earlier also. The alliance between Akali Dal and BJP is not for sharing power between them, but to strengthen the centuries old Hindu and Sikh brotherhood in Punjab. Now, the mustard fields in Punjab will not be stained with blood. One can hear the sounds of Giddha in evenings. The festival of Baisakhi is approaching. Entire Punjab will enjoy. The Congress takes the credit for defeating terrorism in Punjab but the public does not accept this claim. If they would have accepted, why the congress has to face defeat in Punjab. In Himachal Pradesh, we are working with Himachal Vikas Congress. Bhartiya Janta Party and Haryana Vikas Party's alliance is in power in Haryana. Now, there is an atmosphere of mutual cooperation between Haryana and Punjab and contentious issues are not complicated further. Wherever Bhartiya Janta Party is in Power, prohibition has been imposed. As this is a democratic Government, it is being reconsidered to lift the prohibition on public demand. In other states also prohibition has been experimented in many ways. We learn from our experiments and try to improve our policies. However, if the Government bring about changes in the policy after taking into consideration, the difficulties being experienced, then the credit should be given to the Government. I am sure that Bhajan Lal ji must be appreciating this policy.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have already clarified that because of lack of majority we did not stake our claim to form the Government. However, today, we are in majority in the House and we shall prove it. However, I would like to repeat that though the majority and minority are essential components of democracy, whether the democratic process will remain caught in the game of majority and minority? Whether the never ending phase of instability will continue? My colleague Hon'ble Finance Minister Shri Yashwant Sinha has given a realistic picture as to how the country has suffered, particularly on the economic front, due to this uncertainty and unstability in the last 18 months. Our economy has been badly affected by the uncertainty and short sighted

policies adopted during the last 18 months. Foodgrain production has decreased, exports have decreased and government revenue has gone down. There has been increase in financial deficit. We will have to take steps to check this trend and for that a stable, capable and an honest Government is needed at the centre. All of us have to face the challenges of the next century. It is not the question of one party or an alliance of parties. When you were in power, we saw your difficulties and never hesitated to extend help whenever it was sought to overcome those difficulties. After all, the parties are for the country and the nation is the supreme. India is the largest democracy of the world. However, political instability is not only damaging our economy, but it is also tarnishing our image as the largest democracy in the world.

I have tried to highlight the priorities and policies of my government through the President's Address. If there are any differences in this regard, we are ready to have a discussion on them. Our programme is for the overall development of the nation. It covers each and every one. It is for the development of all parts of the country and for all sections of the society. That is why, we have not termed it as Minimum Programme. We have called it National Agenda. We would like to have serious discussion on it. Through this agenda, we want to bridge the increasing gap between the people's aspirations and the performance of the government. India is a multiparty democracy. We are proud of it and are committed to uphold the dignity of our democracy. After independence, due to some historical reasons, one particular party remained in power for long at the centre as well in the states. As a result, several distortions appeared. No doubt, there were certain advantages also, but the situation deteriorated to such an extent that even the Chief Ministers were nominated by the Centre. Practically, there was a decline in the autonomy of the States. There was no appropriate medium to express the Regional aspirations and requirements. Today, it is a matter of great happiness that the regional parties have formed the Government in different states and they are contributing in development of the nation by adopting an all India attitude. They all deserve our praise and congratulations.

There is no conflict between a powerful centre and a powerful State. We would like to give more autonomy to the States so that the Chief Ministers do not have to rush to New Delhi forgetting small amounts of grants or for completion of small projects. The resources should be divided in such a way that the States become selfsufficient and fulfil their responsibilities with regard to development. For this, it is required to

eliminate the negative approach and the feeling of discrimination which has crept into the politics. Last time, an alliance was formed only to keep Bhartiya Janata Party away from the power, but it has broken down.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the country again faced the elections. Whether the same scenario will be repeated? Old political parties are there where they were but the public has made progress. The number of people supporting us is also increasing day by day. Today, we are representing the entire country. We want to progress, alongwith all the sections. Alongwith the multiparties system, we have several languages and many religions in our country. People of different tribes live in this country. They are less in number, so they are worried about their existence. People living in the northeastern States of the country feel themselves neglected being geographically located far away from the Centre. This situation has to be changed and we are committed to it. This task can be easily accomplished by general consensus instead of looking towards the Government.

Diversity is not a sign of our weakness but is the symbol of our rich culture. Study of the literature of different languages sounds like harmonious notes of our culture. Though, we belong to same species, people who are in minority either due to language or religion have apprehensions in their minds with regard to their existence in society. We are aware of such feelings and we will try to remove such fear.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, on this occasion I would not like to speak in detail. Discussion would be held on various issues and I will get an opportunity to reply to all these issues. Some of these issues always have the consensus and I would like to mention particularly the foreign policy here. When our neighbour decided to raise the issue of Kashmir during the Human Right Conference held in Jeneva, the then Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao asked me to represent the country. It amazed the leaders of our neighbouring country. Someone had remarked that the Indian democracy was of a strange kind in respect that the leader of the Opposition was being nominated to represent the Government in the International Conference whereas in his country his Counterpart created obstacles in the smooth functioning of the Government which led to international problems.

People argued that Narasimha Rao was not a simple but a cunning man. His purpose of nominating Vajpayeeji may not be only to show the integrity of the country but also Vajpayee can be made scapegoat should the Jeneva talks, fail. I never believed this as we relied upon each other in

the past.

My friend Shri Gujral is present here. He was Ambassador of our country in Moscow when I became the Foreign Minister for a short period. We know each other from that time. Drastic changes were witnessed in the country in the post emergency period in 1977. Many stalwarts lost election at that time. The party which was ruling the nation for many years had lost faith of the public. When we got power for a short period, even at that time also the Foreign Policy was formulated on the basis of general consensus.

At that time a foreign diplomat had asked me as a Foreign Minister as to what change was going to take place in the South block where I sat. Thereupon I replied that nothing was going to change, only the Minister had changed. Perhaps, my friends in the Congress party will not believe this. There was a Portrait of Nehru ji in the South Block which I used to gaze while passing from there. I also recall the days when we used to have skirmishes in the House. That was the time when I was a new Member and a backbencher. I had to stage walk out to get an opportunity to speak but gradually I made a place for myself. With the passage of time I became the Foreign Minister but I found the portrait of Nehruji missing from the corridors. I enquired about it but did not get the reply. Then the Portrait was replaced there. Has the country any respect for this feeling? Should not we work towards strengthening such a feeling in the country?

But it doesn't mean that I had no difference of opinion with Nehruji. Difference of opinion emerged clearly during the discussion in the House. Once I told Pandit ji that he was a man of mixed personality that he was Churchill, as well as Chamberlein also. He did mind it. On the same day we met at a banquet. He told that my speech was very powerful, then he smiled and went away. Today, such a criticism would invite animosity and the people would stop talking. Can't we, the leaders of the country cooperate with each other and face the challenges before the nation unitedly.

One century is coming to an end. The other is knocking at our doors. I have no objection if you want to conduct a new experiment without us. However, I would request you to pave the way for making our experiment a success.

With these words, I conclude my speech as a mover of the Motion. I shall reply to the issues that will be raised during the debate at the end of the discussion.

BACK NOTE

**IV Motion of Confidence in the Council of Ministers,
27 March, 1998**

NIL

REPLY ON MOTION OF CONFIDENCE

28 March, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the discussion on the motion moved by me is about to conclude. As I have made it clear at the outset, as per directions of the President, I have to prove my majority in the House.

I would like to thank all those members who have participated in the discussion on the motion. Those who have not participated in the discussion and were quietly listening to the discussion, also deserve to be thanked.

Before replying to some of the issues raised in the discussion. I would definitely like to state that we have to conduct the House a little more seriously. At times excitement is possible and rational irrational replies are part of the Parliament. There is ample scope for opposition and excitement. But those who see the proceedings of the House should not have the impression that their elected representatives don't behave in a decent and dignified manner. The whole world is watching this House and for this, cooperation of all is necessary. I don't know what is the correlation between conducting the proceedings of the House, conduct of members in this House and result of the elections. But this is certain that in this House of 543 members those members who were also the members of 11th Lok Sabha are 251 and 288 are new members. Possibly after observing our behaviour or statements, the faith of the voters shatter to such an extent that they don't think us fit to send to this House again.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, many issues have been raised in the discussion. The leader of the opposition and other hon'ble Members have levelled the charges that the ruling party has some hidden agenda. I don't know, what they want to say. Our agenda is open and clear. It is the national agenda and we are committed to it. We are not concerned with any other agenda.

Till this Government is in power. I would be the Prime Minister, I assure you that the Government will function according to this national agenda only. All the parties and the alliance parties of the ruling party contested election on their own manifestoes, this is not new, it is not an unusual thing. But this is also true that all contested election together jumped together into the electoral fray and sought their support, when our number rose to a particular level then we felt that we are in a position to form the Government, then we prepared a

common programme. Didn't it happen during the time of United Front. At that time we didn't speak about any hidden agenda. In 1977 some hon'ble member mentioned about it. When many political parties came together just because they all wanted to get the democracy freed of emergency regime. All the major political parties dropped important parts of their programme. I don't want to go in detail as to which party dropped which programme. Since long we have been talking that India should make atom bombs for its defence. But when Janata Party was constituted and a coalition Government was formed in the country we came across the differences on the issue of making atom bomb, and we dropped that programme. Other parties also dropped some parts of their programmes. The Government didn't work, this is not because of some issues or its programmes. That Government didn't work due to certain other reasons. This time also the national agenda has been prepared. If this is criticised, comments on its various aspects are made, we wouldn't have any objection rather, we will welcome it. In fact this agenda is prepared with consent of all the parties. BJP even being the largest party has not imposed its opinion or programme on any political party. We don't take decision alone, we take decisions unanimously. Decisions are taken on approval of all. Nobody should have a doubt. I am surprised that my hon'ble friends sitting on the other side are raising the issues that have been forsaken by various parties. When we used to talk about Article 370 we were objected to but today when we are not touching those issues, we are jabbed at for that about it. Head I win tail you lose is your policy. Ours policy is not a dual policy. Criticising and targetting in all circumstances is a dual policy.

Now I don't find Shri Jogi here. He was reminiscing holy water of river Ganges, the importance of sacred places as if he is jogi in true sense and not by name only. Lack of faith should not be made a ground as it will not serve any purpose.

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This House is supreme. We are the representatives of the people. It is true that we keep contact and take advice from the people who have elected us but whatever decision are taken, those are ours. Decisions never imposed nor do we welcome the imposition of any decision. Nobody should have any doubt

in this regard. It has further been said that we have adopted dual policy. Not only that it has been also said that there are two centres of powers. Have you seen two centres nearby. When Shri Advaniji was the national president of our party, Shri Joshi has mentioned this, he had announced my name for Prime Ministership even before party could discuss and decide the candidate for the post of Prime Minister. This incident happened in Mumbai. Later the Party ratified it. Now you will say...

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I do not agree with his contention that smaller parties are hindering smooth sailing of democracy. We had to witness this political scenario. But this is not a permanent feature of politics. But I did not find a way out of it. This is a place of transition where alliance and disintegration walk hand in hand. I believe with certainty that after some time the politics will regain its lost balance. But if we people, who are attached with a big party and who have played a long innings of politics in this country and have greater responsibility could bring small parties in the mainstream through new equations instead of exploiting them, the political scenario of the country may change. As I said earlier that a feeling that nobody is there to look after them, has erupted in many parts of the country because of one party's rule for a longer period. This is a multi-religions, multi-lingual and multi-racial country. Small units also want to have their identity and age. Searching a place for themselves. Recently the Prime Minister of Mauritius visited our country. He visited Azamgarh also in search of his ancestors village. Tears rolled down from his eyes when he reached Azamgarh in searching birthplace of his ancestors. The ancestors of the President of Mauritius had settled in Mauritius long-long ago. But it was his desire to see the land and environment where his ancestors born and used to live. We must appreciate this feeling. We sincerely wish that the exchange of visit should increase. I had simplified the process of issuing passport when I got opportunity in 1977 as a Minister of External Affairs and made the foreign travel simple. Recently we visited the Gulf Countries with a delegation. Approximately 30 lakhs of Indians are working in the Gulf Countries which constitute mostly of the Muslim Countries. They are earning money and sending a few bucks to their home apart from contributing to the development of respective countries where they are working. I want that our relation should further improve. Our people to people relation should also improve

further. Shri Gujral was endeavouring in this respect. Though we could not get the desired reply, we will keep our efforts on.

Sir, I once told a leader of Pakistan that one can contradict historical facts but geographical boundaries will remain in the same position now. We will always live as neighbours. The only thing we can do is to live in unison or as an adversary. Why should we live as adversary when we have option of living in unison. I do not want to go in details here. While referring the speech of Shri George Fernandes a Member asked as to whether our policy in regard to China and Tibet has changed. National interest do not change with the change of Government. There are some policies which the successive Government inherits. As a Foreign Minister I tried to take some steps to improve our relation with the China. At that time I was subjected to criticism and our neighbour also committed a mistake by antagonising Vietnam due to which I had to cut short my visit and returned back. But as per the agreement accorded at that time we are holding talks on our border issues and maintaining tranquility on our borders as well. Today also we are holding talks in regard to our borders with China. Talks are being held in a conducive atmosphere and efforts are on to make our relation cordial in other areas also. We had suggested Pakistan also. I told Pakistan, not in the capacity of Prime Minister but as a leader of opposition, that you keep aside the issue of Kashmir for some days and open your gate in the fields of commerce and economic cooperation and other areas. We produce certain items which Pakistan needs and a few items are produced in Pakistan which we need. We can fulfil each others requirements be it electricity and foodgrains. We have not been able to create that atmosphere but I am confident it will happen when situation will be conducive. I have told this earlier also and like to repeat today also. International Relations do not change with the change of the Government. Shri Gujral always used to keep contact with the opposition as a Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. The unity of the entire country on the matter of C.T.B.T. reflects the fact that we can pave one way successfully through contact and mutual discussions. It leaves its impact on the world community as well. This matter is not related to party therefore I sought cooperation when I sought consensus it is not because of any weakness or compulsion that we lack majority and concerned about the survival of our Government. We do not bother about the survival of the Government. We were not in power for the last forty years. We always emphasised on consensus even when we were in opposition. Today when we are in power we want to put our thinking of

consensus in practice.

Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, can a big and ancient country like this comprising of huge population and diversity prosper in the absence of consensus? Perhaps it cannot. We differ on issues and go to the people. Elections are over and what are we supposed to do now? The debate is going on the issue of mandate. Day before yesterday, I had said that if anybody can claim that to have the mandate then we are in the forefront and only we can make such a claim. I did not say that we have the mandate and we do not require your help. Had we got clear majority or even twothird majority, I would have still held the opinion that the country should be governed on the basis of consensus. Those who were in power earlier had also run the Government with consensus. But, this process was hampered. I do not want to go into details when it was hampered but certainly it did. This process should carry on further and efforts should be made to solve the problems of the country in an atmosphere of Cooperation. I would like to assure you that I will make constant efforts in this direction.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, some members have commented upon the issue of the Agenda. My friend, Shri Chidambaram said that Agenda is there but it contains no programme. I fail to understand the minute difference between the two. I would like to submit that the agenda includes programme also. It includes our priorities and the laws that would be enacted. He cited an example about river water. He quoted it and I also quote it.

“We will adopt a national water policy which provides for effective and prompt settlement of disputes and their timebound implementation.”

The hon. Member had said that it is a very general statement that there will be a national water policy. But what are we going to do has not been mentioned in the agenda. We have said that there should be a mechanism for prompt settlement of disputes. Perhaps he wanted us to air our views about the on going Cauvery river water dispute immediately after assuming power in the Centre. What would have been its result? Why did the previous Governments not opened their cards for years together. I am sure the previous Governments must be facing some difficulty. Such issues are policy matters, we will have to sit together to formulate a policy in this regard. Because Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu are the

affected States, there is a need to evolve a solution. The award has been formulated but it has not been implemented. I cannot immediately after assuming the office announce that my Government will implement the award. Even water can catch fire. The issue of water is going to be more complicated. Water problem is not limited to India only. It has become a universal problem. It is quite possible that instead of petrol, scarcity of water may be the next tension for world. Water pollution is increasing. Quantity of water is declining. The ground water level is going down. We experience all these things in our Constituencies. We feel aggrieved when we see people suffering. Sangma ji, we have not committed that we will do everything in five years. But for water, our Government is committed to provide potable water in each and every part of the country within five years. As regards other matters, we have indicated the direction which we will follow.

A suggestion has been given in our National Agenda that a Commission should be set up to review the Constitution. Our friends sitting in the opposition have strongly criticised it. We are not the first to come out with such a suggestion. Deep thinking has been going on in this regard for years. Intellectuals are deliberating and have been expressing their views. These intellectuals are not associated with any political party nor motivated by any political party. Dr. Karan Singh, Dr. L.M. Singhvi, Shri Soli Sorabji, Prof. Rashiuddin Khan, Shri B.K. Nehru, Shri S.L. Shaktihar, Prof. Madhu Dandavate, Justice V.P. Krishna Ayyar, Justice Khanna and General K.V. Krishna Rao have endorsed the idea. 50 years have elapsed since our Constitution came into being. There is need to review it. There is no question of drafting the new Constitution. But at the same time should we be satisfied that amendments in the Constitution take place as usual. Yesterday it was mentioned that there is a difference between review and amendment. Amendment is to be enforced whereas it is open for us to implement or not to implement the report submitted after review of the Constitution. However, there are certain issues which need reconsideration.

We have adopted a particular system of elections. Is that system working properly? Suggestions are pouring and the Members of Parliament may also be in favour of it that an elected body like Lok Sabha must complete its tenure of five years irrespective of the Governments coming into or going out of power. Such a practice is there in many countries. Advaniji is saying and

perhaps Sangmaji have said that present election system is quite strange. At times vote bank increases and seats decreases and at times seats increases and vote bank decreases and thus things are going on. It has also been suggested that the candidate securing less than 50% votes should not be considered as elected.

If he has secured 15 per cent votes in the real sense he can't claim himself to be a representative of the people. You may say that even you have got less votes, if a change is brought in the system that will be equally applicable to us also.

There are countries, who are of the opinion that if the required number is not secured in the first ballot then one should go in for the second ballot. The institution should be more representative in nature and it should be elected institution but this process involves a lot of expenditure. There are certain other points also, but I don't want to dwell upon them. If a committee of experts and impartial people is constituted, which may include Former President Shri Venkataraman, Nana Palkiwala and Dr. Farooq Abdullah. I am not mentioning the names of all, because they are of the opinion, that there should be a commission, to look into the amendments that are required to be made in the Constitution. There is no need to draw such inferences at this juncture that we are going to discard the Constitution and going to write it afresh.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Mr. Sangma had raised a point regarding education. He said that six per cent of GDP should be spent on education, whereas a decision in this regard was taken long ago. It has been asked why word 'gradually' is being added to it. No doubt this decision was taken long ago but it was not implemented. Today, whatever is spent on education is not more than 3 per cent, we would like to raise it. Increasing it from three to six per cent would pose difficulty that is why we have added word 'gradually', but it does not mean that we want to hang it in fire, we have to achieve the target of six per cent at the earliest. The hon. Member has raised the issue of tribals also, this is related to Delhi. When Congress was in power in Delhi, at that time also no list of Scheduled Tribes was prepared. There may be persons belonging to Scheduled Tribes residing in Delhi but list of Scheduled Tribes has yet to be prepared, that list has not been prepared

so far, but efforts should be made in this direction, and the Scheduled Tribes or tribal people living in Delhi should not be deprived of the job opportunities and I assure you that I will talk to Delhi Government in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, all our Governments have paid special attention to northeast. The condition of northeast has improved to some extent. But a lot more is still required.

Packages are announced but are not implemented. Committees are constituted for example Luxmi Chand Jain Committee was constituted and then Shukla Committee was also constituted, but none of their recommendations were ever implemented. Earlier the Governor used to be the Chairman of Northeast council but in the present set up Vice Chairman of Planning Commission would be its Chairman. I am entrusting him this particular responsibility that he should ensure that all the announcements made for providing assistance to northeast are honoured at the earliest. If they are facing resources crunch let them bring it into the notice of Central Government. We will try to mobilise resources for them.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, we take a lot of interest in the factual discussion as to whether we should get the foreign assistance or not and if so under what conditions but the point is that when we get foreign assistance or loan at a low rate of interest, we fail to make its full use. The biggest problem being faced by this country is at the implementation stage. There is no dearth of good ideas. We have a number of attractive schemes only on paper. There are such experienced officers engaged in the Government machinery, who seem to be knowledgeable person in that field, and to some extent, they are but their ideas are not practicable. Why this country is not transforming the lot of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backward classes and minorities? Paucity of the funds may be one of the reasons. I have come across many such cases, though during the past three four days, I have not got much time to see more. I have realised that funds worth crores of rupees were released by the centre for poverty alleviation programme.

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In 1994-95 a national pilot project was launched to control T.B. Work on this project started in 1997.

This project was aimed at T.B. eradication and World Bank had proposed to provide a loan of Rs. 750 crore for it. This project was delayed and due to red tapism this project could not be implemented and now T.B. cases are increasing in the country. World Bank proposed to provide Rs. 750 crore for this project but we could not implement it, how such a situation could be tolerated by the Government or society. The information regarding allocation of funds to Zila Parishad should not be confined to officials or elected representatives only but the whole village or all the concerned persons should know about it. All should be alert and keep a vigil as to how funds are spent. Nowadays, a culture of loot has developed in our society which should be changed. Not only at high levels but honestly should be inculcated at every stage of administration and the society. The relief projects formulated for the public welfare like housing scheme, employment schemes are good. Millions of small houses can be constructed, funds can be sought for such projects. Land mafias are grabbing Government land illegally in big cities. They are selling this land to the people for constructing flats and are earning huge premium. The Government officials are also involved in it and poor people are compelled to live in *jhuggi jhonpris*. This system should be changed. We will make amendments in the existing laws and new laws can also be enacted if required. The Government land is public land and land mafia will not be allowed to encroach upon it simply to earn profits.

How this could be stopped? It is a very difficult problem. But I would like to assure you that all these problems can be solved through cooperation.

I seek your support to fulfill the promises made by me. While concluding I appeal you to vote in support of the Confidence Motion moved by me.

BACK NOTE

V Reply on Motion of Confidence, 28 March, 1998

1. SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : The Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development has issued a circular referring to the BJP agenda.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : That officer also suffers from the same misconception to which you are. This matter has been clarified.

SHRI E. AHAMED : You are the Prime Minister of the country. What action are you going to take?

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Ahmed, please sit down.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : We have seen that circular. This is unnecessary objectionable and I have asked for the explanation and it is one of our point in our National Agenda. But the name of B.J.P. should not have figured in that circular. It is wrong if it's there but it has been deleted immediately and corrected then and there.

It has also been alleged that our Government is being run by the remote control. I am not new to this House.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR : We did not say so, it is said by Baba Bal Thakre.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I took the decision on my own. Wherever I found it necessary, irrespective of antagonising our friends. Can anybody handle me through remote? The fact is that neither anybody is trying to run our Government nor I can be handled through remote control. But why do they use this remote control in our context only whereas it is being used from a number of places. But their remote control is perfectly alright whereas ours is bad. Again the same old saying that 'heads I win, tails you lose'.

2. AN HON'BLE MEMBER : Through remote control.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I do not have to say anything if you want to make fun of it. But you know it very well that it will be contrary to my personality and nature if anybody tries to take undue advantage of my image. Nothing as such is being endeavoured. But it's not that much easy to

create differences between me and Shri Advaniji. No one will get success in it. Please remove all such things from your mind.

Our alliance is comprised of smaller parties. Shri Sangma ji is not present in the House. He has lightly said, each person has...

SOME HON'BLE MEMBERS : He is in the House.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Excuse me. Shri Sangmaji has rightly said so many things. I had a good rapport with him.

3. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : Thousands of crores.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Joshi is saying thousands of crores of rupees. He had been the Chairman of Public Accounts Committee. But what has been the outcome? Such is the situation we have to change this situation, we will have to lay more emphasis on the implementation part. Now the concerned individual will be made responsible for the project. There will be proper monitoring and whosoever will fail to accomplish his task will be brought to the right track. Nobody will be allowed to misuse the resources of this country. Being a member of parliament we get an amount of Rs. one crore. It is not a big amount. I feel that if this amount is spent properly there should be someone to oversee the spending. These funds should not be pocketed by the contractors or officials, then with the help of non Governmental Organizations, one can take up projects in one's Constituency. I am unable to understand as to why the basic problems of the country could not be solved with thousands of crores of rupees when I, myself get so much work done in Lucknow with one crore rupees. A small instance was brought to my notice.

REPLY TO MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

31 March, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we want to express our feelings on the **President's Address** which His Excellency, the President of India delivered to the joint sitting of both the Houses of Parliament. As this discussion was taken up soon after the discussion on Confidence Motion, it is quite natural that some repetition will be there. The enthusiasm with which the hon. Members participated in the debate and there are still many Members who have been deprived of an opportunity to speak proves the keenness of the Members to participate. Shri Balram Jakhar of the ruling party initiated the discussion.

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Recently, elections to the 12th Lok Sabha have concluded. The people might not have educational opportunities or they might not be used to high standards of living, but the common man very well know what is right and what is wrong for him. He knows what is in the national interest and what is detrimental to the interest of the nation. The voter has always demonstrated this understanding. When for a short period democracy had disappeared, the entire nation was converted into a jail. Even at that time the people remained vigilant and fought for their rights and the results of the elections conducted at that time showed the people's consciousness and their alertness. Can anyone mislead the Indian electorate with false hopes? Can't the people subject the promises to the acid test of fulfilment.

We have not promised the impossible. We have promised potable water to every village. Is it a false promise? This is down to the earth promise.. We have promised drinking water to everyone. If we are unable to fulfil this, it would be a national failure. If we are able to achieve this, it would not be the success of a party or the Government but of the entire nation. We want to take concrete measures to fulfil the promises we have made. **I would like to reiterate as I had stated earlier that resources are not scarce but are scattered. I am of the conviction that if these resources are mobilised, the entire machinery is geared up and dedicated to the fulfilment of the goals coupled with a political will, these promises can be fulfilled and implemented.** I look forward for the cooperation of the House in this

small task which is a challenge for us. If we fail to fulfil the promises that we made to the people, will they not ask us about them next time? Do we not have to face the electorate again? The people would say that as we have not fulfilled the promises made, we do not deserve their votes. The enlightened electorate would reject us. After all people must be relied upon. Nobody can throw dust into the eyes of the people of this country. There is a saying in English that you can fool some people for some time, you can fool some people for a long time but you cannot fool all people for all times. Are we going to do that? I would submit that you are not doing justice to us. We would try our level best to implement all the promises that we have made. We would need your cooperation in this regard. We never adopted non-cooperative attitude in such constructive endeavours. Though it is a different matter that such a National Agenda was never put forward. So also a proposal to mobilise the entire country to implement such a national agenda was never made. And wherever it was made to whichever extent it was made, it succeeded. Let us not allow political dissensions to go to an extent where it may become impossible to work together even on the basic issues.

I was surprised when Shri Natwar Singh talked about foreign policy and wanted to know whether the foreign policy is being changed? When I was in opposition and used to make speeches on foreign policy, Natwar Singh ji used to congratulate me. It is not a secret. Even after remaining in opposition I was a supporter of foreign policy and the essence of our foreign policy has been the power and the capability to take decisions independently and that is non-alignment. Though no group is there today but a super power is emerging. There are several developing countries. These countries are also members of non-aligned movement. They are looking towards us. They are telling us that if we go on accepting conditions in the name of globalisation and are not able to protect the interests of our people and fail to face such challenges despite our big size what the small countries will do? Earlier also, we had given guidance to them under the leadership of Pandit Nehru. I do not keep myself in his category, but there should be no doubt that today the whole country will stand united to protect its sovereignty. We shall not be pressurised by anybody in economic or defence matters. Whatever decisions are to be taken, they will be taken by us in the interest of the country and I want that all of you should have

a share in making these decisions. But I believe that foreign policy cannot be static, it cannot be motionless. It has to be changed in the changing scenario but the fundamental norms would not have any change, I assure you.

The proposal to constitute a commission for the review of Constitution has become very controversial. Those who have supported such a review, are important persons of all parties. Nobody can doubt their intention. Such apprehension cannot be expressed about them that they want to undo all that Dr. Ambedkar had done. But, our Constitution has completed fifty years and we have made amendments in it several times. Framers of our Constitution themselves had provided the mechanism of amendment because they knew that the document they are formulating is not a static document. It is being done to protect the interests of people and if required Constitution can be amended and they made provisions also, but procedure of amendment was made quite stricter — the requirement of two-third majority was made. The proposed commission will have persons whose impartiality, learnedness and knowledge of law will be beyond doubt and secondly, they will make recommendations only. This commission would not impose any decision on the country. Its recommendations will be placed before the Parliament and certainly we have majority in the Parliament but how much, you know it. So creating such a bogey is wrong that constituting of commission is wrong and their intention behind it is this that they want to change the whole structure. India has adopted the path of democracy. It will never become a monarchy. Arif Saheb need not give us such warning. India will never be a religious country we have often said it. Untouchability would not be there legally once again, we want to remove it from our practice. Topic being discussed is devolution. Rulers in Delhi should curtail their power and resources to some extent and States should get more power, more financial resources, this is our policy. Everything will become centralised and country's face will change as a result thereof and democracy will be suffocated. Such views have no basis. I want to reassure that we do not have any hidden intention. I have said so repeatedly, so this is also really painful for me. But, we can go forward by believing one another and having mutual faith. While working honestly, we may commit some mistakes, but we would not indulge in unreliable conduct. I want to assure you that there is no need to peep into the history of Bhartiya

Janata Party. During my childhood, first of all, I came into contact with Arya Samaj. I was a member of Arya Kumar Sabha and as member of Arya Kumar Sabha to take up cudgels against hypocrisy is not a dogmatic attitude. To test the facts on the basis of logic to express difference of opinion seriously and fearlessly but not to have doubt about the intention of the person in opposition and also giving no opportunity to him to doubt my intention were imbibed by me since my childhood. Thereafter when I reached college I remained in contact with Students Federation of India because already I used to take interest in students' movements, fought elections, won them and usually elected unopposed. That was a student's organisation affiliated with the communist party.

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At that time, the feeling of economic equality, end of an era of exploitation, creation of such a world where there was no dominance of any country over the other was very strong.

The Soviet Union was the centre of attraction for those countries which were fighting for their freedom. However, it was discovered later on that there was no personal freedom in that country itself. Earlier also, the attractive face of the Soviet Union used to be shown to the people and the democratic socialism, if not communalism, definitely used to inspire the new generation. Among the revolutionaries included the communists and the socialists and they made great sacrifices for the nation. When I was a member of the Students Federation, I came into contact with the RSS. It is a good organisation which teaches discipline and inspires people to do something every day for the country. There can be difference of opinion with that organisation. Many Members may not be remembering that when our neighbouring country attacked us — Shri Nehru was then the Prime Minister — the Republic Day parade was to be held on 26th January but most of the armed forces were deployed on the border and they could not be recalled in view of security. Therefore, arrangements were made to organise parade with the remaining armed forces and police personnel available. Meanwhile, someone suggested Panditji that civilians should also be allowed to take part in the parade.

Today, when there is tension on the borders of the nation, we should show unity. The RSS was called to take part in that parade. I remember that there was a protest against this step of Nehruji in the meeting of the Congress

party. However, Nehruji had said that there could be differences of opinion with the RSS but when the nation was passing through a crisis, they all should forget those differences and won unitedly. Again, when the country was invaded, there was shortage of personnel in the army and the police. At that time, Shri Lai Bahadur Shastri was the Prime Minister. A problem cropped up as to who would manage the traffic in Delhi. We were facing the shortage of traffic police personnel. This task was entrusted to us and at that time, I had said :—

"Dukh mein sumiran sab kare, sukh mein kare na koi,
Jo sukh mein sumiran kare, to dukh kahe ko hoi;"

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have not got drawn in this controversy because I find myself a repository of all virtues, but we have duly discharged the responsibility of an opposition for 40 years. We hope that those who have come in the opposition after a long time will stay there for long and they would also perform their duty. The word 'Dharma' does not mean 'religion'. 'Dharma' is a comprehensive term. 'Dharma Char' means 'Follow Dharma'. There is no interpretation of the 'Dharma' which is to be followed. It is said that one should follow one's 'Dharma'. It is to be decided by the person as to what his/her 'Dharma' is. My 'Dharma' is to address you and speak good thing and your 'Dharma' is to give me a patient hearing. The confusion arises when 'religion' is translated as 'Dharma'. However, the confusion would not have arisen in the translation of the word 'secular' had been "Panth Nirpeksh" or 'Sampradaya Nirpeksh' as no religion can be absolute and all religions are relative. But, there is now no need to go into that controversy. When we say we are a secular nation, you must have faith on us and we will put it into practice. I assure you that the misconception spread deliberately or inadvertently earlier will be dispelled.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri N. Janardhana Reddy has raised one more vital issue. A large number of cotton growers in Andhra Pradesh are committing suicide. This issue was raised even during the elections. I have also taken up this issue with the Andhra Pradesh Government This is indeed a symptom of a grave malady and it will have to take into consideration as to what quality and quantity of fertilizers and manure are to be used; how much loans should be provided to the farmers, how it could be arranged and that if the farmers are not in a position to repay the loans, should such a situation compel them to

commit suicide? These issues keep haunting our minds. Shri Janardhana Reddy hails from Andhra Pradesh. I would like to assure this august House that we would definitely take some urgent steps in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the cooperative movement needs to be strengthened. Cooperative societies are working successfully in some States while they are not that much successful in other States. But, we have no alternative to the cooperative societies.

What sort of participation should be there in a democracy? Participation is not an abstract thing. This is a relative concept and has a definite form. Now in what form and at what level this participation should exist? There is a public sector, then private sector is there. We have to develop a third sector which has already developed to some extent but it still calls for further attention.

We have to eliminate the shortcomings which have crept in the cooperative movement. We have to revitalize it. The interests of the people for whom these cooperative societies have been constituted or for whom the cooperative movements are undertaken should be safeguarded, it is also generally seen that the resourceful or affluent persons capture these cooperative societies. Then they utilize these societies for their political ends. Party politics have to be kept off the cooperatives. But the need of the hour is to expand this network of cooperative system throughout the country.

Nishad ji is present here. I would like to recapitulate his good suggestions. One of his suggestions is to provide identity cards to all the voters. We have been making this demand for years. Though this exercise was started but it was abandoned midway. If we have to check bogus voting, we will have to provide identity cards. If we want to check illegal entry into the country, we will have to provide our citizens identity cards. If people keep identity card with them at the time of emergency or crisis it would be convenient in many ways and also they can avail many other concessions and benefits. They can have ration cards on the basis of these identity cards.

I agree to his suggestion but he has given another unique suggestion that the candidate polling less than one percent votes should be awarded six months' imprisonment. Though this is a good suggestion, yet it is a bit

harsh punishment. It cannot be put into practice. He has also stated that the candidate should not be allowed to spend more than Rs. 50,000/-. Nowadays, contesting elections is becoming a costly affair.

I contested election first time in 1957. I had only two jeeps at that time. I shifted my constituency from Lucknow to Balrampur. I had not gone to Balrampur before. The Party suggested me to contest from Balrampur which was thought to be an easy bet. I went there. I had one jeep and managed one more there and thus, I contested election with two jeeps only. I visited the whole constituency with two jeeps and I won that election. Nowadays, one requires a convoy of vehicles. How it could be possible? Are we not contesting elections with blackmoney? We should think over it with a clean heart. That is why, when we talk of reviewing the Constitution, election reforms are also there.

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If we reform the election system and introduce list system.

If a person casts his vote in favour of a party only in the ensuing elections. That is what my point is. I know that there are problems in it, but it would discourage casteism and a process of collective thinking will be started.

I am giving an example without going into details. However elections being a costly affair, it will make politics a slave to wealth. It is a dangerous signal. Sometimes I wish not to contest elections. But beating a retreat is also not advisable “Na dainyam na palayanam”.

Arjun had taken two vows that he would neither show weakness nor would run away from, the battle field I do not claim myself to be Arjun but I do wish that this situation in the country must change. For me this is my last election. Today, I would like to say that after this I would not contest.

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We have entered into coalition as none of the parties has got clear majority and there was no other alternative before us. If we do not form the Government by making adjustments or through cooperation, then it is said our ideology is wrong, we are full of ills Pilot Saheb, I have rich experience of it while you are new to these things.

Your are again going by to the newspapers

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not want to waste the time of this House by making detailed observations on each issue raised here. However, I would like to congratulate my young friend Shri Omar Farookh Abdullah if he is present in the House. He has been elected for the first time but he has delivered a very good speech. His reply as a citizen of Kashmir to the charges that are traded about India, should prove to be an eye opener, it should be a warning to all of us.

In this discussion, issues related to North-East have also been raised. Today, we received a shocking news from Tripura. There is unrest in some areas which have witnessed violent disturbances. All the Governments have so far been paying attention to it but the extent of success which should have been achieved has not been achieved. We want that development of North-East should receive special attention the other day also I had mentioned this thing. I would call a meeting of all the Chief Ministers of North-East and shall discuss the situation of that area with them. I shall call for their suggestions and take a decision as to what steps could be taken in this regard.

Our friend from Bodoland has also raised some problems of Bodoland in his speech. Their problems are related to development. Let us discuss these problems seriously and reach to a conclusion based on consensus.

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In the President's Address and National Agenda also we have mentioned about the creation of three new States. Today, an hon'ble Member from Vidarbha came to see me and he has submitted a memorandum. I would like to assure him that we will take a decision on that after considering all the aspects.

My Marxist friend had pointed out that the problems of agricultural labourers have been ignored. It is not so. In many States laws regulating minimum wages have seen enacted but they are not being implemented honestly. In places where farmers are well off, labourers are being paid even more than the minimum wages. But this is not the situation in the whole country. If a consensus is there in favour of a Central Legislation in this regard, then we can consider.

I had gone to Bihar, when this incident of massacre occurred there.

I asked the victim farmers near Jahanabad as to whether there is land dispute or wage related dispute. They said that it is neither land dispute nor a dispute related with wages. Certain other dispute is the root cause of this incident.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri Subrata Mukherjee has given a very important suggestion for converting barren land into fertile land. Already, the Government is contemplating on these lines. There is difficulty in increasing the limit of irrigated land but the barren land is lying unutilised and if a national campaign is launched taking cooperation of all and Government would have to take the initiative, then we can make barren land cultivable and achieve the target of increasing production in the country. I want to tell you that Government will take initiative in the regard.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, several issues were raised but it is not possible for me to give reply to all.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not want to comment on this issue. I had already mentioned it on that day. They can put all these points before the Commission which will review the Constitution. They can plead their case there. Even they can get their points included and whenever these things come up before the House, a suitable decision can be taken.

BACK NOTE

VI Reply to Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, 31 March, 1998

1. SOME HON. MEMBERS : The discussion was initiated by the opposition.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Yes, it was done by the opposition. Mr. Speaker, Sir, old habits die hard.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, coming events cast their shadows before.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : He and my friend Shri Janardhan Reddy and some other Members have observed that the National Agenda on which the Government is constituted and which will form the basis for the Government functioning is nothing but a hollow promise and have said that it is far from reality and that an attempt has been made to transform earth into a paradise. At least we have made promises and consequently the Members have drawn the conclusion that this is nothing but an attempt to mislead the electorate. I think by saying this we are not doing justice to the enlightened electorate of this country.

2. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : How did you join that side?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : The communist ideology did influence me to come back but when the Communist Party supported the partition of the country on the basis of religion and termed it as self-determination, I felt that I could not associate myself with such a party.

3. SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER (Tenali) : It has nothing to do with the Constitution.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : It has a link with it.

4. SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER : Yes, election process has to be changed.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : It can be changed provided you change your way of thinking about ours, yours and that of everyone's attitude should change. We must give it due consideration. All these things are such which we cannot relish.

5. SHRI SANSUMA KHUNGGUR BWISWMUTHIARY : Sir, this is just to give you some sort of interpretation. Our issue is not at all related only to the socio-economic problem. This is a very-very acute and serious ethnopolitical crisis. It has to be resolved politically by granting a separate State of Bodoland only.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : The Government has no intention to set up a new State reorganisation Commission.

6. SHRI LALU PRASAD (Madhepura) : This issue is before the commission so do not talk about it.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : All right.

7. SHRI ANAND MOHAN (Sheohar) : Certain qualification for Members of Parliament should also be prescribed. Educational qualification has been prescribed in all the cases even for a peon or a Marshall or for a constable. Similarly, educational qualification for the MLAs and MPs should also be decided.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : As I had said in the beginning, if the electorate is illiterate, it is not necessary that the legislators should be educated.

STATEMENT ON NUCLEAR TESTS DONE IN POKHRAN

27 May, 1998

Sir, I rise to inform the House of momentous developments that have taken place while we were in recess. On 11 May, India successfully carried out three underground nuclear tests. Two more underground tests on 13 May completed the planned series of tests. I would like this House to join me in paying fulsome tribute to our scientists, engineers and defence personnel whose singular achievements have given us a renewed sense of national pride and self-confidence. Sir, in addition to the Statement I make, I have also taken the opportunity to submit to the House a paper entitled "Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy".

In 1947, when India emerged as a free country to take its rightful place in the comity of nations, the nuclear age had already dawned. Our leaders then took the crucial decision to opt for self-reliance, and freedom of thought and action. We rejected the Cold War paradigm and chose the more difficult path of non-alignment. Our leaders also realised that a nuclear-weapon-free-world would enhance not only India's security but also the security of all nations. That is why disarmament was and continues to be a major plank of our foreign policy.

During the fifties, India took the lead in calling for an end to all nuclear weapon testing. Addressing the Lok Sabha on 2nd April, 1954, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, to whose memory we pay homage today, stated, "nuclear, chemical and biological energy and power should not be used to forge weapons of mass destruction". He called for negotiations for prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and in the interim, a standstill agreement to halt nuclear testing. This call was not heeded.

In 1965, along with a small group of non-aligned countries, India put forward the idea of an international non-proliferation agreement under which the nuclear weapon States would agree to give up their arsenals provided other countries refrained from developing or acquiring such weapons. This balance of rights and obligations was not accepted. In the sixties our security concerns deepened. The country sought security guarantees but the countries we turned to were unable to extend to us the expected assurances. As a result, we made it clear that we would not be able to sign the NPT.

The Lok Sabha debated the issue on 5th April, 1968. Prime Minister late Shrimati Indira Gandhi assured the House that “we shall be guided entirely by our self-enlightenment and the consideration of national security”. This was a turning point and this House strengthened the decision of the then Government by reflecting a national consensus.

Our decision not to sign the NPT was in keeping with our basic objectives. In 1974, we demonstrated our nuclear capability. Successive Governments thereafter have taken all necessary steps in keeping with that resolve and national will, to safeguard India’s nuclear option. This was the primary reason behind the 1996 decision for not signing the CTBT, a decision that also enjoyed consensus of this House.

The decades of the eighties and nineties had meanwhile witnessed the gradual deterioration of our security environment as a result of nuclear and missile proliferation. In our neighbourhood, nuclear weapons had increased and more sophisticated delivery systems inducted. In addition, India has also been the victim of externally aided and abetted terrorism, militancy and clandestine war.

At a global level, we see no evidence on the part of the nuclear weapon States to take decisive and irreversible steps in moving towards a nuclear-weapons-free-world. Instead, we have seen that the NPT has been extended indefinitely and unconditionally, perpetuating the existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the five countries.

Under such circumstances, the Government was faced with a difficult decision. The touchstone that has guided us in making the correct choice clearly was national security. These tests are continuation of the policies set into motion that put this country on the path of self-reliance and independence of thought and action.

India is now a nuclear weapon State. This is a reality that cannot be denied. It is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a status for other to grant. It is an endowment to the nation by our scientists and engineers. It is India’s due, the right of one-sixth of humankind. Our strengthened capability adds to our sense of responsibility. We do not intend to use these weapons for aggression or for mounting threats against any country, these are weapons of self-defence, to ensure that India is not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion. We do not intend to engage in an arms race.

We had taken a number of initiatives in the past. We regret that these proposals did not receive a positive response from other nuclear weapon States. In fact, had their response been positive, we need not have gone in for our current testing programme. We have been and will continue to be in the forefront of the calls for opening negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, so that this challenge can be dealt with in the same manner that we have dealt with the scourge of two other weapons of mass destruction through the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Traditionally, India has been an outward looking country. Our strong commitment to multilateralism is reflected in our active participation in organisations like the United Nations. This engagement will continue. The policies of economic liberalisation introduced in recent years have increased our regional and global linkages and my Government intends to deepen and strengthen these ties.

Our nuclear policy has been marked by restraint and openness. We have not violated any international agreement either in 1974 or now, in 1998. The restraint exercised for 24 years, after having demonstrated our capability in 1974, is in itself a unique example. Restraint, however, has to arise from strength. It cannot be based upon indecision or doubt. The series of tests recently undertaken by India have led to the removal of doubts. The action involved was balanced in that it was the minimum necessary to maintain what is an irreducible component of our national security calculus.

Subsequently, Government has already announced that India will now observe a voluntary moratorium and refrain from conducting underground nuclear test explosions. We have also indicated willingness to move towards a *de jure* formalisation of this declaration.

The House is no doubt aware of the different reactions that have emanated from the people of India and from different parts of the world. The overwhelming support of our citizens is our source of strength. It tells us not only that this decision was right but also that our country wants a focussed leadership, which attends to their security needs. This, I pledge to do as a sacred duty. We have also been greatly heartened by the outpouring of support from Indians abroad. They have, with one voice, spoken in favour of our action. To the people of India, and to Indians abroad, I convey my profound gratitude. We look to the

people of India and Indians abroad for support in the difficult period ahead.

In this fiftieth year of our Independence, we stand at a defining moment in our history. The rationale for the Government's decision is based on the same policy tenets that have guided us for five decades. These policies have been sustained successfully because of an underlying national consensus. It is vital to maintain the consensus as we approach the next millennium. In my statement today and in the paper placed before the House, I have elaborated on the rationale behind the Government's decision, and outlined our approach for the future. The present decision and future actions will continue to reflect a commitment to sensibilities and obligations of an ancient civilisation, a sense of responsibility and restraint, but a restraint born of the assurance of action, not of doubts or apprehension. Avoiding triumphalism, let us work together towards our shared objective in ensuring that as we move towards a new millennium, India will take its rightful place in the international community.

Sir, I lay the Paper entitled "Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy".

STATEMENT RE : EVOLUTION OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY

On 11 May, a statement was issued by Government announcing that India had successfully carried out three underground nuclear tests at the Pokhran range. Two days later, after carrying out two more underground sub kiloton tests, the Government announced the completion of the planned series of tests. The three underground nuclear tests carried out at 15:45 hours on 11 May were with three different devices a fission device, a low yield sub kiloton device and a thermonuclear device. The two tests carried out at 1221 hours on 13 May were also low yield devices in the sub kiloton range. The results from these tests have been in accordance with the expectations of our scientists.

In 1947, when India emerged as a free country to take its rightful place in the comity of nations, the nuclear age had already dawned. Our leaders then took the crucial decision to opt for self reliance, and freedom of thought and action. We rejected the Cold War paradigm whose shadows were already appearing on the horizon and instead of aligning ourselves with either bloc, chose the more difficult path of non-alignment. This has required the building up of national strength through our own resources, our skills and creativity and the dedication of the people. Among the earliest initiatives taken by our first Prime

Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, was the development of science and inculcation of the scientific spirit. It is this initiative that laid the foundation for the achievement of 11 and 13 May, made possible by exemplary cooperation among the scientists from Department of Atomic Energy and Defence Research and Development Organisation. Disarmament was then and continues to be a major plank in our foreign policy now. It was, in essence, and remains still, the natural course for a country that had waged a unique struggle for independence on the basis of 'ahimsa' and 'satyagraha'.

Development of nuclear technology transformed the nature of global security. Our leaders reasoned that nuclear weapons were not weapons of war, these were weapons of mass destruction. A nuclear-weapon-free-world would, therefore, enhance not only India's security but also the security of all nations. This is the principle plank of our nuclear policy. In the absence of universal and non-discriminatory disarmament, we cannot accept a regime that creates an arbitrary division between nuclear haves and havenots. India believes that it is the sovereign right of every nation to make a judgement regarding its supreme national interests and exercise its sovereign choice. We subscribe to the principle of equal and legitimate security interests of nations and consider it a sovereign right. At the same time, our leaders recognised early that nuclear technology offers tremendous potential for economic development, especially for developing countries who are endeavouring to leap across the technology gaps created by long years of colonial exploitation. This thinking was reflected in the enactment of the Atomic Energy Act of 1948, within a year of our independence. All the numerous initiatives taken by us since, in the field of nuclear disarmament have been in harmony and in continuation of those early enunciations.

In the 50's, nuclear weapons testing took place above ground and the characteristic mushroom cloud became the visible symbol of the nuclear age. India then took the lead in calling for an end to all nuclear weapon testing as the first step for ending the nuclear arms race. Addressing the Lok Sabha on "2 April, 1954, shortly stated that" nuclear, chemical and biological energy and power should not be used to forge weapons of mass destruction". He called for negotiations for prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and in the *interim*, a standstill agreement to halt nuclear testing. The world had by then witnessed less than 65 tests. Our call was not heeded. In 1963, an agreement was concluded to ban atmospheric testing but by this time, countries had developed the technologies for conducting underground nuclear tests and the

nuclear arms race continued unabated. More than three decades passed and after over 2000 tests had been conducted, a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was opened for signature in 1996, following two and a half years of negotiations in which India had participated actively. In its final shape, this Treaty left much to be desired. It was neither comprehensive nor was it related to disarmament.

In 1965, along with a small group of nonaligned countries, India had put forward the idea of an international nonproliferation agreement under which the nuclear weapon states would agree to give up their arsenals provided other countries refrained from developing or acquiring such weapons. This balance of rights and obligations was absent when the Nuclear NonProliferation Treaty (NPT) emerged in 1968, almost 30 years ago. In the 60's our security concerns deepened. But such was our abhorrence of nuclear weapons and such our desire to avoid acquiring them that we sought instead security guarantees from major nuclear powers of the world. The countries we turned to for support and understanding felt unable to extend to us the assurances that we then sought. That is when and why India made clear its inability to sign the NPT.

The Lok Sabha debated the NPT on 5 April, 1968. The then Prime Minister, late Smt. Indira Gandhi assured the House that "we shall be guided entirely by our selfenlightenment and the considerations of national security". She highlighted the shortcomings of the NPT whilst reemphasising the country's commitment to nuclear disarmament. She warned the House and the country "that no signing the Treaty may bring the nation many difficulties.

It may mean the stoppage of aid and stoppage of help. Since we are taking this decision together, we must all be together in facing its consequences". That was a turning point. This House then strengthened the decision of the Government by reflecting a national consensus.

Our decision not to sign the NPT was in keeping with the basic objective of maintaining freedom of thought and action in 1974, we demonstrated our nuclear capability. Successive Governments thereafter have continued to take all necessary steps in keeping with the resolve and national will, to safeguard India's nuclear option. This was also the primary reason underlying the 1996 decision in the country not subscribing to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); a decision that met the unanimous approval of the House yet again.

Our perception then was that subscribing to the CTBT would severely limit India's nuclear potential at an unacceptably low level. Our reservations deepened as the CTBT did not also carry forward the nuclear disarmament process. On both counts, therefore, yet again our security concerns remained unaddressed. The then Minister of External Affairs, Shri I.K. Gujral had made clear the Government's reasoning to this House during the discussion on this subject in 1996.

The decades of the 80s and 90s meanwhile witnessed the gradual deterioration of our security environment as a result of nuclear and missile proliferation. In our neighbourhood, nuclear weapons increased and more sophisticated delivery systems were inducted. Further, in our region there has come into existence a pattern about clandestine acquisition of nuclear materials, missiles and related technologies. India, in this period became the victim of externally aided and abetted terrorism, militancy and clandestine war through hired mercenaries.

The end of the Cold War marks a watershed in the history of the 20th century. While it has transformed the political landscape of Europe, it has done little to address India's security concerns. The relative order that was arrived at in Europe was not replicated in other parts of the globe.

At the global level, there is no evidence yet on the part of the nuclear weapon States to take decisive and irreversible steps in moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free-world. Instead, the NPT has been extended indefinitely and unconditionally, perpetuating the existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the five countries who are also permanent members of the UN Security Council. Some of these countries have doctrines that permit the first use of nuclear weapons; these countries are also engaged in programmes for modernisation of their nuclear arsenals.

Under such circumstances, India was left with little choice. It had to take necessary steps to ensure that the country's nuclear option, developed and safeguarded over decades not be permitted to erode by a voluntary self-imposed restraint. Indeed, such an erosion would have had an irremediably adverse impact on our security. The Government was thus faced with an adverse impact on our security. The Government was thus faced with a difficult decision. The only touchstone that guided it was national security. Tests conducted on 11 and 13 May are a continuation of the policies set into motion that put this country

on the path of self-reliance and independence of thought and action. Nevertheless, there are certain moments when the chosen path reaches a form and a decision has to be made. 1968 was one such moment in our nuclear chapter as were 1974 and 1996. At each of these moments, we took the right decision guided by national interest and supported by national consensus. 1998 was borne in the crucible of earlier decisions and made possible only because those decisions had been taken correctly in the past and in time.

At a time when developments in the area of advanced technologies are taking place at a breathtaking pace, new parameters need to be identified, tested and validated in order to ensure that skills remain contemporary and succeeding generations of scientists and engineers are able to build on the work done by their predecessors. The limited series of five tests undertaken by India was precisely such an exercise. It has achieved its stated objective. The data provided by these tests is critical to validate our capabilities in the design of nuclear weapons of different yields for different applications and different delivery systems. Further, these tests have significantly enhanced the capabilities of our scientists and engineers in computer simulation of new design and enabled them to undertake sub-critical experiments in future, if considered necessary. In terms of technical capability, our scientists and engineers have the requisite resources to ensure a credible deterrent.

Our policies towards our neighbours and other countries too have not changed. India remains fully committed to the promotion of peace with stability, and resolution of outstanding issues through bilateral dialogue and negotiations. These tests were not directed against any country; these were intended to reassure the people of India about their security and convey determination that this Government, like previous Governments, has the capability and resolve to safeguard their national security interests. The Government will continue to remain engaged in substantive dialogue with our neighbours to improve relations and to expand the scope of our interactions in a mutually advantageous manner. Confidence building is a continuous process; we remain committed to it. Consequent upon the tests and arising from an insufficient appreciation of our security concerns, some countries have been persuaded to take steps that sadden us. We value our bilateral relations. We remain committed to dialogue and reaffirm that preservation of India's security create no conflict of interest with these countries.

India is a nuclear weapon State. This is a reality that cannot be denied. It is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a status for others to grant. It is an endowment to the nation by our scientists and engineers. It is India's due, the right of one-sixth of humankind. Our strengthened capability adds to our sense of responsibility; the responsibility and obligation of power. India, mindful of its International obligations, shall not use these weapons to commit aggression or to mount threats against any country; these are weapons of self-defence and to ensure that in turn, India is also not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion. In 1994, we had proposed that India and Pakistan jointly undertake not to be the first to use their nuclear capability against each other. The Government on this occasion, reiterates its readiness to discuss a "no first use" agreement with that country, as also with other countries bilaterally, or in a collective forum. India shall not engage in an arms race. India shall also not subscribe or reinvent the doctrines of the Cold War. India remains committed to the basic tenet of our foreign policy – a conviction that global elimination of nuclear weapons will enhance its security as well as that of the rest of the world. It will continue to urge countries, particularly other nuclear weapon States to adopt measures that would contribute meaningfully to such an objective.

A number of initiatives have been taken in the past. In 1978, India proposed negotiations for an international convention that would prohibit the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This was followed by another initiative in 1982 calling for a 'nuclear freeze' — a prohibition on production of fissile materials for weapons, on production of nuclear weapons and related delivery systems. In 1988, we put forward an Action Plan for phased elimination of all nuclear weapons within a specified time frame. It is our regret that these proposals did not receive a positive response from other nuclear weapon States. Had their response been positive, India need not have gone for the current tests. This is where our approach to nuclear weapons is different from others. This difference is the cornerstone of our nuclear doctrine. It is marked by restraint and striving for the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

We will continue to support such initiatives, taken individually or collectively by the Non-Aligned Movement which has continued to attach the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. This was reaffirmed most recently, last week, at the NAM Ministerial meeting held at Cartagena which has "reiterated their call on the Conference on Disarmament to establish, as the highest priority, an

ad hoc committee to start in 1998 negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time, including a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The collective voice of 113 NAM countries reflects an approach to global nuclear disarmament to which India has remained committed. One of the NAM member initiatives to which we attach great importance was the reference to the International Court of Justice resulting in the unanimous declaration from the ICJ, as part of the Advisory Opinion handed down on 8 July, 1996, that “there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective International control”. India was one of the countries that appealed to the ICJ on this issue. No other nuclear weapon State has supported this judgement; in fact, they have sought to decry its value. We have been and will continue to be in the forefront of the calls for opening negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, so that this challenge can be dealt with in the same manner that we have dealt with the scourge of two other weapons of mass destruction through the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. In keeping with our commitment to comprehensive, universal and non discriminatory approaches to disarmament, India is an original State Party to both these Conventions. Accordingly, India will shortly submit the plan of destruction of its chemical weapons to the international authority—Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We fulfil our obligations whenever we undertake them.

Traditionally, India has been an outward looking country. Our strong commitment to multilateralism is reflected in our active participation in organisations like the United Nations. In recent years, in keeping with the new challenges, we have actively promoted regional cooperation—in SAARC, in the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation and as a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum. This engagement will also continue. The policies of economic liberalisation introduced in recent years have increased our regional and global linkages and the Government shall deepen and strengthen these ties.

Our nuclear policy has been marked by restraint and openness. It has not violated any international agreements either in 1974 or now, in 1998. Our concerns have been made known to our interlocuters in recent years. The restraint exercised for 24 years, after having demonstrated our capability in

1974, is in itself a unique example. Restraint, however, has to arise from strength. It cannot be based upon indecision or doubt. Restraint is valid only when doubts are removed. The series of tests undertaken by India have led to the removal of doubts. The action involved was balanced in that it was the minimum necessary to maintain what is an irreducible component of our national security calculus. This Government's decision has, therefore, to be seen as part of a tradition of restraint that has characterised our policy in the past 50 years.

Subsequent to the tests Government has already stated that India will now observe a voluntary moratorium and refrain from conducting underground nuclear test explosions. It has also indicated willingness to move towards a *de jure* formalisation of this declaration. The basic obligation of the CTBT are thus met; to refrain from undertaking nuclear test explosions. This voluntary declaration is intended to convey to the international community the seriousness of our intent for meaningful engagement. Subsequent decisions will be taken after assuring ourselves of the security needs of the country.

India has also indicated readiness to participate in negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on a Fissile Material Cut of Treaty. The basic objective of this treaty is to prohibit future production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices. India's approach in these negotiations will be to ensure that this treaty emerges as a universal and non discriminatory treaty, backed by an effective verification mechanism. When we embark on these negotiations, it shall be in the full confidence of the adequacy and credibility of the nation's weaponised nuclear deterrent.

India has maintained effective export controls on nuclear materials as well as related technologies even though we are neither a party to the NPT nor a member of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group. Nonetheless, India is committed to non proliferation and the maintaining of stringent export controls to ensure that there is no leakage of our indigenously developed know how and technologies. In fact, India's conduct in this regard has been better than some countries party to the NPT.

India has in the past conveyed our concerns on the inadequacies of the international nuclear non proliferation regime. It has explained that

the country was not in a position to join because the regime did not address our country's security concerns. These could have been addressed by moving towards global nuclear disarmament, our preferred approach. As this did not take place, India was obliged to stand aside from the emerging regime so that its freedom of action was not constrained. This is the precise path that has continued to be followed unwaveringly for the last three decades. That same constructive approach will underlie India's dialogue with countries that need to be persuaded of our serious intent and willingness to engage so that mutual concerns are satisfactorily addressed. The challenge to Indian state Elections to Committees craft is balancing and reconciling India's security imperatives with valid international concerns in this regard.

The House is aware of the different reactions that have emanated from the people of India and from different parts of the world. The overwhelming support of the citizens of India is a source of strength for the Government. It not only tells that this decision was right but also that the country wants a focussed leadership, which attends to national security needs. This the Government pledges to do as a sacred duty. The Government have also been greatly heartened by, the outpouring of support from Indians abroad. They have, with one voice, spoken in favour of the Government's action. The Government conveys its profound gratitude to the citizens of India and to Indians abroad, and looks to them for support in the difficult period ahead.

In this, the fiftieth year of our independence, India stands at a defining moment in our history. The rationale for the Government's decision is based on the same policy tenets that have guided the country for five decades. These policies were sustained successfully because of the underlying national consensus. The present decision and future actions will continue to reflect a commitment to sensibilities and obligations of an ancient civilisation, a sense of responsibility and restraint, but a restraint born of the assurance of action, not of doubts or apprehension. The Gita as explains (Chap.VI-) as none other can :

“Arurukshormuneryogam karma Karanmuchayate Yogarudharya tasyaiv shamah Karanmuchayate.”

(This passage interprets as: Action is a process to reach a goal; action may reflect tumult but when measured and focussed, will yield its objective of stability and peace)

BACK NOTE

VII Statement On Nuclear Tests done in Pokhran, 27 May, 1998

NIL

REPLY TO DISCUSSION ON NUCLEAR TESTS IN POKHRAN

29 MAY, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the long discussion on nuclear tests conducted by India at Pokhran is about to conclude. I am grateful to the Hon'ble Members who took part in this debate. The House is unanimous in extending congratulations to the scientists, engineers, technicians and the Jawans of our Army for their significant contribution in conducting Pokhran tests.

There is also a consensus that if attempts are made to impose unreasonable restrictions on our economic sovereignty and if the inflow into our country of the aid coming from world organisations is stopped, then we will face the situation unitedly.

Naturally, the need for conducting nuclear tests at Pokhran has been questioned during the discussions here I am reminded of 1974 when discussion was held on Pokhran. At that time I was present, Comrade Indrajit Gupta was also present. These were the two members who were present then also and are present today also in this House. The words uttered by me during the debate in the Parliament at the time of Pokhran tests in 1974 are no different from what I am saying today. The whole country had welcomed Indiraji's decision of granting permission for conducting the tests. Her decision was not a collective decision. She did not consult the opposition for conducting the tests but her decision was right and was in the interest of the country's security. Her decision was aimed at giving an opportunity to our scientists and, therefore, it was welcomed by all. I remember that Smt. Indira Gandhi did not make any speech in the discussion which was held at that time. On her behalf, on behalf of the Government another Minister had delivered a speech. The whole country was satisfied Just now a hint has been given from our neighbour that in 1974 they were not ready and, therefore they were silent, but now they are ready.

Some hon'ble Members have said that Pakistan conducted the tests in response to India's tests. Is a nuclear test possible within a short period of 16 days. People who are aware of the complexities of conducting nuclear tests are present here and they will testify that no country can make preparations for a nuclear test within a fortnight. This preparation has been

going on for years together. Yesterday, we conducted nuclear test and today this news has come that Pakistan has conducted the test flight of a long range missile. Our leaders are well aware of the time since when this preparation has been going on, and they have prepared the country for it. It was not so that I have decided in one day and test was conducted. Today I want to repeat what I had said earlier that behind this nuclear test there is 50 years of research and hard work by our scientists and Jawans of our Army who kept on working in the scorching heat, hot sand and temperature *as high as 50°C* and all this while they are motivated by the sentiments of defencing our country and enhancing the prestige of our nation. I don't think that there is any difference of opinion over this issue in the House. It is the characteristic of this country that whenever we have to face problem we forget all our differences. Ours is a democratic country it is natural that people may have difference of opinion

'Munde Munde matah bhinna.'

I was just going through a statement made by Shri Rajiv Gandhi in 1985, perhaps someone has quoted his statement. Whatever Shri Rajiv Gandhi had stated on 11th October during the Press Conference in the Press Club, I would like to quote that :

"As I have said on a number of occasions, we have to consider our security and there is no question of allowing New Delhi or for that matter any other city in India to be lattered out. We will not allow that to happen. What is even more worrying about Pakistan's programme is that we are fairly sure that at least part of the finances of this programme have come from other countries. Now what we worry about is that the nuclear weapon when developed will also have to go to these countries. I did not say that we are going to wait on your decision, on your response. For Pakistan to explode their device I said, that we have to take certain measures to protect ourselves. There are a number of measures, apart from making a nuclear weapon ourselves."

This is his statement given during the Press Conference in 1985. The Government was concerned and aware of the activities across the border. The super powers, who have stockpiled nuclear weapons, were not ready

to destroy all their weapons under a time bound programme. That is why a unanimous decision was taken that we should not sign the CTBT, once we felt that the super powers of the world wanted to impose a discriminatory treaty on the world. It was feared that we would be isolated.

At times, it becomes necessary to walk alone but our decision has to be correct and then it would not matter much if we walk in isolation. We kept our option open but it appeared from the reports that came in later that it would be necessary to take some action in this regard. The scientists were also consulted about the measures to be undertaken. We see the nuclear weapons as the weapons of destruction. They are useful only for the purpose of defence or self defence. Our opponents should realise that we possess the nuclear weapons so that they do not dare to attack us. Such a situation should be created and it will be created. We have been attacked thrice in these 50 years. Our country is the messenger of peace. It never attacked anybody's land; it never attacked any country, rather it was subjected to attack. Infact we were dispossessed of our land. Now we are trying to get it back. We are holding negotiations and it is possible only through negotiations. However, the country having a population of hundred crore cannot be put into a situation wherein it has to depend on mercy of others for its defence.

We are peace loving people and we want friendship based on justice and a friendship encouraging the mutual interests. India is a vast country. It is strong and also prosperous as compared to the neighbouring countries, still we never tried to take any undue advantage of our position. After all, this was the essence of the Gujral doctrine but Shri Gujral should not shy away from admitting the fact that his doctrine did not succeed in case of Pakistan and Pakistan did not give it any chance. The infiltration of the terrorists inside our country continued and the border crisis also remained unresolved. The talks were on and at this occasion, I would like to reiterate the proposal that we are ready to hold further talks with Pakistan. Pakistan is our neighbouring country, hence we should sit down together to iron out our differences but Pakistan is not ready to go along with the consensus evolved at Dhaka or the subjects adopted for discussion in the Dhaka Resolution. The Prime Minister of Pakistan has repeated his proposal of

being prepared for having talks with India. It is a good thing and the talks should be held.

I remember that once I had told a Pakistani leader that the history may change but the geography cannot be changed. Now can we alter this fact that we are neighbours. It is good if we maintain friendly relations but if the friendship is broken, we cannot simply change the neighbourhood as we are bound by this geographical fact of being neighbours. On this occasion also, I would like to tell the friends of Pakistan. Many people go to Pakistan and have friendly relations with the people of Pakistan. After coming back, they tell us that the insecurity of Pakistan stems from the apprehension that India has not accepted the separate existence of Pakistan, although there are no grounds for harbouring such a feeling. The country was divided and Pakistan was formed. Now they should be happy, satisfied and gain prosperity. They should let us live in peace and both of us should work together to root out poverty, unemployment, diseases illiteracy not only from this region but from the face of the world.

We also envisage a world free from nuclear weapons. Now why did India have to take such a decision? Should we have ignored it yet again? Yesterday I told the journalists that I was not surprised at what had transpired. We knew that this was going to happen and we wanted to prevent it and that is why we took this step. However, it is being interpreted as if they conducted the tests only because we had conducted it. Does that mean that they were preparing for it all along?

We are facing danger from some other quarters also. That country sees us as its sole enemy and their nuclear tests are directed at us.

India specific.

When our country conducts the nuclear tests and also raises its voice along with other nations with regard to the nuclear tests and also asks the super powers to destroy their weapons, in case, all this cannot be done simultaneously, it should be done in a phased manner, then it is stated that sincere attempts are not being made Casting doubts on our sincerity will not help. We want Pakistan to join us in making this demand. It has been stated repeatedly yesterday that the nuclear weapons are the weapons of destruction, so why collective measures are not taken to destroy the nuclear

weapons? It is quite apparent from the widespread support lent by the third world countries in vocal and not so vocal terms for our nuclear tests that a substantial part of the world and majority of people want permanent peace. They want a peace which is not violated by nuclear weapons. We would like to play a role in it but we are also desirous of keeping our country safe. The safety of the country and infact the safety of the world as a whole are equally important for us.

But we should be heard. We should achieve such a position that others listen to us attentively. We do not want to create a situation in which we might hurt our own interests.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹

‘We will formally give a pledge of first non-use of nuclear capability against Pakistan.’

We are ready to give this guarantee that we will not first use nuclear capability against Pakistan but later on if there is a need, then we will use that. But for that, first we have to develop our nuclear capability.

This also lends support to the argument that all political parties have a unanimous opinion on this issue. When this was to be done? After whatever happened yesterday, there is no need to give any reply. Who had taken this decision and who should take decision? It is for you to ponder over it. When some of my senior colleagues say that they were not aware of this, then this does not mean that I have no trust upon them. Therefore, to talk of unanimous decision or consultation is not proper. At that time when nuclear test had to be conducted, it was not possible to have consultations. Very limited people know about it. As Advanji said yesterday, everything gets leaked here, the entire report of the commission was published, but nobody could smell it. In foreign countries this issue has been a subject of debate. It is also an indication of nation’s determination.

It shows that if we want or the situation so demands and there is a challenge before our country, then the people of this country are ready to make bigger sacrifices and can take all precautions. This is an achievement. This should be duly acknowledged.

I felt hurt when an allegation was levelled that this was done for

achieving political self-interests. I had said this earlier and today I would like to repeat that. I was in the opposition for 40 years and as a member of opposition my role has always been appreciated and it has been said that I had not worked for party's interest but I worked for country's interest. Now that I am holding the office of the Prime Minister or have been chosen to hold this prestigious office, shall I allow pettiness, selfishness and the party interests to come in my way? I can never stoop to such a level.

May god save me from committing such a sin. Some decisions may be wrong. There can be two opinions regarding the time of a decision to be taken or not to be taken, but sincerity cannot be doubted. Why nuclear test was conducted in 1974. We did not ask that, people of the country did not ask that because it was a right step. Anyone can take right step, Indiraji could have taken right step. Our friends from the Congress had honoured Smt. Indiraji at the time of formation of Bangladesh, at the time of their liberation. At that time we also honoured her entire country honoured her. After that decision was taken to conduct elections. We did not criticize this. We have not blamed anyone. We said that Indiraji did a good work. My exact words were that an epoch making step has been taken. If we lose the elections, it is all right, the elections are lost at times and won at other times.

Similarly the Governments may come and Governments may go. But the country should be united, should attain prosperity with pride and should be able to protect its precious freedom. However, this is not the responsibility of a single party or Government alone. In the beginning of my speech at Pokhran. I had said that neither I nor my party take credit for this. Whatever was done, was done, in the country's interest. I was surprised when this question was raised that we had not worked according to our national agenda. Concern is being expressed about our national agenda. We are pleased to know that there are several people who are keeping an eye on our national agenda. They have joined two parts of national agenda and have misinterpreted it. They will say that it is printed like this.

But I will say that it has not been printed correctly. In that there are three issues—Combat effectiveness of Armed Forces.

"The state of preparedness, morale and combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces shall receive early attention and appropriate remedial action."

In the next sentence, it has been stated that–

“we will establish a National Security Council.”

and its detail has been given. In the end it has been stated, in fact, it should have been given in a separate para to make the reading easier. However, but there should not be any difficulty in understanding the meaning.

“Towards that end, we will re-evaluate the nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons.”

It does not mean that first of all armed forces will be strengthened, security council will be set up and after doing all this exercise if the situation demands to do it tomorrow, and even then we respond in the negative with an argument that our armed forces are not weaponed and security council has not been formed. Nobody can ascribe such a meaning but attempts are being made to do so. Injustice has been done to us. I do not know whether such a discussion, consultation and meetings of scientists were ever held with the opposition on such an occasion. We fought the Bangladesh war, we were also involved in war with China and conducted nuclear tests in Pokhran but that was not any obligation on anyone. But I regret that our scientist Dr. Chidambaram failed to convince our politician, Shri Chidambaram.

Mr Speaker, Sir, many other questions were raised during the discussion which lasted for a long duration I am not going into the details of all these points. We have taken some decisions which have already been mentioned in brief.

We are disappointed that U.S. has displayed a lack of application of India’s legitimate security concerns. I wish to reiterate Government’s commitment to engage with all principal interlocutors in a responsible dialogue. We remain ready to discuss and explain our position.

Since 11th May, the Government have taken certain initiatives, which I am going to enlist here.

1. We are already observing a voluntary moratorium and are ready to consider and discuss converting it into a *de jure* commitment.
2. We have volunteered to engage in negotiations on AFMCT.

3. India will undertake stringent controls on nuclear and missile related technologies as well as those relating to other weapons of mass destruction.

We had already announced and reiterate our offer to discuss a 'No-First-Use' agreement with Pakistan and also with other countries bilaterally or in a multilateral forum.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the policy of the Government is to maintain friendly relations with China. China is our neighbouring country. Both the countries are in Asia and are big nations. It is required that both the countries maintain friendship according to the principles of Panchsheel. There is some tension on the border issue. However, there is peace on the border these days. We want to solve the border issue through negotiations. Discussions continue but these should progress speedily to find out a satisfactory solution. The way China helps Pakistan, is a matter of concern. This help could be used against us. It is required that China should take note of our concerns. Both India and China should work together with mutual co-operation which is in the interest of both the countries, Asia and the world as a whole. An attempt has been made to create some misunderstanding on the question of some statements. Once distorted version of statements appears in the media, it is difficult to get the correct version find a place in the print media and then the spicy material find place in the headlines. Our policy is of friendship, development and to maintain peace in this Asian region. Besides, preparing for own security, our aim is to remain friendly with all countries. I am confident that those who are our critics today, will have a change in their attitude tomorrow. We have conducted a test, we did not create a war hysteria in our country. When the test was conducted the atmosphere in the country was normal. I myself visited Pokhran and remained there for several hours. There was no radioactivity there. A news appeared that cases of nose bleeding have been reported. But from whose nose and how much blood came out of it, nobody is there to answer such questions.

However this news item was published very prominently especially in the foreign countries. The soldiers are living there in those conditions.

There is no danger of radioactivity. There is also no question of

getting political mileage out of it. We wish to make a progress by formulating policies on the basis of consensus evolved with the cooperation of all the members.

I see it as my primary duty to effectively discharge the responsibility placed on my shoulders and everything else is secondary to that. It is not the issue concerning a person, a family, a group, a community or religion. This country is multi-religious one.

I was surprised to hear yesterday a very provocative speech delivered by the Prime Minister of our neighbouring country while addressing the nation on TV. He was provoking his people. He did not think of crores of people living in the neighbouring country. Crores of people who are followers of Islam are citizens of India and they are enjoying equal rights. An attempt was made to create a hysteria whenever a minor incident occurs and is taken up by the media for a debate and from the feedback, one comes to know that this is not correct and that line of thinking is dropped. However, such an occasion will never arise when I will feel like provoking the people of the country by addressing them through television and if at all, such a day comes, I would like to assure you that I will quit the very same day. I have got this opportunity to serve the nation and I wish to utilise this time properly for serving my nation and I am desirous of getting co-operation from all the quarters in this endeavour.

Some members had quoted from my speech delivered at the time when Pokhran-I tests were conducted I had stated therein that the scientists and the soldiers had done their job and now it was upto the politicians to do their bit. By politicians, I do not mean only politicians but all the people. What is required is that all of us should discharge our responsibilities.

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BACK NOTE

VIII Reply to Discussion on Nuclear Tests in Pokhran, 29 May, 1998

1. Shri Deve Gowdaji is not present here.

AN HON'BLE MEMBER : He is present. He is sitting in the back seat.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I am having a look at the 1996 manifesto of Janata Dal. Perhaps the Janata Dal which I am referring to is the one to which Gowdaji is related.

2 SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (Baramati): The Prime Minister of Pakistan has made a suggestion that Pakistan is ready to discuss NoWarPact with India. What is your thinking? Are you ready to discuss with other political parties also to take some definitive view on this?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : This is not a new offer. But whenever talks were held, we reached the conclusion that they want No-War-Pact but only after the solution of the Kashmir problem, according to their wishes. But if a new offer has been made, we are prepared to probe it.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION

8 June, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members are aware of the Resolution adopted on 6th June, 1998, by the United Nations Security Council. I would like to take the House into confidence on our position on this matter.

We regret that the Security Council as acted in a manner in which it has and produced a Resolution which is completely unhelpful in respect of the objectives it seeks to address. The Resolution contains a number of references to nuclear non-proliferation. As I had mentioned in my earlier statement in the House, we are a responsible and committed member of the international community. The Resolution urges us not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosions. For India, such an urging is redundant because we have already instituted a voluntary moratorium. We have also indicated our willingness to explore ways and means of converting this undertaking into a *de jure* obligation. Further, we have made clear our readiness to engage in multilateral negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut off Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We cannot, however, be expected to commit ourselves in advance of these negotiations, to unilaterally restrain production of fissile materials. In keeping with our commitment to non-proliferation, we maintain the strictest controls over exports of nuclear materials and technologies. Our record in this regard has been impeccable and better than that of some countries who are parties to the NPT or members of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group or even Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council.

However, the call made in the Resolution that we should stop our nuclear programme or missile programmes is unacceptable. Decisions in this regard will be taken by the Government on the basis of our assessments and national security requirements, in a reasonable and responsible manner. This right, which we claim for ourselves is not something new; it is the right of every sovereign country, and a right that every Government in this country has strongly upheld for the last 50 years.

A glaring lacuna in the Resolution is the total absence of a recognition that the non-proliferation issue is not a regional issue but has to be dealt with in a non-discriminatory global context. We find it unfortunate that the UN Security Council Resolution does not reflect on the judgement of the highest international judicial body— the International Court of Justice,

which has questioned the legitimacy of nuclear weapons and called for urgent negotiations for their elimination. In the paper on the evolution of India's Nuclear Policy laid on the Table of this House, we have reiterated our commitment to nuclear disarmament. Let me categorically state that unlike other nuclear weapon States who have sought to retain their exclusive hold over their nuclear arsenals, India has no such ambition. Government is committed to initiatives that can open negotiations for a global convention for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. The attempt to project the recent tests by India as a threat to peace and security is totally misguided and grossly out of focus. Such a portrayal of our policy ignores the positive steps announced by Government to which I have already referred, both in the global disarmament framework and the regional context. Our tests were necessary because of the failure of a flawed non-proliferation regime, and, therefore, we categorically reject the notion that these have adversely affected either regional or global security.

Government have indicated willingness to engage in a meaningful dialogue with key interlocutors on the whole range of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Last week, Special Envoy, Shri Brajesh Mishra visited Paris and London in this regard. He had meetings at the senior most levels in the two capitals. Dialogues with other countries are also planned. These dialogues have to be seen as part of a process, a process that will lead to a better understanding of India's position.

Hon. Members are aware that India has always desired a peaceful, friendly and mutually beneficial relationship with Pakistan based on confidence and respect for each other's concerns. I have already said on the floor of both the Houses, and, I would like to reiterate that a secure and prosperous Pakistan is in India's interest. Our vision of our bilateral relationship is not confined to a resolution of outstanding issues, but is also directed to the future by seeking to building a stable structure of cooperation, which will benefit the people of both countries. As I wrote recently to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, we must not remain mired in the past, prisoners of old contentions. And, I say to him today, let us put the past behind us, let us think of the welfare of our children and grandchildren.

We have remained committed to a path of direct bilateral dialogue with Pakistan. This reflects the nation's conviction and confidence that it is only through direct discussions in a sustained and constructive manner that we can

move ahead in our bilateral relationship. I would again like to reiterate our desire for the earliest resumption of the official talks with Pakistan. The subjects for discussions including peace and security, (along with confidence building measures) Jammu and Kashmir, economic and commercial cooperation and cross border terrorism have been identified. Our proposals for the modalities of these talks have been with Pakistan since January this year. We await their response. We have also made it clear once against that there is no place for outside involvement to any nature whatsoever in our dialogue process with Pakistan.

Hon. Members have expressed strong reservations against attempts to internationalise the Kashmir issue. There is simply no question of India ever agreeing to such internationalisation. The UN Security Council has chosen to mention Kashmir in its Resolution. This is unacceptable and does not change the reality that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. I would also like to draw the attention of the hon. Members to the terms in which Kashmir finds mention in the Resolution. The UN Security Council has recognised that bilateral dialogue has to be the basis of India Pakistan relations and mutually acceptable solutions have to be found for outstanding issues including Kashmir. This is in keeping with our position. Thank you.

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The latest information from Eritrea is that a ceasefire has been ordered and it is being implemented. In the meantime, I have asked the Government to make arrangements for all those who want to come back in safety and the arrangements will be made as soon as possible.

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BACK NOTE

IX UN Security Council Resolution, 8 June, 1998

1 MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Prime Minister, would you like to respond to the submission made by Shri P.C. Chacko?

2 SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVHAN (Karad) : I am on a Point of Order, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : It is already getting 4.30 p.m. now. We have to complete the discussion on the Railway Budget. Please do not raise any Points of Order or clarifications.

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN : I am on a Point of Order under Rule 372. Two important statements have been made by the Government; one by the Industry Minister and the other by the Prime Minister.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to state that as the House will sit till late in the night, arrangements for the dinner have been made.

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN : Two important statements have been made. The normal practice is to issue a supplementary agenda so that our Leaders could be here to listen to the Ministers. But no such supplementary agenda has been issued before these statements. Please clarify this point.

MR. SPEAKER : I have given them permission to make the statements.

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA : Arrangement for the dinner has been made here for the Hon'ble Members and Press People.

MR. SPEAKER : Breakfast, everything.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (Mahbubnagar) : The Prime Minister wanted to make a point on the Maruti deal. He was stopped midway. Why does he not complete the statement? He pledged the support of his Government to the Maruti deal.

You have left midway, we are not satisfied with it.

MR. SPEAKER : Now further discussion on the Railway Budget.

Shri Krishnadas to speak.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS (Palakkad) : Can I start?

MR. SPEAKER : Please start. Otherwise I will call another Member.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Let the Prime Minister speak.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, with your permission, may I take a few minutes of the House? Our friend Shri Reddy has raised the matter regarding Maruti and Suzuki.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria) : He has not raised it. It is you who raised the matter by issuing a statement.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : We are ready to have a discussion on the matter raised by the Hon'ble Minister through the statement. There should be an open debate on it.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH : There should be transparency in discussion.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Mohan Singh, it is not good.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : We should be thanked if we satisfy the opposition in this regard.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : But you should be ready to...

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Prime Minister has already clarified your doubts.

ISSUE OF RESERVATION FOR SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

9 JULY, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there has always been unanimity in this House on the matter of reservation and my friend, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan will agree with me on this issue. Whenever time limit of reservation used to come to an end: it was extended and whole House supported that move. Therefore, it is not good that this House may get divided on this issue. Everyone knows pitiable conditions of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and the reasons thereof. For centuries, they have remained oppressed. Reservation is needed in a society where there is no equality and where there are disparities. If we cannot change the society immediately, and it seems it will be difficult to do that at the moment, then we have to continue with reservation. We will support continuance of reservation and I am sure that you will also support the same.

Our policy is clear in the National Agenda. Besides, Supreme Court fixed 50% as the limit of reservation. But some States have given more than 50% reservation. The Congress Party was in power at that time. Mr. Chauhan had called a meeting of all parties. We supported at that time that where reservation was more than 50%. that should continue and the Constitution should be amended accordingly.

It is mentioned clearly in our manifesto that wherever there is more than 50% reservation that should continue, Shri Jethmalani has already given his clarification.

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BACK NOTE

X Issue of Reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 9 July, 1998

1. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : We are not satisfied with it.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : You will never be satisfied. I think it would be better to let the matter rest.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : You have referred to Supreme Court's decision. Let me tell you that in Delhi University and in many other places, reservation has already been done away with. I raised this question earlier also. You may please look into that.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : There are no two views on this and the matter will be looked into. House should not get divided on this issue. I can understand agitated feelings but that should be within limits. Therefore, I request that...

As far as reservation for women is concerned, let me clarify that we will not agree to less than 33%. They must get 33% reservation. We have called a meeting of all parties tomorrow. I am fully confident that a consensus will emerge and we will be able to bring this bill in the House.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : This Bill should be passed.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : That will be passed only when it is brought.

PROF. A.K. PREMAJAM : We want the Bill providing reservation for women in Parliament is put to the vote of the House because the nation should know who are against this Bill. Even if there is no consensus, let it be put to the vote of the House.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : We have talked about 15 per cent. I agree that the Bill should be passed and I am confident that everybody will support it.

MOTION REGARDING SUSPENSION OF MEMBERS

14 JULY, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the incident that took place in the House yesterday makes us hang our heads in shame, protests have been made in the House earlier also but all limits were crossed yesterday. It is quite natural to have difference of opinion in a democracy. There is a way to express this difference of opinion. We claim to be the largest democracy of the world. The incident that took place yesterday disproves our claim. Democracy can survive only when there is discipline, dignity and decorum otherwise it will turn into a mobocracy.

If an example of dignified behaviour is not set in this House and the Parliament and if its member do not behave in a dignified manner, one can imagine the likely impact of such a behaviour in the State legislative assemblies. Democracy means the rule of the majority and abiding by the views of the majority. Those in minority should have the right to express their views but they should accept the fact that they are in minority and when they muster majority in future, their views will prevail. If those in minority decide that they will not go by the wishes of those in minority and will not allow the House to function, the temporary friction that is likely to follow is understandable.

As Comrade Indrajit Gupta has commented that the sittings of the House were boycotted for so many days at a stretch but it should be in limit. Yesterday, all limits were crossed. I do not wish to go into detail. I have been associated with the Parliament for more than 40 years but I have never witnessed such a painful and distressing scene. After what happened yesterday, two party leaders Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav and Shri Lalu Prasad tendered apology. They say that they sought an apology publically. The House should accept it. We also accept it.

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BACK NOTE

XI Motion Regarding Suspension of Members, 14 July, 1998

1. Shri G.M. Banatwala: They are tendering apology but they are criticising also. This is not good. You should say something in this regard.

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee: I agree with you. If the apology comes from the heart, it should be taken as utmost penance. I would ask the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs not to press the motion moved and the House should carry on with its work.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, in response to my observations today on the conduct of some Members yesterday, particularly the conduct of hon. Members Shri Surendra Prasad Yadav (Jahanabad) and Prof. Ajit Kumar Mehta and in response to the motion moved today by the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Lalu Prasad and Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav have tendered unqualified apologies.

In view of this, I seek the leave of the House to ask the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs to withdraw his motion for the suspension of Shri Surendra Prasad Yadav (Jahanabad) and Prof. Ajit Kumar Mehta. Before the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs rises on his feet, let me place on record my compliments to the Leaders in the House who have reaffirmed their commitment to help maintain the dignity of the Chair and the sovereignty of the House.

VISIT TO COLOMBO IN CONNECTION WITH SAARC SUMMIT

3 August, 1998

Sir, over the last few weeks, the Government has kept the House regularly informed about the developments in the fields of international relations and our foreign policy. I take this opportunity to bring the hon. Members up-to-date on the most recent events, especially SAARC, our relations with Pakistan and the recent ARF and ASEAN dialogue, meetings.

I visited Colombo on 28th-31st July, 1998 to participate in the 10th SAARC Summit. I was accompanied by Commerce Minister, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, as well as Minister of State for External Affairs who led our delegation at the Ministerial level meeting preceding the Summit.

The Summit reaffirmed the common desire of SAARC Member States to strengthen cooperation in the region. There was general agreement with our perception that to meet the challenges and to avail of the opportunities presented by the substantially transformed global economic situation, it was technical cooperation. The agenda and the discussions during the Summit were focussed on these areas.

It was agreed that SAARC must move purposefully towards setting up a Free Trade Area; a group of experts will be set up to negotiate a comprehensive legal framework for this purpose incorporating schedules for liberalised trade and facilitation measures, taking into account least developed countries' concerns. Parallel steps will be taken to conclude the third round of the trade negotiations under the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement, and to commence the next round.

We have reiterated our commitment to, and readiness for bold initiatives to speed up trade liberalisation. I announced our Government's decision to lift all Quantitative Restrictions preferentially, on imports from SAARC countries, with effect from August 1, 1998. This is a decision with far-reaching positive economic and developmental consequences for the region and has been welcomed. We also made known our readiness to enter into bilateral free trade arrangements with interested SAARC countries. Sri Lanka has taken up this offer.

In our discussion, it was recognized that the benefits of trade liberalisation would be more extensive and balanced through promoting trade related joint ventures, investment and trade-in-services such as tourism. India's

decision to substantially increase the ceiling for investment for India under the fast track in SAARC countries, from US \$ 8 million to US \$ 15 million has also been welcomed. This will encourage a greater flow of Indian investment and stimulate trade.

Important initiatives have been taken in the social sector, to illustrate, a Social Charter for SAARC, agreement to finalise a convention to combat Illegal Trafficking in Women and Children. This is to be signed at the next SAARC Summit. A regional convention on child welfare will also be developed.

We underlined the importance of cooperation in energy through networking. India has, further, offered to host a special meeting of Science and Technology Minister to consider a SAARC S&T initiative for regional projects in rural areas, directly benefiting the people. We also underlined the utility of cooperation in traditional systems of medicines and have invited participation in a Health Ministers' meeting in India for this purpose. India has reaffirmed support for comprehensive environment related proposals.

I would also like to draw attention to my bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the Summit, with the Presidents of Maldives and Sri Lanka, the Prime Ministers of Bangladesh and Nepal and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bhutan. These meetings provided the occasion for renewing our friendly contact, for fruitful discussions enabling a review of our bilateral relations and of progress in specific areas of cooperation, as well as for sharing our perceptions.

I took the opportunity, in my interaction with other leaders, to reiterate our commitment to peace and stability, setting at rest misconceptions about our recent nuclear tests. Our initiatives for confidence building and disarmament have been appreciated. There was an agreement on the need to commence purposeful negotiations towards a comprehensive and non-discriminatory global nuclear disarmament regime and a nuclear weapon-free world.

We have conveyed our appreciation to the Sri Lankan Government for the excellent arrangements made for the Summit, and in particular to President Chandrika Kumaratunga for the vision and efficiency with which she steered the Summit deliberations. We wish her well in her new responsibility in Chairing SAARC. We assure Sri Lanka of our full support.

In my interaction with Pakistan Prime Minister, Mr. Muhammed Nawaz Sharif, which included a long meeting on July 29, I reiterated our

commitment to developing peaceful and friendly ties with Pakistan, and our interest in a secure, stable and prosperous Pakistan. I urged that we should work together to develop trust and confidence, and avail of the many opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation in the economic, social and other fields so that we can improve the lives of people. I further underlined the need to work together to address our differences in a rational and realistic manner. The atmosphere of our discussions was cordial and constructive. I look forward to continuing a purposeful interaction with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

My discussions with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also focussed on our official level dialogue. Hon. Members will recall that such a dialogue had been resumed last year and that the subjects for discussion were jointly identified in June 1997. The modalities for this purpose have not yet been finalised. We directed our Foreign Secretaries to meet and complete this exercise.

India has consistently underlined its commitment to a direct, composite dialogue with Pakistan. Such a comprehensive and sustained process will contribute to building trust and confidence, promote mutually beneficial cooperation and help address bilateral issues. The dialogue must address the totality of the relationship and not be pursued in a narrow, segmented fashion which would defeat its very purpose which is to build a wide ranging and enduring relationship. A direct bilateral interaction which seeks to generate confidence and foster cooperation in functional areas, and enhanced people to people contacts would also help create a positive climate, in which difficult issues under discussion could be purposefully addressed. It is recognised by the international community that all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan, including Jammu and Kashmir should be settled bilaterally in a peaceful manner. The modalities which we have suggested would help ensure that the process moves forward on a broad front in a constructive and sustained manner, while at the same time, providing a meaningful opportunity for discussions on confidence building measures, cooperation and dealing with outstanding issues, as part of a composite process.

Our Foreign Secretaries met in Colombo and exchanged views on this subject. We will remain engaged in the process and continue contacts through diplomatic channels, to work out an agreement, so that the dialogue

could be continued.

During my talks with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, I also emphasised that instigation and support of terrorism was incompatible with our common desire for friendly and peaceful relations and that these activities must cease immediately.

Hon. Members are aware that we also participated in this year's ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference which is an important part of ASEAN's interaction with its dialogue partners, as well as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Meetings, held on July 24-29. Our delegation was led by Deputy-Chairman, Planning Commission. My Government has re-affirmed the policy of strengthening cooperation with countries in ASEAN and the Asia Pacific Region as a whole. Apart from bilateral contacts, we have also established active communication with them in the framework of the dialogue partnership and ARF. Our participation in these meetings this year, was particularly important, as it provided an opportunity to once again clarify our policy on nuclear disarmament in the context of the recent tests, as well as to demonstrate our continued engagement in the economic and political stability of the region and share perceptions on regional and international developments. While the ARF "Chairman's Statement" contained a paragraph disapproving of the recent tests in South Asia, with which we disassociated ourselves, we also found a better overall understanding on the part of ASEAN countries of the rationale of our policy, as well as of the need for purposeful moves by the Nuclear Weapon States towards comprehensive, universal nuclear disarmament on a non-discriminatory basis. We assure the ASEAN countries that we fully respected the status of the Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in South East Asia.

Our interaction with ASEAN reflected an understanding that cooperation and dialogue partnership with India had made good progress, and that we needed to jointly consolidate this through implementation of projects and measures under discussion, in trade and investment, infrastructure and human resource development, tourism, culture and people to people contacts.

The leader of our delegation also had constructive and forward looking discussions with the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN countries, Russia, China, Australia and New Zealand, the US Secretary of State and the Ministers of State of Japan and the United Kingdom. Our bilateral and multilateral interaction in the ASEAN and ARF meetings has helped our post-Pokhran-II diplomatic efforts. Our overall approach, and importance of the steps we have taken to address international and regional security concerns is better acknowledged. There is also continued recognition that India is a factor for peace, stability in the region.

BACK NOTE

**XII Visit to Colombo in connection with SAARC Summit,
3 August, 1998**

NIL

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

4 August, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Mr. Sangma made a request for a short duration discussion under Rule 193. I am here to reply to that discussion. This subject is related to Foreign Policy and Foreign Policy is also connected with the defence policy of our country. It is true and I would like to reiterate that there has always been a general consensus in this country regarding Foreign Policy. In the area of Foreign Policy, there used to be very few instances of differences between the ruling party and the opposition. The Policy of non alignment was supported by the whole country and all parties. The nuclear policy of the country has also been a matter of discussion and on that also there has always been a general consensus in the country. I do not accept this allegation that general consensus has been broken. Whatever steps are necessary for this national security, there will be taken. This question must not be dealt with on party lines. During the course of discussion, it has been stated that we have conducted nuclear tests with the motive of getting a seat in the Security Council. India has a natural right to get a permanent seat in the Security Council. The world has changed. New countries have joined the United Nations. Imperialism has been defeated. Wave of independence has come up. The present set up of the United Nations Organisation does not reflect the true picture of the world. I would like to know whether securing a permanent seat in the Security Council should depend upon the mercy of some particular individual. Should it not be decided in a democratic way? It is funny that we should conduct a nuclear test for that.

Mr. Sangma has also emphasised over it and I agree with him that the country should be well prepared from the defence point of view and it needs to be economically strong. There is no contradictions between economic prosperity and defence preparedness.

We can make best utilisation of our resources and we are doing also. The interests of the Nation must be safeguarded and prosperity should also come but we cannot ignore our security. We have the experience of fifty years. Many times we have faced invasions from outside and lost large areas of our land. To regain that, we have adopted the path of peaceful bitateral talks.

To avoid this type of situation in future security measures must be strengthened. As I have already submitted, if we make use of our resources in a proper way our security needs can also be fulfilled and the nation can achieve. It is not correct to say that the prices of tomato and onion have increased only due to nuclear test at Pokhran. One such test was conducted even at the time of Smt. Indira Gandhi. That can be said only in a lighter vein but it is not a fact. We have waited for 24 long years in the hope that the nations who have piled up atomic weapons would destroy their weapons and a world free from atomic weapons would emerge but our efforts failed. After Pokhran test a pressure has build upon those countries who are in possession of atomic weapons and that they should take steps towards nuclear disarmament.

Whichever conference I have got the opportunity to attend in the last few days, this question was also there on their agenda. Many Honourable Members have repeatedly said that India has been isolated. It is not true, who can isolate a country with a population of 100 crore and how it can be done? How can India be ignored? Be it the summit of non-aligned countries, Manila Summit or the summit of SAARC Nations, our role and our dialogue with other nations has been meaningful, I would like to ask whether it is the sign of being isolated?

In the NAM Summit an attempt had been made to criticise us for nuclear test by naming us. It was not accepted by the summit. It is also not the tradition of non-aligned movement.

Recently a SAARC Summit was held at Colombo. It would be enough to say about SAARC summit that all those who wanted to isolate us were themselves isolated. The SAARC was set up for economic development, to promote cooperation between the member countries and also to march ahead in the direction of free trade and further to go ahead with the creation of a common market. Some important steps were taken in the Colombo summit in this regard. But Pakistan was not interested in those steps. Pakistan was adamant on one point only. It was also said that until the mutual disputes were solved economic prosperity couldn't be achieved. Though, some disputes will always remain and that is a fact not only in respect of the relations between India and Pakistan but also in respect of all other countries. Steps should be taken to solve the disputes by talks and steps are taken in this direction. Economic and mutual cooperation does not hold good if conditions are not created for the

solution disputes. That is not the right attitude. We are for peace and want to solve disputes through dialogues. But we, would like to make it clear that the economic development should not be hampered due to these disputes. A large number of population lives in this country, in this part of the world. They have been facing so many problems economically, and SAARC is a great experiment in a right direction. Bilateral relations have also improved through it. During Colombo summit bilateral talks were also held but they were not the part of the summit. We had also opposed and asserted that these issues could not be included in the agenda informally, because that would have opened a Pandora's Box. Disputes are not only between Pakistan and India, these are between other countries also. SAARC Summit provides great opportunity to hold informal bilateral talks, to resolve disputes like these.

Yesterday, Mr. Indrajit Gupta raised the issue of the terrorists of Assam who have taken refuge in Bangladesh.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have discussed the matter with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and we have demanded extradition of those criminals who are in their captivity and against whom the process of trials is going on in India. They should be handed over to us. The Bangladesh Government has said that they have kept them in Jail and whenever the legal proceedings are over, they will hand them over to us. I am giving just an instance. Similarly, there is a question of fishermen with Sri Lanka.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, these summits provide us an opportunity to solve these type of problems. Exchange of views must be made on these questions. India played a significant role in the SAARC summit and there is no question of India's being isolated. All those who were present in the last two summits organised in Manila have seen that our representatives talked to the leaders of the member nations and as a result, there has been an increased awareness regarding the Security of India. In the matter of understanding many honourable members have kept themselves confined to the event of 26th May. Since then the world has gone far ahead.

Sir, now we are discussing as to how to solve the problems arising out of atomic explosion and how to find a solution thereof having its far-reaching and worldwide impact. In every conference it has been said that nuclear disarmament is a global problem. It cannot be viewed in parts. In Geneva conference, eight countries made a joint statement, in which these big countries have asked other countries not to go in for atomic weapons and not to

indulge in arms race; they should look into their own conduct, and reduce the number of their own weapons. The atomic weapons should be destroyed and eliminated in a time bound programme. This voice is gaining momentum. These issues were also raised during bilateral talks.

Sir, the ex-Prime Minister of Japan, (a new prime minister has taken charge since) has thanked me by writing a letter in response to my letter and said that now we were having a better understanding of India's security concerns. Japan is the country which was attacked with the atom bombs and the people are still suffering from the nuclear holocaust. We have done atomic explosion not to attack but for our safety and self-defence. It has been used as a deterrent and that too as a minimum deterrent which is the basis of our policy, so that no one may pose a danger for our Independence and integrity. So, we have announced that we shall not do atomic tests in future. No it is not necessary. It should not be necessary even in future. Although C.T.B.T. does allow it and after signing N.P.T., if a country thinks that a danger or impending danger has arisen to its supreme national interest, then it can take an appropriate step.

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We are even ready to make this kind of treaty with several countries. This issue was raised in Colombo that we should give assurance to those countries which are not equipped with atomic weapons. I told that there was no question of atom bomb being used on those countries who do not possess atom bombs. When we say that we shall not be first to use an atom bomb, then there is no basis in using it against those countries who do not possess these bombs. It is also necessary that we should further the process of disarmament.

Pakistan is not only managing all its diplomacy by making Kashmir a nodal point but also giving emphasis on the issue of linking non-proliferation with Kashmir. The dispute of Kashmir is fifty years old. We are ready to solve it on bilateral basis. No country whether it is from G5 or G8, has admitted that the issue of non-proliferation should be linked with Kashmir issue. Kashmir issue is a different thing and non-proliferation is in itself an important issue. Pakistan wants to negotiate on the issue of Kashmir only and nothing else. Why? There are many other issues between the two countries. Why should not we talk about all issues? We are neighbours, we have to live together. Why should we discuss Kashmir only?

Yesterday, Mr. Soz was narrating about the circumstances in which the

changes had taken place in Kashmir. Peace has been restored there. Elections were held. A large number of tourists are going there. The tour of Amarnath is going on peacefully. It is said that Kashmir is a flash point. Yes, if Pakistan wants to take some steps to draw the attention of the world by masterminding petty disturbances, then I shall say with conviction that they are not going to get success at all. But, at times I think why there is such emphasis on Kashmir. Pakistan is not satisfied with its boundaries. Pakistan wants to change the *status quo*. The rulers of Pakistan are unable to digest the fact that a state with a majority of Muslims should live with India. It is their problem if they have not accepted secularism. But for there is something more important than that. Some ideals, some symbols are also attached with it. So, we refused to talk only on Kashmir, this refusal is not of my government but the decision was taken by the last Government. An agenda was prepared. We were prepared to talk on that agenda. But Pakistan dragged its feet. They are alleging that we are back tracking. There is no truth in it. We told that we were prepared to negotiate about Kashmir but other matters related to it should also be included in the negotiation. It is necessary to negotiate after taking a forward view. But Pakistan is not ready for that. In Colombo they handed over documents to us in a casual manner. On its perusal it becomes crystal clear that they are not interested in negotiation. By drawing the attention of the world community, they want to make it an international issue, but no other country agrees to its proposal. Arab countries, P5 and G8 and even China has said that the problem of Jammu and Kashmir should be solved by mutual negotiation. One of the measures of the confidence building measures put up by Pakistan is that the Government of India should talk to Hurriat Conference by recognising it as the representative organisation of Kashmir. No Indian can accept this proposal? Kashmir is a part of democratic India. Recently, elections were held there which were monitored by the election commission. By giving an example I would make it clear that Pakistan is not interested in negotiations. But we shall continue our efforts. It is necessary that our relation with Pakistan should improve. It is true that both the sides should have the desire to improve the relations, but India's point of view is quite clear.

I am confident that the talks held with China in Manila would help in removing their mental reservations. Our Chinese friends are expressing their anguish by quoting the statements of some of the Indian Leaders. It was clarified to them that they should not make decisions on the basis of the printed statements in newspapers. Our defence minister has clarified it that he had never said that China was our enemy number one. Its denial was also sent but.

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A number of hon. Members wished to know Government's position on the CTBT. After concluding the series of tests on May 13, India immediately announced a voluntary moratorium on further underground nuclear test explosions. In announcing this moratorium, India accepted the basic obligation of a test ban. In 1963 too, we had wanted a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. What the international community concluded instead was only a Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT). Eventually, India went along and became an original state party to the PTBT. That decision was taken in the broader national interest.

As hon. Members know full well, India, which first proposed a ban on testing in 1954, and as a country that remains committed to global nuclear disarmament, could hardly have acted otherwise. In announcing the moratorium, we reflected our own commitment to disarmament as also addressed the general wish of the international community. Naturally, India reserves the right to review that decision if in its judgement extraordinary events take place that jeopardise India's supreme national interests. The CTBT also gives the same right to every country. We also announced then our willingness to move towards a *de jure* formalisation of our voluntary undertaking. Ways and means of doing this are being explored through bilateral discussions with key interlocutors. These dialogues have been undertaken after satisfying ourselves that India no longer requires to undertake nuclear explosions. We can maintain the credibility of our nuclear deterrent in the future without testing. India remains committed to this dialogue with a view to arriving at a decision regarding adherence to the CTBT. In 1996, we stayed out of the CTBT principally with national security as our only guide. That remains entirely unaltered.

I would like to assure the House that while deciding about the international treaties we shall keep the issue of national security upper most and the House will be taken in confidence.

BACK NOTE

XIII Recent development affecting India's foreign policy, 4 August, 1998

1. SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): They are making ground for signing the treaty.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It is our desire to give a legal form and legal obligation to this moratorium. We also told that we would not initiate the use of atomic weapons.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: What will happen if someone else attacks us? Will you be in a position to use it?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mulayam Singh Ji had been Defence Minister and he should not say such things which are not National.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: No, if someone else attacks us then what will we do? If we are in danger.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Why will someone else attack us?

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: They will say something and will do something else.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Why will someone else attack us?

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: You should make friendship.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We should not have such type of fear that we would not be in a position to use it if any other country attacks on us. To be equipped with atomic weapon, is in itself a deterrant. There should not be any attack.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: You should rather say that we shall not be compelled to use it if we establish friendly relations.

2. SHRI LALU PRASAD (Madhepura): Only 6 days after the reaction of the Government of India he gave his statement in Patna that he had not made any comment like this.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: After all he spoke. Lalu Prasad is confirming my statement. His only grievance is that the statement came after six days.

SHRI LALU PRASAD: No, he contradicted it in Patna and that too after six days when the spokesman of External Affairs Ministry gave a statement that it was the statement of the Minister not of the Government of India. The Minister should have resigned the same day. You have also made a reference of those matters in your letter. You have written it in the letter, you may confirm it.

SHRI SHAKUNI CHOUDHARY (Khagaria): China is the number one enemy of India, so it was said. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I did not hear

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: To the American President.

SHRI LALU PRASAD: Mr. Prime Minister, when your Minister's mistake is detected they just pass it on to newspapers.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: This is an old technique adopted by both of us. Mr. Speaker, In the letter under reference a mention is made about the apprehensions arising about China, but it also mentions about improvement of our relations with China and we want to further improve these relations.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hugli): Then what was the need to write the letter?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: But we can not deny that these are some disputes which need to be settled down between our country and...

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? Let him complete. Please take your seat.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): Mr. Prime Minister, please clarify the Government of India's stand on this. It is very important matter. The relation between the Government of India and China should be proper and Harmonious.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Somnath Chatterjee Let him complete.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I agree to it that India's relation with China should be friendly and cooperative. Concrete steps are to be taken to make it cooperation oriented and we are trying to dispel the misconceptions. But the question of border remains on which negotiations are going on.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: This issue must be taken up.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We also told Pakistan that if they stress upon anything as the main cause of dispute, it would not be solved soon. Please keep it aside for a brief period. If we increase trade, interaction between people of both sides contribute towards the economic wellbeing of both the countries only then there will be improvement in situation and relations will become cordial. Then it will be easy to solve the most difficult problem. The same policy has been adopted in the case of China. We shall continue our efforts about this problem. Our concerns are related to piece of land and borders, these must be solved through negotiations.

SHRI LALU PRASAD: Your policy must be clear about Kailash Mansarovar. If it is not so, then you should drive your chariot in that direction, bring Lord Shankar back.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: In that negotiation, the issue of C.T.B.T. was raised in a strong manner. I would like to switch over to English Language so that my statement is correctly quoted.

VALEDICTORY REFERENCES

6 August, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this session of the Parliament is going to conclude. Though it was a difficult session but under your leadership we successfully overcome those difficulties and accomplished many important tasks. However, some work is still left which is to be done in future. Efforts would have to be made in future to run the proceedings of the House smoothly, without any untoward incident. It has been the special feature of this session that even after the happening of such an incident, normalacy was immediately restored. It indicates the strength of Indian democracy.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the credit of all this goes to you. You are 'Yogi' by name. The way you remain neutral and even ignore certain things while occupying the Chair, requires a lot of patience and Yogic Sadhna is essential for it.

I am also grateful to all the Members who have contributed in making this session successful. We also express our gratitude to the staff and officials of Lok Sabha Secretariat who work hard and helped in successful completion of the session.

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BACK NOTE

XIV Valedictory References, 6 August, 1998

1. SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER (Tenali): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have reached yet another milestone in our Parliamentary career. The first Session of the Twelfth Lok Sabha which is ending today has, no doubt, been presenting certain commotions and problems. But our culture had been such that notwithstanding the differences that we had; notwithstanding the commotions that we faced and the problems that confronted in running this House, we have the intrinsic worth and capacity. Our dynamism is such that at a given time we have always been able to pull together. This had been our unique quality and I would not be far wrong to say that it had been our unique distinction also. This had been our national legacy which we have, I would say, successfully carried even in the conduct of the business of the House in this Session.

Quite a bit of work has come to a fruition. It had been successful notwithstanding some difficulties that the Opposition and the Treasury Benches faced from time to time. But the fact remains that we have practically discussed all the important subjects, which you were so kind to enumerate, which were necessary to be discussed.

I am particularly grateful to the entire House that on an issue which is highly touching and emotional to us, we have discussed the same rising about Party lines, notwithstanding slight differences here and there, we have been able to discuss it rising above Party lines. This is a reflection on our representation and in my view this is what we have inherited not only in the last couple of years but also in our parliamentary career and I would not be far wrong to say that it has matured itself.

Sir, above all, in fact to be frank, when you took over that seat we were slightly worried, particularly the people from Andhra Pradesh were very much worried, but I may tell you without any exaggeration and modest in expression of this type that you have quitted yourself so wonderfully well that we people, particularly from Andhra Pradesh raise our heads aloft.

The nation is proud of you and I am sure you will go down in the history as one of the best Speakers of this House.

Sir, I must compliment the Prime Minister and his team that notwithstanding the little bit of problems that we faced with them, I should say that they have always tried to rise above the ordinary levels. They have helped us and the House in seeing through the business being carried out in a normal fashion. I must particularly compliment the Home Minister for this. On certain issues where we were finding some difficulty, he had been coming to our rescue. Whenever we wanted to get over the Home Minister, we always approached the Prime Minister. He was so kind to help us out. This shows that we have become nature in our Parliamentary career, notwithstanding what others would say.

Of course, my friends remind me about the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. He is as dynamic as ever. Equally, he is as vocal as ever and he has dealt the conduct of the House in the best of traditions for which he deserves our compliments.

I must say that notwithstanding a few skirmishes that we had, the entire catena of hon. Members has by and large acquitted themselves very well. I have often seen the British Parliament and shall I say, Sir, that on most occasions I found that House to be much worse than what we are. That is a Parliament which claims that it has prestine glory. This shows that this is inherent in our very blood. This is what we have received by way of legacy from our forefathers. It is this culture which I hope will permeate throughout the nation in due course of time.

While complimenting all the Members for seeing that the Business of the House is carried out in the best manner, Sir, we could not have discharged our duties so efficiently unless the Secretariat staff had day-in-and-day-out worked and helped us out to see that we do our work in an efficient manner. They came to our rescue whenever we demanded. In fact, when we — either from this side or that side — sometimes wanted to quote some rules, they guided us. This shows that they have without any favour fearlessly carried out their job and they deserve all our compliments.

Once again I thank you and the Treasury Benches, equally all the Members sitting here who have been able to see that we command respect, that respect which is our rightful place in the comity of nations.

BILATERAL TALKS WITH UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

15 December, 1998

Sir, since the May 11 and 13 tests, the Government has, from time to time, taken the House into confidence and sought views of the hon. Members. This was done through statements and discussions in the House on 27-29 May, 8 June and on 3-4 August. Nevertheless, I wish to re-emphasise some salients of our policy.

I take this opportunity to reiterate that India's commitment to global nuclear disarmament remains undiluted. As hon. Members are no doubt aware, India has consistently maintained that a nuclear weapon free world would enhance not only our security but the security of all nations. That is why numerous initiatives in this direction were taken during the last fifty years; such steps as would encourage decisive and irreversible measures for the attainment of this objective. Regrettably, the international community, particularly countries that have based their security on nuclear weapons or a nuclear umbrella, have been reluctant to embrace this objective. Keeping open our nuclear option, therefore, became a national security imperative three decades ago, an imperative equally valid for India in the post Cold War period. The option that was exercised in May, 1998 was thus a continuation of a decision taken nearly 25 years earlier; during which period India had demonstrated an exemplary nuclear restraint, given the exceptional security related complexities of our region. I wish to place on record that successive Governments continued to safeguard this option, demonstrate our capability and take such steps as were necessary to ensure the viability of the option through weaponisation.

Just as our conventional defense capability has been deployed in order to safeguard the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India against any use or threat of use of force, the adoption of our nuclear deterrent posture has also followed the same logic. We have announced our intention to maintain a minimum nuclear deterrent, but one that is credible. Mindful of our global and enhanced responsibility to address concerns of the international community, and in order to re-assure all countries about the defensive nature of our nuclear capability, we have engaged in bilateral discussions with key interlocutors. In international forums, like the United Nations, India is the only country possessing nuclear weapons to raise a call for negotiating a gradual and progressive elimination of all nuclear weapons, within a time-bound framework.

We also have an established tradition of consultation with friendly countries on all important international issues. Successive Governments have pursued an open, positive and constructive approach in our foreign relations. This is in keeping with our national ethos. It is within this framework that India had been engaged, even before May, 1998, in a wide ranging and broadbased dialogue with the United States. This included discussions on disarmament and non proliferation and on larger strategic issues.

Following the May 11 and 13 nuclear tests, apprehensions were expressed in some quarters. It was, therefore, decided to have more focussed and intensive discussions. Accordingly, Shri Jaswant Singh, the then Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission was designated as our representative to carry forward this dialogue. Similarly, President Clinton designated Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, as the US interlocutor.

This dialogue has been conducted on the basis of a set of comprehensive proposals, put forward by India, to the international community, soon after the May tests. As the House would recollect, these proposals comprise: a voluntary moratorium on underground nuclear test explosions; our willingness to move towards a *de jure* formalisation of this commitment, a decision to join negotiations on a treaty for a ban on future production of fissile material for weapons purposes; and, our determination to make more stringent the existing system of export controls over sensitive materials and technology.

Since the 11 June, 1998 Washington meet, six rounds of discussions between Shri Jaswant Singh and Mr. Talbott have been held. Both teams have worked purposefully to narrow gaps of perception and to establish common ground. These exchanges have been marked by a sense of responsibility, candour and a sincere attempt to understand each other's concerns and points of view. The Government is entirely mindful that the issues involved touch upon matters of vital interest to both countries. In these talks, we have firmly put across our security concerns and the imperative of maintaining a minimum, credible, nuclear deterrent. I wish to inform the House that the talks are premised on this basis. Also there now exists some understanding of our security concerns and requirements.

The talks have focussed on issues related to disarmament and non-proliferation. It is agreed that regional issues shall be kept distinctly apart. As hon. Members are well aware, India's concerns in these matters go beyond the South Asian region, and involve a wider perspective.

After six rounds, talks have narrowed and are now focussed on the

following four issues.

CTBT: India remains committed to converting our voluntary moratorium into a *de-jure* obligation. In response to the desire of the international community, as expressed to us in our bilateral and multilateral interactions, that the Treaty should come into effect in September, 1999, in my address to the United Nations General Assembly on 24 September, I reiterated broadly what I had said in Parliament, that: "India is now engaged in discussions with our key interlocutors on a range of issues, including the CTBT. We are prepared to bring these discussions to a successful conclusion, so that the entry into force of the CTBT is not delayed beyond September, 1999. We expect that other countries, as indicated in Article XIV of the CTBT, will adhere to this Treaty without conditions".

That remains our position. For the successful conclusion of the talks, creation of a positive environment by our interlocutors is a necessary ingredient.

The House will be reassured that in the assessment of our scientists, this stand does not come in the way of our taking such steps as may be found necessary in future to safeguard our national security. It also does not constrain us from continuing with our R&D programmes, nor does it jeopardise in any manner the safety and effectiveness of our nuclear deterrent in the years to come.

FMCT: We have expressed our willingness to join the FMCT negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva. It is our understanding, as that of many other countries, who have confirmed this to us, that the objective of these negotiations is to arrive at a non-discriminatory treaty, that will end the future production of fissile material for weapons purposes, in accordance with the 1993 consensus resolution of the U.N. General Assembly. We are willing to work for the early conclusion of such a treaty.

It was suggested to us that we might examine announcing a moratorium on fissile material production. We have conveyed that it is not possible to take such steps at this stage. We will, of course, pay serious attention to any negotiated multilateral initiatives in the course of the FMCT negotiations.

EXPORT CONTROLS: Discussions in this area have registered progress. An expert level meeting of officials from both sides was held in New Delhi on 9-10 November. In light of our additional capabilities, as a responsible State possessing nuclear weapons, and as earlier announced, we are taking steps to make more stringent our laws in this regard. We have also conveyed

that India should be provided better access to dual use and high technologies in view of India's impeccable record of effective control over sensitive technologies. The expert level meeting was categorised as helpful by both, India and the United States, to the prospects of continuing cooperation in this area.

DEFENCE POSTURE: As hon. Members are, no doubt, aware, matters relating to defence postures are sovereign functions, not subjects for negotiations. In fact, our talks are based on the fundamental premise that India will define its own requirements, for its nuclear deterrent, on its own assessment of the security environment. The US and other interlocutors, are interested in understanding our positions and our policies better.

We have formally announced a policy of No First Use and no-use against non nuclear weapons States. As hon. Members are aware, a policy of no first use with a minimum nuclear deterrent, implies deployment of assets in a manner that ensures survivability and capacity of an adequate response. We are also not going to enter into an arms race with any country.

Ours will be a minimum credible deterrent, which will safeguard India's security — the security of one sixth of humanity, now and into the future. The National Security Council, with the assistance of its subsidiary bodies, the establishment of which has been announced, will make important contributions to elaborating these concepts.

We have expressed our reservations about provisions of certain export control regimes that ostensibly seek to promote non proliferation objectives, but are discriminatory in application. India's missile development programme is an indigenous programme, that was launched almost 15 years ago. This programme is regularly reviewed, taking into account our security environment, particularly missile acquisitions and deployments in our region. We have announced that a new version of the Agni, with an extended range is under development. Flight testing of such an enhanced range Agni will be conducted fully in accordance with established international practice. While our decision is to maintain the deployment of a deterrent which is both minimum but credible, I would like to re-affirm to this House that the Government will not accept any restraints on the development of India's R&D capabilities. Such activity is an integral of any country's defence preparedness and essential for coping with new threat perceptions that may emerge in the years ahead. This Government remains un-equivocally opposed to any suggestions that seek to place India at a technological disadvantage through intrusive or sovereignty violative measures.

At the same time, we will continue to take initiatives in the international forums towards fulfilling the objective of complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. At this year's U.N. General Assembly, we had taken the initiative for, what could be an important first step, through a resolution on 'Reducing Nuclear Danger'. This initiative was intended to urge countries to move back from the nuclear hair trigger response postures of the Cold War. If such initiatives are multilaterally accepted by other nuclear weapon States, they will, of course, be accordingly reflected in our own positions, too.

In the course of these discussions with the United States and other countries, I have kept in touch with leaders of various political parties. We have issued statements from time to time on pronouncements and declarations by various countries. This corpus of Statements in Parliament and through Official Spokesman conveys our position and is well known to Honorable Members. These issues have also been discussed, at considerable length, in meetings of the Standing Committee and the Consultative Committee of Parliament. The view points expressed by hon. Members in these discussions, have provided us valuable guidance in conducting discussions with the United States and other countries.

The dialogue with the United States will be continued at the next meeting scheduled to be held in the second half of January, in New Delhi.

While there is no time frame for the conclusion of these talks, it is the intention of both countries, that a stable understanding should be reached on the remaining issues at an early date. This would provide a further momentum to bilateral relations, which is desired by both countries.

In addition to the talks between Shri Jaswant Singh and Mr. Strobe Talbott, we have had detailed exchanges with France and Russia. Discussions have also taken place with UK and China at the level of Shri Jaswant Singh and at official level with Germany and Japan as well as with other non-nuclear weapon States. I have been in regular correspondence with President Clinton. Our correspondence has touched not only upon issues under discussion between our Representatives but also on larger aspects of Indo-US relations. It is my view that the future of IndoUS relations is much larger than the four issues under consideration. President Clinton has also expressed to me, his desire for a broad based relationship with India that befits the two largest democracies of the world. I have fully reciprocated these sentiments. Indeed, our ongoing dialogue with the United States is geared towards that end. I am confident this House will want to wish it all success.

BACK NOTE

**XV Bilateral talks with United States of America, 15 December,
1998**

NIL

FELICITATIONS TO DEPUTY SPEAKER

17 December, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I very much congratulate and welcome Shri Sayeed on his being elected as Deputy Speaker. It is never too late to mend. But late was not due to any question related with the personality of Sayeed Saheb. Delay was caused because there was a difference of opinion on how to follow the tradition. I got the opportunity to establish relations with Sayeed Saheb inside and outside the House. He is very humorous, introvert and sweet spoken. He knows when to be firm and when to be flexible. The beautiful Island to which he belongs, he has brought beauty of that main land also. He has been elected ninth time. I was elected in 1957 for the first time after which he came to the scene. He shouldered many responsibilities, he had been Minister, discharged responsibilities as members and chairman of committees and attempted to take all alongwith himself in which he got success. Now a new responsibility has come to him. I wish him a success. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you would also be relieved of some burden. I once again, congratulate Sayeed Saheb.

BACK NOTE

XVI Felicitations to Deputy Speaker, 17 December, 1998

NIL

AIR STRIKES ON IRAQ BY UNITED KINGDOM AND UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

17 December, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have been closely following the developments relating to Iraq.

India has close historical ties and strong affinities with the countries and the peoples of the region. We have been deeply concerned about the sufferings of the people of Iraq and have called for the lifting of sanctions *in tandem* with Iraq's compliance with the UN Security Council Resolution. We have consistently counselled restraint and moderation in resolving the differences that have emerged from time to time in the interaction of the UN Special Commission with Iraq.

The Government of India is gravely concerned at and deplore these air strikes being carried out on Iraq by the UK and the US. It is particularly regrettable that this unilateral step has been undertaken at the very time when the UN Security Council was in session to discuss developments arising from the report of the Head of the United Nations Special Commission to Iraq, with the UN SG had forwarded to the Council with his recommendations proposing alternative courses of action.

This attack raises serious questions regarding the functioning of the collective and consultative procedures of the UN Security Council. It also undermines the ability of the Council to verify Iraq's compliance with the relevant Council Resolutions. It has been our considered view that use of force in this situation would be counterproductive. The issue needs to be resolved diplomatically through peaceful means and dialogue. We have supported efforts by the United Nations in this direction.

We have noted the statement of the UN Secretary-General expressing deep regret at the latest development. We call for an immediate halt to the military action and the resumption of diplomatic efforts under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Indian Community in Iraq, numbering about fifty persons, is safe. We have been in touch with our Embassy and are taking all measures to ensure their welfare.

BACK NOTE

XVII Air Strikes on Iraq by United Kingdom and United States of America, 17 December, 1998

NIL

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

15 MARCH, 1999

Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, may I say that the reply has actually to be given by Shrimati Sushma Swaraj and I am only intervening in the debate. I would first of all like to wish our President a speedy recovery from his operation of cataract. The operation has been successful and he would be returning to Delhi in a few days. We also wish him a long life. Two of our former Prime Ministers have also gone abroad for treatment. It is my wish that they may recover soon and be in our midst and I hope that the House is with me in the good wishes.

Nearly 40 Members participated in the debate and a variety of subjects came up for detailed discussion. I regret that I could not be present in the House during the entire debate. I concede that I should have been present.

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It shows that they had not walked out. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the President's Address depicts a realistic picture of the situation. It neither exaggerates the achievements of the Government nor makes tall promises. Our Government is going to complete one year in the office and, during this one year, we have tried to improve the situation and the situation has improved also. Even our severest critics acknowledge that all the predictions made about the Government that it will collapse or disintegrate have proved wrong. We have demonstrated our majority in the House and have achieved success in improving the economic situation. Above all, we are striving to make a success of this experiment of coalition Government which has so far failed in this country. It does not appear that there will hence forward be the domination of any single party. The all India parties will now have to function in collaboration with regional parties. The regional parties have become so influential primarily because of certain shortcomings of the national parties. It becomes difficult for the national parties to reflect the regions feelings and to represent their hopes and aspirations. But the regional parties have their roots among the people of the region and they reflect their wishes and problems. This country is full of diversities and this diversity is reflected in the political sphere by way of differences. And this is as it should be.

When no party got a clear majority, we decided to form the Government. It is difficult to run a coalition Government, but in a democracy this difficult task has also to be performed. We are taking those parties with us in collaboration with whom we had contested the elections. It is not a question of mere sharing of power. In Punjab, our cooperation with the Akali Dal is not only for power. It is very useful in sustaining the feelings of brotherhood. This applies to other regions also. We want to make a success of this experiment and hope to be successful.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the situation that prevailed a year ago has now changed. It is a different atmosphere now. After the Pokhran test, an attempt was made to isolate India.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, attempts were made to isolate us in the world. Economic sanctions were imposed. They believed that India would not be able to stand to this challenge, but that did not happen. We had carried out the Pokhran explosion in view of our security concerns. Today, the foreigners who come to India, and those of our foreign friends who maintained a distance from us, do not ask us as to why we carried out a nuclear test at Pokhran? On the other hand, they talk of trade and commerce and want to expand economic cooperation with us. They have a fresh understanding of our security concerns now. Our nuclear explosion was not meant to be a show of strength. The need of country's defence was behind it. This aspect is now being increasingly appreciated and more and more countries are now understanding it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was surprised to read the speech of an hon. Member. He said that India's voice was no more heard in the international arena. He also said that our relations with SAARC countries were not good. This is unnecessary criticism. It is not that we do not welcome criticism. We welcome criticism. There is a proverb in Marathi which says "A critic's house should be nearby your house". A Hindi poet has also said that it is advisable to keep a critic by your side because a yesman would do you no good. But criticism should be *bonafide*. The fact is that our relation with all SAARC countries have improved. We have arrived at an agreement with Sri Lanka and a final shape is being given to it. We shall fully protect the interests of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, this is our promise. A transit Treaty has been signed with Nepal

so that there does not remain any uncertainty in this regard. Our relations with Bangladesh have been strengthened. A decision has been taken to operate a bus service between Dhaka and Calcutta. I got an opportunity to go to Pakistan at the invitation of Pakistan's Prime Minister. I took advantage of the bus service which was starting the same day. I am happy that our talks went well. In the Lahore Declaration and in the Memorandum of Understanding prepared by the foreign Secretaries, some new measures were announced. Now, both India and Pakistan are nuclear states. There is no other way than to live together in peace. A nuclear weapon is not a weapon of attack, it is a weapon of defence. It is a weapon that has contributed in maintaining peace. If there was no balance of power or balance of terror during the days of the cold war, the odds could have been in favour of one party and it could have committed excess. But this did not happen. The Prime Minister of Pakistan asked me as to why we undertook the nuclear explosion at that particular time whether the date had been fixed after some consideration. I said we had taken this step after due consideration, but asked him why he was putting this question. He laughed and said that our action coincided with the lowest ever foreign exchange reserves position in Pakistan, creating a crisis for them. We too had to pass through a crisis, but we successfully faced it with the cooperation of the people and the House. This is an evidence of our sound economy. We are capable of meeting any crisis. We want to solve all our problems with Pakistan through negotiations. There have been three wars between us during the last 50 years. Measures would now have to be taken to stop the war for ever. For this, there is no alternative other than negotiations. Whatever the issue, we are prepared for talks.

When I was in Lahore, the news came of a massacre taking place in Rajori the same day. I took up the matter immediately with the Pakistan's Prime Minister and told him that if this process of killing innocent people did not stop, the bus of our friendship would come to a halt before their corpses. These killings must come to an end. When relations between our two countries are improving, care should be taken to ensure that no terrorists including foreign mercenaries cross into India. It is true that both the countries blame each other for such incidents taking place in their territories. But we cannot kill our own people. They have also not been victims of any rivalry between them. Then who are their killers? They have come from across the border. Please stop them.

In the declaration, both the countries have expressed their

determination to fight terrorism in all its forms. It says that we would honour the Shimla Agreement both in the letter and the spirit. The complaint did not mean that the importance of Shimla Agreement had been downgraded. In fact, we enhanced the importance of the Shimla Agreement. Confidence building steps between the two countries are being taken. We propose to change the visa system. Fishermen going on seas to catch fish are themselves sometimes caught and thrown in prisons. They have been languishing there for months and they must be released. This happens in both countries. There are prisoners of war also. Their cases should also be considered for release. We need to increase the people's visits, open the doors for trade and commerce, cooperate with each other and take steps to solve all the pending issues. I feel assured that both the countries will tread this path.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, a number of issues have been raised during the debate. It will not be possible to reply to each and every point, but I would like to take up some of them. Some hon. Members have said that there is no mention of family planning in the President's Address. I accept it. But our coalition Government does have a policy on family planning and the same has been stated in our National Agenda. It says that for population control, a judicious and intelligent mix of incentives and disincentives will soon be presented to establish our national commitment to this matter of great importance. The Government has prepared a document on family planning and there has been some discussion on it in the Cabinet. This matter has been referred to a small group of Ministers. It is a delicate issue on which a consensus should be formed. However, the foreigners who come to India are surprised to find that family planning programme has been successfully going on in India. The rate of population of growth has gone down from 2.1 per cent to 1.85 per cent. However, inspite of this decline, we are adding 1.70 crore people to our population every year. Here, we differ from China. In some of our States, the family planning programme has been implemented with even greater success. However, some others have been left behind. It is somewhat surprising, and it should not happen that the States which are successfully carrying on family planning are losing the number of the Lok Sabha seats. This would have to be reversed. The number of seats should be fixed for every State and adequate steps should be taken for family planning. I was happy to read the speech of Shri Soz who refuted the contention that the population of

Jammu and Kashmir is increasing. He said that the people of that State believed in family planning and the population of Jammu and Kashmir was not increasing and that a wrong propaganda was being done in this regard. The issue of family planning is a national issue and all of us will have to sit together to ponder over it. It is a national issue. No party or Government by itself can find a solution to this problem. The question is not only of formulating a policy, but also of its implementation. And from this view point, all the parties should come together and consider what steps are to be taken.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the paper on agricultural policy is ready. Opinion of experts is being sought and the final document will be presented before the House soon. Several Members have raised the question of delay in implementing the crop insurance policy. The existing crop insurance policy does not include all farmers and all crops. It is confined to those farmers who take loans. In our amended crop insurance policy, we are going to remove all these shortcomings for promoting the interest of the farmers. The scheme is almost ready and we propose to give effect to it with the 1999 kharif crop. The cabinet has approved it in principle. Under the new scheme, more crops will be included and efforts for participation by all farmers in it will be made. The farmers will be getting more benefits under this scheme. The farmers who have taken loans will, of course, be included in it, but the scheme will also take note of those who have not taken loans, but become victims of floods or drought. Nearly six lakh farmers have so far been issued credit cards. The public sector banks have been told that this number should go up to 20 lakhs by the end of the next year.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition, Shri Sharad Pawar, raised the question of a memorial of Baba Saheb Ambedkar in Delhi. Dr. Ambedkar used to live at 26 Alipur Road. The demand is to acquire this place and convert it into his memorial. The contention that no funds have been spent so far is incorrect. The issue of Baba Saheb Ambedkar Memorial is not a party issue. Even before we came to power, the Department of Social Justice had advanced an amount of Rs. 7.12 crores on 26 March, 1997 for acquisition of this building. But the policy to acquire it was challenged. In an interim order, the Land Acquisition Collector was directed not to declare the compensation award until the disposal of writ petitions. The matter is

pending in the Court, since then. We are trying to have the court decision soon. Different concerned Ministries are in contact with each other. Negotiations are also going on with the owners of the property. If Shri Pawar can wield any influence on them, we will welcome his intervention.

It is not true that funds were not allocated to different institution meant for the welfare of the Dalits. For the year 1997-98 Rs. 611.77 crores were allotted for the Dalits, out of which Rs. 610.24 crores were spent. In 1998-99, the allocation was increased to Rs. 733.70 crores out of which Rs. 699.56 crores had been spent till 12 March, 1999. The Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition also referred to Dr. Ambedkar Overseas Fellowship. Enquires have shown that the Governing Body of the Foundation had terminated this scheme in 1977, before we took over the reins of the Government. However, the National Overseas Scheme for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is very much in operation and the amount of stipend given under it to the researchers has been enhanced from \$ 6600 to \$ 7700. Previously, there was a restriction of two boys from the same family getting stipend under the postmatric scholarship scheme. This has now been removed. Many facilities are being provided in the North Eastern States under this scheme. A special programme is being implemented for girls belonging to the Scheduled Tribes since they are the most illiterate among them. Forty districts have been identified where literacy among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people is merely two percent. Separate allocator has been made for them and the money is also being spent. It is also not true that funds have not been allotted to NGOs working among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The fact is that an assistance of Rs. 10.64 crores was given to these NGOs during 1997-98. If need be, this amount can be increased.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, one issue relates to public sector undertakings. When industries were set up in the public sector, I was among those who had welcomed the move. Panditji eulogized it, and a campaign of capital investment in industries by Government was launched. The country expected that these undertakings will be our national assets and contribute to the welfare of the nation. But the picture that exists today is naturally causing concern. What is the reason, why the public sector units turn sick in such large numbers, suffer losses and come to the brink of closure? According to the figures available with me, the total losses suffered by the sick public sector units so

far add up to Rs. 41,264.55 crore. Of the 236 public sector undertakings, 104 are running in losses. The biggest loss has been suffered by the Fertilizer Corporation of India. Other main loss suffering enterprises are in the sectors of textiles, coal and steel.

If the profits earned by the oil companies of the public sector are excluded, the net profit of the entire public sector will be very small. Due to the fall of oil prices in the international market, our profits in the oil sector have increased. A serious consideration needs to be given to the ailing units of the public sector.

It was a policy that we had inherited, and we are trying to pursue it. However, I feel that the time has come when the leaders of all parties, particularly those who have been associated with public sector industries and have worked among the labour should sit together and analyse why the public sector became a losing proposition.

There are some other aspects also to be considered. If some public undertaking can be revived, how it is to be done? If the workers are to be retired, what policy should be adopted? We have to be careful that the enterprises which can be run may not become sick. It is an issue that requires consensus. We are not bound by any predetermined notions. We want to pursue practical policies in the realm of economy. There can be no place for any 'ism' in the matter of economic development because, that would neither be in the interest of the country, nor in the interest of the common man. The basic consideration is the interest of the nation. When some step is taken in the direction of economic development, but a remark is made that we are selling the country, I am pained to hear it. Who can sell a great country like India? And who can purchase it?

There can be differences on matters of policy and genuine differences can be there. We had a debate on EMR and product patent. When our leftist friends targeted us only.

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The issue is being discussed. As you know, we are in favour of public sector industries. We are seriously considering had IDPL can be revived and steps are being taken towards that end. But I also want to urge upon you not to follow too much of 'ism'. If you will continue to hang on to a policy

which has been proved impracticable, which has got a beating the world over, you will be cut etc.

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During the last few months, there have been attacks on our Christian brothers and their institutions. It is a matter of great regret and great concern. True, the number of these incidents is not large, but why would such incidents take place at all in this country? The media has also a duty not to blow up these incidents out of proportion as they incite the people. At times, the report turns out to be wrong. A world wide news agency flashed a report of an attack on a couple at Allahabad, but later on the same couple denied the report and said there was no attack on them. I am not aware whether that news agency carried a clarification or not, but some restraint should be observed on all sides. Every citizen of this country, particularly belonging to smaller communities, must be protected. Those people should be our special concern. The increasing intolerance in the country signifies a danger bell. The very basis of our culture is tolerance, it is well-known for it. The Indian thinking has been in terms of the entire world, the whole universe, but if some people feel on the basis of their community that justice is not being meted out to them, or if they develop a feeling of insecurity, it is not only a matter of concern, but a challenge also. Wherever any incidents have taken place, the culprits have been arrested and they are being prosecuted in courts. Gujarat is also included in this. But in Orissa, the name of a prominent suspect is being widely mentioned as the main culprit. He has not yet been arrested and efforts are being made all over the country to apprehend him. He must be bought to book. The burning of an Australian citizen along with his children is a most heinous crime. It has been condemned the world over, and we must put our home in order. There are elements that would like to derive political advantage out of it, they should not be provided a handle. Our Government is determined to ensure security for every citizen, create confidence among minorities and strengthen the law and other machinery. There should be no laxity in this matter. Any person, howsoever influential, and any organisation howsoever strong, will be dealt with according to the law for any activity violative of the law. We will see to it that. It is not right to allege that no action is taken; action is taken.

We have ensured the cricket match between the Indian and Pakistani teams, it has taken place after all. A similar problem had cropped up 10

years back during the Congress regime. There were warnings of disrupting the match and uncertainty prevailed on whether the match should be held or not. The Congress Government cancelled the entire series. But we have got it done. The Calcutta incident is a different matter. We do not blame our leftist friends for that. But they must share the responsibility to some extent. At time, such incidents occur all of a sudden, but it is necessary to check them.

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BACK NOTE

XVIII Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, 15 March, 1999

1. SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER (TENALI): Your Minister was present.

2. DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD (MADHUBANI): But you were defeated in the elections after that.

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Shakeel Ahmad, please do not disturb. What is this?

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Shakeel Ahmad, you are unnecessarily disturbing the House, wasting its time.

3. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): We have targeted both.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: There is no need to target both.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You have been faithfully following all their bad policies.

SHRI MURLI DEORA (MUMBAI SOUTH): In fact, they are opposing.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): When they were in the Opposition.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: What about the Law Commission?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: The Law Commission Report and decision of the Parliament are two different things.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Let it be discussed in the House.

4. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: If you run all the units properly, we will not say anything.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: You will be cut off from the mainstream.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: We will help you in that..... We will support you. Please run them properly.

5. SHRI MOHAN SINGH: They are leftists and you are capitalists.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Shri Mohan Singhji, where do you stand between these two? You are unnecessarily poking yourself. Where do you stand!

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Here, before you.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We are ready for confrontation. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will not take much time of the House. I am thankful to you for giving me the time to speak. I would appeal to all the Hon. Members.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (CALCUTTA SOUTH): What was the impact of the Calcutta incidents at Lahore?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I would speak about this in Calcutta.

SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ (SOUTH DELHI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is the greatness of Atalji that he said he is only intervening in the debate and reply to the debate will be given by me. There is no arrangement for this in our rules and nor courtesy demands. Rule 20, sub-rule (2) provides that after the reply of Prime Minister neither the mover nor the seconder of the motion has any right to reply. Going one step ahead, I would like to say that even if there had been such provisions in the rules, then courtesy demands that after reply of Prime Minister no one should speak by way of reply. How beautifully he has summed up this whole discussion and replied to the debate and I think after that there is no need for anyone to speak.

MR. SPEAKER: A number of amendments have been moved by hon. Members to the Motion of Thanks. Shall I put the amendments together to the vote of the House?

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: You call the name of Members one by one separately.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Basu Deb Acharia, shall I put all the amendments together?

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Not together, Sir.

When they are separate then how it can be put together.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Mohan Singh, are you moving the amendment or not?

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Sir, in this Address mention has been made about the President Rule in Bihar, situation has changed there now. My amendment is about enforcing Presidents Rule in Bihar. I would like to say that when President's Rule has been revoked there then it would be improper to make any mention of it in President Address. This is also against his dignity and against the traditions. I would like to request that at least amendment for deletion of that portion should be accepted then I will not

press for my amendment.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, I shall put amendment Nos. 1 to 8, moved by Shri Mohan Singh, to the vote of the House.

The amendments were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER: I shall put amendment Nos. 33 to 41 and 328 and 329 moved by Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee to the vote of the House.

The amendments were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER: I shall put amendment Nos. 63 to 81 moved by Shri Basu Deb Acharia to the vote of the House.

The amendments were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, I shall put amendment Nos. 104 to 113 moved by Shri C. Kuppusami to the vote of the House.

The amendments were put and negatived.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (MAHABUBNAGAR): Mr. Speaker, Sir, now you can put the remaining amendments together to the vote of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: I shall now put all the other amendments moved to the Motion to the vote of the House.

The amendments were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That an Address be presented to the President in the following terms:

That the Members of Lok Sabha assembled in this Session are deeply grateful to the President for the Address which he has been pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 22nd February, 1999."

The motion was adopted

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the House will take up Matters under Rule 377. Hon. Members, today, you have to forego the lunch. Is it the sense of the House to forego the lunch?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If any hon. Member wants to go out of the House, he may quietly do so. Let them not stand here.

MOTION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

17 April, 1999

Mr. Speaker, Sir, day before yesterday, while initiating the discussion on the confidence motion, I had said that before speaking, I would like to hear. Now today it is my turn. So I too should be heard uninterruptedly. The opposition has complained that.

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I was saying that the opposition has a complaint and they have alleged that I did not observe canons of political morality. Parliament is in session. Hon'ble Members and the opposition were going to get opportunities to vote against the Government almost daily.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been associated with the Parliament for about 40 years. I have seen many minority Governments. There was minority Government run by Smt. Indira Gandhi. Nobody then accused her of unprincipled politics. Shri Narasimha Rao also continued to head the minority Government.

I do not want to go into what was done to convert that minority Government into a majority one but if the opposition wanted to know whether I enjoyed majority or not, it could bring forward a motion in this regard. Why the opposition instead of knocking at the door of the Hon'ble President of India, did not bring forward a Motion against me? When the Hon'ble President desired that we should seek the vote of confidence, we at once agreed to it. The debate has continued for two days. It is going to be over soon. It could still be better in quality and standard. We claim to be the greatest democracy of the world. We indeed are. But, judging us from the going on in our Parliament, what the countries which have recently joined the mainstream of democracy, must be feeling about us, can easily be gauged. When shall our social life break loose from the trammels of allegations and counter allegations? When we hurt allegations, we feel called upon to corroborate them. We can just repeat what has appeared in the press or the media in corroboration. But that is not a very foolproof or effective way.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my Government was formed just 13 months back. We are being subjected to a trial of strength. I never claimed to be seasoned

statesman. But I do submit that I have never aspired for anything than to serve the country. When I was in the Opposition, nobody ever charged me with doing anything detrimental to the interests of the country. Then, have I changed my character after coming to power? Does power change a man to such an extent? If it is true, what to say of people who remained in power for 40 long years. We all know the conditions in which the elections were held. On the basis of the results of the elections, it was only the coalition Government that could be forward. Even at the very last moment, we had submitted to the Hon'ble President that since democracy is a game of numbers, we didn't have with us the adequate number of M.Ps., and that if someone also was in position to form the Government, he should better invite him for the purpose and we would prefer to sit in opposition for some days more. But nobody was prepared to form the Government. But now, surprisingly enough, after 13 months, they are ready to form the Government. It is a good thing.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the main opposition said that theirs would be the constructive opposition and that they would neither support anybody, nor get support from anybody and would wait for the day when they will get clear cut majority. Pachmarhi seems to have been left far behind. New alliances are being formed. Our alliance has come in for comments. But they are entering into new alliances. We had contested elections together with most of the parties who became our allies later. Soon after taking over the reign of the Government, we presented before the country a National Agenda for Governance. But now in their negative approach and sinister design to oust us, such parties are coming together as are ideologically poles apart. We have been maintaining right from the very beginning that the Indian politics is taking a new turn in which the regional parties too have to play an important role. Emergence of regional parties is reflective of our diversity. It also goes to prove that the parties carrying the label of All India parties have failed to represent the hopes and aspirations of the States in real terms. We have been running the Government for the last 13 months. Many regional parties are with us. Those who deserted us later also did not behave in a manner that militated against the unity and solidarity of the country. We had our differences but their faith in the unity of the country remained unshakeable. It is a welcome offer. But the manner in which the Congress Party criticised the regional parties in its election manifesto of 1998 does not speak of a healthy attitude. I quote:

"By their very nature, regional parties lack a national perspective and can never rise above local ethnic considerations. They adopt

populist platforms for coming to power. They incite narrow linguistic or ethnic sentiments. Very soon these agendas become a recipe for economic disaster and social turmoil."

If this is your assessment of the regional parties, then how and on what basis will you enter into an alliance with them? I also quote below for the benefit of our friends belonging to the leftist parties a relevant comment of the Congress Party about the regional parties:

"As for the Left Parties, even after seven decades, the CPI and the CPM, have not been able to integrate themselves into the national mainstream."

It is a very serious charge. It is part of the Congress manifesto. It is a declaration. Now an alliance is perhaps being entered into in an attempt to integrate the Left Parties into the national mainstream.

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The Janata Dal was in a fix. We do not know what decision it has taken. I refresh the memory of my friends belonging to the Janata Dal by quoting below. The very language used by the Congress Party to describe the Janata Dal:

"The Janata Dal was born in a convulsive fit of anti-congressism in 1989. It is a collection of disparate groups and embittered individuals driven by egos. It can hardly be called a serious political formation. Like an amoeba, it lives on splitting itself into smaller and smaller groups. Its platform of social justice is hollow and is just a misleading cover for the practice of a divisive caste politics."

If this is going to be the basis for their coming together, then their protestations of stability have no meaning. An attempt was made to destabilise my Government. Besides, my Government was charged with being run by parties suffering from inner contradictions. Does the formation you contemplate to foster and it is not likely to materialise—owe its origin to any single ideology? Do you have any programme or one leadership? The other day Shri Lalu Prasad ji said, "You step down and not in five minutes but in one minute, we will come forward with an alternative". If it is so, should not the House be taken into confidence about that alternative. Does not the nation have a right to know that when you are asking a Government formed on the basis of a mandate from the people to step down. People had given mandate to us, not to you.

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We have tried to move ahead on the basis of the national agenda. National agenda is a programme of five years and we intend to accomplish it within that stipulated period. There is no denying the fact that there is perceptible improvement in every field in our country since we took over. Whether it is a question of national security, or of economy or of diplomatic relations with other countries, we can right fully claim that we have tried to make rapid strides in every sphere and achieved success in our efforts.

Surprisingly enough, even the nuclear tests conducted by us came in for criticism. We were asked as to what danger was lurking in before the country. In 1974, I was in the House when the nuclear test was conducted under the leadership of Smt. Indira Gandhi. We had welcomed it, despite being in the Opposition because that test had been conducted for the defence of the country. What was the danger at that time before the country? Should we prepare for self defence only when some danger stares us in the face? If we prepare ourselves in advance, the danger that is imminent would be warded off without taking any practical shape and that was precisely the reason for our deciding to conduct nuclear tests. The nuclear tests were part of our programme. These have found mention in it. There was no secret, no mystery about it.

About the nuclear test, Shri Chandrashekharji has given vent to some of his views. I am afraid, I cannot subscribe to his views. He has his own peculiar way of thinking. But what our own experience of 50 years tells us. Should we not become self-reliant in the matter of defence? We don't have only one neighbour. We have several neighbours. What is at present happening in Europe should serve as a warning to us. Pokhran-II test was not conducted for the satisfaction of any ego. Nor was it meant to show off any bravado. It has been our policy, may the policy of the country, to have the minimum deterrant. That should also be credible. Hence the decision for the test. We knew before hand that some difficulties were bound to come in but we had a firm belief that the nation would surmount them and that was exactly what happened.

Economic sanctions couldn't deter us from moving forward. Nor could they prevent us from taking vital decisions about our own defence. But besides the test, we also announced that there would be 'no first use' of nuclear weapons by us. We also declared that we would not use nuclear weapons against those who do not have them. We also pronounced a ban on nuclear tests. In fact, we could conduct one more test in Pokhran but

we refrained from it when we realised, that the scientists had completed their work for readying the nuclear deterrant. Nuclear weapons can be used for defence purposes. These have been used even for avoiding wars. There was peace in Europe all these years. There was no war in the world divided into two camps. It was basically due to the fact that there was balance of power and so they desisted from creating any trouble for each other. That is the concept behind the deterrant. The need of the hour is that the entire House should ponder over it.

Even Agni-II has been subjected to criticism. The other day we were in for a big shock to read in the newspapers that one of our old friends accused us of having succumbed to pressure to shelve Agni-II test. But by then the test had been conducted and Agni-II was heading towards its destination with full speed. If we had not conducted the test that day, her statement could give rise to a good deal of confusion, not only in India but in other countries also.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, during our 13 months in office we never took any decision under international pressure. Nor shall we do so in future. I do not think there shall ever be a Government in India which would work under pressure. But I know that such a Government had been there in our country. Prior to our conducting the nuclear test, successive Governments, particularly the Congress Party Government, wanted to move in this direction. Former President, Venkataramanji, who was then Defence Minister, to which office Shri Mulayam Singh was elevated later, unfolded, the mystery that all preparations for the nuclear test had been made, the entire paraphernalia for being taken to Pokharan for the purpose was ready. I was also to be present at the time of the test but the Government could not conduct the test because international pressure was there. Shall we work under international pressure, shall we not take our own decisions in the matter of security? Pressure is being mounted on us as well. But we have accorded top most priority to the security of the nation. A burnt child dreads the fire. So is our case. We have to be on our guard all the time. Independence and sovereignty of the country must be protected at all costs. We can proceed to establish social service only when our country is well protected. If our borders are intact and free from any danger of attack, we will be in a position to guard our people to undertake constructive work and strain their every nerve for the defence and overall prosperity of the nation.

We have suffered three agressions such a situation should not recur. We do not equip ourselves with the intention of launching an attack on

any country. We have no such intentions. I have been asked to explain as to how Pokhran-II and Lahore bus journey are related to each other. They are the two sides of the same coin. We must first have the needed strength to defend ourselves. Then we should extend the hand of friendship. But we must be honest in our offer of friendship. We must also be equally honest in preparing ourselves for self-defence. As stated by my friend, Shri George Fernandes yesterday, in 1977-78 when the Janata Government was formed under the prime-ministership of Shri Morarji Bhai, I was entrusted with the portfolio of External Affairs. At that time also, I had endeavoured to establish friendly relations with our neighbours including Pakistan. Now, not only with Pakistan but with other neighbouring countries also, our relations have improved. What national interest does it serve to say that relations have not improved in the face of the fact that our relation with these countries have actually improved? What will be the reactions of those countries to such statements? What will be its repercussions in the world outside? We have entered into a major trade agreement with Sri Lanka. We signed a transit treaty with Nepal. A bus is proposed to ply between Calcutta and Dhaka. It is at present under trial. Elections are being held in Nepal these days. It is for the first time that India is not an issue in elections there and no allegations and counter allegations over India are being exchanged there. Political parties there are also satisfied with the policies being pursued by India. We do not want to interfere in the internal affairs of any neighbouring country but at the same time we brook no interference from any country in our affairs. When I went to Lahore recently killings had taken place in Rajouri about the same time. I immediately took up this matter with the Pakistani Prime Minister. We told him categorically that if such killings continued to take place, atmosphere of goodwill and harmony would not be created, in the absence of which no cooperation between the two countries would be possible.

The situation in Jammu & Kashmir has changed now. Sporadic incidents are, of course, taking place. But these too have to be stopped. It is the duty of the neighbouring country to contribute its mite in this respect but credit for this change in Jammu & Kashmir situation goes to the people there. They want to live peacefully there. Now they cannot be made scapegoats. Attempts to provoke them to indulge in unlawful activities by inciting their sentiments would prove futile in future. Jammu & Kashmir is not in the news nowadays. If at all it is in the news, it is only to know as to how many tourists are going there, how many persons visited that State,

which film companies are shooting films there etc. etc. It is indicative of the improved situation there. We have also succeeded to some extent to improve the situation in the North-East. Efforts are afoot in this direction. Concrete steps have been taken and are proposed to be taken for the economic development of that area. Actually speaking, these are not the party issues. These are the national issues.

Yesterday, it was stated here that we did not take the opposition into confidence. The allegation that in our national agenda, we talked of evolving a consensus but did not followed it up in practice, is not tenable. We have had discussion wherever it was called for. We have taken the opposition into confidence wherever it was necessary. Government alone cannot take such a vast country with diversities galore along with it. It is the responsibility of all the parties involved. Did we not fulfil our responsibility in this behalf when we were in the opposition. Had Smt. Indira Gandhi informed us, the opposition beforehand about the first nuclear test conducted in Pokhran? No, she had not done so. Such an information is never passed on beforehand. But we never made it an issue of complaint. Such questions, however, continued to crop up. Our endeavour is to move ahead after consulting all concerned and to resolve our disputes with the cooperation of all parties. In this, the opposition too will have to fulfil its responsibility.

Opportunities for exchange of views can be further expanded. Yesterday, we were made the target for criticism even on the question of representation of women. We have held talks with different parties. We are prepared to bring forward a bill tomorrow and have it passed if we are assured that it would not be opposed and these would be no scramble, but last time.

What is he saying? Mr. Speaker, Sir, there was a consensus that the Bill be passed in its present form and if representation is to be given to different groups, it may be considered later but the Congress Party did not accept it. Now allegations are being levelled against us. The whole world knows that we are not in majority in Rajya Sabha. Many important Bills have been passed there. Thanks to the cooperation of the Opposition. The Opposition considered them important and they were essential also in the interest of the nation. But because of differences in the Opposition, certain Bills remained pending. Blaming us for that state of affairs would indeed be doing injustice to us. We shall try to bring forward those Bills again. When we had taken over, the economic condition of the country was in a very

bad shape. Can anybody deny the fact that the economic condition of the country has registered an improvement? No one can do it. Even if we choose to criticise by adopting a narrow approach, we would have to accept the fact that the situation has improved during the last six months—GDP is 5.8 per cent, reserve is 32 billion and inflation is 4.6 per cent. This can be managed. Then, an atmosphere of political uncertainty is created which has an adverse effect on our economy. This we are witnessing these days. Will this game plan continue every year? If your Government comes into being, that would also be a coalition government and you too would have to face all the odds. We have more support than the Opposition. Is their exercise limited only to bringing us down? Will the country be kept in the dark? Will it be called morality or principled politics? Whatever it is, it should be done in the open. But this is not being done. We have made the country strong from the point of view of security, have improved the economic situation, and have created an atmosphere of peace and cooperation in the country. Ours is a vast country. Some accidents here and there cannot be helped. But efforts have been made to check them without losing time. My friend who preceded has thrown light on this. Shri Yashwant Sinha dwelt at length on the economic situation and apprised the House of the changes that have taken place in the economic front. There has been a record food production this year. Storage facilities are falling short. Credit for this goes to the farmers. We claim no credit for this. The policy being followed for years is showing good results. But if there are floods and cyclones causing destruction to the crops, then there is need for all of us to face the situation unitedly. But that gives rise to the desire to derive political mileage out of such a situation. This tendency must change, our farmers deserve kudos for the record food production. We are aware of their problems. Last year a decision was taken to increase the price of urea. But now a demand has been made on behalf of the farmers and their organisations to lighten their burden. We assure them that all out efforts would be made to alleviate their sufferings.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is very necessary to reduce the prices of inputs. There is need to protect the farmers from natural calamities.

Crop Insurance Scheme is on the anvil, agriculture policy is being finalised. We are being charged that though we have completed one year in office, we are unable to give an agriculture policy to the nation. You couldn't do it even after 50 years. Agriculture policy is being given final shape. The process of consultations with others is in its last stage. The matter concerns the interests of the farmers. Therefore, cooperation of all

of us is necessary.

In the last session, there was a lot of excitement over the memorandums concerning the reservation of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes. The period of reservation is coming to an end. The Government has decided to bring forward a Bill in the House to extend the period of reservation for another ten years. Two of the memorandums brought out in 1997 are pending before the courts. Our endeavour is to get the verdict of the courts thereon as early as possible. The Bill on one of the subjects is ready and the same will be introduced in this very session. The need of the hour is to find a way out to fill the backlog of SC/ST and backward classes in the services. The present arrangement in this regard is not satisfactory. If this continues, it will not be possible to liquidate the backlog for years; on the contrary it will increase further. It is imperative to avoid this situation. We need cooperation of all in this connection. We appreciate the sentiments of people of SC/ST and Other Backward Classes on this issue. Some delay has definitely taken place. But we will not accelerate the process. The ambitions and expectations of the Members and people of these classes will be taken due care of.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, a point referred to in the discussion relates to the dismissal of an officer of the Navy.

My friend, the Defence Minister has expressed some views in the House in this regard. I would appeal to the Hon'ble Members to go through the document brought out by the Defence Ministry in this connection. That document is not meant for publicity. It is a statement of facts. Decision should be hammered out on the basis of facts and not on the basis of allegations and counter-allegations. If after perusing that document, House reaches the conclusion that something more is needed to be done in the matter, Government's cooperation would be forthcoming. A suggestion has been made. Shri Indrajit Gupta raised a question, "Cannot we discuss the matter?" The discussion should not be held in a vacuum. It should not take place in an atmosphere of allegations and counter-allegations. There should be a solid base for it and that solid base is there. Discussion can take place on the basis of the document that has been published. A committee of some prominent Members of the House can also be constituted. Shri Indrajit Gupta, Shri Gujral, Mulayam Singh Yadav ji, and Chandrashekhar ji

would not be allowed to excuse themselves. Shivraj Patil ji and others can also be included in it. They may examine the facts and if they are of the opinion that besides discussing the matter in the House, there should also be a parliamentary Committee, then I assure the House that there would be no objection from Government's side. But if allegations are made on the basis of the material appearing in the media, then someone should take responsibility for it. Persons who level allegations should atleast realise that they would also be asked to prove them. The document published by the Defence Minister and the statements made by him in this regard are in accordance with the decision taken by the All-party committee which had met in your chamber. He did not reveal any mystery. He did not try to mislead the House or the country but if nonsensical allegations are hurled on the Defence Minister, it causes a jolt to the entire machinery as also to him. A way out can be found of this imbroglio. Problems can be sorted out. In fact, we should give up the habit of perceiving everything with coloured lenses.

Whenever any public matter comes up, our first reaction is to see something wrong in it. If there is anything wrong, that should be looked into.

We have been fighting against the corruption for the last 40 years. There is no question of our compromising with it. If we had compromised yesterday, the need for seeking this vote of confidence would not have arisen. We have tried to run the coalition Government along smooth lines.

It is running and will pick up further speed today evening, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not a question of running or not running the government. The question is whether this country will run or not and the mandate of the people will be honoured or not. By condemning a coalition government if another coalition government is formed, will the latter survive the odds for which the former was held guilty. A coalition government, has its own limitations. We have yet to come to terms with these limitations and act accordingly. I can understand the hesitation and the reluctance of the congress party. They are between two minds. They have an ardent desire to oust us and to share power and to take a decision to go ahead on their own. There are difficulties in it. But I am confident, that a democratic way would be found out to overcome these difficulties. It is good that discussion continued

for two days. There was more heat than necessary in the discussion. We should exercise some restraint and this applies to all parties. Democracy is our most potent weapon which we have accepted as a way of life. It guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens. It is essential to strengthen democracy with a view to unifying the country.

Sangmaji talked of the institution. Later Chandrsekhar ji also laid stress on it. Institutions should be safeguarded and certain principles should be observed. About me, it has been said that I of course, follow certain principles but I have been so besieged and beleaguered that I have been rendered helpless and hamstrung. I am not so weak a person. We have taken decisions which are in the interest of the nation with all the force and determination at our command. I fail to understand as to how it occurred to my friends in the opposition and particularly Shri Mulayam Singh ji, who at times assumes belligerent postures, that there are differences between me and Advani ji. Just think over it.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, we can understand that there can be differences between, the Leader of the opposition, Shri Sharad Pawar and Shri Shiv Shankar ji. But why are we being put in the dock. Between Advaniji and me, it is not plain political companionship but a life long association. He has been assisting me ever since I got elected to the Lok Sabha. He has discharged his duties as Home Minister of India quite efficiently. There can be difference of opinion on various questions. Are you all of one opinion? Mulayam Singh ji do you and Beni Prasad ji never differ on any matter? I know.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I appeal to the House to take the decision as the time for it has come. During our span of 13 months, which people gave us to serve them, we have indicated that if we are allowed to have our full term, we will bring about radical changes in the country. After all elections are held for 5 years, 13 months time is not a very long time. But the footprints that we have left on the sand of time during these 13 months are ineffacable and unchangeable. By criticising us, facts cannot be covered up. By giving vent to your anger and bitterness and by personal insinuations, our achievements cannot be undone. You may not accept opinion polls. But are they not indications enough that people wanted us to serve longer and our government to continue for its full term. I am sure, this House will take a decision in our favour.

BACK NOTE

XIX Motion of Confidence in the Council of Ministers, 17 April, 1999

1. SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV (Sambhal): Mr. Speaker, Sir, mike is not working well. Please have it repaired.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon'ble Prime Minister, could you please use the second mike also?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the Hon'ble Members that they want to hear me.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: We do want to hear you.

2. SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: First of all congratulate Shri Chandra Shekhar on his birthday.

MR. SPEAKER: When the Leader of the House is speaking, do not disturb him.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: Will you not allow even felicitations?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I, in the House.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: Today is the birthday of Chandra Shekharji.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Whose birthday is today?

MR. SPEAKER: Today is the birthday of Chandrashekhar Saheb.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Many happy returns of the day!

3. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): We do not need their certificate either way.

4. SHRI RAJESH PILOT (Dausa): Ten parties have got 25 per cent and our party alone has got 21 per cent votes.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, during these 13 months,

we have tried to implement our programme.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Sir, this running commentary should be stopped immediately otherwise we will interrupt.

MR. SPEAKER: There should be no running commentary please. What is this?

5. SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: I never doubted your wisdom and knowledge. My only regret is that you have been labelled a mask.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Do not worry about the mask. The mask can be thrown away.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: If you throw away this mask, we will be with you.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Very good, then be prepared to join us.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: The day you throw away this mask, we shall stop opposing you.

THIRD MINISTERIAL WTO CONFERENCE IN SEATTLE, U.S.A.

1 December, 1999

Hon. Speaker Sir, I rise to make a statement in response to comments made and concerns voiced by hon. Members on the Third Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation, which began in Seattle yesterday.

The Ministerial Conference was to begin at 10.00 a.m. However, due to demonstrations and disturbances, including teargas shelling, the inaugural session could not start. Even the US delegation could not arrive at the venue and the inaugural session was abandoned.

Most of the Ministers from different countries could not even attend the lunch hosted by the DirectorGeneral, WTO. It was decided that the plenary will be set up at 3.00 p.m. It could start only at 3.40 p.m. Ministers could not use their cars due to disturbances and had to walk to the venue.

The Commerce Minister of India made a statement just after 5.00 p.m., that is, 6.30 a.m. Indian time. A slightly longer version of the statement was also circulated.

I beg to place on the Table of the House the statement made by Shri Murasoli Maran, Minister of Commerce and Industry at the WTO Conference.

Our basic position in the Seattle Ministerial Meeting is:

1. We are not in favour of a wideranging new round of negotiations, often called the Millennium Round.

2. We are opposed to relating with trade:

- (a) Core Labour Standards,
- (b) Environmental issues,
- (c) Coherent Global Architecture,
- (d) Investment issues,
- (e) NGOs' involvement in WTO negotiations, and

(f) Competition policy.

3. We are prepared for a few new items being taken up for negotiations provided implementation issues arising from the Uruguay Round are also resolved to our satisfaction.

These are the matters for negotiation in Seattle and I have no further information to share with the House at this moment. I assure the hon. Members that India's national interests will be fully protected and promoted at the Seattle negotiations.

BACK NOTE

**XX Third Ministerial WTO Conference in Seattle, U.S.A.,
1 December, 1999**

NIL

PENDING AYODHYA CASE BEFORE SPECIAL ADDITIONAL SESSIONS JUDGE

7 December, 1999

Mr. Speaker, Sir, pending Ayodhya cases can be classified into two categories.

The first category is of cases relating to the title dispute. There are five such cases, two of which have remained pending since over 49 years.

The second category is of the case arising out of the happenings of December 6, 1992. In this case, chargesheets have been filed by the CBI against over fifty persons. This case is pending before the Special Additional Sessions Judge (Ayodhya Prakaran) since 5th October, 1993.

I would like to affirm that ever since I have assumed office in March, 1998, neither I nor my Government has ever interfered in this case, even though the investigating agency, namely, the CBI is directly under me. As has already been indicated in another context, Government holds that interference in a pending prosecution is impermissible in law.

Neither the Constitution nor the law disqualifies a Minister from holding office merely because a chargesheet is filed by the police or formal charges are framed by the court.

The question as to who should be in the Council of Ministers is one of Prime Ministerial discretion, and sense of political propriety. Many circumstances are relevant to the final decision of the Prime Minister on these issues.

In view of the fact that no change in the position of court cases has taken place ever since the Ministers concerned were inducted into office in March, 1998, and no allegation of corruption or misuse of office is involved, the demand that the Ministers quit office or that they be barred from replying to certain questions is untenable.

However, the cases will be allowed to proceed without any interference from the Government here or at the State level.

I urge this House to await the judicial verdict.

BACK NOTE

**XXI Pending Ayodhya case before special additional Sessions
Judge, 7 December, 1999**

NIL

**REPORTED REMARKS OF THE CHIEF MINISTER
OF U.P. AND A UNION MINISTER ON THE
CONSTRUCTION OF RAM TEMPLE
AT AYODHYA**

13 December, 1999

Mr. Speaker, Sir, no one can deny that the issue raised by the members has been raised on the basis of news published in the newspapers. I have also read these newspapers and tried to construct what had been reported. I am still trying to find out and I will certainly get a report in this regard. It is not always necessary that the statements made are published in the same form. I am not holding anyone responsible.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have no hidden agenda. We have been elected with the public support on the basis of same agenda on which we had contested together and we got vote of confidence on the same agenda. It is very clear that there is no mention of three disputed issues in that agenda. Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a lot of difference between 1998 and 1999.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when we decided to contest the election, we made a new manifesto. Which was in print. We approached the public with this new manifesto. There is no mention of these three issues in this manifesto and that was the only programme we had. We are going by that manifesto. Nobody should have any kind of doubt in one's mind about that manifesto.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, all the newly elected members have been elected on the basis of national agenda only. The individual opinions may vary from person to person, but this Government and N.D.A.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, we had also brought out a separate manifesto for the 1998 elections. It was mentioned in that one but it has not been mentioned in this time's manifesto. We don't have a separate manifesto this time, we have contested the elections on the basis of joint manifesto and that formed the basis to unite all the parties under one umbrella and the entire Government machinery is being run based on that one. It's a matter of surprise that you are not believing my words. The 6th December passed off peacefully. There was peace in Ayodhya and all over the country that day and that's why they are embarrassed.

What we are saying, we are putting that into action also. We did not allow anybody to create tension in Kashi and we arrested them. We would not allow anything untoward to happen in Ayodhya also. Our action speaks

volumes of it but you will speak what is in your mind.

What he said, I am just ascertaining about that. Have some patience.

The manifesto which formed the basis of our contesting elections, and on the basis of which we have won elections, that is final for us. If somebody says something outside of it, that is wrong. He should not say such thing and you should also not take it seriously.

BACK NOTE

XXII Reported remarks of the Chief Minister of U.P. and a Union Minister on the construction of Ram Temple at a Ayodhya, 13 December, 1999

1. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I am taking up the matter.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (MUMBAI SOUTH CENTRAL): Mr. Speaker, Sir these people are not giving a chance even to the Prime Minister to speak. How can it serve any purpose. They have started creating riots in Maharashtra.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Kumari Uma Bharati is a Member of the Council of Ministers.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, how firm we are in our intention.

AGENDA OF NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE

14 December, 1999

Mr. Speaker, Sir, yesterday Ayodhya issue was discussed in the House. I had said that I would try to find out the facts from Shri Ramprakash Guptaji, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. I had a talk with him. I had asked him whether he had stated in his statement that the question of construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya is a state issue and is not related to the national agenda. National agenda is different from the agenda of our state. He refuted this charge and denied saying so. Then I asked him as to what he had said. He replied that contrary to he had said that they are bound to pursue the national agenda and will follow the policy statement made under the national agenda. I had also received a letter conveying the same today. I would like to take the House into confidence and quote the content of the letter.

"In some of the newspapers my alleged statement regarding construction of Ram Temple at Ram Janam Bhumi in Ayodhya has been published and it is stated that the construction of Ram Temple is included in the agenda of Uttar Pradesh Government. In this regard it has become essential for me to clarify that no such statement regarding Ram Janam Bhumi in Ayodhya has been made by me that it is included in the agenda of Uttar Pradesh Government. It had clarified that the agenda in this regard which has been framed by National Democratic Alliance and accepted and adopted by the Government of India is also the agenda and policy of the State Government."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think that after this the controversy should come to an end.

BACK NOTE

XXIII Agenda of National Democratic Alliance, 14 December, 1999

NIL

RELAXATION OF STANDARDS IN RESERVATION IN PROMOTION FOR SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE

22 December, 1999

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Hon. Members are aware that certain operational guidelines issued by the Department of Personnel and Training regarding reservation in Government jobs have created some discontent among the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. These guidelines were issued by the then Government after certain pronouncements of the Supreme Court.

I would like to inform the hon. Members that in Pursuance of my assurance on the floor of the House in the 12th Lok Sabha, our Government has already taken steps for reviewing these guidelines.

In respect of one of the Office Memoranda, the Cabinet in its meeting held on 21st December, 1999, has approved the proposal to bring about a Constitutional Amendment Bill to incorporate a proviso to Article 335 of the Constitution with a view to enable the State to restore the relaxations of qualifying marks and standards of evaluation in matters of reservation in promotion for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It may be recalled that these relaxations had been withdrawn as per the instructions issued by the Department of Personnel and Training on 22.7.1997 in pursuance of the Supreme Court judgement dated 1.10.1996 in the case of *S. Vinod Kumar versus Union of India*. I may also mention that the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was also consulted on this aspect and that the Commission has expressed its appreciation of the proposed amendment. The proposed Constitutional Amendment Bill will be introduced in the Parliament as early as possible.

The proposal to bring about another Constitutional amendment which would make it possible to clear the backlog of jobs through special recruitment in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is also at the final stage of consideration.

The Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, in a recent judgment dated 16.9.1999, has reiterated its earlier judgements regarding the principle of fixation of seniority on promotion of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe employees. The legal and constitutional aspects of this judgment are under

examination with a view to bring about a Constitutional Amendment to restore the seniority principle that was prevalent prior to these judgments.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to assure the House that this Government is committed to protecting the interests of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe employees and will take all possible steps for their upliftment.

BACK NOTE

XIV Relaxation of Standards in Reservation in promotion for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Government Service, 22 December, 1999

NIL

VALEDICTORY REFERENCE

23 December, 1999

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the present session is going to conclude. So far as enactment of legislations is concerned, we have enacted several laws in this session. Perhaps this is first time that we have received to so much cooperation particularly the cooperation of the opposition. We have got no majority in the other House and some very important Bills have been passed with the cooperation of the opposition for which the Government are grateful to them. Our approach had been constructive when we were in the opposition. What happened in the House for the last two days if that could have been avoided and a way had been adopted to make the points in a proper manner, I think it would have been good for protecting the dignity of the House and democracy would have emerged stronger. I had assured the House at the beginning of the session of the Parliament that we would introduce the women reservation Bill in this session itself and that it would then be circulated for consideration. The word of the Bill is not the last word but it was also our responsibility to fulfill our promise made to the people of the country and by introducing this Bill in the House we have fulfilled our promise .

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Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, there could be controversy on Bills and we can find a way out thereof. I had talked about consensus and we have tried to evolve consensus. Just now, I was being alleged to be an adamant person but during the last two days it has been proved that who is adamant and who is not willing to cooperate. Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, nobody is against the reservation for women in principle. The difference of opinion is about the extent of reservation whether it should be 33, 20 or 15 per cent.

The difference of opinion is over as to what should be the procedure of election and whether there should be exchange of seats or it should be on rotation basis. Our male members are apprehensive that if reservation is made for women they would not be able to contest the election from the seats they have been elected from. A solution should be found to avoid such situation. Recently the Election Commission has suggested one more solution to this problem. Shri Mulayam Singhji has been giving good suggestions and if he

continues making efforts in this direction more people will accept his good suggestions. Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, if people will not accept his suggestions then he will start accepting the suggestions given by other people. Some way out of this problem will have to be found out and we all can find this way out collectively. Ours is the largest democracy of the world. Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, I am here for the last forty years. The incidents which took place in the House during the last two days have never taken place and such incidents should not be repeated in future. If we indulge in physical pushing in the House we will have no face in the public. This is really regrettable. But now this is coming to an end. All is well that ends well.

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Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, we really want to thank you for the profundity you have shown as a 'Balyogi' which is really commendable. We feel concerned that if you become a "Purnayogi" instead of a 'Balyogi' what will be the fate of the common people. You have conducted the proceedings of the House very efficiently. The House is going to be adjourned on a happy note. I have already expressed my gratitude to the opposition. I express my gratitude to the leader of opposition, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi and the leaders of other political parties. The Lok Sabha Secretariat has to do additional work and it has faced difficult situation. I thank the staff members of the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, you are worthy of our thanks I wish to you and to the entire House a very happy new year and best wishes for the new millennium. I hope that we will meet again in a very cordial atmosphere and we will forget the incidents that took place during the last two days.

BACK NOTE

XXV Valedictory Reference, 23 December, 1999

1. SEVERAL HON'BLE MEMBERS: It has not been introduced.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It would have been better had the Bill been introduced in a cordial atmosphere.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV (Sambhal): Hon'ble Prime Minister, Sir, please try to make the atmosphere cordial. The Bill has not been introduced. You should not say this. Please create cordial atmosphere.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: You also do not...

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Rumour is being spread by the ruling benches that it is being done.

MR. SPEAKER: You please take your seat.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: This is being said by the people of R.S.S. rumour spreading society.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Interruption is not an indication of broad mindedness.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: Hon'ble Prime Minister, Sir, you are passing remarks, we were expecting that you will try to make the atmosphere cordial.

2. DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: The Government is responsible for this. The Government remained adamant on its stand that it will only introduce the Bill which have already been drafted. It is like saying that we will listen to the suggestions of the hon'ble members but we will do whatever we want to do. The fault lies with the attitude of the Government. The Government is responsible for all this.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Not only the Government but barring you the entire opposition is also involved in it.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Raghuvansh Prasadji why are you speaking so loudly. Please sit down.

OBITUARY REFERENCE MADE TO PASSING AWAY OF SITTING MEMBER SMT. GEETA MUKHERJEE

6 March, 2000

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it seems hard to believe that now we will not be able to meet Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee. Death is a hard and naked truth of life but we never expected that the cruel death would suddenly come, deceive us and snatch Geetaji away from us.

Her whole life passed in struggle. Her's was a fighting personality but alongwith fighting spirit she embedded in herself, a feelings of innocent live, and affection and also a firm resolve to stick to her beliefs. We continuously witnessed her presence in the House since 1980. Her sustained struggle for the cause of a common man outside the House always gave her a dignified place in the House. She always raised the fundamental issues which are very essential in our national life. What should be the form of post independence India, this idea always remained central to her and her party also and throughout the crests and turfs of her career she always remained committed and devoted to this aim and kept working tirelessly to achieve this objective. The sphere of her activities included certain ideal works such as the end of exploitation, discrimination and wish for the welfare of all etc. She played a significant role especially in empowering the women. She played a leading role over women reservation issue ever since it came to the fore, she was the chairperson of the parliamentary committee and *raison d'etre* behind the presentation of unanimous report.

When, I after reverently bowing before her and paying floral tributes to her, I was coming out of her small room which was also a symbol of her personality. Living in small room and doing big deeds were the characteristics of her personality. The small room of Vithalbai Patel House had become a centre of attraction for the people. At that time a women asked me to give consent to the Women Reservation Bill. That bill is the property of the House. Her memory is with us. Her vacant place in the House would be filled up but the hearts of the people which have become empty in her absence, would be hard to fill. I, on behalf of myself and my alliance and the entire House offer my humble tributes to her.

BACK NOTE

**XXVI Obituary Reference made to passing away of sitting
Member Smt. Geeta Mukherjee, 6 March, 2000**

NIL

VISIT TO MAURITIUS

16 March, 2000

Sir, the House is aware, Mauritius and India have enjoyed a very close and traditional friendship. This has been continuously fostered through visits at the highest level. I was invited by Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, the Prime Minister of Mauritius to be the Chief Guest on the occasion of the first Independence Day celebrations in the new millennium. It is symbolic that 12 March was chosen by the leaders and people of Mauritius as their Independence Day to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's Dandi Salt March. This is testimony to their commitment to the values of Mahatma Gandhi and friendship with India.

My visit from 10-12 March provided an opportunity to renew contacts at the highest level with Mauritius and to sustain the momentum in our special relationship which is deeply rooted in the strong foundation of linkages of religion, language, culture and our shared civilisational heritage.

During my stay in Mauritius, I had meetings with the President, the Prime Minister and the Vice-President of Mauritius as well as the Speaker of the Assembly and leaders of political parties. The talks further widened the deep understanding and commonality of approach on bilateral and international issues which characterises our relations. It has always been our endeavour to share our expertise and experience with the Government and people of Mauritius. During my visit, three Agreements on bilateral cooperation in the field of trade and commerce, information technology and supply of coastal surveillance equipment with a credit of U.S. \$ 9 million and a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of oceanography were signed. Through these Agreements, our cooperative ties in these important areas will be further strengthened.

It was also announced during the visit that direct air links will be established between Port Louis and Chennai. This has been greatly appreciated by the people of Mauritius.

During the visit, I had the opportunity to inaugurate the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture in Mauritius which has been set up with assistance from our Indian Council of Cultural Relations. This new complex will further

boost our bilateral cultural exchanges. The Centre is also expected to become a hub for cultural activities for the benefit of the Indian community in this region.

Along with Prime Minister Ramgoolam, I also had the privilege to lay the foundation of an educational-cum-cultural institution named after Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore as Ilot village in the Northern part of Mauritius. The Government of India would contribute US \$1 million towards implementing this project. A civic reception was organised on this occasion. Recalling our historic bonds, I assured the people of Mauritius that India will always stand by the people of Mauritius in their hour of need.

The visit helped to further cement our bilateral relations which are indeed a shining example of the close and deep mutual understanding between the two countries. It would be the policy of the Government to continue to build upon this relationship in the future.

BACK NOTE

XXVII Visit to Mauritius, 16 March 2000

NIL

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

25 April, 2000

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the whole House is grateful and thanks. His Excellency, the President for his gracious speech addressed to the joint sitting of the two Houses on which we are holding discussion. Recently, the President has returned from his successful official tour of France which enhanced the prestige of India as well as it strengthened our friendly relations with France.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, 28-29 hon'ble Members took part in this discussion. Smt. Sonia Gandhi delivered her maiden speech, for which I congratulate her. Our National Democratic Alliance Government is in power for more than two years. It is true that one election was held in between and instead of 12th Lok Sabha we are Members of 13th Lok Sabha. But correct evaluation can only be done when we look at the overall performance of this Government during the last two years.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I request that we look into some earlier events. We have got to view the situation prevailing in the country during Pokhran in order to deliberate about Kargil. Though the Pokhran tests showed the might of our country but we had to face adverse criticism at the international level. Not only that we had to face criticism within the country also where it was stated that India will be left isolated due to this Pokhran tests. The outcome of Pokhran was Kargil. Both the incidents took place in the month of May—one in 1998 and other in 1999. But there was wide a variation between them. Can anybody say today that India is isolated because of our policy? Can anybody say that the credibility of India at the international level took a nosedive because of this? We also used to criticize and in future also if we get the opportunity to sit there we will show you the way criticism is done.

But we are helpless if you do not give opportunity to us. Mr. Speaker, Sir, even now Lahore Bus Service is being criticized. I do not know how you take it but this is a fact that due to Lahore Bus Service India's image has been enhanced at the international arena and gave the message that India indeed wanted peace and was ready to do anything to achieve this. Whole world is praising our approach and our opposition! Why this is happening?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, our journey for the last two years has been journey of

the nation marching ahead. India is an old Nation but at this time it is young because most of the population is of young people. Today 60 per cent of our population is below 35 years of age and we have to fulfill their expectations and provide opportunities for their development. Economic sanctions were imposed after Pokhran tests and we faced them. Still sanctions are there but the country which imposed sanctions have understood that they cannot overtook India. The reason for this is the emerging power of India and I agree that it did not happen in two years or two days. I also accept the fact that they have also contributed a lot who are sitting in opposition today to help India reaching this stage. But they are not ready to accept. Sometimes they even hesitate in taking our names.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not necessary to remind me that there was a caretaker Government and election was round the corner when Kargil war started and perhaps capitalizing the prevailing opportunity we were targeted. But our forces has shown their might and commanding officers managed well resulting in victory which was a victory of the entire country. Kindly look at my speech which I delivered in and out of Parliament as a leader of opposition after Bangladesh war and creation of an independent Bangladesh the way you spoke after the Kargil war will be witnessed by the people in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the changes occurred in the life of nation during the last two years is because of political and social stability. We have come in the era of coalition Governments. Our colleagues from opposition are forced to join such Governments. It is different thing that they join Government only when all Members of their party are made Ministers, we have 24 parties but we are working together with them smoothly. For this all parties have to fulfil their responsibilities. But because of the political stability at the Centre the Mr. Speaker, Sir, till some time back India and Pakistan were one identity and after partition Pakistan came into existence. We wish to see Pakistan a prosperous country. There should not be any misconception in the minds of Pakistani people that we do not accept existence of Pakistan and we want to establish cordial and friendly relations with Pakistan and not that of hatred. If Pakistan wants to build its future on the hostility against India, I am sure it will not succeed in its design. We have opted for democracy. In our country power is changing hands smoothly. Though there are some difficulties but it is the transitional period of democracy. We will overcome these difficulties and

despite these difficulties multi-party democracy is successful in our country. Pakistan has deviated from the path of democracy. The day on which our Government was taking oath of office in Delhi it was reported in the newspapers that duly elected Government in Pakistan have been dissolved and the Prime Minister has been arrested and the Army has taken over the reins of the country. This depicts difference between the democracy in the two countries. Pakistan is not trying to understand as to why it is being isolated in the world community? In the commonwealth conference all the countries have endorsed the proposal to oust Pakistan from commonwealth.

It is not a matter of pleasure for us but it should be a matter of concern for Pakistan as to why it is getting isolated in the world community. We are willing to improve relations with Pakistan but Pakistan should take initiative in this regard. Pakistan should create congenial atmosphere for this. If terrorist activities are continued if ISI keeps on increasing its activities in various parts of our country, if violation of line of control is continued and its propaganda of hatred against India is continued as such conducive atmosphere cannot be created for undertaking meaningful dialogue. Therefore we demand and I want to make it clear that we have feelings of goodwill and friendship in our minds towards the people of Pakistan. Efforts are being made to improve relations at people to people level but the nature of talks will depend on as to what is the Intention of political losses across the border. I went to Lahore for talks but intrusion by Pakistan in Kargil came in the way. I do not want to undertake any such new journey. Pakistan will have to change its attitude. The line of control should be honoured.

The people who are in favour of fresh talks and who want meaningful conclusion of talk they should also keep In view the fate of the agreements signed earlier with our neighbouring country. Simla agreement has been violated and Lahore declaration has been discredited. Now invitations are being given for the further talks and to reach the new accords. Efforts are being made to sign new treaties at the cost of old ones, it is not possible. There is unanimity in the country in this regard. We are In favour of friendship but friendship cannot be unilateral.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the American President Shri Bill Clinton had visited our country last month and his visit has been very useful. I hope his visit will contribute in improving the relations between the two countries and

relations between us will acquire new dimensions. It is a matter of satisfaction that there is a change in the stand of America on Kashmir issue and American is in favour of maintaining the sanctity of line of control. The massacre of Sikh brethren in Jammu and Kashmir during the stay of the President Bill Clinton has made it dear to our American friends that this question is related to get their demand fulfilled through terrorism rather than taking public opinion into account.

Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and it will remain so. America is of the view that borders cannot be demarcated with blood and it is a positive attitude and we hope that further steps will be taken on the basis of this.

America has recognised the increasing importance of India in the field of economy trade and Information technology. The vision statement signed by me and the President Bill Clinton will give multi-dimensional shape to relations between our two countries and due to this our relations will improve further and I believe our friendship will be based on equality. Just before the visit of the American President a confusion was created in the minds of the people of the country that he is coming here to pressurise us to sign the CTBT. We have had clear discussion on CTBT in a cordial way and the question of any pressure does not arise. If we have succeeded in improving the credibility of the country during the last two years, its main reason is that we have refused to succumb to any power, America is also aware of our position in this regard. We are going through the process of talks on CTBT and will form unanimity in this regard and I assure you that any decision in this regard will be taken after consulting you.

I would also like to mention the question which has arisen due to difference of opinion with Congress and it should be clarified. A delegation of Congress party called upon the President Bill Clinton what transpired between them. Whether there was discussion on a unrestrained minimum nuclear deterrent. The spokesmen of Congress have given different versions in this regard. There was no doubt in our mind but these two versions have created some doubt. It can be cleared here at the moment by the Congress president Shrimati Sonia Gandhi if she desire to do so. The Home Minister is of the view that this should be left aside. I am not raising this question for creating any controversy. If this is the stand of Congress, I welcome it because there should not be any difference of opinion between the political parties on the issue

of nuclear. All the earlier Prime Ministers have also been trying to make India a nuclear power without making any announcement to this effect. The present Government thought that this is the right time and we went ahead in this direction. We welcome all the political parties to be unanimous on this issue as national security is the prime concern and it should not be made an issue of party politics.

During the past two years economic condition of India has improved. What the leader of opposition has said does not depicts the correct picture. Whether it is a fact that annual growth rate of GDP has improved?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, earlier this rate was 5.00 percent and now it has become 5.9 percent and I believe it will increase further. We are expecting it to increase upto 6.5 percent. Till some years ago it was 2.00 percent or 3.00 percent, now this growth rate is increasing. Is it not the result of a successful economic policy? I am sure that we will be able to achieve the growth rate of 7.00 to 8.00 percent. The growth rate of industrial production has exceeded 8.00 percent. In March 1998 the growth rate of industrial production was 6.6 percent. Earlier our foreign exchange reserve was 26 billion dollar which has increased upto 35 billion dollar. These are factual datas. These datas reflects improvement in our economy.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not claiming that this is the result of the policies we have followed during the last two years. To be very frank we have been inherited some policies in the economic sector and some of them are really very good and few were not good.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question of subsidy has to be considered once again. All the political parties should think over this issue collectively. Subsidy meant for poor should continue. Arrangement should be made to provide subsidy to poor wherever it is necessary. The necessary steps in the field of economy will be taken to provide foodgrain, water, houses and for raising the standard of living. In the matter of fertilizers the benefit of subsidy did not reach to farmers to the desired extent. What is the price of urea in the world market? We wish that our plants should run but our urea plants are lying closed.

Yes, I know the United Front Government left these plants in this

condition. How much should be the subsidy? When I was in opposition our communist friends used to talk about the public sector.

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What is the proposal, please listen to it. I am quoting.—

"The Congress, therefore, urges that our Constitution be thoroughly examined to ascertain if the time has not come to make adequate alterations to it so that it may continue as a living document, effectively responding to the current needs of the people and the demands of the present."

What will be done by this commission. Whether any separate terms of reference have been fixed for it. It will be reviewed. Review means to have a second look.

This is not a question. Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no need to tell about the Members of this commission. Their authenticity and ability is above board. They will give their recommendations, which will be presented in the Parliament. Parliament will consider and accept any recommendation if it want to do so. Later on, a bill regarding Constitution amendment will be brought in the House and 2/3 majority will be required for passage of the bill. Why are you so worried. There is no need to worry for that.

Some hon. Members are agitated over this issue which does not indicate that their arguments are strong and rational. Review of Constitution is a continuous process and it will continue in future also. Earlier also amendments have been made in the Constitution and it will be done in future also. Constitution is not a rigid document which cannot be amended.

When commission submits its report, it will be considered in the Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Parliamentary Committee could have been constituted. There should be no objection in setting up commission. Please take your seat. You are raising finger on ability of hon'ble Members of the commission. You have objections against them.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a saying in Sanskrit that when you cannot prove your point rationally then 'Shesham kopen pooryen' which means that remaining part is completed by expression of anger.

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Whether the Government cannot think over it by setting up a commission. After reviewing the Constitution the commission will give its report as to what amendments should be made and what changes should be brought in it. That report will be presented in the Parliament and amendment bill will be brought for making any change in it. But it seems that opposition has decided to oppose all the works undertaken by the ruling party. They have no other point. I would like to say that you should reconsider it. There is no use to divide the House and the country over such an issue for which there is no basic difference. We want your cooperation and I hope that you will cooperate us in creating harmony in the country...

Consensus is needed on important issues for the future of the country but I find that except for the brief period after formation of the Government, the largest opposition party is trying to oppose every issue, having lost its popularity. Their attitude is negative. Several States are still in the grip of drought.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, several parts of the country are in the grip of severe drought. This issue has already been debated in the House. All the hon'ble members are concerned about it. Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and also Madhya Pradesh. I have not enlisted all the States. I have no intention to leave any State. Our objective is to provide assistance to every State. Such an issue should not be politicised but unfortunately politics was played in case of Orissa and stress was laid to declare it a major calamity, which was not essential and we tried to provide the required assistance.

You want to know that Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are trying our best for providing assistance. There is need to work collectively. Fodder for cattle is

being arranged. Trains are being run for this purpose. Arrangments for drinking water is also necessary and required measures are being taken in spite of differences, such issues should be dealt collectively. I seek cooperation of the whole House on it. An all party meeting has been convened today. You should take part in it. While extending assistance the Central Government will not discriminate States on the basis of political party in power there. We will provide assistance to all. We are all native of this country and it is our duty to help our countrymen at the time of distress. Your contribution is essential in it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have taken much time. I intended to make a short speech but due to interruptions my speech overspilled. I am grateful to this House. Mr. Speaker, Sir, now I conclude.

BACK NOTE

XXVIII Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, 25 April, 2000

1. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): You have pursued the wrong policies.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : We have not pursued the wrong policies. I am surprised to see that our friends are retreating from the policies they have pursued earlier. Is it not correct that there is a change in the stand. A Congress party on the issue of subsidy. What is the reason for this change.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA (Guna): Mr. Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Prime Minister yield and you permit me I would like to make a point.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, since we both belong to Gwalior you cannot make me to yield.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: First, it should be made clear whether you are from Batukeshwar or from Gwalior.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I am from Lucknow.

2. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: We are still talking about the public sector.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Yes you are still talking about the public sector.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You were with us on this issue. You have crossed over.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: At that time also we were against the quota permit raj. You used to talk about taking the public sector to the commanding height. What is the condition today? Labourers have been rendered jobless. Payments of salary to them has become a compulsion. What can be done in respect of the factories which cannot be revived? You are also doing the same in West Bengal.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You should take individual units into consideration. I have said this repeatedly. I have said this to the previous

Governments and I have also said this to you. You should revive the factories which can be revived.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: This is exactly what we are doing.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: I am challenging you. Mr. Prime Minister, you appoint somebody. Let us sit unit by unit. Are you accepting that. We have told that if any unit can never be revived, we shall agree to that.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: You start from the West Bengal.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We will cooperate with you.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Basu Deb Acharia, please take your seat.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: First you should make efforts for the revival.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We have divided the public sector undertakings in three categories. The first category is of those undertakings which are running in profit. Second category is of which efforts should be made to run them in profit, in respect of which our efforts can be fruitful. Third category is where no alternative is left then closing them. We will have to consider the future of the labourers working therein. There cannot be any difference of opinion in respect of this policy. But you are not allowing the practice you are adopting in West Bengal for the rest of the country.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: No unit is being closed in West Bengal.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAYA: Industries are not running in West Bengal. All units have been closed down.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: If there are such undertakings which can be run by providing some assistance then we are ready to make them viable.

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? When the Hon. Prime Minister is giving the reply, this is not the proper way.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Your Ministers or Government do that.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: A group of Minister has been formed to consider this issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Topdar, you are a senior member, how can you object to the Hon. Prime Minister?

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I want that consensus should be reached in respect of economic reforms.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Topdar, please take your seat. The Hon. Prime Minister is giving the reply.

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? You are also a senior Member. You know the procedure.

MR. SPEAKER: No cross talk, please. What is this?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It is neither the matter of West Bengal nor a matter pertaining to a particular political party. My communist friends must be aware of the matter of IDPL which is being re-examined and efforts are being made to revive that.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Exactly this is what we have been demanding.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: We will congratulate them for their good deeds.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: But you do not do that. We have to work so hard to earn your appreciation. This matter should be discussed collectively.

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH (Maharajganj, UP): The fertilizer factory of Gorakhpur is lying closed.

MR. SPEAKER: Kunwar Akhilesh Singh, what are you doing, please?

3. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: There is another point regarding review of the constitution and I would like to mention that. I do not know as to why Shrimati Sonia Gandhi did not touch this point today.

Perhaps, she has thought that this issue has been discussed adequately outside the House and there is no need to mention it here, I would like to clarify regarding the campaign being launched about Constitution Review Commission.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: That is correct.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: That is not dignified. It cannot be insult to Dr. Ambedkar.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur): The Government has no right to appoint Review Commission.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, debate on provisions of the constitution have been going on since it came into existence. Amendments have also been made into it and some major amendments have been made. What happened during emergency. What type of measures were taken, I do not want to discuss that.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : That was wrong and it is also wrong.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: In the beginning itself while referring to the commission we clarified that the basic structure of the constitution which includes secularism will not be changed at all it will be incorporated into it if it is not there.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in 1976, under the Chairmanship of Sardar Swam Singh, Congress Party constituted a committee to consider various provisions of the constitution and also to consider the amendments. It is the proposal of AICC.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: They were doing wrong. Will you also do that?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: What was suggested?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA (Canara): Sir, That was a party committee and not a Government. I was a member of that committee.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: If you yield, I will conclude my point in two minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: You are a senior Member. The Prime Minister is replying. If you have any clarification, you can ask that after the Prime Minister's reply. What is this. How can you do it now?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Whether the proposal of the party was not for implementation. Then why party presented such proposal?

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: It was wrong.

4. SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Ballia, UP): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is correct that Members should not disturb the speech of hon. Prime Minister. But your this decision will prove to be a mistake. You can speak more loudly but it is not going to affect me.

Let them speak like this.

I would like to make a submission. The constitution was framed by representatives of people. It would have been proper if the proposal of setting up a commission for review of the constitution was brought in the Parliament. It would have been done easily as your party enjoys majority in the House. But you have acted at a wrong time and thereby violating the spirit of the constitution and overriding the authority of this august House. The Government should admit this fact.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I am happy that Chandra Shekharji has not opposed the setting up of the commission but criticised the manner of setting up it. There may be difference of opinion in matter of procedure.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: I have no difference of opinion regarding Members of the Commission because I do not know as to who they are? But several Members of this House are expert of the constitution. Members like Shri Nariman, Shri Anand and several other MPs are here.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: The report will be presented here itself.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: I would like to say that it will be against the dignity of the constitution and the House to allow any external commission to interfere in matters relating to the constitution. You can discuss it if you know about the constitution.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Commissions have been set up earlier also and these will be set up in future also.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: I remember that earlier Swam Singh Committee was constituted and at that time myself and the Prime Minister both were of the view that it was a wrong step.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I am concluding.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: We should also be given a chance to speak.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Will the Hon. Prime Minister yield for a minute? Today he is not yielding. I do not know why. Generally he does. He is very uneasy about this point.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if there is difference of opinion over the issue of commission then I would like to say.

You should withdraw your objections as these have no strong base and relate to the procedure only. Now the main point is. You are in majority in Rajya Sabha and you will not let it pass there. But it should be debated throughout the country. Elections are being held for the last 50 years and people of this country are requesting for reform in electoral procedure.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: Election Commission will do that.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Election Commission is doing. Election Commission can do that and not we.

VALEDICTORY REFERENCE

17 May, 2000

Mr. Speaker, Sir, First of all, I would like to congratulate you for the efficient manner in which you have conducted the proceedings of the House. Really you have a lot of patience. It is tested again and again and you succeed all the time. I believe that your patience will be intact and so shall the dignity of our behaviour will be maintained. As I was telling that Budget session is about to end and it is important.

Usually the difference of opinion occurs on the Budget and it is not for the first time but it is probably for the first time that the opposition has decided to oppose it by making it an issue. It was not necessary. If we could run the Government, and make the future of the country without burdening our people then we could not have done the unpleasant job of earning unpopularity for us. Prices increase and it affects everybody that we have done it by making a balance and I believe that the people of this country will like it. After all we have come here after winning the confidence of the people. We had declared in our manifesto that..

I had told that we would consider about the burden which is being put on the nation and shall give it a logical form. I was surprised, when the main opposition party, which has the experience to run the country and which is waiting for coming into power again though their expectations are not going to be fulfilled, opposed it, but if we do not adopt a pragmatic approach in the economic field and remain involved in sectarian politics, then it will be very difficult for the nation to overcome the economic crisis. Yesterday, Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji delivered speech in Rajya Sabha and it confirms this fact that intelligent people are also in ruling party, ruling party has also farsighted persons. His speech can not be denied, it is a recorded thing. It should be read carefully. Mr. Speaker, Sir, please excuse me, one thing I am unable to understand whether all the recommendations of all the standing committees be always accepted by the Government.

Then what is the problem? Do you know that today whatever you are talking about the consensus report have our members also. They did not give note of dissent keeping in mind that they are not to give note-of-dissent,

otherwise there may not be any such report which does not have comments of our members and they would not have expressed their dissent.

I do agree that the recommendations of the committee should be taken into consideration. The Government should take it seriously. Only on the basis of this you cannot say that the government should accept what you are telling—it is not necessary. I have also been in opposition and I am witness to how our recommendations were rejected, but we never complained about it.

I am thankful to the opposition that constitutional amendment was unanimously passed in this session. There are certain issues on which country is unanimous and it ought to be.

As far as the rights of the scheduled castes and tribes are concerned, the issue of backlog regarding the promotion in service was raised and it was said that injustice was being done to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, there was some judgement of the court, but the entire House collectively changed it. We do not have majority in the House that we can get the constitution Amendment Bill passed on our own, but it is such an issue that the entire House was unanimous over it. Things were discussed regarding the grant of more financial autonomy to the States and giving more funds to them. For these too constitution was amended. The House cooperated in that. If the House is unanimous about similar issues, like national interest and universal welfare, then there should not be any hesitation in it that we can unite and can support each other.

Sir, untouchability is disappearing from the social arena but it will not be a wise step to restart untouchability in political field. The need of the hour is that we should collectively work. During the Budget Session, there were several occasions when it was evident that in spite of apparent differences, there is solidarity among us on the important questions. For example as far as the question of Sri Lanka is concerned, we did not discuss it in detail but overall the entire nation is unanimous over the issue of Sri Lanka and the entire nation wants that the peace be restored and the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka be maintained. But we continuously seek the advice of the opposition on such issues and discuss with them. Today itself, I discussed internal situation of Kashmir with Congress delegation. Yesterday a Congress delegation took pain to pay visit to my House. They gave their memorandum and I replied to them, but grievance is still there that I did not accept suggestion.

Yesterday I had told and today once again I am telling that our only fault is that we are in the Government. But there is no justification, reason to it. There are certain issues like the matter related to the economic field where nation is in serious economic crisis, so some harsh decision had to be taken.

Sir, it was expected that the Government will change the decision under pressure—we are not pleased to take this decision, but whatever has been decided has been decided after deliberation and that is why we are adamant to it. We will find a way out to satisfy our friends. I would like to assure you for that.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Information Technology Bill has been introduced in the House. Before that I wanted to introduce a Bill regarding the freedom of information but it could not be introduced, but that Bill is ready with us. As far the legislative Business is concerned, we have done a lot of work in this Budget session and I feel that was not possible without the support from all corners. At times I felt that probably it has been decided that in the morning, matters of public importance will be allowed to be raised and in the evening substantial work will be done. That is why the House continued to sit late till night and all of us gave our cooperation. The Secretariat certainly has some difficulties, and Mr. Speaker, Sir you too have to come. Today probably Deputy Speaker, is not present in the House.

He has gone to Brazil, many Members are preparing to go there. A demand has been put forward by the lady members, that during the previous Government all the lady members of Parliament were sent on foreign tour, they were sent to China. Similarly, it should be done this time. I will accept it if there is a consensus, I will have to accept unanimous opinion.

BACK NOTE

XXIX Valedictory Reference, 17 May 2000

NIL

**CERTAIN REMARKS MADE BY FORMER LAW MINISTER
WITH REGARD TO CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA AND
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF INDIA**

28 July, 2000

Mr. Speaker Sir, certain statements have been made by Shri Ram Jethmalani, former Union Minister for Law, Justice and Company Affairs with regard to the Chief Justice of India and the Attorney General of India. I have gone through those statements. My Government does not share the views of Shri Ram Jethmalani with regard to the subject matter on which he has spoken. We completely disagree with his perception of the facts. The Government believes in promoting a harmonious relationship between different wings of the State. Without going into the question of correctness of any possible view involved in the issues on which Shri Jethmalani corresponded with the Hon. Chief Justice of India, I was of the opinion that even the difference of opinion between the Chief Justice and the Law Minister should not create any imbalance in the harmonious relationship. Thus, in order to ensure that this harmonious relationship is not only maintained but strengthened, I exercised my prerogative and asked Shri Jethmalani to resign.

I have gone into the text of his statements issued yesterday, that is, 27th July, against the Chief Justice of India and the Attorney General of India. I reiterate that my Government completely disagrees with his perception.

BACK NOTE

XXX Certain Remarks made by former Law Minister with regard to Chief Justice of India and Attorney General of India, 28 July 2000

NIL

**SITUATION ARISING OUT OF RECENT MASSACRE IN
VARIOUS PLACES IN JAMMU & KASHMIR
AND PILGRIMS AT PAHALGAM**

4 August, 2000

Sir, I visited Pahalgam and Srinagar on Thursday to study the situation arising out of recent massacre in various places in Jammu and Kashmir and of pilgrims at Pahalgam.

I am thankful to Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, Shri Somnath Chatterjee, Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav, Shri Yerrannaidu and Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad for agreeing to join me at such a short notice. My colleagues, Shri George Fernandes, Kumari Mamata Banerjee and Prof. Chaman Lal Gupta also joined me, alongwith the Chief of Army Staff. From Srinagar, the Governor, and the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir accompanied us.

Our visit was also intended to assure the people of the State that the entire nation stood by them at this hour, and to share their grief over the inhuman behaviour of the terrorists against innocent people belonging to the State as well as many from other parts of the country on pilgrimage to Amarnath.

The briefing which we were given by the Chief of United Command and Security Forces made it clear that perpetrators of these heinous crimes were foreigners. Arms and ammunitions recovered from them clearly established their links with Pakistan based Lashkar- e -Taiba.

Delegation of local population as well as pilgrims met me and spoke to me about the difficulties they were facing in the wake of the killings.

The House, I am sure, is one with me in assuring the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the nation that we will not yield before terrorism. I may add that while the fight against terrorism will be continued, India will not give up its efforts for restoration of peace in Kashmir.

I made it clear at Srinagar that the dialogue with Hizbul Mujahideen is a part of this effort. Other groups which have chosen the path of violence should also realise that the people of Jammu and Kashmir want peace in the State. It is futile for them to continue on the path of violence. They should come forward for talks with the Government for redressal of their grievances.

BACK NOTE

XXXI Situation Arising out of recent massacre in various places in Jammu & Kashmir and pilgrims at Pahalgam, 4 August, 2000

NIL

VALEDICTORY REFERENCE

25 August, 2000

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Monsoon Session has come to the end. We feel satisfaction on the achievements of this Session. Parliament lags behind in the matter of legislative proceedings since other issue taken up for discussion take more time. There used to be such complaints but now there should not be any complaint. Though, the House used to sit late in the evening to complete legislative business. By virtue of hon. Members cooperation that work also has been completed. We are successfully accomplishing the task of enactment of laws which also includes two Constitution Amendment Bills.

Sir, because of typical nature of party position in the House it was thought that it would be very difficult to mobilise two-third majority or more efforts will have to be made for this purpose. But, with the cooperation of all the political parties, especially the main opposition party, both the Constitution Amendment Bills have been passed with good majority or you can say with consensus. It is very much necessary that such sort of environment should prevail in the House. At the same time, I feel, we should discuss our problems and solve them and we should keep maximum restraint while expressing our difference of opinion.

Sir, today, on last day of this session I would like to request you that, though I held the same opinion when **I was in opposition, the Question Hour should be permitted to be run as Question Hour only. Creating any type of obstruction during Question Hour is not good. If there is any sensitive issue, we can raise it after Question Hour is over in a more serious and efficient manner.** But the importance of Question Hour should be maintained. I would like hon. Members of all parties to consider it. Once, earlier in last Lok Sabha it was decided that Question Hour will not be disturbed, but we have forgot that and obstructions have been created during Question Hour. Sir, today through your efficient handling you could minimise disturbances during Question Hour. Sir, several times you have managed it skillfully. Our hon. Members also should exercise some skill and introduce a new system and tradition.

Sir, as you have already mentioned, we have lost our two colleagues during this Session which is concluding today. They are Shri Rajesh Pilot and Shri P. Kumaramangalam. Both of them were marching firmly on the path of success. Their future was bright. Now they have become subject matter of our tribute. Though we miss them, yet we are going on with our business. Entire nation feels that the House may be divided in divergent factions, but at the time of crisis, any sad event of external threat the entire House and whole country stand united.

Sir, lot of congratulations to your leadership and I hope that we would not only complete this Session but will complete even full term.

BACK NOTE

XXXII Valedictory Reference, 25 August, 2000

NIL

REGARDING DEMOLITION OF BABRI MASJID

14 December, 2000

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am sorry to state that I cannot support the resolution moved in the House on which we have held discussion for quite sometime. I have been asked to remove some of my colleagues from the Council of Ministers. I have been made a target of criticism saying that I have been shielding those Ministers.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this issue has not been raised for the first time. It has been going on for the last several years. I remember that last year also this issue was discussed in the House. Therefore, I had made a statement, which was referred yesterday by my colleague Shri George Fernandes.

I had stated—

"Neither the Constitution nor the law disqualify a Minister from holding office merely because a chargesheet is filed by the police or formal charges are framed by the court."

Neither it has been challenged nor it can even be challenged, but the question of morality is being raised. The logic is that others have resigned. Harin Pathak's name was referred. Even Harin Pathak did not know that some of my colleagues in the Congress party like him so much. Yesterday, there was a talk of making him the Prime Minister. It will be a matter of great happiness if he becomes Prime Minister after me, but then what about my friends in the Congress who have been aspiring?

Harin Pathak resigned under certain different circumstances, he himself tendered resignation. He could not be forced to resign. When he expressed his desire to resign he was advised to wait for sometime. We wanted to see the nature of case to be framed in the court, but he was adamant on resigning, so it was accepted. It depends upon their wish, but as far as the demand of removal of three Ministers is concerned. The question of asking them to resign does not arise. I will not accept their resignation even if they resign. It needs to be understood. It is not a common offence. It is to be appreciated that they are my colleagues hence I know them well. They have been entrusted responsibilities according to their abilities and qualifications and they have been carrying it out very well. We should wait for court's verdict since the matter is

sub judice. Justification is yet to be given.

I would not talk about Bihar. Whom are you supporting? I would not like to say with whose support colleagues from your party are holding office of Ministers. But one thing is clear, with everyone's consent we should frame a code of conduct so that none can be alleged to have adopted double standards. It cannot be one sided affair. Therefore, I would like to request my friends in the opposition not to raise issue of morality. It is not a question of justification As far as I know personally, but you would say that I am trying to influence the court. No, I do not want to do so nor I do so. I am sure the court will not be influenced even if the best lawyers appear before it.

No effort has been made. Come along, let us all sit together, discuss it and find a way out with consensus. Advani ji has no hunger of power.

When charges of financial misappropriation were levelled against Shri Advani ji, he resigned from Membership and said as long as I am not proved to be innocent, I will not come here. He stayed out and then contested election and got elected. With whom the public is? Our votes are being counted, we are in the majority in the House. Our allies are supporting us in this regard and we are committed to national agenda. We have dropped disputed issues deliberately, there was no such compulsion. But, keeping in mind the present state-of-affairs in the country and frequent changes in political affiliations, we should work unitedly. See, after all, you also take support from other parties. You form Government with their support and later on topple it. Perhaps, you do not like smooth running of our Government. Our coalition partners are working with us despite minor differences. It is a good sign for democracy and you should welcome it. But you had thought that the NDA Government would go, since it was a very serious issue. But NDA stands united. Though, I do not want to make it an issue of NDA versus the opposition. Ayodhya issue is a sensitive one. I would not use the language which was used against me yesterday. That day I was present in the House. There is my speech I had moved a No-Confidence Motion at that time. That is also a part of the record and I had given vent to my anguish and resentment. "The mask has been unveiled" — what does this expression connote? What kind of language is this? That is true of the opposition. I have not resorted to defections and thus there is no question of changing the masks. I have been a Member of Parliament for the last 40 years. I have not defected to different parties I have expressed my

views fearlessly and have stood by the existing Governments in the time of crisis. But, today, no one is ready to deliberate upon the national crisis.

I have said just now that there should be unanimity in some matters. We cannot work without consensus. We do not enjoy a majority in the Rajya Sabha. We need the cooperation of other parties. They may stall the proceedings but such tactics are not in the interest of the welfare of the country. Just a few minutes back. I said that I have never spoken on this matter since the Ayodhya tangle but I was constrained to speak out when the proceedings were brought to a standstill. I do not understand this act of stalling the business of the House.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as you know that Shri Somnath Chatterjee has been present here from the very outset and I am reminded of Shri Indrajit Gupta.

We had laid our heads together and taken some decisions. Objections may be raised but not in a manner that hampers the conduct of the business of the House or jeopardise decisions connected with shaping the destiny of the country. Now, they may ask as to what did we do when we were in the opposition? Somnathji you may recall that I have always laid emphasis on the fact that the Question Hour should never become a subject of pandemonium in the House.

Whatever you want to say, you may say it at 12.00 O'clock. Now-a-days the Members troop into the well and lay a siege around the hon. Speaker even before he assumes his chair. Are we, that way, setting a right precedent?

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I do not understand the reasons behind stalling the proceedings of the House. They are demanding the resignation of the Ministers, why? Just because they wish so. They think that they can sow the seeds of dissension. I did not want to raise this issue. Now, it is being said that I made the statement under duress and Shri Chandrashekharji is also speaking in the same vein that I have said all this under pressure. Mr. Speaker, Sir, those who are acquainted with me and my disposition would never accept this theory.

Besides being Atal, I am also Bihari. There was no pressure. It is also an unfounded premise that raking up this issue was necessitated by the compulsions of strengthening my party as Uttar Pradesh elections are round

the corner. hon. Advaniji was ready to tender his resignation and that is why this matter has been raised. The media quizzed me, the moment I came out after attending the meeting with you. There was only one pressure and that was from the media. I also wanted to say that the environment being created for the resignation of Ministers was highly inappropriate and we would never concede to it. I would like to clarify two points regarding the question answers session that ensued. I can read out for them and Shri George Fernandes has gone through my statements yesterday. One thing is to be noted that I have not given any *suo moto* statement. If we do not give reply to a particular question, it is said that we are ignoring them. They ask me whether any medley is going on in the NDA and when I reply in the negative, objections are raised on this. I have no differences with Advaniji but there is a propaganda that we differ with each other. It is also being said that I have raised this issue in order to keep him in good humour. Someone even went to the extent of saying that since we wanted to go back to the stand of Hindutva we have raised this issue. I would like to aver that our stand has already been chalked out with our allies. We will firmly adhere to the understanding reached with our allies. There is no question of deviating from that I have said this in reply to the second question. I am saying as to how can this matter be resolved. They have raised the issue of Ram Mandir. I said that there are only two ways of constructing the Ram Mandir. First is the legal method whereby the court may provide land to the organisations interested in constructing the temple by giving decision in their favour and thus the temple may be constructed. I am sorry. Second option is that both Hindu and Muslims may come together and reach an understanding thus paving the way for construction of a temple and a mosque. Only if a mutual understanding is reached and you will also agree that there is no third way out.

But distorted connotations are being derived. Now Chandrashekarji is saying that if I had clarified the facts then why did not they come to know about that?

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, right now the Government has decided that a National committee should be constituted to celebrate 2600th birth anniversary of Lord Mahavira. The persons of different political parties having different sets of ideologies are the members of the committee. We

are thinking in terms of celebrating this occasion collectively. It would not be wrong on my part to say that celebrating this kind of occasion reflects the national sentiments. What do you want to define. It is ultimately a question of sentiments. At that time also some people had criticised Dr. Rajendra Babu. The efforts were made to the extent of preventing Dr. Rajendra Babu from attending the Somnath Celebration. But he did not accept the same by saying that he will go to even a mosque and a church if he was invited. Our country is not anti-religion. The ideology of communists is different in this regard. But our ideology is based on the basic tenant of respect towards all religious and equal treatment, without fear or favour, towards all religions.

These are the words of Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

"Even though I am a Sanatanist Hindu by faith and daily practice, yet I believe that every man can reach God by worshipping Him according to the dictates of his own faith. Not only have I respect for all religions and their places of worship, but I also go to them to pay my respects whenever possible. Whenever there is an opportunity I go to Dargah, Masjid, Church and Gurudwara with the same feeling of respect with which I go to the temple of my faith."

Dr. Rajendra Prasad had also said that the reconstruction of Somnath temple is the symbol of our national sentiments. Similar sentiments are also affiliated with Ram temple but the possibility of its construction can only emerge when a consensus evolves after holding celebrations. I had said this thing only. And this thing was extended to make a mountain out of a mole-hill with the intention of deriving mileage. Though some manipulations are always there in politics yet it was purely a political game. I need not give any explanation in this regard but I am definitely perturbed to find that my honesty has been put under doubt.

My life is like an open book wherein there is nothing to hide. You can have difference of opinion with me and I have nothing to hide in this regard. But to accuse me of putting on a mask. Those who change the parties, they not only change their mask but their entire body and also their soul and yet accuse me of.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the only mode of expressing the national sentiment is not the construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya. Our national sentiment

is affiliated to several other great leaders and great places. I gave the example of Chaitya Bhoomi in this regard. We have decided to construct a glorious national monument there. I would like to once again quote from the speech of Rajendra Babu:

"There are many symbols of our national life of which we are proud of, whether it be Dargah Sharif at Ajmer or Dargah of Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi, be it the Golden Temple at Amritsar or the Church of St. Francis in Goa, these are all the great symbols of our national life."

Whether these monuments do not reflect our national sentiments? There is no reason to believe this.

My submission is that there should be a limit to look at this problem from the narrow perspective of party politics alone.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, elections will be fought, defeat also would have to be faced but it is always necessary to keep in mind that this thing does not harm our national unity and integrity. It is shameful on the part of those who were indulged in hampering the proceedings of the House despite knowing about the truth. These people have once again raised this question before our national forum. Why is it so? We have not done so far we were bound by NDA manifesto. What was the need to demand resignation for it was made last year itself and it was denied. Why is it so that the proceedings of the Parliament is being disrupted ?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, ours is the biggest democracy in the world. Despite differences of opinion we are trying to make it surge ahead. We are also getting success in this regard but if the issues pertaining sentiments are kept on being raised in this manner how can the democracy prosper? Why were the proceedings of Parliament be disrupted. You cannot go ahead Mulayam Singh ji in this respect. Hence it is my submission to the main opposition party that you will have to think over it seriously and in an impartial manner. We are running a coalition Government. The public will give its verdict over our performance but if the national sentiments are raised by some political parties or by some persons then its consequences will be very dangerous.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have evaded some issues and fun was made of

us. One of the issues among there is Ram temple also and I would not have replied the questions if they had not been associated with Ram temple. I did not call the press conference of *suo moto* conference. If I did not answer, I would have been accused of not replying.

This can be debated as to what is the right reply and it will be decided by the public at last and we are ready for that but sentiments of the people should not be provoked. You need not be wrong about our partners. You are searching for new partners. Is there any one to align with Jyoti Basu. Mulayam Singh ji has a distinct opinion in this regard.

Until you are in alliance with the Congress, Mulayam Singh ji cannot extend his hand of friendship to you.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not want to take more time of the House. We should seriously ponder over the matters related with the sentiments. Party politics should be confined to a certain limit and we should be ready to face the challenges in a collective manner irrespective of the difference of opinion which will certainly continue. Till yesterday you were in favour of open market economy but now you are changing tracks. You have a right to change your stand over the economic issues but you should certainly refrain from indulging in such bend of behaviour which may hinder the path of the Government for implementing its decisions on economic front.

Not only do we want to shake hands but we want to go to the extent of embracing them. If you are talking about mutual love then one should express it by throwing a hearty embrace and it is also on Iftar occasion. Merely shaking of hands would not do instead one should cordially embrace others, not that the interests of the other persons are harmed.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not question of embracing one or two persons or parties. The country will get success only when the entire country unitedly try to achieve it. We want to go ahead in that direction only.

BACK NOTE

XXXIII Regarding demolition of Babri Masjid, 14 December, 2000

1. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: It is the latest development.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: This latest development does not augur well.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: If only you had come and tried to consult the Opposition, it would not have happened. You did not even attend the Speaker's meetings.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: All the time, consultations were going on.

We did not extend formal invitations since it was a matter concerning the hon. Speaker.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You should have found a way out.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: If this is your grievance, then I would say that it is logical.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: I had many times asked where the Prime Minister was, where the Leader of the House was and where the leader of the Government was when there was a crisis here. You may ask him. I have said that in the Speaker's meetings also.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I did not know that you were so eager to meet me. otherwise I would have come.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You do not fulfil our demands whenever we approach you.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Sir, there are certain sensitive issues about which the political parties should observe a measure of restraint. I was taken aback by the allegation that I did not condemn what happened at Ramjanambhoomi and Babri Masjid. I was one of those who criticised it.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Then criticise it today also.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I have already done. Now it is being

said that all this is being done to gain a political mileage. That is what has been said here. I would like to clarify in the backdrop of what circumstances I was constrained to utter a few words. The House is stalled, the proceedings have come to standstill. Is it so because the Prime Minister is not meeting the leaders of the opposition.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: We did not say this, we only asked where is the hon. Prime Minister !

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: There were some other Ministers present there. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are a witness to the fact that I have presented myself before you whenever I have been remembered.

Sir, I did not speak for three consecutive days, why were the proceedings of the House stalled? My statement which is being discussed and criticised here, came later on.

MR. SPEAKER: Mulayam Singhji, please take your seat now, you may speak later on. It is not in good taste to speak at this moment.

The Leader of the House is speaking. Please understand what is the confrontation?

2 SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Balija): You are repeatedly taking my name I am surprised and I do not understand as to why is the resignation of the Ministers being demanded. I have said that if the media has published a distorted statement of the hon. Prime Minister, then why did not he issue clarifications in the last eight days? If the hon. Prime Minister could make three statements outside the House, then why not the fourth statement of clarification was given outside the House itself. We are not going to be impressed by your oratory because I have been with you since long and know you very well. If you would have given a statement outside, then proceedings of this House would not have been stalled for eight long days and we also would not have contradicted your statement. The hon. Speaker was kind enough to invite the party leaders by sending them notices. The Prime Minister and the former Prime Minister, Shri Chandrashekhar being no exception I received the notice as did you but you did not turn up. Business of the House would have been conducted smoothly, if you would have come that day.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: On behalf of the Government the Minister

of Parliamentary Affairs participated in every meeting. If due to some reason, I could not participate in any meeting, I informed the hon. Speaker but how can this crisis be attributed to my absence from the meeting.

SHRI CHANDRASHEKHAR: You had made a statement but did not issue a clarification, that is why this crisis emerged.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: Had a clarification been issued, the House would have functioned smoothly.

MR SPEAKER: This is not right.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: The crisis occurred because two parties were vying with each other.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: What is this national sentiment? You shall have to define it.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not the way.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: When two parties try to jostle their way to raise this matter in the House. Did he ponder over it. He is not in the race but the main opposition party is vying with Mulayam Singhji on this issue. This is a very dangerous trend.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Please do not divert it.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: So far as appeasement is concerned, no one can beat Mulayam Singhji. He was the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. He ordered firing at the devotees of Rama. He clamped curfew in whole Uttar Pradesh so as to restrict the movement of people altogether.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: I saved the country by ordering firing. Temples have been demolished in all the Muslim countries of the world. We safeguarded those temples.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: You did a very good job, but there should not be competition amongst the political parties on such an issue. We shall have to avoid such competition. I am not digressing from the issue. Regarding my Statement, I have said that this is a matter of national sentiment and how can any objection be raised on it?

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: What is the national sentiment.

MR. SPEAKER: How shall we continue like this?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: This can be a subject of discussion. When the Somnath Temple was renovated and reconstructed after hundreds of years of the temple remaining in a dilapidated condition after the country achieved independence, then Somnath was again, I am not referring to Shri Chatterjee. Whether the statements uttered at that time, or the viewpoints or feelings expressed regarding construction of Somnath Temple then do not apply today?

MR. SPEAKER: This will not go on record. Please take your seat.

Shri Jaipal Reddy is sitting here to give the reply.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It is not that it is a Hindu temple and is being constructed. So it is a national feeling, a few days back.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (Mayiladuturai): He is misleading the House.

MR. SPEAKER: You are also disturbing the House.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: There have been a number of observations on this, both on the floor of the House and outside but not a single party has ever said that there should not be any temple. The dispute is only whether it should be constructed on that spot. Therefore, during Shri V.P. Singh's tenure it was suggested that the land would be given next to that spot and you can build any temple you want. Therefore, there was no question of anybody standing in the way of construction of temple. When you say, the task is yet to be fulfilled and you say that it represents the national sentiments, then the question arose.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: No, no that is not so. Mr. Speaker, Sir, whether the construction of such an ancient and holy temple is not considered to be an expression of national sentiment? I have only said that the construction of that temple should be done by common consent and consensus. Demolition of the mosque was condemned. I do not want to go into the

controversy, but the leader of the Congress Party and former Prime Minister went there and laid the foundation stone.

SHRI SONNATH CHATTERJEE: It was done wrongly.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Yes, but I do not blame him for that. He had a feeling in the heart of his heart that whatever he was doing served lesser purpose for his elections, but more for a good cause because the construction of Ram Mandir was obligatory. I am not ready to accept this, because previously.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (Raiganj): During Shri Rajiv Gandhi's time, it was done not at the disputed spot.

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should go on record except what the Prime Minister says.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Shri Narayan Datt Tiwari is sitting here. Is he not aware of the entire situation?

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the House is misleading the House. I have got the High Court order with me.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, a few days back a function was held to celebrate the tricentenary of Khalsa Panth—was it not the expression of national sentiment? Khalsa Panth was established 300 years back and a national function was organised on this occasion. The Khalsa Panth may be a sect but it is important component of our national life. I remember that Dr. Rajendra Prasad had on the occasion of Somnath Temple.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have decided right now.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We have decided to make the memorial of Dr. Ambedkar more grand and expansive. Is it not the expression of national feeling.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Recently, we have decided to celebrate the 2600th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Mahavira.

SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI (Nainital): Mr. Speaker, Sir, perhaps the facts supplied to the hon. Prime Minister are erroneous because whatever he said about the Babri Masjid and the laying of foundation stone of the Temple is far from truth. The plan submitted was in the court by Waqf Board demarcating the area by ABCD that housed the mosque. It was after due deliberations for one full week that permission was granted to lay the foundation stone of the temple at a site far from the ABCD marked area of the Sunni Waqf Board, which was not included in the disputed site and then it was a condition in the agreement that no further construction would be done after laying the foundation stone. All shall wait for the verdict of the court and during the premiership of Shri V.P. Singh in this House. You are not ready to listen the truth and in this House, it was said that foundation stone had not been laid at the disputed site. This reply was given here during Shri V.P. Singh's tenure. So the statement of hon. Prime Minister that the foundation stone of the temple was laid at the disputed site is wholly untrue.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I have not said so.

PEACE INITIATIVES IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR BY THE GOVERNMENT

20 December, 2000

Mr. Speaker, Sir, before the Winter Session of the Parliament concludes and the House rises for the festivals of Eid and Christmas, I wish to take this opportunity and share with all the hon. Members, the Government's assessment of the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, also along the Line of Control.

Following my announcement of 19 November that during the holy month of Ramzan, our security forces would not initiate operations against the militants, also expressing a hope that along the LoC too, infiltration would cease, there have been some encouraging developments. Certain other aspects, however, remain as our continuing concerns.

The Government is greatly heartened by the response of the citizens, political parties and other organisations in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Our peace initiative has been widely welcomed there. A distinctly different and a more optimistic mood now prevails in that State. The constituency for peace has expanded significantly.

There has also been a decline in incidents of terrorist violence in that State. Activities, however, of organisations like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen continue, resulting in most unfortunate and regrettable loss of innocent civilian lives, also of the personnel of our security forces. The Government remains firm in its resolve to combating these and other challenges, also to defeating their inhuman and nefarious designs.

There has been a recognisable decline too in attempts across LoC and cross-IB infiltration of terrorists. This must cease entirely. The Government is committed to achieving this end.

Along the LoC, we have witnessed a marked improvement in incidents of exchange of fire. Relative peace has prevailed all along the LoC ever since my announcement of 19 November, barring some incidents in the early stages.

After careful consideration of all aspects, the Government has, therefore, taken a decision to extend the period of 'no initiation of combat operations' by another month. After the Republic Day, 2001, the Government will review the position again.

As the initiator of the dialogue process with Pakistan, India remains committed to it. The existence of a suitable environment for such a process is self-evidently necessary. As part of our continued commitment to the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, the Government will initiate such exploratory steps as are considered necessary by it, so that the Composite Dialogue Process between the Governments of India and Pakistan could be resumed.

Let me inform the House that the Government's unwavering commitment to meeting the challenge of terrorism remains undiluted. Whereas, we will continue to exercise maximum restraint in face of grave provocations, national interests will never be compromised.

I wish to assure the hon. Members that we remain steadfast in our commitment to restoring lasting peace and to enabling all our citizens from Jammu and Kashmir to join as equal partners in India's march to prosperity.

BACK NOTE

**XXXIV Peace initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir by the
Government, 20 December, 2000**

NIL

VALEDICTORY REFERENCE

22 December, 2000

Mr. Speaker, Sir, today the fifth session of the 13th Lok Sabha is coming to an end. With this session, the year is also going to end. We will meet in the new century, new millennium. The facts you have put forward give the full details of work done.

During this session, Bills were passed in large number, new Bills were introduced and despite disruptions, several matters of public importance were debated upon. This is a brighter side which reflects the vibrancy of Indian democracy. However, you have also mentioned the number of days when the business could not be transacted. Perhaps, the number of such days is eleven. Can we think of changing this scenario in the new century, in the next year. I have already stressed on this point and I would like to reiterate that the Parliament is the mirror of the time and symbol of the hopes and aspirations of the society. Therefore, people's acrimony, grudges, dearth and injustice, if any, done to them, are always reflected and must be reflected. But the question is that what is the way of reflecting it in a parliamentary democracy. Is it necessary to stall the Question Hour?

This matter has been raised earlier also and today I would like to raise it again. There is a need to convene all party meeting in order to discuss this matter prior to the commencement of the next session. We may start the is determined to stall the parliamentary proceedings. However, the questions may be asked while proceedings are going on and the Government may be forced to give the reply. The opposition have been in power for a long time. They know very well if questions addressed to the Ministers are put off some day and the member who has asked a particular question is absent, it is a great relief for the Minister. It does not mean that the questions should not be asked. Question hour will go on but it is being stalled. What is the need of stalling the proceedings for several days.

Today, we do not make complaints of any sort and we stress only on the brighter side and think over it that how our democracy can be strengthened and how can the parliament fulfill the aspirations of the people. But the leader of opposition has not spared us even on this occasion. It is unprecedented. The leader of the opposition has become member of this House recently. I have been a member of Parliament for the last 40 years and remained in

opposition. But I always ensured that the dignity and decorum of the House is maintained. If one has to make complaints against the Government and for that last day is chosen then it is unpredictable what scene would be presented. This dignity has been maintained in the past but today it has been violated.

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You are the only truthful person is Kaliyug.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, democracy is a lively process. It has been a practice that the Parliament is allowed to function smoothly and opportunities are thrown open upon for discussion which may include even a censure motion. During the session, an adjournment motion was moved and debated upon. In the other House, where the Government does not enjoy a majority, emphasis was laid on division. That proved that we did not enjoy a majority in that House. But it was also proved that we are in majority in the Lok Sabha. No one has any complaint against it. Whatever is done should be done properly. It should be done as per the process of democracy. This should pave the way for the new generation. As regards to the plight of farmers, the Government is equally concerned. We have taken many steps in this direction but we feel handicapped because we have inherited the fall out of WTO Agreement which has many repercussions and we have to face them. We are ready to face them but if such ways and means are adopted, which have a tendency of weakening our democracy and incite acrimonious. It will not be good. We want to take certain measures with regard to the situation prevailing in Manipur, but we do not enjoy a majority in the other House. Here we have some limitations and we need cooperation. Sometimes we do get cooperation. We get more cooperation earlier, now it has diminished. Aggressiveness will increase as the election comes nearer. I do not blame for it. The game of figures, the game of number is clear but the process as well as what we say is important. However, the manner in which we say is rather more important, views may be expressed, policies may be explained, necessary steps may be taken in commensurate with that but the decorum of the House must be maintained.

Speaker, sir, we have full sympathy with you. On that day I had asked a question that why such thing happens? You said that we were asking you? Questions are asked from us but sometimes it looks good to

ask questions from you but it should be considered. I would like to reiterate it. It is time to put our heads together once again and ponder over the way we could ensure the smooth functioning of parliament when we have to face new challenges at the close of the year and also the century.

Come to the question of women reservation. The government was definitely in favour of providing for women's reservation and we had also suggested alternate option in order to achieve success, but in vain. Now who is blamed? Should I also blame a person by name? Why other suggestion was not accepted? If the women's empowerment is our moto then their representation should be increased. If it is our aim then the same objective can be achieved through other way. On one side a part of opposition is adamant on the otherside the entire opposition has become adamant. Allegations are made on non issue. I do not want to blame anyone. The session is over. We will meet in next session. I extend my greetings for forthcoming festival of Christmas. We will celebrate Eid. Greetings to all for that. This country will be under one flag to face the new challenges in new millennium, as it is today, I understand that we will ensure it, this is our foremost duty. I am of the opinion that this House is contributing in this direction.

BACK NOTE

XXXV Valedictory References, 22 December, 2000

1 SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: Decorum is violated by saying 'shame-shame'.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: To some extent.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): Shri Mulayam Singh is keeping a restrain and everybody is seeing it.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mulayam Singh ji, sometimes inclines to this side and sometimes inclines to that side.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: We do not incline this side or that side. We are always with the truth.

**OBITUARY REFERENCE MADE TO THE PASSING AWAY
OF SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA**

20 February, 2001

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have lost one more colleague of ours who was known as a stalwart in the Parliament. I saw him here as an M.P. from the year 1960. He was committed to the ideology of his party, but he presented his thoughts and arguments in a very polite language. Though there was difference of opinion with him yet he had an attractive personality. There was firmness in his personality. He was committed to the ideology and his life was like an open book. He always expressed his views as a seasoned Parliamentarian and contributed greatly for evolving consensus in the time of crisis. He was associated with trade union movement which catapulted him onto the centrestage of politics. He made concerted efforts to safeguard workers' interests. He used to propagate the interests of the working class in and outside the country. He had always a deep sense of concern for the problems of the country and the lot of the downtrodden and the exploited. He had a towering personality. Though he could not keep himself aloof from the pandemonium in Parliament yet he always maintained dignity. We all had cordial relations with him. On his death the Lok Sabha has suffered a great loss. I have already said, he was a great stalwart who is no more amidst us. I pay tributes to him on behalf of the Government and my party and on my own behalf and I would like that our condolences should be conveyed to the bereaved family.

BACK NOTE

**XXXVI Obituary Reference made to the passing away of
Shri Indrajit Gupta, 20 February, 2001**

NIL

UNILATERAL NON-INITIATION OF COMBAT OPERATIONS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

22 February, 2001

As hon. Members would recollect, Rashtrapatiiji during his address to the joint sitting of both the Houses of Parliament had given voice to the Government's approach to the whole question of Jammu and Kashmir.

He had then, amongst other things, shared with the hon. Members of Parliament that:

"The Government is pursuing a multipronged strategy to bring peace and normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. As part of this, it launched a major peace mission on November 19, 2000, by announcing a unilateral noninitiation of combat operations in the State during the holy month of Ramzan. This bold initiative was extended twice up to February 26, 2001. As anticipated, this was warmly welcomed by the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who are longing for an end to militancy and violence in their beautiful State.

The international community has also given overwhelming support, because it sees in it yet another demonstration of India's sincere commitment to a peaceful and permanent solution to the Kashmir issue."

Rashtrapatiiji had also then informed the hon. Members that:

"Militancy in Jammu and Kashmir is now increasingly confined to foreign mercenary groups. This has widened the scope for democratic activity in the State. The people of the State participated enthusiastically in the recent Panchayat elections. I reiterate the Government's readiness to have talk with every group in the State that abjures violence. "

The Government has decided to pursue this path by initiating talks with various groups in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Government has seriously addressed the question of continuing with the peace process and further extending the period of noninitiation of combat operation by our security forces. In this regard, the Government has benefited by the detailed briefing of and consultations with all political parties that it had on February 21, 2001.

Having examined all aspects of the question in its totality, the Government has decided to further extend the period up till the end of May. Let this opportunity not be missed by all those that desire peace, for our patience is not infinite.

I wish to make it abundantly clear that the peace process is only for those that wish to benefit from it. We will not let this process be derailed, diluted or misused. For such organisations or elements, which have vowed to disrupt the peace process, or intend to continue with violence and the killing of innocents in Jammu and Kashmir, my message is unequivocal and clear. If you inflict injury on any Indian citizen in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, or elsewhere, or commit any act of violence or terrorism, then the security forces have clear instructions to act decisively to defeat such intentions and law and order shall be maintained. Those who think that our security forces are less determined today to put an end to terrorism are only deluding themselves.

It is my hope that Pakistan will act, even now, and abjure violence, give up their continuous hostile propaganda against India, stop promoting and aiding crossborder terrorism, take the path of peace through bilateral talks as enshrined in the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, thus creating a conducive atmosphere so that the comprehensive dialogue process can be resumed resulting in a lasting solution to the problems.

The process of peace is to enable our citizens in Jammu and Kashmir to live peacefully. It is their voice that has to be heard, not of the militants or foreign mercenaries.

Peace is our objective, to peace and dialogue we remain committed because that, above all, is what the people of Jammu and Kashmir need most.

BACK NOTE

**XXXVII Unilateral non-initiation of combat operations in Jammu
and Kashmir, 22 February, 2001**

NIL

STATEMENT ON EARTHQUAKE IN GUJARAT

27 February, 2001

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have heard the speeches of the hon. Members during the discussion. I have also glanced through the proceedings to come across of the speeches during which I was not present in the House. Shri Nitish Kumar, the Minister of Agriculture will reply to the debate. I rise to say a few things.

What has happened in Gujarat is simply inexplicable in words. There has been an increase in the incidence of natural calamities for the last few years. Some areas were hit by drought, some by floods. There was a super cyclone in Orissa, land sliding in Uttaranchal as a result of earthquake. I am not naming the States separately because I am afraid that it may snowball into a controversy. This is not a time of raising any controversy. When an all party meeting was held to review the situation of Gujarat the way all the parties extended cooperation in a cordial manner and expressed their views, I felt that the tradition of standing united during the time of natural calamities, national crisis, will be followed in the case of Gujarat also. While concluding the discussion, on that day I had hoped that the cooperative and cordial atmosphere, witnessed in that meeting, would be reflected in the House also but it did not happen. An effort was made to place the Government in the dock. Thank God, no one blamed that the earthquake occurred due to this Government. I do not want to prolong this controversy, Elections are around the corner. There can be room for a little bit of politics. When we were in the opposition, we also used to play a little bit of politics, but not during the hour of crisis. This is a natural calamity. We should all come forward unitedly. I have seen the feeling of assisting Gujarat and it is still there throughout the country. All the State Governments, have extended assistance. I do not want to name them because yesterday one of my friends said that a particular State has given Rupees five crores, but its name was not taken. Now, I have a list with me. There are a number of States who have given rupees five crores each I think that I should lay on the table of the House a list of those States*.

* He laid on the table a copy of the details of assistance received from various State Governments and foreign countries for the victims of recent earthquake in Gujarat.

All the States should know that no State was lagged behind in providing assistance. Although different States are ruled by different parties but in the Gujarat tragedy, more or less, all are united. This was the feeling. Unfortunately, this feeling is no being seen at Central level.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, allegations have been showered on us.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹

No discrimination was done it is a baseless allegation from the first day of the earthquake it is being alleged that there was discrimination. This matter was raised in the all Party Meeting also. In that meeting the Chief Minister of Gujarat was also present we had invited him to the meeting with the purpose of clarifying any doubts or allegations. That is why his presence was must. He had also clarified that such allegations are not true. But if these allegations are true, he can write to me pointing out where and with whom such a discrimination has been done. Can anyone discriminate under such circumstances? Saying that is an insult to the whole of Gujarat.

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"I believe that all the members of his party agree with the explanation of Shri Patil and they will act and behave accordingly."

"Sir, I myself visited Gujarat and observed the situation there. It has been said about me that I had come back after making an aerial survey without making a halt over there. While the discussion was about to conclude, one of the members said that 441 tents were received from other countries, where are those tents?"

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to make it clear that all the tents received were placed under the charge of the District Collector of Kutch and those tents have been kept in the schools so that the schools can run.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question is what kind of atmosphere we want to create in the country and in the House. As I have said that all the parties have extended help to the Government on a large scale. There was a competition of the sorts among the States as to who will extend help first and all the sections of the public have generously contributed the 'Prime Minister's Relief Fund'.

More than 200 crore rupees have been collected so far. Such a huge amount has never been collected before because people are afflicted with the tragedy of Gujarat in real sense and people want to share the grief of the people of Gujarat. Death of people on such a large scale, devastation, collapsing of houses and many such examples were given during this debate. Such incidents were narrated, which send ones heart rendered indeed. If wrath of the nature was witnessed on the one hand the generosity of mankind was also witnessed on the other. The Government of Gujarat became active from the very day the earthquake hit and it took many steps. Keshu Bhai addressed the people of Gujarat. Doordarshan was not functioning so he made that address on Akashwani. He went and sat in the Police Control Room. One of the members asked as to why the meeting at Delhi was called at 3 PM when the earthquake hit at 5 AM or 6 AM or 8 AM why did you take so many hours to hold the meeting? Mr. Speaker, Sir, Crisis Management Committee is there. Responsible persons are its members. When the news of earthquake was received, each and every member was to be informed. Time was also consumed to know about the intensity of earthquake, the nature of calamity, that is why the meeting was called at 3 PM. Upto 12 noon everybody was busy in the celebrations of the Republic Day. Now we are being placed into the dock in this House and are being asked as to why the meeting was called at 3 PM, why not prior to that? What should I reply? The meeting of the Cabinet was held in the evening on the same day. The Government of Gujarat became active. The Chief Secretary of the Government of Gujarat visited Bhuj the same day. Advani Ji rushed to Gujarat immediately after the Republic Day parade was over. He was one of those members who visited there immediately. Even then, allegations are being levelled. It is not fair. It hurts. This type of politics should not be there. You would be glad to know that the entire world has made its contribution for the help of the victims at this hour of tragedy. I have the names of these countries with me.

As one of the hon'ble members has mentioned that there was no space for the planes to land. There was no space for landing of the planes. Planes full of relief materials were pouring in. I also want to place on the table of the House the list of those countries who helped us during this calamity. Humanity got afflicted, Humanity became worried. The spirit to save Gujarat, to help

Gujarat at this hour of tragedy spread immediately throughout the country but some people did not give up playing politics. If some discrimination was being done, it could have been mentioned once, but repeating it frequently in each and every speech is not good. Are you aware of its consequences? Your speeches have been published in foreign countries that discrimination is being done with the Muslims and Harijans. The foreign newspapers have published them under their headlines. The country has been insulted at the cost of drawing political mileage. What is the need to repeat this. The Chief Minister of Gujarat told at the all party meeting that such incidents may be brought before him if they occur. They have brought the names of the villages in writing these have been brought by Patel Sahib just now. We will find it out and bring the truth before you and would place you in the dock. You have blamed Gujarat Government. You have tried to make advantage of this national crisis from political point of view. It is a matter of great sorrow.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not want to prolong this debate any further but I have expressed my feelings, which were within me. The people will make a decision. The final decision is to be made by the public. By-elections were held recently for some legislative assemblies and their results have come forth. Public is speaking.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, an all party meeting was held wherein certain useful suggestions were made. Smt. Sonia Gandhi had given a suggestion that there should be a standing Committee and there should be a permanent machinery to deal with the natural calamity. There should be a National Disaster Management Authority. Not only at the time of Orissa, this thing has come to our notice this time also that whenever a grave natural calamity hits the country, the preparations are not made to the required extent to deal with the situation. In fact, we have not seen this matter from that point of view. Though, Latur had warned us when a sudden earthquake had hit the country. What shall we do? Hundreds of people got buried under the debris. How can that debris be removed, where are the machines, how can stones and cement be cut? People are buried and they are crying. They can not be taken out of this tragedy. The rescuers are shedding floods of tears. Trained persons are required for this job. The same thing happened at the time of plane hijacking also. The calamities come like that whether they happen on land or in the air. Therefore this has

been decided. In fact, consideration on this suggestion has been started after the cyclone of Orissa that there should be a permanent authority and we would set up a permanent Committee of this type. Separate groups have been made for that. They would give their recommendations in this regard.

Centre does not make any discrimination. We have provided less in Orissa, now we are providing more in Gujarat. This is not fair.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, Centre has no discrimination in its mind. The Government has been doing well for the last two and two and half years. Centre had very good relations with the States during this period. You can enquire from the Chief Ministers of your respective States.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I saw in Bhuj that a hospital was completely destroyed. We have proposed that the centre is ready to rebuild that hospital afresh.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, such calamities confront our lives, to test us. It seems as if the nature has decided to test us. We can overcome the nature but it is very necessary to fight the ugliness underlying our mind. Politics will take its own course, there will be elections. The Governments will go on changing. But when the entire world is rushing to with all sorts of help we can understand the worldwide impact of this tragedy.

The need of the hour is that the whole country should face this challenge unitedly. I believe that after this discussion, an atmosphere will be created where allegations and counter allegations will come to an end and an atmosphere of hard work will start and we will rebuild Gujarat. Different types of Packages have been provided. There is a separate package for Kutch and the Gujarat Government has made a separate declaration for industries. We are also concerned about the other districts which are not part of Kutch and which were also affected by the earthquake. We are providing all sorts of assistance as desired by the Gujarat Government and I will request all hon. Members that now onward we should start thinking creatively.

BACK NOTE

XXXVIII Statement on Earthquake in Gujarat, 27 February, 2001

1 SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: I have given a suggestion that there should not be any discrimination. It is upto you to agree or disagree.

2 SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL (Latur): Sir, all the leaders present here have said that they will help in the relief work being carried out by the Government and other institutions and that is the need of the hour. It is our responsibility. If people still make complaints before any leader and that complaint is brought to the notice of the Government then is it not the duty of the Government to enquire into the genuineness of that complaint? If that complaint is genuine, then, remedial steps should be taken and if it is a false one then, the Government should find it out. Nothing more than this has been said *here,...(Interruptions)* Mr. Prime Minister, kindly excuse me for interrupting you for a short while. It has repeatedly been said that our leader, in such a crisis, has expressed her sympathy everywhere during her visit to Gujarat as you did in case of Latur. Nothing more than that has been *said,... (Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI ADVANI): Sir, the hon'ble Prime Minister has rightly mentioned that when this issue was raised in the all party meeting, Shri Keshubhai Patel, Chief Minister of Gujarat immediately said that if any one had discriminated like this then he had committed a sin. He assured that if any specific case is reported to him then he will take action against the guilty. He said this in the all party meeting. Notwithstanding that, all the allegations made are general in nature. Yesterday, I heard Shivraj Ji. He told that complaints have been received about such and such places where discrimination has been done and also named some villages for that purpose. But later he said that these complaints were not against the Government. He has said so.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: Yes Sir.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: When the complaint was not against the Government then it was expected from him to tell as to whom the complaint was about. But he did not make it clear. If someone goes through the newspapers of today, he will sense that the Government has discriminated while he himself had told yesterday that their allegation was not against the Government. But what has been said yesterday about the Government of Gujarat is baseless and false.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL: I have said it earlier also and I once again reiterate that complaints are not against the Government there. But the people who went there for distributing the relief material, are not the representatives of the Government. They are going there on behalf of other agencies and are saying like that. Who had gone there. It has come to our notice. It has come to the notice of our leaders and we bring those facts to your notice? We are not making complaints against the Government. I hand over this paper to you, you can act there on. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This is not a member to member discussion. This is a general discussion.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: The Prime Minister is making a provocative statement. This does not behave of the *Prime Minister*.....
.....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Sir, we are speaking on behalf of the Government. The Central Government and the Government of Gujarat are working jointly since 26th, the very first day of earthquake. The leader of the opposition, therefore, did not make any mention about the persons against whom these allegations have been made.

When i listened to Shivraj Ji I got some satisfaction. According to him their complaint was not against the Government. He has reiterated it today

as well. Among all the speakers, only he has said explicitly that his complaint is not against the *Government...*(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Your Chief Minister has said. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? Please take your seat. This should not be from Member to Member....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Shrimati Sonia Gandhi did not say but Shri Keshubhai Patel has said. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi, he is not yielding. Please take your seat....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: It is Shri Keshubhai Patel's statement. You cannot insult the Opposition for nothing....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: He is playing politics. . .(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: It is the complaint of the people of Gujarat that discrimination has been done. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This will not go on record....(*Interruptions*)•

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Sir, I would submit to the Hon'ble Members that if they go *there...* (*Interruptions*) I have gone there several *times...*(*Interruptions*)

Sir, many Government Officers and staff whose family members have died worked with me throughout the day. When, in the evening i enquired about their families, they told me that they had lost everything. They accompanied me continuously for six days in the same clothes and here people are talking like this. This is gross injustice. ...(*Interruptions*) This is injustice with the *Government...*(*Interruptions*) I would not like to say anything more than *this...*(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Slither): Shri Lai K. Advani, you are wrongly briefing the hon. Prime Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Our Leader has said that we treat the people of Gujarat like heroes and the hon. Prime Minister said...*(Interruptions)* What is this?... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi, please take your seat. What is this?...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: How many times I have to ask you to sit down.

3. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: At that time we come to you with great expectations, but you said: "Where is the money?"

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: You were given Rs. 130 crores.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: At that time you did not have funds, may be you had it later on. Now the door was opened, an order was given to Reserve Bank. They are also the people of India.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: The Finance Commission's report has been received.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Whatever you have done for Gujarat is right and we have supported it.

We said "In future, think of other States and apply the same standards please".

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: That is good.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: We are saying the same thing and you have come here in an angry mood we are saying only this and nothing else!

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: From where this anger has arisen today.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Prime Minister says where is the money.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, we have permitted HUDCO to issue taxfree bonds worth Rs. 1500 crores for the restructuring of Gujarat. Restructuring of Gujarat has to be done. We have to take up construction

amidst destruction. Money will not be a constraint, but if I say so, it will lead to the question as to why such a statement was not made in respect of West Bengal.

REPLY TO MOTION OF THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

12 March, 2001

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the discussion on President's Address is going to be concluded now. I thank all the hon. Members who participated in the discussion. Unfortunately, I could not attend the House at many times when hon. Members were speaking. Sometime it becomes necessary to attend the Rajya Sabha session also. I am really very sorry about it and would like that it may not follow in future. Therefore, the business of the House should be arranged in such a manner that the discussion on the Presidential Address may be held in a continued manner. It creates difficulties for all, when the discussion is held in piecemeal and I think that under your leadership all the political parties will together formulate a programme to hold the discussion in a continued manner so that no member faces any difficulty to attend it.

The Government of National Democratic Alliance is going to complete its three years. Our Government have disappointed those who were in the favour of the fall of this Government. Our's is a strong Government and political stability has been maintained in the country. We are progressing very fast on the path of development. The entire world has seen our achievements. We are among the 10 countries who are progressing very fast on the economic front. Our country has ample stock of foodgrains and has become self-sufficient in this regard. The credit goes to the farmers. However, I would like to mention one thing. Emphasis has been given to food production but required attention has not been paid to store the increased production of foodgrain. Perhaps we have been thinking over scarcity economy till now but now the time has come to think about the plenty economy. Some problems are being faced in some cases especially in foodgrains. However, efforts are being made to remove such shortcomings. Concrete steps have been taken in the current budget in this regard. The Government want that farmer should switch over to crops other than wheat and rice. For this purpose farmers should be assured of remunerative prices. The problem is that we never preplan farming. However, now efforts are being made in this regard. During my speeches in Punjab, I stressed upon to grow vegetable and fruit crop alongwith rice and wheat. Production of oilseeds and pulses are also required, but farmer takes time to change the

prevailing system of crop which creates problems. Prices of cash crops have also reduced. Government want to procure these crops and make such arrangements so that farmers may not suffer losses. But there is a limit for the Government intervention. Efforts are being made to export the surplus foodgrains. In this regard some relaxations are being given. For example the quantum of wheat and rice production in our country is more than sufficient. That's why it is being exported. Rice and wheat crop has a good market in foreign countries. We are hopeful to get good prices of them. Efforts are also being made to reduce the cost of agriculture production. A policy is required to be formulated in this regard with the consensus of all the parties.

It is inappropriate to state that President's Address does not mention about employment. It is also a misconception that economic liberalisation will lead to increase in unemployment. Some people will certainly be affected but that can not be escaped. However, more number of employment opportunities will be made available. I would like to quote President's Address in this regard:

"For example, India can command a significant competitive advantage in the international market in labour-intensive industries like garments, light engineering, toys, handicrafts, leather, and in IT-enabled services. The Government will encourage large-scale investment in such industries and create necessary infrastructure for their rapid growth."

I am aware of the problems arising due to our participation in WTO but these problems can not be solved by back track. Challenges should be faced. There is a need to see that we should not remain backward in this regard. The old process of farming should be replaced with the new one. It is necessary that we should stay in international market. For this purpose, quality of the crops should be emphasised. If we can improve the quality, since we are connected with WTO we can face their challenges especially in respect of small scale industries and agriculture. I was in Bangalore yesterday. The Chief Minister of Karnataka has suggested me to call a conference of Chief Ministers of States to consider upon the problems arising in agriculture due to WTO norms and take any decision in this regard. The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh repeated the same thing on telephone today in the

morning. I agree with their suggestions and with regard to the agriculture related problems arising out of our WTO agreement, we will convene a conference of Chief Ministers, wherein we will try to evolve a consensus and find a way out. By increasing Excise duty, we want to protect our Industries and agriculture. But we have increased it to a certain limit, we have increased the excise duty whenever there is a need and if necessary it can further be increased.

We have to make an effort to find permanent solution to it. Therefore, I feel that it is necessary to evolve consensus over this but there are many hindrances in this. Some of our colleagues have decided to formulate such policies in the economic field which are old and have no use but they continue to see things on the same ground or criterion. Success cannot be achieved from that. We have been opposing the "quota permit raj" from the very beginning. The system of licensing breeds corruption and our past experience in this field has been bitter. But inspite of our best efforts the quota permit raj is not coming to an end as it should have been because there are lot of difficulties when the question of its implementation arises. This will be possible once a broad consensus is arrived at on the question of economic reforms. I am not saying that there will not be any difference of opinion but we should try to remove those differences. We can also launch movement over our differences of opinion and go to people because finally they have to decide. But it is necessary to evolve consensus over some questions and among that one question is this also and I hope that the Congress party will not take any such step which may lead the Congress being accused of doing volte-face, "badle-badle mere sarkar nazar aate hein".

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is very essential that we should move with self-confidence. Among us some play the role of shalya' who are in pandava' side but talk in such a manner so as to create despondency and disappointment. This policy is not good. We are not averse to criticism and are ready to learn from criticism. We have not run the administration earlier but are trying to understand it, but our intention should not be doubted.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the NDA Government has been instrumental in promoting decentralisation and devaluation of powers to the State Government in the country. The Centre-State relations are very good today. Today, we have a coalition Government at the Centre and the government of different parties in different States. We have never resorted to discrimination and if at

all anything happens then we will try to solve that immediately. My friend from West Bengal must be agreeing with me.

Today, we have a coalition Government at the Centre and the Governments of different parties in States. This is the time when we should work unitedly and endeavour to strengthen our democratic institutions. You can implement either multi-party democracy or any other structure, whichever you like, in your State.

Now, my next question relates to electricity. The power sector is undergoing a state of crises. A conference of Chief Ministers was held recently. In that they formed an opinion. Chief Ministers of all parties were involved in forming that opinion. All have decided that there should be improvement in power sector and power generation should be increased but the pilferage of power reported to the tune of hundreds of crores of rupees.

The power generation units are running in losses in every State. We are producing electricity but we lack in its distribution management. Now this is not a question of any single party, Centre or States. We have to find a way out unitedly. The future is full of challenges. I would like to quote what Hon. President has exactly said. He gave the reference of Dr. Ambedkar and presented his quotation. I would like to quote his wordings.

The cautionary words of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar should guide us in our March forward. While presenting the draft of the Constitution, he had said with great fervency, I quote:

"On January 26, 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality; and in social and economic life, we will have inequality. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest."

Baba Saheb Ambedkar sounded warning at that time. Even today the India is in a paradoxical situation—one in which India is progressing facing challenges and its production is increasing. There is stability in technology and in other fields. We have also achieved progress in the field of communications.

Now there is no need to take the help of any M. P. for cooking gas. People are getting gas connection easily. We should accept the progress made in the field of communication. The rate of telephone calls have been drastically slashed. The whole world recognises our strides in the development of information technology. We do not need certificate from anyone. Our work is being

appreciated by the people. The prestige of India in the world has increased due to the fact that she has always pursued universal values which are fundamental of our foreign policy. But there are shortcomings also. We are very lowly placed in human development index. But whether we should see only one aspect? We should see the condition of India as a whole, we should see both aspects together. There are shortcomings but we will try to remove those shortcomings. For this, resolution is essential and in some cases this resolution is necessary in all parties. Today, we are in power, tomorrow some other party will be in power. We were also in opposition but used to oppose upto certain extent. We were surprised that day when Shri Somnathji had said that this Government is neither national nor democratic and nor an alliance. He has finished everything by saying this. We are neither national nor alliance but he is international.

But nobody recognises him in world. He is unable to understand as to with whom he should associate himself. He gave a judgement that we are neither national nor democratic. We have been elected in a democratic manner. We have come here with people's support.

We have alliance with different parties.

We have not united for power. Prior to election, we had alliance. We fought election on the basis of common agenda and were successful in achieving more seats. Even today, we have opportunity.

There can be only one ideology as to how to protect the sovereignty of our country and how to work for the welfare of the people. Any type of "ism" will not do. Now it has become outdated. The only ideology should be to see that our behaviour is in order and it should be oriented towards fighting corruption and to provide good governance to the people and not to fight over the non-issues. This will not do. Different parties are in power in States but they are running the administration on the basis of decentralisation. There are complaints and these are addressed only if one speaks loudly but no attention is paid towards the cooperation. You also have to move ahead in this direction. "No annayayay panth vidyate" there is no other way out. The Congress party had decided that they will not have alliance with anyone.

Congress had decided not to align with any party. Later on the decision was reversed and they entered into electoral alignment in Bihar, what principles

were involved there? We have united for the unity of the country, stability and good governance. Our conduct is transparent and that is why there is no alternative to us.

It is usual in democracy. Now democracy cannot work without some amount of self-publicity. If you are not ready to mention good when you see it at least we would call it so even if it relates to ourselves. But the real standard is the merit and conduct.

We have attempted to promote peace process in Jammu-Kashmir. The issue of Jammu-Kashmir is an old one and it is delicate too, since terrorism is involved there. Our neighbouring country is helping to increase the terrorist activities there. But when Ramadan ceasefire was announced, it was welcomed in the country, abroad and also in Jammu-Kashmir. India desires peace, world recognised it. International opinion about Kashmir is changing now. The statement of Kofi Annan is a pointer in this regard.

People who mocked at the Lahore visit, should look within themselves. Diplomacy is necessary but along with it we should also take our own people in confidence. Definitely there has been some delay in the start of negotiations in Jammu-Kashmir. I do not want to go in the reasons for that, but Government is not responsible. There are some other reasons which would be disclosed later. But we are going to start negotiations soon, we will talk with all parties and would try to find out a solution of Kashmir problem. There is no dispute about that and the complaint that we do not take others in confidence is baseless. I do not know how much more can we take others in confidence? Meetings are held and no important steps or decisive step are taken without having consultations.

But it is the responsibility of all and we need to shoulder it together. The negotiations will start and we will try to find out a way Pakistan should change its ways. Pakistan should try to change its perpetual unfriendliness towards India. This is our hope. We thanked them for helping in the Gujarat. tragedy. We also would not hesitate to extend a helping hand if, unfortunately, they also have to face some trouble. This is a question of humanity. Mulayam Singhji got sentimental about it yesterday and said resources permitting, we would extend not 6 times but 8 times help to them. He agrees to what I say and I agree to what he says. We should try to come together on the issue.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that before raising a matter in the House, if that matter is based on magazine or newspaper articles, they should be examined with regard to the fact content in that. After all Members of the Parliament are responsible persons. Newspaper have their own politics. They have their own games, sometime we fall victim to it and sometimes you don't. But hurling baseless allegations are meaningless. PMO is in controversy. Did I create it? I have not. It is working since the time of Lal Bahadur Shastri. Group of Ministers is an issue. The cooperative environment and the free atmosphere in which the present cabinet is working is probably without precedent.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, discussion takes place on all the matters. Decision is not announced before the discussion and if the House fails to agree on a subject, it is referred to a few Ministers for consideration. That is how, Group of Ministers' is formed. Thereafter the report of Group of Ministers' is submitted to the Cabinet. There is no question of bye-passing the Cabinet. Representatives of different political parties. Consider and decide on the matter. There is no restriction on debate but the final decision is taken by the Cabinet. Cabinet takes the final decision. These type of allegations do not add to the prestige of the country, but adds to disappointment in my heart. But I believe that before levelling allegations, some sort of investigation is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am raising a very serious issue and creating pandemonium in the House will not serve any purpose. Please consider the issue with a cool mind. Having debate on the issue will achieve nothing. A weekly magazine was quoted in a large measure. I also want to quote the same magazine. The last part of the editorial says—

"The tragedy of Indian democracy is not our present rulers (is there much to choose between the PMO we have now and the one we had under Rajiv?), the greater, much greater, tragedy is that we possess an Opposition led by Sonia Gandhi, Somnath Chatterjee and Mulayam Singh Yadav. I wonder what sins the people of this country have committed to deserve them."

Now if you get misled by the article and raise the matter in House.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have only said that it is expected from Members of Parliament that they should try to find out variety of issue published in

Media before raising them in the House.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, issue relating to Ayodhya was mentioned by Shrimati Sonia Gandhi and she asked what the Government is doing. Let me clarify the view point of the Government on this issue.

Ever since our Government assumed office, it has remained fully committed to the due process of law. Neither it has ever interfered in the legal process in any matter nor will it ever do so.

Unlike in the past, our Government, has never withdrawn any criminal case against any individual or individuals associated with the Government. Even the prosecution lawyers arguing for the CBI in the Ayodhya case are those appointed prior to my Government assuming office three years ago. The CBI is an independent investigating agency. The Government does not issue any direction to the CBI nor can it in law issue any such direction. The CBI's position before the Special Judge in Lucknow is that its chargesheet against various individuals in the Ayodhya case is maintainable notwithstanding the judgement of the Allahabad High Court. The matter is *sub judice* before a Special Judge. Therefore, I wish to make no further comment on it.

Law will take its own course and there should be no doubt about it to anyone.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to conclude my speech. President's Address dwells at the Problems and condition prevailing in the country. Therefore, President's Address can act like reference book. The position of President is different in our country. There is difference between what President speaks on various occasions and what he speaks while addressing the Parliament. Therefore, sometimes we feel that Address is boring and quite long. If everything is to be included in it then we cannot avoid these things. We are grateful to the President and thank him.

Shrimati Sonia Gandhi raised the issue of Nuclear policy. We want to have discussion on matter of Nuclear policy. We should sit together and discuss it. Nuclear policy would not be the policy of one party rather it would be the policy of whole country. This policy will be binding on the future Government also. There should be no difference of opinion and ill-will among us about it. I am grateful to all the Members who...

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you. Namaskar.

BACK NOTE

XXXIX Reply to Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, 12 March, 2001

1. SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : Hon. Prime Minister, please accept our four demands—one, end the dispute relating to temple construction in Ayodhya; two—end your talks about repealing Article 370; three—change your opinion about minorities, especially Muslims; and four—break your relations with RSS. We would automatically come together.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was talking about India and Pakistan. We cannot have talks with Shri Mulayam Singhji. I do not know what will happen to the person who befriends Mulayam Singhji.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: We are compelled to do that. It is for the sake of country. Otherwise the country will be sold off. Nobody is buying the loss making enterprises and in the national interest we are opposing the sale of profit making enterprises.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: No One in the world has the guts to buy this country.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh): But there are people who are ready to sell it.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: If it is so, people would throw them out. We have the example. We should not talk of selling and buying. At least patriotism should be above suspicion. We have not done that, and we won't allow anybody to do that.

2 SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: The capital of the country is being sold.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: The problem is that we cannot agree with everything Mulayam Singhji says. He has said that had India been powerful, we could have prevented the destruction of Buddha statues in Afghanistan.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: This is true. It is true that no country in the neighbourhood of America can take liberty. If our country was powerful, Afghanistan would not have dared.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mulayam Singhji has been a former Defence Minister. Do not speak in a way undignified for a Defence Minister.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: Invasion is not required, it is the prestige of the country that matters. Today our prestige is low among our neighbouring countries. Our policy is not to invade but our prestige should be such as to create fear among others.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not want to go in that dispute. The whole world has condemned what happened in Afghanistan, it was an act of barbarity, but there is a limit. There is no reason to suppose that if we had power we could have stopped the destruction. It was impossible. But we should ensure that such elements are not encouraged, promoted and allowed to overwhelm the world and towards that end we are trying to create a world opinion about fundamentalism. We want an international agreement on terrorism and that is possible only if the problems are discussed in depth.

3. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Please allow me I made it very clear. Mr. Prime Minister, you were not here then. Unfortunately, you were not here. I accept your statement that you were busy elsewhere with Parliamentary duty. I said that I was bringing this before this House because I wanted an explanation from the hon. Prime Minister. A senior bureaucrat has made these charges which remain unrefuted. There were serious allegations made. There is no response from the Government. Therefore, after considerable deliberation I have brought it before the House. I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister of India what is the true state of affairs. Mr. Prime Minister, what do you say with regard to a Secretary who says:

"Because I objected to certain decisions against a business house. I was transferred the next day."

So, please say whatever you wish to say. That is not my statement. He now says that he is quoting the editorial because I raised it then. It is most unfair.

LAUNCH OF GEOSYNCHRONOUS SATELLITE LAUNCH VEHICLE (GSLV)

19 April, 2001

Hon. Speaker, Sir, I am happy to inform this august House that the first test flight of India's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle, GSLV, was successfully carried out from Sriharikota on April 18, 2001.

GSLV is the most technologically challenging mission undertaken so far by ISRO and its successful launch is a new landmark in our space achievements. GSLV, once commissioned into regular service, will provide us with the capability to launch INSAT type of communication satellites into 36,000 km high orbit.

GSLV represents a confluence of sophisticated technologies with a major proportion developed indigenously by our scientists. It uses solid, liquid and cryogenic propulsion stages. The cryogenic stage has been supplied by Russia. The 49 metre tall GSLV, weighing about 400 tonnes, lifted off from Sriharikota at 3.43 pm IST, carrying "GSAT-1" satellite weighing 1540 kg. After a flawless countdown and 17 minutes of flight, the satellite was successfully placed into its intended orbit.

The first signals acquired from the "GSAT-1" satellite indicate normal performance of the satellite. In the next few days, the satellite will be manoeuvred to reach its final geostationary orbit. The satellite carries instruments to conduct experiments in digital audio broadcast, internet services and compressed digital TV transmissions.

The successful accomplishment of GSLV mission is the culmination of a decade of efforts of ISRO Centres supported by industries and academic institutions in India.

I request this august House to join me in congratulating ISRO and all others who have been involved in the successful launch of GSLV.

BACK NOTE

**XL Launch of Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV),
19 April, 2001**

NIL

**RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED ON
SC & ST SERVICE MATTERS**

25 April, 2001

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue raised by hon. Shindeji is very important. There is no difference of opinion over this issue between the Government and the opposition. The Government desires that the condition of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should improve. Justice should be done to SC/ST employees and justice means that we should try to rectify the system whereby injustice has been done to them or they have been neglected. The policies have been framed with this objective. But often, these policies are challenged in court of law. The House may remember that the Government twice brought Constitution (Amendment) Bill, which was passed with consensus since there was no difference of opinion about that. The third point raised by him is regarding jobs. The matter is under consideration of the Government. The problem is that the matter is in the court before the Constitution Bench. We expect a favourable decision from there very soon. Government is committed in this regard. We wanted to bring such a bill prior to the current budget session of the Parliament, however, we are making efforts once again and seek your support in this regard.

BACK NOTE

**XLI Response to issues raised on SC & ST Service matters,
25 April, 2001**

NIL

VALEDICTORY REFERENCE

27 April, 2001

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the session is coming to end. It is a tradition that at the conclusion of the session we express hope and aspirations for the future and also reiterate the achievements of the Session. It has become a tradition. But to make sure that it should not become a ritual only, therefore, there is a need to ponder upon the fact that the session, which starts in a good atmosphere and should conclude in the same manner. Why the session should not run smoothly and why cannot we maintain the harmony during the proceedings of the Parliament.

Parliament is the place to hold discussions where the decisions are taken by the majority, but if the business of the Parliament is hindered, then it hits the functioning of the democracy. Tehelka episode is a very serious incident. We have taken it very seriously. It is a warning and a challenge to all the parties and to the entire House. We were interested in holding discussions on this issue.

We were even prepared to create the environment for discussions. But my problem is that since my resignation was being demanded so I had to seek your intervention. I am a Member of Parliament for the last forty years. I never had listened to such abusive language but this time foul language was used. Is this abusive language going to become the part of Parliament practice? The situation of confrontation had arisen. There can be no greater challenge than this for the biggest democracy of the world. Even then, I wrote a letter to Soniaji and tried my best to find any possible way out. I am happy that you have sorted out the matter by your interference but it should not become practice to drag you in each such situation. **Treasury benches and opposition can reach a solution by sitting together but it is possible only when the integrity of other party should not be suspected.** When we suggested to form JPC at that time our proposal was not accepted. Therefore, we appointed a commission. Commission and JPC cannot run together. All aspects are to be considered and if after the discussion, the House comes to a conclusion that through majority or unanimously a Committee should be constituted, even for that we had said that our mind is open but open mind does not mean empty mind, we too have our norms and we are following those norms. We also expect that each one of us should also follow common norms.

I was abused in the House. Nobody had uttered a word that this is

an unparliamentary act and these kind of words should not be allowed to be used. But still I am prepared to forget that entire episode. The only thing I want is that whenever we meet in Parliament, the business of the House should run smoothly. If we are in minority, then you remove us. Our earlier Government had fallen by one vote, we were defeated because of one vote, when we were defeated, we resigned. We did not create any hassle, but if in the name of morality we are asked to resign then there are many cases where you cannot evoke one sided morality it have to be alike for both sides. But whatever happened was really painful. I never came to Parliament for this. I had waited for 40 long years to reach here. In Ramayana, Lord Rama had said that I am not afraid of death but I am afraid of ignominy—"no bhito maranadasyi, kewalam dooshito yash."

But I do not think that anybody's honour can be protected here. I do not say that in this episode only one side is to blame, here both sides are to be blamed. We are also responsible and we are ready to accept it but for that proper environment should be created. If the policies are made, proposals are brought forward and discussions are held only to rum someone's image then what exactly we are doing. We are engaged in ruining the image of each other and consequently the image of our country is being spoilt. We claim to be the biggest democracy of the world but what is happening? How the world is looking at us.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to you for intervening. However, we are in favour of sorting out the problems through bilateral talks but sometimes we need the third party's intervention and you are neutral between the Government and the Opposition. You have tried to find out a solution and it became a reality. I hope that next time when we meet in the ensuing session and if your intervention is required between the Government and Opposition, then such efforts need to be made on your part that no such incidents reoccur in the future and we may be able to maintain the dignity of the Parliament and protect our democracy.

BACK NOTE

XLII Valedictory Reference, 27 April, 2001

NIL

SUMMIT LEVEL TALKS BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

24 July, 2001

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Members would recall my invitation to President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan to visit India.

Prior to his visit, I had the occasion to exchange views both individually and collectively with leaders of political parties, eminent persons, media representatives and intellectuals, on the future prospects for Indo-Pak relations. They almost unanimously endorsed my view that the visit should be utilized to seek avenues for durable peace and cooperative friendship with Pakistan. Building on the Shimla agreement and Lahore declaration, I sought, through the invitation and subsequent visit to strengthen the broadbased framework of dialogue, so that progress could be made on all outstanding bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. I also identified the continuing cross border terrorism as an important subject to be addressed.

To promote a congenial environment and confidence building before the visit, the Government took some significant decisions relating to peace and security, nuclear and non-nuclear confidence building measures, people to people contacts, humanitarian issues, education, youth exchanges and trade. I believe these decisions have been well received by the people of India and Pakistan. The Government remains committed to implementing them.

President Musharraf, accompanied by Begum Musharraf came to New Delhi on July 14. He was accorded full ceremonial welcome. He called on the President who hosted a state banquet in his honour. The Vice-President, the Home Minister, the External Affairs and Defence Minister and the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha called on him. I hosted lunch in his honour. At the retreat in Agra on July 15 and 16, President Musharraf and I had extensive one to one talks for over five hours. We also had talks at the delegation level.

During these discussions, I emphasized the importance of creating an atmosphere of trust for progress on all outstanding issues including Jammu and Kashmir. I took up other specific issues which would help the process of peace. These included the issues of 54 prisoners of war believed to be in Pakistani jails; the extradition of

terrorists and criminals taking refuge in Pakistan, the upkeep of Sikh Gurudwaras and Hindu temples in Pakistan, extending good treatment to Indian pilgrims visiting holy places in Pakistan and promotion of bilateral trade beneficial to both the countries.

I focussed on terrorism being promoted in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. I conveyed in clear terms that India has the resolve, strength and the capacity to meet terrorism and violence until it is decisively crushed. I want to reiterate this resolve today on the floor of this House.

In his presentations, President Musharraf focussed exclusively on Jammu and Kashmir only. Hon. Members would be familiar with all his views, since they were widely disseminated in both our electronic and print media.

Despite obvious differences in our views, we made progress towards bridging the two approaches in a draft joint document. We wanted to incorporate in the document the structure of a future dialogue process on all issues, including meetings at official, ministerial and summit levels. I made proposals for addressing the issues of peace and security—including nuclear and conventional confidence building measures, Jammu and Kashmir, and terrorism and all other issues from the composite dialogue. But finally, I had to abandon the quest for joint document mainly because of Pakistan's insistence on the "settlement" of the Jammu and Kashmir issue, as a pre-condition for the normalization of relations. Pakistan was also reluctant to acknowledge and address cross-border terrorism. My Cabinet colleagues and I agreed that our basic principles cannot be sacrificed for the sake of a joint document.

Hon. Members, though there are serious differences regarding the solution of Jammu and Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan, I believe that an allround development in the relationship between the two countries will have a positive impact on our dialogue on Jammu and Kashmir.

No objective will be achieved by going into the controversy that whether Jammu and Kashmir is a prime issue or not. We cannot ignore the cross-border terrorism and insurgent activities prevailing in the State. The activities being carried out in Jammu and Kashmir with the help of foreign mercenaries and foreign funding are nothing but the terrorism. Killing of innocent men, women

and children cannot be termed as 'Jihad', a holy war or a political movement. It is a considerable issue that just after the Agra Summit, pilgrims were murdered on their way to Amarnath. Just two days ago, a massacre took place in which people belonging to a single community were killed by the terrorists. Therefore, Pakistan's refusal to stop cross border terrorism is the biggest hinderance in creating a positive atmosphere for a mutually agreeable solution to the problem.

Pakistan wants to evolve the solution of Jammu and Kashmir problem as per the wishes of Kashmiri people. I am sure that every Kashmiri whether belonging to Kashmir valley, Jammu, Laddakh, Pakistan occupied Kashmir or to Northern areas of Shaksgam Valley, has the foremost desire to lead a peaceful and secured life and to enjoy the freedom so that he could progress economically.

It should be our continuous endeavour to provide them their constitutional rights. Most of the Kashmiris have their elected representatives who present their legitimate demands before the Government. We are ready to consider demands and ideologies which may even come from representatives of a small section of the Kashmiri people, provided they are ready to give up the path of violence. With these feelings we have offered talks with the representatives of All Party Hurriyat conference.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, President Musharraf has invited me to Pakistan which I have accepted. Similarly, Foreign Minister of Pakistan has also invited our Foreign Minister. This has also been accepted. In this way, our bilateral relations with Pakistan would continue. We will continue the path of dialogue and also the friendly exchanges. We would continue to make Pakistan understand that our bilateral cooperation should not stop for the solution of a single issue. Though we have failed to evolve consensus to sign the joint declaration at Agra but to an extent we succeeded in developing mutual understanding. Likewise, we will continue our cooperation in other fields also. And definitely India's concern to stop the cross-border terrorism would be included in the documents of future talks.

I would also like to mention that we are not in search of any issue of publicity and discussion. We shall continue our diplomatic moves patiently and our endeavour for peaceful, friendly and cooperative relation will be continued vigorously.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, the number of Members who took part in the discussion was around 30. Members who were not present in the House, were also interested in the discussion and were trying to witness and hear the proceedings of the House from wherever they were.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the discussion was initiated by Shri Madhavrao Scindia.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**²

I quote here the first Para of his speech:

"What I mean to say is that the debate was initiated on behalf of the Congress Party. However, Shri Mulayam Singh Ji had started the discussion and has made some important points but I want to start from the speech of Shri Madhav Raoji because he spoke in the capacity of the Congress Party.

The Agra Summit has left the country very confused. What is even more discomfoting is that even the hon. Prime Minister, the Government and the hon. Minister of External Affairs seem confused. They are not able to resolve this dilemma as to whether this Summit was a success or a failure."

According to him, all are confused, entire country is confused and he himself is confused of which he has given ample proof. There can be differences about that Summit. One may not be able to say as to what extent the Summit achieved its objective, but to say that the entire country confused and the Government is confused is far from truth. It is not doing justice to the nation and this House. All are aware of the circumstances under which the talks were held.

A question has been raised that we had not made preparations. Before that Lahore Summit had taken place. That Summit had its own importance in the relations between our two countries. What happened in Kargil after that Summit is another story. We need not link the two. The whole world talks about the Lahore Declaration. We also refer to it because it is an important link in our relations with Pakistan. After this Summit, a final declaration was issued in which terrorism was denounced. Terrorism of every kind and in any form had been condemned in it. Pakistan was a party to this declaration. Sporadic incidents were taking place at that time. But after the change of power in Pakistan, the entire scenario registered a sea change. We could not persuade Pakistani delegation for a mention of across

the border terrorism. They moved a step ahead by dubbing it as a freedom struggle. It was totally unexpected and from that point of time the atmosphere for talks got vitiated. They were time and again told that terrorism is no solution of the problems. Terrorism is a fatal tool. Terrorist incidents are taking place in Pakistan too which are creating difficulties for the Government there. So much so, that even General Musharraf had to say that if he had his way, he would shoot terrorism of that kind. Terrorism has become a problem even for them. Therefore, terrorism cannot be encouraged in any manner. Terrorism is neither a freedom struggle, nor can it be called Jihad. But the truth is that we continue to witness ups and downs in our relations with Pakistan. Sometimes we have an atmosphere congenial for friendship, sometimes we are at war and at other times, we have ceasefire. This has been going on for the last 50 years or so. Our policy has all along been directed towards improving relations with our neighbours, but not out of any weakness.

I was surprised to learn that some journalists from Pakistan we heard saying that the Kashmir Valley was going to fall in their lap like a ripe fruit, that Indian forces are tired and India has come to the end of its tether and is not likely to make any extra efforts to safeguard its interests in Kashmir. I fail to understand how this misconception gained ground and spread. Delegation keep coming and going. Some non-Government institutions are also active. This sort of propaganda might have had, most probably had its impact on the mind of the Pakistani President as well. Now, let there be no misunderstanding in the mind of anybody about us. India is very strong and its forces are fully prepared to face any attack and any internal challenge. These people have wrong notions about us. If they framed their policies and strategies on this premise then failure was sure. We can never tolerate terrorism. Jammu and Kashmir is an intergral part. I told General Musharraf that Jammu-Kashmir may just be a piece of land for them. He hardly even uttered the word, Jammu; Laddakh he would leave out; he focussed only on Kashmir and said that our relations would not improve till Kashmir issue was resolved. I told him that India had always been willing to talk on Kashmir.

Even in "Simla Agreement" we had agreed to hold further talks on Jammu-Kashmir. We are ready for talks and even in the Summit Conference, we had discussed Jammu-Kashmir issue alongwith Kashmir at some length and told Pakistani delegation that if they were eager to focus all their attention on

Jammu-Kashmir then they would have to take into account the entire history of Jammu-Kashmir *i.e.* how they had launched an attack, how they prevented people of Jammu-Kashmir from merging with India as per their wishes and how the tribal invasion had taken place. Whenever Pakistan talks about Jammu-Kashmir, it thinks of weapons—I was really surprised to hear this. I take the House into confidence to confirm that they said that if the tribals had not invaded at that time, Pakistan would not have got even that part of Kashmir which is at present under their occupation. Where was the basis for talks? We could never agree to what they wanted and this is why we repeatedly invited them for talks to sort out matters and improve relations.

We gave them an agenda. We gave them the agenda twice and announced confidence-building measures on our own. We informed them we were prepared to implement it and hold talks on Kashmir but please do not harp on a complicated issue. For them, Kashmir may just be a tract of land; but for us, it is part of our life. The way incidents of terrorism are taking place and innocent people are being killed, it cannot be called a freedom struggle. It is a naked dance of terrorism and so long as it continues the situation is not likely to improve. I hope Pakistan will reconsider its attitude. I am sure it will bring about necessary change in its demeanour towards us. We shall continue our efforts in this direction. For me, friendship with neighbouring countries is an article of faith. When I became the External Affairs Minister in 1977, I had to improve relations with Pakistan, to make movement of people from both sides easy and to simplify the rules governing visa and passport. But later, violence came to dominate the scene. A journalist from Pakistan has endorsed this view in his article and I wish to quote a portion of his article here (Ayaz Amir belongs to "Dawn"):

"The Stark truth is that jihad (a term being used loosely here) has no — future in Kashmir. This is a harsh thing to say given the blood split and the sacrifices rendered but, unfortunately, all too true. A continuation of the insurgency can bleed India, as it has done with creditable results over the past decade, damage Indian prestige and keep the valley unsettled. But it cannot secure the liberation of the State. This much should be clear from the history of the last 53 years. What the Pakistan army has failed to secure in full fledged battle, the jihadis hope to achieve with their hit and run tactics."

This is the statement of a Pakistani journalist. From the beginning Pakistan is trying to annex Kashmir by force. It has now taken recourse to proxy war and has given an impetus to terrorism. Schemes are being drawn up to create internal disturbances in our country. But these tactics will take Pakistan nowhere. We shall continue to strive for peace. A process has set in. If change of power had not followed the Lahore Summit, our relations in various areas would have improved and the dialogue on Kashmir would have continued on the basis of the agreement reached there. An important leader from Pakistan once told me that an issue which could not be resolved in 53 years cannot be resolved so soon. Laying bare his heart, he said, "We shall not give up our demand on Kashmir and we know that you will not part with Kashmir. Therefore, the better course is to continue our dialogue on Kashmir, but at the same time improve our relations and widen the areas of mutual cooperation. And if we have to fight, we should fight against poverty, disease and unemployment. The world has advanced beyond measures but we are engaged in a conflict. The solution of which does not seem to be in sight in the near future". But they changed their ways after the change of power. I remember that when the meeting was coming to close. Smt. Sonia Gandhi had said "You should bear in mind Shimla and Lahore". The President of Pakistan did not like the mention of Shimla. The very mention of its name was perhaps leaving a bad taste in his mouth. Leaving Shimla and Lahore he tried to make a new beginning, when Joint declaration was being drafted their emphasis was on not including Shimla and Lahore in it. We did not accept it. India has always been trying to improve its relations with Pakistan. We had wars with Pakistan, in which success evaded Pakistan. President Musharraf had said in Delhi that this issue cannot be solved by war; it would have to be solved through dialogue. But he omitted to mention that Pakistan had adopted a new technique of fostering unrest and waging a war in Kashmir in order to grab it, thinking that India would concede defeat in face of this new technique and agree to their demand.

I do not want to dilate upon the one-to-one talks that took place between us as they were held in mutual confidence. But I found that he did not have interest in any matter other than Kashmir.

We had announced confidence building measures. On going through them, you will find that it is a document covering relations between India and Pakistan. However, Pakistan did not accept it. A point was voiced

during the discussion as to why we did not break-off the talks when Pakistan was not prepared to talk according to an agenda. Talks are not initiated or abandoned in this manner. How could we have broken-off the talks when in the allparty meeting held before the summit, no one took the view that if they were not agreeing to an agenda, then the talks may be postponed? However, at Agra the future of talks was jeopardised; but even then there has been accord on some issues and we will broaden this base. The process of dialogue would continue, but talks will be held on a firm basis, keeping the unity of the country in tact. I want to assure the House that I am thankful to all Members and parties for the support extended in the all party pre-summit meeting. The tone was also positive in the meeting held after the summit talks, even though it was somewhat reduced tone. Perhaps, there is an element of politics in it. May be it is the result of the coming elections. But I welcome criticism.

Sir, the question of Kashmir is one on which we have to jointly carve out a single opinion and show to the world that our differences are only democratic in nature. There is no difference on the issue of unity and dignity of the country. Mani Shankerji said he was ready to support the Government. He claimed that he had the experience of summit meetings, we had not. I do not want to underrate his experience, but his party is not taking much advantage of it. Whenever we invite the Congress Party for talks and think that we would have the occasion to meet Mani Shankerji and have some exchanges with him, we find him missing. He is not included in the Congress delegation. There might be some confusion behind it, but there is no confusion in my mind and we would like to avail of his services in future. He is a person with experience. I know him ever since he was working in Karachi. He admitted that a demand was made for initiating talks with Pakistan. Demand for summit talks was there, but climbing on the summit was never envisaged. Talks had already been going on; a break came after Kargil. There was change of Government in Pakistan. A meeting at officers level would not have sufficed. It was necessary to know the line of thinking of those who had come at the helm of power to find out what they really wanted. We were talking of friendship, but were not sure about the response we will get, whether we will get the right response or not. We were constantly emphasizing that an agenda should be prepared as a framework for talks. But General Musharraf came with a one-point agenda. I tried to make him understand that Kashmir issue was not so simple. He wanted to start from Agra, we said a start had been made in Tashkent.

We have never refused to talk, but we have never talked under fear or for the sake of publicity. Even now we are prepared to talk on Jammu-Kashmir, but cross-border terrorism would have to be stopped. Terrorism is again appearing there in frightening dimensions. Are the massacres in Doda a fight for freedom? I am told that the External Affairs Ministry of Pakistan has condemned these happenings. It is my firm belief that Pakistan can stop these incidents if it wants to, and it must do so. It is a test. We want friendship, and this is the test of their friendship.

I told General Musharraf that if he raised the issue of Kashmir, then we would have to go into its entire history. I pointed out that one-third of Kashmir was under Pakistan's forcible occupation, a part of which it had given to China, and there was no democracy in the portion that was under it. I also told him that while he talked of ascertaining the will of the people, the people's will in Pakistan was not ascertained while power was taken over by him. He was not expecting such frank talks. It was a redeeming feature that these talks took place in a friendly atmosphere. You might ask how is it possible? Everything is possible in diplomacy, and we will make possible what appear to be impossible. We will continue to improve our relations with Pakistan without sacrificing our interests. We have the support of the international community in this. People wanted us to talk, General Musharraf had himself said that he was prepared to go anywhere anytime for talks. Voices were being raised inside our country also that we should start talking, that we may not agree to their demands, but there was nothing wrong in agreeing to talk. A propaganda was launched in small countries that India was emerging as military power, which was the reason she was bent on refusing to talk. When we took the decision to talk, it was a right decision at that time. The period immediately following Kargil was not an appropriate time for dialogue. Pakistan was defeated in Kargil.

I also pointed out to him that Kashmir was being mentioned ever since Tashkent agreement and asked why he had not referred to that fact. He said, that was exactly his complaint. The political leaders were not laying emphasis on Kashmir, but now that he had come, he would lay emphasis on it. I said that if this was his approach, the talks may not move forward. Kashmir issue was not that simple. It was associated with our sentiments, I told him. We do not accept the two-nation theory on which Pakistan was founded, but now that it has come into being, we wish it all the best. However, Pakistan must not take any attempt to partition India further. We will not allow such an attempt to succeed. Decision on Kashmir

was taken by the constituent Assembly. In Pakistan, even elections were not held.

The people of occupied Kashmir have no say. Sometime back, there election took place, but the power was later on entrusted to a military commander. A part of it was given to China. Under what sanction it was done? He argued that if we arrive at an agreement, Pakistan would take back that portion from China. I said, nobody would believe it and Pakistan should better realise the truth and the reality and give up the hysteria. It must not resort to terrorism. India is a big country following liberal policies, and would continue to do so. But liberalism does not mean that we would not protect our important interests. We would protect our interests and try to find the way to improve our relations while protecting our interests. We want the support of the entire House in this matter.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it was said that our publicity was inadequate. However, we cannot follow methods of publicity resorted to by our opponants, the Pakistanis. But now, on account of the electronic media, it appears that some small diplomatic change would have to be brought about. A summit meeting has a certain decorum. There is a method of carrying it on. Statements are not issued at every step. Things are not leaked to newspapers. All this did not happen in our summit with Pakistan at Lahore. But at Agra, it appeared that publicity was being used as a weapon of attack. It did not have a salutary effect on our people. They thought that we were not speaking out. I had made a statement before the delegation in the presence of General Musharraf in which I said that we could not be cowed down by terrorism and nobody should underestimate our capacity to crush terrorism. He was hearing all this and was taking notes. But we did not disclose anything to the Press immediately. We believed that they should be given a chance to think. A decorum must be observed. We showed firmness, but were courteous at the same time. We observed decorum throughout the talks. We suffered some loss as a result for which we will take necessary steps in future. But to say that our efforts failed as a result of this is baseless. Understanding is no more. There would be further talks on certain issues. We would remain prepared to talk on Kashmir issue, but we have made our point clear. Pakistan would have to make matching efforts. I hope the attitude of Pakistan would change.

BACK NOTE

XLIII Summit level Talks between India and Pakistan, 24 July, 2001

1 SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (Mumbai South Central): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the only solution to the problem is to attract Pakistan.....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This subject is going to be discussed in the evening. What are you doing.(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should go on record.(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: We are discussing this matter today evening.(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: We are discussing this matter at 4.00 p.m.(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should go on record.(Interruptions)

2 SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV (Sambhal): It is not correct. You read the only newspaper in which the news has appeared. If you had read all other newspapers, you would have known the fact.

STATEMENT ON AYODHYA ISSUE

27 August, 2001

Sir, I am sorry since I am a bit late in arriving in the House. I was busy in a N.D.A. meeting. I am happy to note that the Hon. Members have evinced their interest on the Ayodhya issue. I would like that they should continue to do so and be helpful in solving this issue.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was in Lucknow yesterday. A press conference was held there. Sir, if there is a provision that when the House is in session, one should not address the press, there should be no announcement of any sort, there should be no policy announcement, I am agreed to it and the House is also agreed to it. But if somebody asks me question about Ayodhya, should I say that the Parliament is in session, I, therefore, have kept my mouth shut. I cannot do so and this House would also not like me to do so.

The type of prohibition being imposed on us will also be imposed on you. The Opposition cannot shy away from this responsibility. Yesterday I said something about the Ayodhya issue in response to a question asked to me. The question was what is my reaction to the ultimatum given by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad to resolve the Ayodhya tangle by March. I said that I want the Ayodhya issue to be resolved before March. The talks in this regard are on.

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BACK NOTE

XLIV Statement on Ayodhya issue, 27 August, 2001

1. SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: With whom the talk is going on?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I am just telling you as to what reply I gave there. It should not be in the public interest to divulge the details as to with whom the talks are being held.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I do not interrupt the Hon. Prime Minister. How can the Hon. Prime Minister hold discussions with anonymous groups? How can the House be kept in dark? How can that be in the national interest.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, yesterday several delegations we met which was comprised of representatives of different seeks. I am ready to lay all the lists on the table of the House. However, if you all are interested in resolving the serious issue of Ayodhya, you will definitely appreciate the initiatives on the Government and would realise that it is not proper to make announcements about the talks in their midcourse. When we would be reaching to some definite conclusion we shall definitely apprise the House about the developments and at that stage we will welcome all your criticism.

VALEDICTORY REFERENCE

31 August, 2001

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Monsoon session is now over. Today people are celebrating the festival of Onam on this occasion, I would like to greet all countrymen and the Hon. Members. Tomorrow is "Ganapati Visarjana". Ganapati is the God of wisdom. We need to learn things and take blessings from him.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you dwelt upon the achievements of this session and in many respects, the House has done significant work. If work could not be transacted in day time it was completed in the night and for this we sat late. It is quite right to dispose off the work, but this sort of routine is not good. You have taken important measures. There should be discipline in the House. I am advocating discipline right from the days. I was in Opposition. We need cooperation from the people who are at present in the opposition.

We have different ideologies here. We get opportunity to express them in House. I don't want to dwell upon the achievements of the Government, but at a time when the whole world is going through economic recession, we are successful in making economic progress. It is worth mentioning and it should be appreciated by all. I don't want to go into the statistics of development in various sectors as this is not the right moment to do so. I am only expressing my pleasure that the session is closing on a cheerful note. Such a scenario should not be seen only at the time of culmination but should permeate all through the session.

Opportunity for discussion can always be had and Government has never shied away from discussion. We put forth our views clearly. Allegations are levelled and refuted. But there should be a limit to allegations and counter allegations. Democracy can't function without dignity and if that is practised voluntarily, it would be better. If Members of all the parties take a collective decision regarding it, a better atmosphere could be created.

Session is closing today. We are enumerating achievements. But the public perception of Indian democracy, the largest democracy of the world, is not such that we can be proud of our democracy. The situation can be improved with the cooperation of all. I want to congratulate you for the efficiency with which the business of the House was conducted and I also greet all the Members on this occasion.

BACK NOTE

XLV Valedictory Reference, 31 August, 2001

NIL

VISIT TO RUSSIA, USA, UN AND UK AND ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

20 November, 2001

Between November 4 to 13, 2001, I paid bilateral visits to Russia, USA and UK, and addressed the 56th session of the United Nations General Assembly. I met the Presidents of Argentina, Cyprus and Iran and the Prime Minister of Mauritius on the margins of the General Assembly.

These visits and meetings focussed on the broader, longterm agenda of our bilateral relationships with these countries. They also provided the opportunity for consultations on important international issues, including the campaign against terrorism and postconflict challenges in Afghanistan.

My State visit to Russia fulfilled a bilateral decision on annual summit meetings, made during President Putin's visit to India in October 2000. My discussions with the Russian leadership confirmed the congruence of our geostrategic outlook and consolidated our bilateral strategic partnership. They also highlighted the enormous scope for further economic, scientific, technological, defence, atomic energy and space cooperation.

The Moscow Declaration on terrorism and our bilateral joint statement, together with the several agreements concluded during the visit, map the contours of our future cooperation. We also agreed on the further development of our close defence cooperation and cooperation in atomic energy and space.

We discussed new areas of bilateral economic cooperation, including the diversification of our trade basket. To compensate for the anticipated reduction of India exports financed by rupee debt repayment, promising new areas of trade in information technology, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals and diamonds need to be energetically explored. Simultaneously, Russian imports of traditional commodities like tea and tobacco should be sustained. We also discussed the release of rupee payment funds for Russian investment in Indian enterprises.

We discussed an institutionalized bilateral dialogue on energy security, which we hope to commence soon. India's investment in the Sakhalin project already represents a beginning of our cooperation in this field.

Four chairs of Indian studies have been established in academic institutions in different cities of Russia. Partnership agreements have been concluded between Gujarat and the Astrakhan region and between Hyderabad and Kazan city. These arrangements will strengthen people-to-people, educational and cultural cooperation.

Since March 2000, India and USA have established a wideranging dialogue for closer relations. My visit to Washington, at the invitation of President George W. Bush, focussed on strengthening this dialogue architecture from a longterm perspective.

President Bush categorically affirmed that his Administration is committed to intensifying our bilateral engagement over a wide canvas.

We agreed to resume and broaden the Bilateral Economic Dialogue and extend our cooperation to energy, environment, health, biotechnology and information technology. We will soon initiate discussions on cooperation in space programmes and civilian nuclear safety projects.

The India-US Defence Policy Group has been reactivated and will meet in December. We agreed to discuss ways to stimulate bilateral high technology commerce and to streamline procedures for transfers of dual use and military items. The lifting of economic and technology restrictions should help this process.

I had extensive interactions with a wide cross-section of members of the US Congress. I met the leaders of both parties in the House of Representatives and the Senate, as well as members of the House International Relations Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The bipartisan nature of support in USA for strong bilateral relations with India was again emphasised.

The visit demonstrated a new vigour in India-US relations. There are excellent longterm prospects for their expansion and diversification, both in the bilateral and in the wider international context.

Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom invited me to stop over in London for a working visit on my way back to Delhi from New York.

Prime Minister Blair and I continued the dialogue which we had in New

Delhi during his halt in October. We reviewed a number of aspects of our bilateral relations, which have seen a remarkable surge in strength and diversity in recent years. These discussions will be continued in greater detail in the near future, when Prime Minister Tony Blair pays an official visit to India. We expect this visit to take place very early next year.

My address to the United Nations General Assembly highlighted two themes of vital concern to all of us — the threat to civilized societies from international terrorism and the challenge of equitable development. In democratic and multi-cultural developing countries, there is often a strong inverse correlation between terrorism and development.

We have to reject arcane and unproductive arguments on the definition of international and state sponsored terrorism or their root causes. The universal revulsion against terrorism after September 11 should be exploited to singlemindedly destroy all terrorism everywhere.

Developing countries have recently faced some hard realities of the impact of globalization on domestic poverty levels and income gaps. The results of Doha again underline the urgent need for a Global Dialogue on Development. Resource generation for poverty alleviation has to occupy pride of place in this dialogue. It should dominate the economic agenda, not only of NAM and G-77, but also of North-South interactions.

In all my bilateral discussions. I found a broad identity of views on a comprehensive approach to international terrorism and about the situation in and the future of Afghanistan. There can be no political, economic or ideological justification for terrorism. The campaign against terrorism is, of course, not to target any religion. The international community will need to summon the necessary political will to ensure that all funding and safe havens are totally denied to terrorists everywhere.

Similarly, there was a convergence of views on the need for a broad-based, representative, independent and neutral Government in Afghanistan. The urgency for massive international assistance for reconstruction of that country was emphasized. India's legitimate interest in the political and economic future of Afghanistan was also widely acknowledged. It was generally accepted that a more representative framework than the 6+2 grouping is required for consultations on the future political structure and the economic agenda in

Afghanistan. Subsequently, on November 16, India participated in a meeting of 21 countries in New York under the aegis of the United Nations, held to specifically discuss the situation in Afghanistan.

We will remain engaged with other countries on future political and humanitarian arrangements in Afghanistan. We will also continue to maintain and strengthen our traditional links of solidarity with the Government and all the people of Afghanistan.

Hon'ble Members would appreciate that though the situation in Afghanistan during the last fortnight or so has altered radically, and the United Front/Northern Alliance has moved into various urban centres of Afghanistan including the capital — Kabul, it is still fluid and rapidly changing.

The Government is fully monitoring the situation and is in continuous touch with all the relevant parties and groups.

BACK NOTE

**XLVI Visit to Russia, USA, UN and UK and on the situation in
Afghanistan, 20 November, 2001**

NIL

TERRORIST ATTACK ON PARLIAMENT

19 December, 2001

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the august House is discussing a matter on which the division between the ruling and the opposition parties gets blurred, if not erased. In such a scenario, people who are neutral and unbiased should provide right direction to the country and boost its morale.

Yesterday's speech of Shri Chandra Shekhar was reminiscent of Arjun of Mahabharata, going to war or not is not the issue. The issue we need to discuss is the circumstances in which the war should take place, whether we need to go to war or not. Nobody wants war in the country.

I had written a poem, "Jung na hone denge" but Kargil war took place soon after that. If the country had not been ready and prepared but only absorbed in the poem "Jung na hone denge" then a gross injustice would have been done to the nation. I had gone there with the message of peace, but could not succeed. Now I am being asked why did I go at all? It is a no-win situation. If I go I am criticised for that and if I don't go even then I am criticised. But this discussion has centred on a positive approach.

I would like to thank leaders of all the parties. As I said at the outset, this is not the time to stick to our party lines. The need is of finding a way out collectively. We have always tried to consult all. As for the incidents occurring in the Parliament House complex, initially we could give no information as the Government and the administration were trying to gather full information. Initially we had no information except what was already being disseminated by the media and the newspapers. That is the reason for delay in calling the all party meeting. We remained in contact even though there were holidays in between. The Hon. Minister of Home Affairs would elaborately throw light on this point. The House is indeed facing a grave situation. So far, the menace of terrorism was limited to Jammu and Kashmir. Now it has come knocking at the gates of Parliament House. I congratulate the jawans of our security forces and the Watch and Ward staff who defended Parliament House at the cost of their lives.

How the terrorists managed to reach Parliament needs to be thoroughly investigated and at the same time we should not undervalue

the sacrifice and grit and resolve of the security forces and the Parliament's Watch and Ward staff and our administration. I believe that nobody in the House has the intention to derive political mileage from the incident.

As I have said in the beginning, it is not the time to play politics as the existence of our country, our sovereignty has been challenged. Why Parliament House at all there are other places in the country, too. Parliament House was deliberately chosen, since the terrorists know that the Parliament is the core of Indian Republic, the axis of our unity, the symbol of our democracy and represents the whole country. They wanted to attack everything which symbolises and guarantees democracy. It has been done deliberately. I don't think the attack was unplanned and spontaneous. I don't think that the gun-wielding terrorists had come just to commit suicide and the people who sent them, had not pondered over this question. They have taken this dangerous step deliberately. This is a challenge to the whole country and we have to face it squarely.

I congratulate the hon. Members for their speeches during the discussion. Shri Shivraj Patil spoke in a positive manner and I would like to quote one thing from his speech I am quoting the words of Shri Patil:—

"Sir, we had opposed the earlier moves to strengthen the security of the Parliament which we should not have done. We should keep at least that in mind today. Action has not been fully taken on the plans chalked out for the security of the Parliament."

It is a matter of pleasure that the hon. Speaker said in a meeting this morning that following the incidents in Jammu and Kashmir, he had appointed a committee which is expected to submit its report shortly and all the recommendations contained in it would be implemented and the security of the House strengthened. But we still face difficulties, obstructions.

We are still novice to act and express our views in the present atmosphere of insecurity. Perhaps it is because of our attitude towards life. Our ideology is that everybody has to die one day, so what is the need of making umpteen efforts to save this life. However, this attitude is not correct. Every life is precious. Terrorists are trying to spread terror among the people to attain their objectives and designs. We have to fail their designs.

Every effort made for security should be implemented firmly. Time and again, this issue should be discussed in the House, cutting across the party lines, as representatives of the highest body of the country and not as Members of ruling party or opposition. The issue of safety and security is uppermost. It is not only the question of safety and security of Parliament and this House but it is the question of safety and security of the country. A crisis is looming large over the country and those who are responsible for it are playing a dangerous game.

Now we are being given sermons that we should act in a controlled and restrained manner. We have always behaved in a restrained manner but our attitude was taken as our weakness. Our country is a democratic country where people's feelings should be respected. Also there is a need to judge what is wrong and what is right. Nobody in our country is pressurising for war and war should not be there. Decisions regarding war and peace are not taken in haste. A policy would be formulated in this regard. Keeping in view the whole scenario and after reviewing the options before us, the country's interests will be safeguarded while taking such a decision. Further, cooperation of all would be sought. No party can take such a decision all alone. That would be the decision of the country.

I congratulate the members of the Congress Party. I heard the speeches of various members alongwith Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi. Shri Omar Abdullah put forth the Government's views very effectively. Every step in this regard would be taken keeping in view the country's interests. Shri Mulayam Singh ji should not have any misunderstanding and misconception in this regard. But it would be inappropriate to mix the two varied issues of election and terrorism. Elections would be held on time. Democracy is our biggest asset, our biggest strength. That's why they targeted Parliament. They hatched this conspiracy to disintegrate the country. There are some elements in Pakistan who talk about ancient history; proclaim to unfurl the flag over the entire nation. When the country was once divided, we accepted it.

On my visit to Lahore I got an opportunity to visit Minar-e-Pakistan. I was advised not to go there but I said that it would be wrong if I did not visit. I visited the same and said that we needed a neighbour that could prosper, progress and at the same time, is powerful. At times the weakest develop a

tendency of misadventure. Pakistan has developed such a complex that India has not accepted the partition of the country. This is a wrong perception. I had told General Musharraf that the chapter was closed for us but desired to know whether he has accepted the partition of the country or not. Though unfortunate, the partition took place. We were opposed to it. Today, we are following the same because it has become the policy of the nation. Government of Pakistan are aware that there are such elements active in Pakistan. We also know it following this incident, we have asked Pakistan to take action against the terrorist organisation which was involved in undertaking and planning this mis-adventurous act. We hope that action would be taken but, at the same time, we are not depending only on diplomatic process. We are creating world opinion as has been suggested and the public opinion on this issue is in our favour. We should have this self-confidence and self-reliance. Meanwhile, I have undertaken journeys to a number of countries. The world is looking at India with confidence. Indian democracy is a prospering democracy. India can face challenges which is becoming obvious. But we will have to fight terrorism on our own. All the countries of the world have been apprised of our position in this regard. These countries agree that we have every right as well as permission to take steps for our self-defence but, at the same time, the same nations ask us to take action with restraint. We are taking all the steps wisely. In future also, we will take every step after considering each aspect in this connection but those talking about restraint, should ask our neighbour as to how long it will continue this game. If they want a neighbour then the neighbour wants that terrorism is rooted out. An international alliance has been formed for this purpose with most of the nations as its members. Does terrorism in India need any proof? The bullet marks on Parliament House, dead bodies of the terrorists lying outside Parliament House, the fact that they were Pakistanis—all these are proof in itself. There is no question of joint investigation. The Security and the sovereignty of our nation has been challenged. We are ready to face it and expect the support of all the vigilant nations of the world. We don't look forward to any nation to fight on our side. I reiterate what I have already said, we will root out terrorism on our own. But other nations in the world too are to understand that terrorism cannot be seen in isolation. It cannot be defined differently. Terrorism cannot

be divided into fragments. One cannot presume that terrorism takes one form in one nation and another in the other. A move is going on in the world to root out terrorism. The incident that took place that day was a stark expression of terrorism. We believe, other nations will realise our feelings in this regard and extend their support. We have already had fight with terrorism. We have since got victory over terrorism in Punjab. There was a situation when all had apprehensions about the future of Punjab. There was a situation when unity and integrity of the nation was at stake. Such were the apprehensions. But firm measures were taken and terrorism was crushed. Today peace and brotherhood prevails in Punjab. The people of Punjab deserve an applause for this. We know how to deal with terrorism and we will deal with it. But on this occasion, other nations in the world are put to acid test too. They are being exposed as to what they say and what they do. There cannot be different standards. There will be only one standard to gauge terrorism.

India is a democratic nation. Ours is a multi-party democracy. When I went abroad, I told the guests abroad that we had very old relations with Afghanistan. I visited Afghanistan twice as Minister of External Affairs. We have started a hospital there. We are planning to give more aid. After the emergence of Taliban regime, all situations were turned into such a state that the people were deeply shocked. Therefore, we are supporting the steps taken to finish Taliban. An attack was carried on Parliament of India about which several Hon'ble Members have detailed discussions that anything could have happened that day. However, due to the preparations made to fight terrorism, we succeeded in averting a tragedy. Terrorists were not able to succeed in their plan. We should not ignore those arrangements and we should point out the shortcomings. Suggestions are welcome to overcome these shortcomings, but this is not a question of ruling party and opposition party. The first thing is to ensure peace and brotherhood in the country. If anybody tries to take benefit of the situation arisen in the country or if any organisation or party tries to create enmity among the communities, they are working against the country's interest. We will not tolerate such activities. We hope that good sense will prevail among the people. This is a testing time. That day we escaped perhaps only to perform our duties in future. I am confident that the attitude

shown today during discussion in this House will strengthen our efforts. The entire world, all the countries are looking towards us. Party politics will continue as it has its own place, but this country has a special characteristic that at the time of crisis, the entire country, unites leaving behind all differences and faces the challenge unitedly.

Sir, when I was in opposition, I congratulated Smt. Indira Gandhi on independence of Bangladesh. The feelings expressed by me were not only mine, but of all of us. We have shown much restraint. Now we are trying to solve the problem diplomatically and we will take the decision after going through all the options. I hope the august House would support the Government and its policies in this regard.

BACK NOTE

XLVII Terrorist Attack on Parliament, 19 December, 2001

NIL

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

8 March, 2002

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I associate myself with the views expressed by Ms. Mamata ji and other women Members on the occasion of International Women's Day. One woman Member was right in saying that women are not weak, they are strong and are capable of protecting their rights. As for the issue of reservation, all hon. Members know that we are in favour of reservation.

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But it could not be passed due to circumstances created. Now, the effort is to evolve a consensus and in this direction, a new development has taken place. Election Commission has given a formula and that should be considered by all the political parties. Shri Dasmunsi ji was saying that they are ready to support it in whatever form or content. In my opinion, on the basis of that formula. Consensus can be evolved and the bill can be passed after making some modifications.

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Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am ready to call an all-party meeting to reconsider the issue and I am sure a unanimous solution to this issue would emerge in the All party meeting. On the basis of which reservation for women could be provided. As for the issue of Uttar Pradesh, we will have time for detailed discussion.

BACK NOTE

XLVIII International Women's Day, 8 March, 2002

1 SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Introduce the Bill.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It was introduced.

2 SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: You are not making enough efforts. Try for consensus.....(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: You assured us that you would take the initiative to talk to all the political parties and bring out a formula. Why did you not implement your formula?.....(Interruptions)

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH: Samajwadi Party approve the formula of Election Commission and we are ready for that.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): This matter was brought up when the earlier Chief Election Commissioner was there. He made a suggestion. At that time, the principal Opposition party had reservations about that. They said that the Bill, as introduced, should be passed. On that, there has been no consensus. That is all what the Prime Minister has pointed out. According to your statement today, you are willing to accept any formula. If that is the case, then, there is a possibility.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: I would like to correct myself. The Prime Minister took the initiative in a meeting that he would consult all parties and come out with his own consensus formula. We wanted to know as to what happened to that. If that consensus has been arrived at by the initiative of the Prime Minister, what is the exact position? If there is any change, we do not mind. In whatever form you bring it, we would support it but there has to be reservation. We may have difference of opinion about the Chief Election Commission. Why should we make the Chief Election Commissioner a party to it? The Prime Minister should take the initiative in this regard..... (Interruptions)

SITUATION IN AYODHYA

11 March, 2002

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the problem of Ayodhya is a complex one and efforts are being made to solve this problem. We have not been able to solve it. Owing to our slow judicial process Court has also not taken any decision as yet. Now I would like to tell about the latest position. Shri Mulayam Singh ji is not fair enough when he says that Ayodhya is burning. Now there is peace in Ayodhya. The situation is fully under control. I want to inform the House about the arrangement which have been made. At present, 41 companies of CRPF, 23 companies of PAC, 400 constables and 100 sub-inspectors of UP Police are deputed in Ayodhya. There are 80 security personnel in one company. marching is going on there. The people were facing difficulties due to restrictions but now restrictions have been relaxed. Now there is peace in Ayodhya and the Government is determined to maintain peace there.

Shri Ram Janam Bhumi Nyas had written a letter to the Government and demanded that they should be allowed to perform 'Yagya' on undisputed land which is now under the supervision of the Government. Besides this, Shri Ram Janam Bhumi Nyas had also informed the Government that it is ready to accept the decision of the court in regard to Ayodhya and had also cleared its position in that letter. A new turn has come in Ayodhya dispute. Till now, Hindu Parishad and its other affiliated institutions used to say that this matter could not be settled in court because it is matter of loyalty. We rejected it. NDA in its election manifesto and in the speech of President had made clear that Ayodhya dispute could be solved only by two methods.

Firstly by having discussion with each other and if it is not solved by this then, we could ask the court to give its decision as early as possible. Ram Janam Bhumi Nyas has announced that it is bound to the decision of the court even if it goes against it. So their suggestion has no connection with the disputed land. Undisputed land is concerned to the Government and the Government is doing its supervision. Legal advise has been taken and the matter has gone to the court. In between Government have also taken steps so that early decision could be taken in this matter. The announcement of "Nyas" that it will accept decision of court is an important statement. I urge the House as well as the citizens that they should accept the importance of this announcement and shall extend their

cooperation to solve this problem. Jagad Guru Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kam Koti had come to Delhi to solve this problem through discussion and had also talked to Muslim leaders. The atmosphere is favourable for discussion and the situation is improved. I want to capitalise on it. It would be good enough if this problem will be solved through discussion. As far as the question of worshipping is concerned on 15th the matter has now gone to court and will come for hearing on 13th. Government have not given any approval to "Nyas" for performing any programme there. We will wait for hearing of 13th and will see court's decision. We hope that court's decision would be helpful in final settlement of this problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are various organisations, they have several leaders and have several spokesmen. Yesterday, leaders of "Imams" organisation had come to meet me.

He said something that I felt hurt. He said that you have handed over the temple to Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the mosque to a Muslim leader. Now we have neither temple nor mosque, what should we do? In fact, what he said, there was anguish in that.

Efforts are being made to solve the problem. Your cooperation is needed. Nothing would be done and the Government would not let something done that would be against the verdict of the Court. But if the problem be solved by way of negotiation. It should be welcome and whole of the House should contribute in it. This is all for now. I want to say.

BACK NOTE

XLIX Situation in Ayodhya, 11 March, 2002

NIL

**CURRENT SITUATION IN AYODHYA IN THE WAKE OF
SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT ON RAM
JANMABHUMI, AYODHYA MATTER/ISSUE
14 March, 2002**

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to make a statement on the Supreme Court's interim order yesterday on the Ayodhya issue.

At the outset, I wish to categorically and unambiguously state that the Government will implement the Court's order in letter and spirit. I had said this in the Lok Sabha on March 11 even before the Court had delivered its ruling. I reiterate it today.

I have said on numerous occasions, both in Parliament and outside, that the Ayodhya issue can be resolved either through a mutual agreement between the concerned parties or through a judicial verdict. The same was also restated by the Government through the President's Address to the two Houses of Parliament on February 25, 2002.

The Government has requested the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court to expeditiously give its verdict on the title suit in respect of the disputed site in Ayodhya. Simultaneously, in the past few weeks, I have received several organisations and individuals belonging to both Hindu and Muslim communities for a consultation on the Ayodhya issue. The Government is pleased that a dialogue process between representatives of the two communities has resumed. His Holiness Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham held discussions with members of certain Muslim organisations and eminent Muslim individuals on a possible basis for an amicable and mutually acceptable resolution of the issue.

Although his efforts have so far not yielded the desired results, the Government believes that the dialogue between representatives of the two communities should continue. If negotiations do not produce a mutually agreeable resolution of the issue, both sides should abide by the court's verdict.

The Government received a letter from the Ram Janmabhumi Nyas on March 8, 2002 requesting permission for performing a symbolic puja on March 15 on the acquired undisputed land in Ayodhya as a part of its hundred day Poornahuti Yagya. The Nyas is a permanent lessee of 42 out of 67 acres

of this acquired land, adjacent to the disputed site in Ayodhya. It is also the owner of an additional one acre, out of this acquired undisputed land.

Before the Government could decide on this matter, a writ petition was filed in the Supreme Court by Shri Mohammed Aslam Bhure seeking, among other things, that the Court prohibit the Government from permitting the performance of puja on the acquired land. The Court listed the petition and application for various directions for hearing on March 13.

The Government then took the view that the decision to allow a puja or not would be in accordance with the orders that may be passed by the Supreme Court on March 13.

No affidavit or written submissions were filed on behalf of the Government. It was only after the conclusion of the petitioner's Counsel's arguments, on being asked by the Court, that the Attorney General submitted that, on his reading and interpretation of the Supreme Court's judgement in Farooqui's case in 1994, temporary use of the undisputed adjacent land for the purpose of performing puja was not, *per se*, prohibited and would not violate the *status quo* order passed by the Supreme Court as this *status quo* order was referable only to the disputed site and not to the undisputed acquired land.

The Government had made this point clear through the President's address to the two Houses of Parliament on February 25, 2002. I quote the relevant sentence: "The Government of India, being the statutory receiver, is duty bound to maintain the *status quo* at the disputed site in Ayodhya".

It is the Constitutional duty of the Attorney General to interpret a law or a judgement of the Court, when asked by the Court to do so. This is what the Attorney General did when the Supreme Court asked him yesterday if a symbolic puja on the undisputed acquired land in Ayodhya was permissible.

The Attorney General submitted that, even if the puja was not prohibited by any previous judgement or order of the Supreme Court, the same could be permitted only under welldefined conditions and strict restrictions, which, by way of illustration, he indicated for the Court's consideration. He further stressed that if any further safeguards and restrictions were considered necessary, the same could be imposed by the court.

The Court, however, expressed the view that no puja or religious activity of any kind should be permitted or allowed to take place on the 67 acres of land in village Kot Ramachandra, which is vested with the Central

Government.

The Court made it clear that its order was an interim order and was subject to further orders, which may be passed in the pending writ petition.

It is clear from all this that the Government has kept its commitment of going by the order of the Supreme Court in the matter of a symbolic puja on the undisputed acquired land in Ayodhya on March 15.

I wish to assure the House that adequate preparations have been made to maintain law and order in Ayodhya and to ensure that the 13th March order of the Supreme Court is adhered to.

I take this opportunity to appeal to all the political and nonpolitical organisations across the country to cooperate with the Central Government as well as with respective State Governments to maintain peace and communal harmony.

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Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, some important issues have been raised during the discussion. Various views have been put forth. I do not want to repeat them. We heard the speeches of two lawyers on the role of Attorney General. The opinion given by Shri Soli Sorabjee as an advocate has been mentioned here. It is a matter of dispute whether he had the right to give his opinion or not however, it was necessary to make the people of the country aware of the reality.

Discussion was also held regarding a judgement given by Supreme Court in 1994. However, the judgement given is acceptable to all. It will be implemented and it should be. Any judgement can not be rejected only because of difference of opinion else it can be referred to a higher bench of Supreme Court for consideration to obtain a fresh decision on the matter. But till then the verdict given by Supreme Court should be accepted and followed by all.

Regarding the statement given by Vishwa Hindu Parishad that the acceptance of Shiladan by PMO official is the acknowledgement of the Government for the construction of temple, I would like to tell my friend from Telugu Desham Party that we have clarified our stand in this regard. The issue is *subjudice*.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad had said that as the Shiladan has been accepted, they will abide by the court's verdict. They will not force to change the verdict. The discussion between Saints, seers and Maulanas etc. was held on the same basis. Some former judges of Supreme Court also met Shankracharyaji. In that meeting also they decide that the Courts' verdict would be the final verdict. We can also go ahead on the advice of Shri Shankracharyaji. Therefore, there should not be any misunderstanding that construction work of temple has been started. Though shilas have been kept there but those shilas would be used only when Supreme Court gives its ruling in the favour of Hindus otherwise not. If Supreme Court's verdict goes against the Hindus or if it favours Muslims, there is a way out mentioned in Supreme Court's verdict regarding the facilities to be provided and to resolve the dispute.

The decision is to be taken by the Court. It is not right that someone interfere in it.

There has been a lot of discussion on secularism. Somnath Babu said that he is standing like a 'Kapalik' on the dead body of a secularism.

That kapalik is even standing today. A very dramatic language has been used, secularism is not going to die.

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Not only in our country, growing fanaticism in the entire world is a warning for us. If it does not remain confined to its limits and if the loyalties of the people does not remain confined to limits then it could take a serious turn and can cause a law and order problem. All of us should think over it. Only reciting secularism is not enough. Secularism cannot become selective secularism. If an effort to do so is made then the entire concept of secularism will be in danger but I am sure that such a situation will not arise in the country.

I have to give a clarification. It is being repeatedly said that I had assured the Vishwa Hindu Parishad that the temple would be constructed on so and so date or a decision to that effect would be taken. I had only said that efforts will be made in this regard and I was hoping that probably some solution would be found by the month of March but it did not happen and I held both the

parties guilty in that unless they assume some flexibility and make way for mutual exchange and march ahead on the basis of mutual goodwill and harmony, no solution could be found. Hence to repeatedly say that I have encouraged them is not proper, they have not gone ahead because of me but due to the support of the people they are proceeding further. Please think about the 14th. Today we are meeting here in a different ambience and are holding talks but there was a pressurising situation on the 14th. I don't want to discuss whether it was right or wrong. An atmosphere of fear, apprehension and uncertainty prevailed. We have yet to come out of Gujarat crisis and a new controversy has arisen. Hence everybody beared a sigh of relief when the shiladaan passed off without violating the court verdict. *Status quo* was not threatened, 'Shila' was received and it is fully safe and as I said that shila will be utilised only on the day of the decision on the original suits. Shila is not going to be of any utility, in between hence I don't see any reason for the spread and provocation of fanaticism in the country. Everybody should cooperate in it. I am confident that today's discussion will be fruitful and the country will proceed in the right direction.

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BACK NOTE

L Current situation in Ayodhya in the wake of Supreme Court Judgement on Ram Janmabhumi, Ayodhya matter/issues, 14 March, 2002

1. Speech on 16 March 2002.

2. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: We also want that it should not die.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: No one will die. Before us also the country was secular and it will remain secular in future also. This country is secular not due to some party. This is a part of our tradition, and the colour of our blood. When the opposition was in power then also the country was secular for ours is pluralistic society wherein the people of diverse views live.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Tunde Tunde Sarswati.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: If I mentioned one, he spoke of the other. Now the views differed. I had recited half the sloka and he completed it. Secularism is in fact, a way of life.

3. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: He has not replied the point that deals with the matter he had sent to Shatrughan Singh from P.M.O. That was the real question and its reply has not come.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: There is no reply in it.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I have not repeated the subjects on which my colleague Arun Jaitley had thrown light. It is of no use to further analyse a thing already analysed whatever has been analysed, has been analysed minutely.

REPLY TO THE MOTION OF THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

16 March, 2002

First of all, I would like to pay homage to the former Speaker of Lok Sabha Shri Balayogi. At this moment of sorrow, I got a chance to visit his birth place. I was surprised to see that while conducting Business of the House efficiently and representing the country in international conferences, he worked very well for development of his parliamentary constituency. He is an example for us. I also pay homage to those security personnel who sacrificed their lives to save the Parliament and Members of Parliament. 90 days have passed since the incident of 13th December and sometimes it seems that we are forgetting that incident. The attack on Parliament was a challenge for the entire nation and sovereignty of the country. It was condemned throughout the world but the guilty persons could not be caught as yet and our efforts have continued. Voice against terrorism is being raised throughout the world and we are supporting that. We should intensify our efforts. Hon'ble President addressed the House on 25th February and on 27th February, Gujarat tragedy occurred. Later on Ayodhya controversy arose, which caused resentment and anxiety throughout the country. Will the country stray from its path? Will we not be able to protect our freedom and sovereignty attained after great sacrifices. But it is a matter of satisfaction that with the internal power, the country is overcoming these challenges and making progress. No single party can be credited for that and even criticism by a party cannot reduce its importance.

Today, rehabilitation is the need of hour for Gujarat. Thousands of people are living in camps. The team of MPs which visited Gujarat has seen the situation actually. People can not go back to their houses as their houses are damaged or looted. There are not proper arrangements in camps. I have suggested to the Gujarat Government to constitute an all party Committee under the chairmanship of the Governor and proper arrangements should be made for the victims. The situation has improved to an extent but that could not be termed adequate. The lacunae should be removed. We have decided to make contribution from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for this purpose. Gujarat also suffered the tragedy of earthquake and whole humanity came forward to help the earthquake victims in the same manner the whole country should come forward to help the victims of this tragedy in Gujarat.

We should not go in controversy as to how it happened. We all know what happened in Godhara but what happened afterwards can not be rationalised. One criminal cannot prove another criminal as an innocent person. Counter violence cannot yield good result. I would like to say that situation of Gujarat should be monitored constantly and Central Government as well as State Government should work for relief and rehabilitation of all victims.

It is my submission that one should be cautious in selecting words while raising Gujarat issue. Some hon'ble Members have developed tendency of using such word whose meaning is known to them only and not to others. Such words cause disaster. This is a place to express sentiments and not a place to show one's intellectual.

I would like to say to the Leader of the Opposition that use of word genocide is not proper in case of Gujarat. That is a different word. This word is used when a caste or nation is destroyed. In Gujarat Hindu as well as Muslims, both have been killed. People belonging to both the communities have been killed in police firing. One should try to understand purport of the word. This word can be used at international fora.

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Mr. Deputy Speaker, sir, the situation has improved now. With its inner strength, the country is overcoming the challenges and moving forward. Ayodhya controversy has been resolved.

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Shri Vinay Katiyar played a very constructive role there. I myself had to beat abuses from the people. Pamphlets were distributed among the Members in Parliament House that dictatorship will not be tolerated. Who can be a dictator in a democratic set up. We abide by the Constitution and made others also to follow it. Simultaneously, 'Shila Pujan' took place. When one goes to a temple to perform Puja, he makes offering to God in the form of gold, silver, flowers, fruits etc. If someone offered 'Shilalekh', it was necessary to accept it. Accordingly arrangements will have to be made to place it at an appropriate place. Paramhansji got annoyed and refused to talk to me. Later he was pacified and blessed me with a long term for my Government. I do not know as to the extent to which these blessings will work but when I saw Sonia ji saying reverential salutations to Shankracharyaji, I thought there is something in his blessings and I should not deprive myself of it.

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Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ayodhya dispute has to be resolved. Efforts have to be made for a speedy hearing and early settlement of this dispute. This problem should be solved at the national as well social levels outside the court precincts because it is posing a great challenge to the communal harmony in the country. Such a matter can become an election issue but by that nobody loses or gains in the elections. Now people are understanding the things. It is not appropriate that this pernicious matter should linger on this. The matter should be solved at an appropriate time before it becomes a sinus. We want success of the efforts being made to resolve the dispute. We are ready to make our contribution to it. A controversy has also arisen regarding the role of the Attorney General. That will be discussed in the evening, that's why I am not mentioning. Several other issues were also included in the discussion.

President's Address was a critical evaluation of the situation prevailing in the country and the policies of the Government. The Members have expressed their views on several issues. I would like to make a mention of a few of them. The Leader of the Opposition made a mention of our relations with Pakistan and has raised certain important question also.

Indo-Pak relations are still tense. There has been no let up in the flow of infiltration to our country from across the borders. We have to see what will be the situation when snow starts melting congenial atmosphere for a meaningful dialogue can only be created. If infiltration stopped completely at the line of control and at the international border.

Shrimati Gandhi had asked about the progress made in the demand made to Pakistan to hand over the 20 terrorists wanted by India. Our efforts in this regard are on but no progress has been achieved in this regard. It is a test whether Pakistan is actually willing to fight terrorism or not. We want to make it clear to the people of the world who urge us time and again to take initiative for holding a dialogue, that we do not have any objection in holding a dialogue rather we believe in holding a dialogue but what is the use of holding dialogues when objectionable activities continue to take place. On this point we get international support and those who urge us to hold a dialogue agree that terrorist activities should stop.

We treat Pakistan as a member of the SAARC. Recently Shrimati Sushma Swaraj attended the conference of Information Ministers. In her visit to Pakistan,

she successfully presented India's stand point for which she should be commended.

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Pakistani rulers work in a specific style. First we saw in Kathmandu and then in Islamabad. He makes a surprise announcement at the right moment. This time also he did the same thing. He said they were ready to resume rights between the two countries and sought her views in that regard. Shrimati Swaraj said that she belongs to a democratic country. Where there is no military rule. She has to consult others also. She abide by the principle of collective responsibility. If there is a concrete proposal, we will definitely consider it. They want to win in the war of propaganda. Now we have also become clever.

There will be a SAARC Ministerial Conference on poverty. This process will be going on and we hope that impediments coming in the way of healthy Indo-Pak relations will soon be removed in near future. In this connection, I would like to make a mention of Sri Lanka where a radical political change has taken place. That change has been welcomed. We hope peace could be restored in Sri Lanka by that. We wish them good luck. Sri Lanka is our nearest neighbour. We have cultural and religious relations with them. We have helped Sri Lanka at the times of crisis. We put the life of our soldier in danger just to save the integrity of that country. We made full efforts in this regard. We want Sri Lanka to be able to solve its problem and pave way for the country's progress by providing equal opportunities to people speaking different languages while protecting the country's integrity. It should prove further on the path of development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, certain financial matters were also raised during this discussion. Though the Budget will be presented in coming days and the House would get an opportunity to discuss the economic situation, but I would like to mention one thing here. Shri Somnath Chatterjee raised a question very emphatically as he always does, it was mentioned in Shrimati Sonia Gandhi's speech also as to why profit making public sector undertakings are being closed down. It is but natural that such a question would be raised. It is a misconception that profit making undertakings are being closed down because the Finance Minister needs funds to abridge the deficit. There is a logic behind this move. If only loss making undertakings will be sold then who will purchase them.

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You think of labourers many a time but I think of the entire society. However, we also want to make the labourers understand the situation for which the cooperation of the august House is required.

There should be a consensus on this issue. Economic reforms were not initiated by us rather we have inherited them from the previous regime. Today, Shri Ram Naik has made some announcement regarding gas but so far as I have been told opposition did not welcome that step. Opposition only wants to topple the Government. The Congress Party is facing the same problems in West Bengal which we are facing here.

We seldom want economic reforms by inviting impopularity. But we know that what seems wrong or unpopular today will be right and popular tomorrow. Today people are feeling difficulties but later on many will understand it. The march should not had because of difficulties.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, so far as the bill regarding women reservation is concerned, we are ready to bring it again on the consensus of all political parties. Earlier when the bill was brought, a suggestion was made to evolve consensus by making the quota of reservation less than 33%. There was some delay in presenting it before Sonia ji. I am going to revive that proposal and will again present the bill on women reservation before the House, but not for publicity.

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Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there should be no more delay in the matter. Sometimes it appears that we are not serious about the matter and only propagating the matter but women are benefited by the reservation in Panchayats and local bodies. Women are already prepared to take the lead in Parliament and Legislative Assemblies. Awareness gained during the freedom struggle helped women to participate in politics. We want to introduce this bill and get it passed with your support.

I would like to thank Shri Vijay Kumar for moving the Motion of Thanks to President's Address. I request the august House to support it.

BACK NOTE

LI Reply to the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, 16 March, 2002

1. THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): We heard your leader with rapt attention. This is not proper. I took special care on that day. We too had many objections to many of the things that she said.

2. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Shiladan has taken place.

3. MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sir, we learnt from the past experiences and formulated policies on that basis. We showed rigidity wherever it was necessary but at the same time we have respected public opinion also. The Members of Parliament belonging to my party were not allowed to go to Ayodhya, rather they were arrested. I know that Members of my party are sad due to that. But it is the duty.

4. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: We have appreciated her.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Dada, sometimes you do a good job.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You should always do a right thing, doing it sometimes causes trouble.

5. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Do modernization!

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Funds are required for modernization and disinvestment is being done for collecting funds.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: it is not being done.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Please look into this matter.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: All of you are aware that I raised the matter in Moscow even for the revival of the Iron & Steel company. We neither want closure of this company nor do we want to put labourers in any problem but we are concerned about economy also.

6. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: If any different percentage is suggested by some, let them bring an amendment. The House will decide. You cannot have it outside the House.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I entirely agree with you.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Please bring it before the House. Let us see which amendment which percentage to passed.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I accept your advice hundred percent. Look at your left side also.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Please ask the Members on your backside.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Members sitting on his backside will listen, but those sitting by your side will not listen.

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH: If a provision of reservation for women belonging to backward classes and dalits is to made, we will support the Bill.

PREVENTION OF TERRORISM BILL AND REPLY TO THE REMARKS OF OPPOSITION ON PRIME MINISTER

26 March, 2002

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I did not intend to take part in this debate.

But when I heard and read that the leader of Opposition, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi had made a mention especially about me then clarification on it became necessary. I do not know whether all the hon'ble Members have heard those words during noise and uproar in the House on that day and I felt that mention of my name is being made in some context. When I read her speech afterwards I felt that this mention is not made just in some context but is important part of her speech. I would like to quote her words:

"The Prime Minister, as the head of this Government, has to decide whether his primary duty is to protect the welfare of the people of India to succumb to the internal pressure of his Party and its sister organizations."

What does it mean? What is the intention of Shrimati Sonia Gandhi behind saying so. She has reminded me about my primary duty as if other duties are not that important. She has nothing to do with that whether I am bowing to the pressure from Parivar and discharging my duties or not. In her opinion the only criteria of my duty is that whether I am yielding to the pressure from any concerned organisations. This is our Internal matter and I ask Soniaji not to interfere in that. I am not Prime Minister due to the favour of Congress Party but I am here in spite of opposition of Congress. I will be Prime Minister till people of this country are in my favour and what is the need of taking that much interest about me. Further there is question.

"Will he be submissive and weak in his leadership or will he uphold the prestige of the high office he holds?"

What is intention behind that? What does she mean while saying so. The allegation that I am working under pressure is wrong.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not work under any pressure. My life as Parliamentarian is its proof. Just now I was reading my speech delivered in joint meeting in 1961 which was convened to discuss the issue of dowry. I

opposed dowry system at that time. Later on during discussion I had to hear that I was conservative and believed in old traditions otherwise, then why dowry system was being opposed by me?

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Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this incident occurred in 1961. For the first time in 1957 I was elected to Lok Sabha and was in Opposition. I do not know as to what would have happened if I had worked under pressure of somebody. Why are you so much worried that I should not work under pressure. Just now it was being said that I am under pressure of Parivar. Members of left parties allege that we are working under pressure of USA and other foreign powers. Then how my party and allies are supporting me? What is its propriety? They all know that I do not work under any pressure. In spite of opposition from all over the world we performed nuclear tests. In this House I can tell in details the manner in which a former Prime Minister acted in the matter of nuclear test. One pit was dug for nuclear tests, tunnel was ready and date of conducting test was fixed and at the last moment the programme was cancelled due to external pressure. I do not work under pressure. Please keep quiet. There is a limit to hear all this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, during Kargil War USA President Clinton invited me to New York and Washington. He said/told me that Prime Minister of Pakistan had come over there and I should also come there to discuss the matter with them. But I refused and told him that this matter could not be discussed till an inch of Indian land is in the possession of Pakistan. I did not go to USA, or work under their pressure. Why are they so disturbed. What is the meaning of interrupting my speech. Truth is bitter and you cannot hear that. Further more is there.

This is the speech of the leader of Opposition. Such words have been used against Prime Minister. What is their intention? What is the meaning of words that day of my reckoning has come. I am taking to examinations daily. I am in this Parliament since long. Since when Soniaji did not know anything about politics. Now I am being put in the dock. Has she any right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, you may kindly check if I have used any unparliamentary word in my speech. Kindly expunge it from the Proceedings, I would have no objection. Now, they're objecting, to my style, but now at this age, it is not possible for me to change my style. Shri

Jawaharlal Nehru had accepted this style and I did not hear any objection from the next generation too as I heard from the written statement. I have not gone through Shrimati Sonia Gandhi's entire speech. I am quoting it.

"There is, I am afraid, neither moral integrity, nor sincerity of purpose among those who are trying to force this law on the nation today."

What is this 'moral integrity'? What does it mean? If in the treasury benches. Shrimati Sonia Gandhi should apologise for such words. In my long Parliamentary career, I have never used slang language, nor have I ever behaved improperly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, these allegations are made with regard to POTO. Our integrity is being doubted, people are talking of bonafides. If they bring TADA it is all right, if they bring MISA, it is all right. At that time we did not doubt their integrity and that is why I am pained. If morality cannot be established by majority then should we expect that it will run by minority. I was going to praise Sonia ji on one point. In the same speech, she has said that they would be with us in our fight against terrorism, today and always. But thereafter, she waged a war against me. These are personal allegations. These are not policy related allegations, nor are they related to any violation of principles. It is an attack on my personality, which I would never bear.

I have only two options—either I should adopt the path of welfare of the people, or act under pressure. Now who will decide this? It is the people who have given me this position and if I work under pressure, my friends, my party will leave me. The Leader of Opposition need not tell me whether I should work under pressure or quit. I am trying to serve the country in my own way and would continue to do so in future also. But I shall have to reply to the objectionable comments made against me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am still requesting you if I have used any unparliamentary word, that may be expunged from my speech. Then whatever pandemonium they have created here, was useless.

BACK NOTE

**LII Prevention of Terrorism Bill and Reply to the Remarks of
opposition on Prime Minister, 26 March, 2002**

NIL

**SECURITY OF MINORITY COMMUNITY IN VARIOUS
PARTS OF THE COUNTRY
30 April, 2002**

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me once again clarify that I have not risen to reply to the discussion. The reply has to be given by Shri Mulayam Singh. He had moved the resolution, therefore the House should be ready to listen to him. I am just providing some information to the House. Apart from the announcement of rehabilitation package, I have to speak on two issues. Firstly, an allegation levelled against me during the discussion that I keep changing my statements. I refute it. My public life is open to all. My ideas may be different but why would I change them? What self-interest have I to serve? What political target have I to meet? It is said that I have said one thing in Gujarat and a completely different thing in Goa—but this is not true. What I said in Gujarat is not different from what I said in Goa. My speeches are taped. They have been published. There is no scope of changing them. I would like to quote what I said. I am accused of opposing Islam. I have been accused of opposing Muslims. It seems that all I had earned throughout my life is going to be robbed of me. Such allegations I consider a blot on my personality. I have never discriminated in my life—either on the basis of religion, or on the basis of birth or on the basis of caste—but this cycle of politics is such that is destroying all my prestige. I feel sad. What I said. What I said about Islam is like that.

Islam has two forms—one is tolerant to all, teaches to adhere to the path of truth, teaches us compassion and mercy. But the Islam—which is now being used in militancy, has no place for tolerance. It runs on the slogan of *Jehad* and dreams of bringing entire world under its aegis.

I am talking about my journey. I had been to Singapore and Cambodia. You would be surprised to know, as I was, that a few terrorists of *Al-Qaeda* were arrested in Singapore also. The Government of Singapore did not even think that *Al-Qaeda* would be active in their country—would be conspiring in their country. 15-16 persons have been arrested there and a covert inquiry is on. The aim is to find out the truth. The same thing is happening both in Indonesia and Malaysia. There are such Muslims who do not want to live with other people, they do not want to mix with other

people, instead of propagating their ideology peacefully, they want to propagate it by creating fear and terror among the people. The world has become conscious about this danger. What is objectionable about it?

But alongwith it, there is an allegation that I criticise Islamic fundamentalism, but not Hindu fundamentalism. This is also wrong. A few days back, I had to release a book 'India First' written by Shri Malkani, at that time I gave a speech. That book is mainly about Hinduism, but I said Hinduism should be liberal and generous. If we talk of Hinduism, I like the Hinduism of Vivekanand but I do not like Hinduism ideology based on narrow mindedness. Some of my friends took it ill. They may have different opinion. But I did not miss the opportunity to criticise it and I have always taken such step on the occasion of testing time that proves that the country should move on liberal path, path of harmony. This is the message of Indian culture. Today these allegations are being levelled to tarnish my image. It seems that a speech in one day has finished me. The allegation has become a never ending source of agony for me. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have mentioned an issue.

The Leader of the Opposition party had mentioned my name in her speech. She had appealed me to rise above the party line and think in the wider interest of the country. I respect her views. All of us has to rise above the party line. Whatever, I saw, heard and experienced about Gujarat, after that I have become apprehensive about the future. A new kind of communal position and fanaticism is being spread. I would call it madness, I do not know how far, the two-three stories which are being propagated, are true. But the kind of atrocities being committed against the women and the incident of their humiliation reflect that the set up of whole society has changed. Rioting is one thing. I can also understand betterness and fanaticism, but downfall of the human being to that extent that the rape is committed, but the rapist is not ashamed of his act, and the society does not use strong words for him or not express its feelings, then it should be assumed that the society is in the grip of such disease which will destroy our civilisation and culture if it is not treated. This is a new crisis. I know that a Marathi paper, wrote its Editorial. Whatever is written in it should not be misunderstood by anybody at this juncture. I do not know how far it will prove true. It wrote, Muslim brothers, why are you complaining that atrocities are being committed against you, this editorial is of Tarun Bharat, why are you complaining, the Hindu society is practicing the lesson learned from you. The present behaviour is condemnable. We were

proud of that. We would not flout the old tradition by our actions but I was stunned to hear that the people belonging to rich families also looted the shops. They were not short of anything. How the tendency of looting has developed? I have heard that they looted the items and after reaching home they found it was not good, then they again carried it by the same car and left it there from where it was looted and took the other items which they liked. If these incidents are true, it is really very sad.

A women delegation went to enquire about the atrocities committed against them. They talked with the women. They put a condition that when there will be no media person, no loudspeaker, no TV cameras and no male members, then they will talk. If the women delegation has come, it will talk only with women. They talked with women. I asked the delegation, how far the stories which are being propagated are true, it said that those stories are partially true. They are being exaggerated. It is very unfortunate. It is a different aspect. Serious consideration is required about the role of media in the Gujarat incidents. You will say that I am criticising the media. I am making media as scapegoat, but how far it is justified to telecast the scenes of murders, burned dead bodies repeatedly in the form of news. News can be telecast only once, but such things telecast repeatedly.

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Just now, Soniaji told me in her speech to rise above the party line. I want to rise, but I cannot rise alone. For this, Soniaji has to rise with me also. If we want to rise above party line, everybody should do it. If the nation is supreme, India is firm.

When I said that if the House had unanimously condemned the killing of people in Sabarmati Express in strong words, probably the incidents would not have taken place on next day and this opinion was not only mine. Today, Shri Chandrashekharji is present here, therefore, I am saying it in his presence. He said on that day, that they want to stop it. On that day Chandrashekharji wanted that the House which was adjourned due to uproar, be continued so that the accident of Sabarmati Express could be condemned but session could not take place. Soniaji said, who stopped me from holding the Session? I cannot alone hold the Session. After the budget, when we met next day, Chandrashekharji wanted, that all of us should collectively condemn it. Today, all of us are saying separately that we condemned it, we condemned, but the unanimous

voice of the House could have awakened the country, in this regard.

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Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I was wrong, I accept it. I should have made some effort, but somewhere it was in my mind that the Godhra incident would not take such an ugly turn. This was somewhere in my mind which was wrong. But the deep impact of this incident came to my knowledge subsequently. I had kept both the incidents together when I spoke in that regard for the first time. Whatever happened after Godhra incident cannot be justified both should be condemned. After all today why did Sonijai had to say that we had condemned it. I repeat, please do not go into the past unnecessarily, see to the future.

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Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, kindly guide us. We do not want that the House be divided on this issue. We are not saying this because we have less number of votes. We are in majority, but this is not the question of majority or minority. Today, there is danger to the dignity and prestige of the country and if this august House takes a step ahead, this atmosphere can be changed. Sir, with your permission, I read it out:—

"Rehabilitation of those who lost their homes, belongings and means of livelihood and immediate revival of normal economic activities in all the riot affected areas now remains primary national task. They need to be addressed with utmost expedition, understanding and sympathy. The spirit of spontaneous support and brotherhood demonstrated by all sections of the society in Gujarat in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake has to be kindled once again. The rehabilitation package has to be comprehensive and cover all strata of society.

I announce an immediate package of assistance of Rs. 150 crore to Government of Gujarat to carry out its implementation. This package of assistance will primarily include reconstruction and repair of damaged houses and shops, both in rural and urban areas, provision of assistance to all the self-employed categories who lost their earning assets, financial support for recommencing business commercial and industrial activities..."

It also includes revival of educational, medical and other institutions in the affected areas and special programmes to benefit widows and children.

This package will be fully supplemented by loans and assistance from banks and financial institutions on liberal and concessional terms as were extended following the earthquake of January 26, 2001.

The active involvement of HUDCO and the National Housing Bank for building and reconstruction of houses and shops would be enlisted. Similarly, financial institutions would be asked to catalyse industrial and economic activities. In this endeavour, the National Minorities Finance and Development Corporation would be enabled to play a supportive role.

Convergence of employment and welfare schemes like Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana and Sampurna Gramin Rozgar Yojana, would be promoted, where necessary be suitably augmenting the provisions under them, it will be ensured that no one affected by the communal riots is left out of this relief and rehabilitation.

This rehabilitation package is in addition to a comprehensive relief package that I had announced when I visited Ahmedabad on April 4, 2002. Since March, relief in one form or another is already in hand. To enhance the vital need for immediate rehabilitation. The Government will ensure that this package is implemented within four months. For this, the Cabinet Secretariat has been asked to monitor the work of implementation on a weekly basis.

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BACK NOTE

LIII Security of Minority Community in various parts of the Country, 30 April, 2002

1. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: The incidents are taking place daily.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: If incidents are taking place daily, they should be stopped. It is the duty of all of us to stop it.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR: Whether media can stop them?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Media can also be helpful in it, media has to play its role in it also. We do not want to control the media. The media people should themselves decide code of ethics for them. Earlier it was decided, that at the time of communal riots, name of people will not be given, it will also not be made public, how many Muslims and how many Hindus have been killed. Today, there is no such convention. Does it not spread communalism? There should be a code of conduct for it and all should collectively decide it.

2. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Why didn't you call a meeting?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We did not call any meeting. The House was in session. You did not let it run. Do not repeat the things that have already gone by. Let us now concentrate on the future.

3. SHRI PRAVIN RASHTRAPAL: Let us accept his Motion.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Sir, let there be a Substitute Motion. Let a Substitute Motion be drafted. Let the House, in one voice, express a view. Let us have it.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: You condemn both Godhra and Gujarat violence.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We condemn both the incidents.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: You bring it before the House.

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI (Amethi): Let us have a unanimous resolution now. Let us have it now.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I welcome this Resolution and let me announce a 'package' for those people who have been rendered homeless. In the meanwhile, the House may discuss that and form an opinion.

4. SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU: Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has given his reply. We made four demands. Some demands have been covered by the hon. Prime Minister. The foremost one is this. We have demanded the change in leadership to create faith and harmony among the people of Gujarat and to create normalcy and communal harmony in Gujarat. It has not been covered. So, in protest, we decide to walk out from the House.

FELICITATIONS TO THE SPEAKER

10 May, 2002

Mr. Speaker, Sir, many congratulations for getting elected to the post of Speaker, Lok Sabha. You have been elected unopposed. A convention has been followed and we have to further strengthen the democratic conventions. It is very essential that conventions should be established along with rules and should be followed strictly. You have taken this seat as a Speaker. This seat is a responsible seat, the responsibility and the prestige of the Parliament is in your hands. Your life has always been full of social activities. You have started your social life at the grass root level. You have been closely associated with education but besides education you have also shouldered the responsibilities of a public representative in politics. You were a corporator, you have worked as a Member of Legislative Assembly. You had a chance to serve Legislative Council. You were a Minister in Centre and State and you were also a Chief Minister. You have shouldered the responsibilities of all these posts with great efficiency. Besides, you always endeavoured in the field of education by starting a campaign, particularly in the field of technical education in Maharashtra, that every person of Maharashtra should take technical education and the State should progress in the field of industry and trade. I was told that in Maharashtra wherever there is a bus-stand there is a Khinoor technical institute. I am not aware whether the institute was opened by keeping in mind the bus-stand or the bus-stand was made keeping in mind the institute but both have coexistence.

I was told that while performing the official duties of a Chief Minister, you maintained links with the field of education and you had a class room and a black board, where students could study in the Chief Minister house 'Varsha' and you used to often work there as a teacher. I was told by someone that you are more popularly known as 'Sir'. You were addressed as 'Sir' just because you are a teacher. Today you are adorning the post of Speaker. It is a very prestigious and dignified post, it is as a throne of Vikramaditya, whoever occupies this, has to do justice, he has to be neutral and has to run the House as per the Constitution and the rules keeping this in view you have great responsibilities and we have full faith in you that you will discharge your duties very smoothly. You will always get full support from us in this regard.

Just now Deputy Speaker Saheb has recalled that the golden jubilee

celebrations of the Parliament will be celebrated within few days. A programme was organised on 13th May. If you refer to the proceedings of yester years you will find that approximately during these dates only Shri Dada Saheb Mavalankar was elected as the Speaker of Lok Sabha. You are going to take such a post. It is the need of the hour that the conventions are safeguarded. The dignity of this House is increased and the House should run smoothly. As I have already said that I have full faith on whoever occupies this seat because he has to do justice, he will have to be neutral and has to maintain the dignity of this post.

Due to death of Shri Balayogiji you have taken the responsibility to post of Speaker. When he became the Speaker for the first time we were rather uncertain regarding how he will be able to take all of us together. How he will manage to run this House but the way he carried out his duties as a Speaker elevated his stature for that every one remembers him and he will be remembered as a good Speaker. You are having the same reputation as he had. I am fully confident that the House will run smoothly under your guidance. The House will run smoothly and in a disciplined manner under your guidance. Wherever any lacuna is observed you will be putting efforts to settle it by taking the suggestions of one and all.

After the death of Shri Balayogi, Shri Sayeed Saheb, Deputy Speaker took over the charge and performed the duties efficiently. I whole heartedly appreciate him. Today is his birthday that is why many happy returns of the day to him. Today in the morning, when I telephoned him and conveyed my good wishes to him, he said whatever I have done it is just because of your cooperation. He ran the House efficiently in very odd situations. Now a new Speaker has been elected and he will put efforts to brave such situations. No doubt that we will be able to overcome any sort of crisis with the cooperation of one and all.

I want to congratulate Shri Sayeed Saheb and wish to welcome you also. You have been given a great responsibility. May God give you strength to carry out these responsibilities.

BACK NOTE

LIV Felicitations to the Speaker, 10 May, 2002

NIL

**UNPRECEDENTED DROUGHT SITUATION
IN THE COUNTRY
20 November, 2002**

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have not risen to give reply to the discussion the discussion will continue.

My colleague, the hon'ble Minister of Agriculture will give reply to the discussion. Shri Yadavji has presented some information in regard to the situation arisen due to drought during the discussion. It shows that drought is widespread, severe. The Union and State Governments are making efforts to handle this situation.

Sometimes this allegation hurts me that Union Government is discriminate the States on political ground. I deny this allegation. If it is the part of politics, then I do not want to say anything but during last threefour years, we have not discriminated among States on any matter. The fact is that we have taken initiative in helping those States, where BJP Government is not in power. NDA moves with the cooperation of regional parties.

I have some figures with me for comparison. I do not claim that I am the winner in any argument when allegations are levelled, the befitting reply has to be given. Severe drought hit the country in 1987 also. I would like to mention the steps taken by the then Government.

In 1987, 8-7 lakh tonnes of foodgrains were distributed under different employment schemes, whereas in the current year we have distributed 19-25 lakh tonnes of free foodgrains under 'Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana'. In 1987, Rs. 842 crore were spent on employment generation, whereas in the current year, already 2000 crore rupees have been spent, and more will be spent in future.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, effective steps have been taken in view of the severity of the famine this year. Centre is fulfilling its obligations and is providing assistance to the States. The financial condition of several States is not satisfactory. Hence while formulating the schemes we are paying attention to the fact that the interests of the States should not be neglected.

A provision for 10 thousand crore rupees has been made for the Food for Work Scheme wherein States would be provided the foodgrains worth

5 thousand crore rupees annually. The remaining Rs. 500 crore is to be given as cash to the States. Similarly the State Governments can implemented various small irrigation projects and water harvesting schemes. We want that such schemes be completed in time so that the people may get relief from the drought.

Sir, steps have been taken in the entire country to provide some relief to the farmers regarding the burden of loans. The interest realisation on the crop loan has been stopped. We have said that the loans on crop along with the interest thereon would not be realised during the current financial year. The Government have announced for providing relief in the payment of crop loans in view of the severity of the drought. This benefit would be available to all the drought affected areas.

We do not want the issue of drought to be politicised. There is no dearth of the will power, rather it is strong. Decisions are also being taken without delay but the root cause of the problems coming to the fore at various places in the system have been received in legacy and we have failed to rectify in the last four years. We provided foodgrains and it became available to the States but the problem was how to send it to the districts, tehsils and the villages. Some States stated their problem in that though the centre is providing free foodgrains to them, who would bear the cost of its transportation when they lack sufficient funds to meet it. This is the problem and the decision have been taken keeping this thing in view.

I would like that we should consider by sidelining our political interests even though the politics goes in for the entire 365 days and the elections also do take place every now and then. The issue of vote also comes to the fore at some place or the other but in view of the severity of drought it can be said that unless States and the Centre cooperate with each other and all the political parties cooperate even in the Centre, it would be very difficult to overcome this crisis. I would like to appeal all to extend their cooperation in combating this drought.

Shrimati Sonia Gandhiji said that the All Party Meeting has not taken place. Now-a-days even the meeting of the Chief Minister is an all party meet. The meeting of the Agriculture Ministers had taken place. We maintain contact and exchange our views. We have also extended our cooperation to the States which have constituted their all party committees. We should avoid the

instinct of playing politics and I do not know as to how much we can do so in electoral years.

All of us are suffering from the same disease and I shudder to think as how far our country would face this dreaded drought. Drought strikes every two to three years. There are no foodgrains, fodder and the drinking water and a permanent solution to this problem has to be found out.

Though this issue was considered after Independence but desirable attention was not paid to this issue. May be the dearth of resources was the reason of failure. Effort to link all rivers can be made. Still only 40 per cent land is irrigated and the rest is still without water. Water is life and if enough attention had been paid earlier towards the various water harvesting projects, situation would have been different. However, I would like to urge upon the House to cooperate with me in this regard. All of you should decide collectively. I assure you that there would not be lack of funds to the project for linking all the rivers.

When the projects to broaden highways and construct new ones were started, doubts were raised regarding the mobilisation of funds at such a large scale. The money is in the country, the need is to spend it properly. Rivers can be linked and the talks can be held with the neighbouring countries. There is a need to raise this issue at a war footing. How long would we continue to face the drought? Allegations and counter allegations would follow and the life would become even more miserable. Now, the foodgrains production has increased and our farmer and the scientists deserve congratulations for this. However, the news of starvation deaths are being reported despite the availability of foodgrains. The truth of the news is only revealed later on. Clarifications are given but what impression does it convey to the psyche of the people abroad and they are forced to ponder as to what kind of country is this where the people are dying of hunger despite the fact that the godowns are filled with foodgrains.

This is not an issue of a party. Today different States are being ruled by different parties. We have to take every Government along with us and extend our support to all and seek everyone's support. However, the starvation deaths lead to controversies. One part of media is interested in such happenings to keep their newspapers running. This is not right and I do not want to dwell in it detail.

Such an incident has also taken place in Orissa. Somebody had gone

there to take a photograph. When he got the news that a person had died due to starvation but to his dismay he found that there was no death and he declined to take photograph. Rather he waited for him to die. Later it become clear that there was no possibility of starvation death there. However, ensuring the proper distribution of foodgrains is the responsibility of the system and we are somewhat lacking on this count. We will have to find a solution to it.

However, I was talking about linking the rivers. Supreme Court has taken initiative only later on, after our meeting in the Centre had taken place. One presentation took place and the Government and the Ministry were asked to formulate a scheme. I invite Soniaji to cooperate with us in this work. This would change the destiny of our country. It will take time to link all the rivers and to find a solution to drought problem but we have enough time to accomplish our task. A task force on Cauvery and Ganga has been set up.

Now-a-days I am associated with the Cauvery dispute and the dilemma is whether to hear Karnataka's arguments or look at the Tamil Nadu's interests. Courts though arbitrate, it takes a lot of time. How can we resolve these riparian disputes? The decision of the Supreme Court should be accepted but how long the issue of sharing the river water would remain as the bone of contention between us. I am of the view that the entire House should start thinking and making progress in this direction and it is what we want to convey through the session and Government's programme.

There are several other issues and I would not say much on it. I would like to reiterate that drought be kept aside of the politics. Drought be viewed as a humanitarian issue. There is no fodder for the animals. Though we have been supplying it yet it is not adequate. Similarly there is a dearth of drinking water. Transportation of the free drinking water, fodder and foodgrains is being done by Railways. There is no shortage of foodgrains in the country but there is a problem of its distribution and I invite that all hon. Members give their suggestions to improve the condition in their respective constituencies to the State Governments and send the copy of the same to the Centre also. The menace of the drought is going to last long. Now new crop is to be sown. How much losses will be suffered is hard to estimate but we should be ready to face all the circumstances. I wish that the discussion prove fruitful from that point of view.

BACK NOTE

**LV Unprecedented Drought Situation in the Country,
20 November, 2002**

NIL

VISIT OF SHRI VLADIMIR PUTIN, PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO INDIA

11 December, 2002

Mr. Speaker, Sir, President of Russian Federation paid a State visit to India from 3 to 5 December, 2002. His visit has upheld the established practice of convening annual meetings at summit level a practice which we started since October, 2002. President Putin called on our President who hosted a banquet in the honour of the distinguished guest. Vice-President, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of External Affairs and Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha also met President Putin.

The President Putin and I had a detailed discussion on bilateral relations. We exchanged our views on regional and international issues of our mutual interests. By these indepth discussions, we have reached to several bilateral agreements between the two countries on mutual interests.

Important documents were issued at the end of the summit which reflect our mutual interests. These include Delhi Declaration on further consolidation of Strategic Partnership, Joint Declaration on Strengthening and Enhancing Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation and a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Combating Terrorism. These documents and other related joint declarations have been placed on the Table of the House. Documents related to cooperation in telecommunication sector and intellectual property rights in the field of science and technology were also signed. A protocol was also signed for cooperation between Karnataka Government and Samara region of Russian Federation.

I hope these documents will further strengthen the political and legal basis of the multifaceted cooperation between India and Russian Federation.

President Putin and I agreed that we should take initiatives to promote bilateral trade and economic relations. We will have to expand trade in high value and hightech goods and in other fields such as oil and gas, diamond etc. There is immediate need of diversification in trade because under bilateral agreement of RupeeRouble, there would be steep fall in the repayment by the year 2005. At present, the entire export is funded by this repayment only. We also expressed our consent to promote the mutual investments.

Cooperation in energy sector has a long term significance for both

the countries. Both sides will hold regular bilateral discussion through appropriate mechanisms regarding global energy production and supplies. Sakhalin-I Project has made a good progress in our cooperation. We have agreed to extend our cooperation to other projects including Caspian Sea Projects and other aspects of the energy sector.

We expressed satisfaction on the progress being made in the implementation of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project and recognised that the expanded scope of the project would be in the interests of both the countries. President Putin confirmed Russia's interest to continue its cooperation to India in peaceful and civilian application of nuclear energy. During the joint press conference held after our talks, he expressed the need to reform the international situation. We fully agreed with this.

Hon'ble Members are aware of expanded defence cooperation between the two countries. Now our cooperation is not confined to buyer and seller of weapons rather it includes joint research, development and production also. The latest Brahmos missile is a product of our joint research and development efforts. Both the countries are going to start co-production of this missile system so that it could be inducted in armed forces of both the countries. President Putin and I agreed that there are number of other projects for which we need mutual cooperation in future.

Delhi Declaration, emphasized that none of the two countries would take any action which may threaten the security of the other. We have declared that both the countries would follow these principles in their security and defence policies and in military-technical cooperation with third countries. These are important mutual commitments which strengthen the active defence cooperation between India and Russian Federation.

While reviewing the international situation, we were of the similar view that strong and permanent measures should be taken to combat international terrorism. United Nation's Security Council Regulations- especially-1373 should be implemented strictly against terrorism. Both the countries are victims of terrorism and its roots are in our common neighbourhood. It is in the interest of both the countries to combat terrorism through preventive and deterrent measures at national and bilateral level. An agreement to set up a Joint working Group for combating terrorism will further strengthen our cooperation in this regard. Both the countries expressed concern at the

threat to Afghanistan's security from the possible regrouping of Former Taliban and Al-qaida elements and their continuing links with their sponsors. We expressed full support to the President Karzai's Government in Afghanistan and the efforts made by it for national harmony, economic reconstruction and rebuilding of Afghan institutions. India and Russia will cooperate in promoting reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's priorities would be considered in this regard, India would also continue its bilateral dialogue with Afghanistan leadership and would further strengthen its traditional relations with the people of Afghanistan.

Our views on the situation in South Asia have been expressed in our joint statement. Russia agrees with our point that we can resume dialogue with Pakistan only when it stops cross border infiltration and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan controlled territory.

In short, President Putin's visit has served our purpose to continue summit level dialogues. Russia on all the issues of mutual interests of both the countries. His visit has emphasised the importance of our mutual commitment to constantly strengthen our strategic partnership and political consultations and to give a new dimension to our economic relations. His visit has proved our common views on various major international issues.

We will continue to give highest importance to our relations with Russian Federation. I have accepted President Putin's invitation to visit Russia next year keeping in view our commitment to hold annual Summits.

*** Delhi Declaration on**

**Further Consolidation of Strategic Partnership between
the Republic of India and the Russian Federation**

The Republic of India and the Russian Federation,

- relying on long-standing traditions of friendship and good-neighbourliness;
- recalling the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Russian Federation of 28 January, 1993 and the Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of India and the Russian Federation of 5 October, 2000;
- proceeding from the fact that the strategic partnership between

India and Russia is founded on the complementary of national interests and geopolitical parities of the two countries;

- determined to elevate their strategic partnership to an even higher and qualitatively new level in both bilateral and international arenas;

- recognizing respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity, plurality, diversity and tolerance as the cornerstone of a stable and enduring multi-polar world;

- recognizing also their unique role and responsibility as multi-ethnic and pluralistic States in contributing to a stable world order, as envisaged in the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000 and the Moscow Declaration by the Republic of India and the Russian Federation of 30 June 1994 on the Protection of Interests of Pluralistic States, and in contributing to peace, stability and prosperity in Asia and all over the world;

- determined to counter new challenges and threats to security primarily international terrorism through mechanisms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation;

hereby declare:

Our strategic partnership provides a solid framework for long-term and all-round development of relations. Mutual security, development and prosperity of our peoples are core objectives of this partnership. It also contributes to countering global challenges and threats and promoting stability at the international level.

The established practice of holding annual meetings at summit level as well as at Ministerial and working levels, and exchanges between Parliamentary, judicial and other constitutional bodies would be further intensified. There would be particular emphasis on deepening the economic content of bilateral relations. People to people contacts would be strengthened through an expanding network of ties between the two societies.

Internationally accepted standards of democracy and the rule of law, as enshrined in our respective Constitutions, are basic components of our political systems. They are reliable guarantees for a pluralistic political, social and economic framework and for the promotion and protection of the aspirations of our peoples for human rights, life with dignity and freedom from want

* Laid on the table

and fear. These are standards which shall also guide our relations with other countries. As large multi-ethnic and pluralistic states, we are convinced of our special responsibility to combat and bring to an end challenges posed to our unique attributes, including our territorial integrity, by forces of terrorism, extremism and separatism.

We reiterate our support for each other's territorial integrity and respect for each other's sovereignty, enshrined in our respective Constitutions. Neither side shall take any actions which might threaten or impair the security of the other. Both sides shall be guided by this principle in determining their security and defence policies as well as in military technical cooperation with third countries.

Bilateral cooperation as well as cooperation with other countries would be further enhanced to meet the various challenges of globalization, in particular the mitigation of its negative manifestations. Globalization and national identity represent complementary components of world order. Recognition of and respect for diversity is a necessary precondition for human progress, and an essential component of the Dialogue between Civilizations.

Enduring ties of friendship, trust and confidence and commonality of interests confer on India and Russia a unique capability to contribute to the evolution of a new world order, which would be stable, secure, equitable and sustainable and will be based on the respect for the principles of the UN Charter and international law. To fulfil this vision, both sides would endeavour to strengthen relevant international institutions and mechanism. Both countries reaffirm that now more than ever before there is a need for the international community to commit itself to the UN and multilateralism.

Both countries favour strengthening of UN's central role in promoting international security in a multi-polar world. They stand for enhancing the efficiency of the UN and its Security Council and making them more reflective of the contemporary geopolitical and economic realities and rendering them more representative of the interests of the vast majority of the UN members by completing the process of rationally reforming the Organisation based on the broad-based consensus of its member-States. In this context, Russia reaffirms its support to India as a strong and appropriate candidate for permanent membership in an expanded United Nations Security Council.

We take note of the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg and in this context, welcome the reaffirmation of the Rio principles. Taking note of the importance attached to the issue of climate change by both the countries, we welcome the results of the Eighth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change hosted by India in October November 2002 and the initiative of the President of the Russian Federation to convene in Moscow in Autumn 2003 the World Conference on Climate Change.

Both the countries reiterate their commitment to work towards a new cooperative security order that recognizes the legitimate security interests of all countries and promotes global peace and stability at lower levels of armaments and strengthens nonproliferation and disarmament goals. India and Russia are convinced that the promotion of the disarmament process, including reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, is one of the most important components of security both in Asia and in the world at large.

We call for early start of multilateral talks aimed at preparing a comprehensive arrangement on non-deployment of weapons in outer space, non-use or threat of use of force in respect of space based objects and preserving the use of space for full range of cooperative, peaceful and developmental activities.

Situation in our common neighbourhood — Afghanistan and Central Asia — is of vital security interest to both the countries. We feel that there is a need to continuously assess the evolving Afghan situation and intend to continue and expand the close cooperation on Afghanistan. We welcome the successful implementation of the Bonn Agreement and extend full support to the Transitional Administration, aimed at promoting national reconciliation, reconstruction of Afghan economy and rebuilding the Afghan institutions, including indigenous security structures, which are important for countering and defeating internal and external threats to Afghanistan's security. India and Russia agree to cooperate closely in the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and agreed that these should be driven by Afghan priorities. We underline the need for the United Nations and the international community to remain engaged for ensuring the revival of Afghanistan as a sovereign and independent State, free from terrorism, drugs and external interference. Both sides have a vital interest in maintaining security, stability and a secular order in the Central

Asian region.

We call for containment of the spiral of violence in the Middle East and resumption, in good faith, of the negotiations towards establishment of a just and durable peace on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397(2002).

Both the countries support the continuation of political and diplomatic efforts to fully implement all the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Iraq.

India and Russia have been victims of terrorism and, as democratic and open societies, have been vulnerable to the threats posed by globalization of terror, including new manifestations of linkage between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Terrorism constitutes a gross violation of human rights, particularly the most fundamental right, the right to life, and is a crime against humanity. India and Russia firmly condemn all acts of terrorism wherever they may occur and whatever may be their motivation. Terrorism cannot be justified on any grounds and must be condemned unambiguously wherever it exists. Both the countries strongly condemn those who support terrorism or finance, train, harbour or support terrorists. States that aid abet or shelter terrorists are as guilty of the acts of terrorism as their perpetrator.

We are fully determined to strengthen our cooperation in the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism, and the support these phenomena receive from organized crime and illicit arms and drugs trafficking. Both the countries regard these as global threats, which can be effectively countered only through collective, comprehensive, determined and sustained efforts of the international community. The fight against terrorism must not admit of any double standards and should also target the financial and other sources of support to terrorism. Both the countries reaffirm the relevance of the Moscow Declaration by the Republic of India and the Russian Federation on International Terrorism of 6 November 2001. In this regard, they also stress the paramount importance of strict implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on the fight against terrorism, in particular Resolution 1373, and universal anti-terrorist conventions which create the basic framework for national, regional and international obligations and cooperation of the international community in combating terrorism, in accordance with the UN Charter. India and Russia remain fully committed to implement this Resolution and call for an early

agreement on, and entry into force of, the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism and the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

As victims of terrorism having its roots in our common neighbourhood, we have a particular interest in putting an end to this common threat through preventive and deterrent measures nationally and bilaterally. The two countries agree to enhance bilateral cooperation in order to combat terrorism, including in the context of the cooperation under the aegis of the Joint Working Group on Afghanistan and the Group on terrorism set up by the National Security Council of India and the Security Council of the Russian Federation. The agreement to set up an Indo-Russian Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism will further strengthen our cooperation in this sphere.

Both sides recognize that factors influencing global energy production and supplies constituted an element of vital national interest and would be the subject of regular bilateral discussions through relevant mechanisms. India and Russia would strengthen cooperation in all areas of the energy sector taking into account the needs of sustainable development and environmental protection.

The Republic of India and the Russian Federation are convinced that this Declaration will widen and strengthen the framework of the existing cooperation in different areas and will contribute to consolidation of our strategic partnership.

Sd/-

The Prime Minister,
The Republic of India

Sd/-

The President of The Russian
Federation

New Delhi, 4 December 2002

**Joint Declaration on Strengthening and
Enhancing Economic, Scientific and Technological
Cooperation between the Republic of India
and the Russian Federation**

1. The Republic of India and the Russian Federation consider it vitally important to expand economic relations between the two countries. Along with the political & strategic dimensions, effective cooperation in the economic & allied fields is at the core of the Indo-Russian partnership. In the longer term perspective of further cementing the bilateral relationship, this subject received

special focus at the talks between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation during the State visit of the President of the Russian Federation to India from 3-5 December 2002. The two leaders underlined the following principles of cooperation.

2. India and Russia have growing market economies, with abundant natural and human resources, well-established productive capacities in industry, agriculture, services and science & technology. In the last decade, with the stimulus of reforms and liberalization, the economies of the two countries have acquired a new dynamism and significant new capabilities and Requirements have emerged.

3. This has created a qualitatively changed environment for bilateral economic cooperation. The two countries should strive to make optimal use of the enhanced opportunities that have thus arisen, for mutually beneficial interaction which would add to the strength of the two national economies, and to the welfare and prosperity of the two people. This would also be essential for reinforcing the overall relationship and for providing more substance and long term sustainability to the strategic partnership between India and the Russian Federation.

4. While progress is being made in this direction, through increased bilateral investment and business exchanges, the great inherent potential of economic cooperation is far from being fully realized and falls short of excellent political relations between the two countries.

5. Taking the above elements into account, special focus and direction will be given to upgrading bilateral economic relations. While the business sector and the scientists and technologists of the two countries would be the leading participants, the two governments will fulfil their key responsibility in facilitating and sustaining this process. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment in this regard.

6. Accordingly, the Governments of India and the Russian Federation would strengthen their regular contact and consultation with the business sector on progress in economic cooperation. They will work out broad concepts and a roadmap for strengthening and enhancing bilateral economic relations.

7. They would also strive to ensure that governmental policy and the framework of institutions, agencies and regulations provide for a positive

environment for the conduct of business interaction and investment. They will work together for putting in place the following measures:

(1) Creating a favourable environment for bilateral investment and its promotion and protection.

(2) Enabling business organizations to get the full support of financial institutions in their trade and investment exchanges. This would include expediting the opening of the branches of Indian commercial banks in Russia and *vice-versa*.

Cooperation in this sector would include human resource development.

(3) Strengthening transportation links and infrastructure in different modes, within and between the two countries, in order to support increased flow of traffic in goods and service, as well as tourism and travel. Special importance will be attached to registering forward movement on bilateral and trilateral consultations to operationalize the NorthSouth International Transport Corridor. Attention will also be paid to maintain effective communication links, especially in electronic and telecommunication fields.

(4) Streamlining customs administration to facilitate trade growth.

(5) Harmonizing national standardization and certification regulations relevant to trade and investment. This would encompass exchanges of empowered delegations representing the regulatory bodies of the two countries. Such cooperation would also focus on removing technical barriers to trade between the two countries.

(6) Putting in place an efficient visa regime for business exchanges.

(7) Encouraging active interaction between the insurance sectors of the two countries.

(8) Exploring the possibilities of establishing a joint venture fund to help start up new enterprises.

(9) Consistent with bilateral agreements, encouraging economic interaction at the regional level.

8. Adequate up-to-date information about mutual requirements and possibilities is necessary for the healthy growth of economic cooperation between the two countries. There is therefore, a pressing need to assist and

reinforce the efforts of the business and related sectors for instituting arrangements for effective information flow through regular contact, exchange of visits, communication through electronic means, use of mass media, and holding of and active participation in trade fairs and exhibitions. The two Governments would make the best effort to encourage this activity. They would also assist in the establishment of a joint business centre, in both countries, for disseminating information and functioning as a database on developments and trends in the national economies of India and the Russian Federation for identifying possibilities for trade and investment.

9. The two sides recognized that a sustained business sector dialogue is vital to progress in their economic relations. Hence, strengthened regular contact between business federations, both national and regional is essential. In this regard they were encouraged by the activation of the work of the Joint Business Council, and the new contacts between Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs and Confederation of Indian Industry. Such exchanges will be strengthened.

10. Recognizing the vital importance of small and medium enterprises in the economies of India and Russia, in the export sector in particular, and the special emphasis being given to this sector in both countries, it was agreed that attention will be paid to promoting contacts as well as informational and commercial exchanges and bilateral investments in the field of Small and Medium Enterprises.

11. The two sides will encourage cooperation on exchange of experience in management, and support business sector initiatives in this field, especially in the Small and Medium Enterprises sector.

12. The Governments of the two countries would support measures for expanding existing trade exchanges in commodities, consumer goods, light engineering items, food processing and agricultural products. They will also make efforts to develop trade in, and joint ventures for the production of, knowledge-based high technology goods and services that might be added to the trade basket.

13. Both sides would take practical steps to further enhance the quality and international competitiveness of their goods and services. The business community would be encouraged to establish quality assurance mechanisms consistent with national legislation.

14. The two Governments will jointly explore possibilities of regional trade and economic cooperation arrangements with other countries in a manner that is in harmony with their respective national interests.

15. Both countries have a long tradition and well established capabilities in science and technology and a record of fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation. This interaction will be strengthened with special emphasis on the creation of conditions for meaningful commercialization of key technologies consistent with national legislation and international agreements. This would also involve attention to high-technology and frontier areas of research and application. The possibilities of working together in key areas such as tele-communication, computerization, information technology and space research will be actively taken up. Both Governments will provide organizational and other necessary support for this purpose.

16. The two sides will strive to maximize the opportunities provided by the presence of large reservoirs of skilled manpower in their respective countries for the creation of knowledge based industries, while also ensuring the protection of intellectual property rights in each others' markets, especially with regard to copyrights and patents.

17. Particular attention will be devoted to the issue of energy security which is considered an increasingly important component of bilateral relations between India and the Russian Federation. The two sides indicated their common desire to intensify long-term cooperation in this sector, which could be extended to other areas, including the Caspian Sea, and to other aspects of the energy sector.

18. In the pursuit of strengthening bilateral economic relations, due importance will be given to the principles of sustainable development and environmental protection.

19. The two sides recognized the importance of cooperation in their interaction with international trade, economic and financial bodies. India supports the early accession of Russia to the World Trade Organisation, and will extend all possible assistance in this regard.

20. The two sides recognize the sustained contribution of the Inter-Governmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and

Cultural Cooperation in providing direction and a larger systematic framework for their economic relations. The Inter-Governmental Commission and its subsidiary bodies will play an essential coordinating and nodal role in implementing the provisions of this Joint Declaration. The Inter-Governmental Commission will set up a task force to monitor the progress in implementing the steps elaborated in this Joint Declaration and to report at the next Summit meeting.

Sd/-

The Prime Minister,
The Republic of India

Sd/-

The President of The Russian
Federation

New Delhi, 4 December 2002

Memorandum of Understanding

*between the Government of the Republic of India and the
Government of the Russian Federation on
Cooperation in Combating Terrorism*

The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Russian Federation, hereinafter referred to as the Parties.

Taking into account the goals and principles of the existing international agreements on combating terrorism, resolutions of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, Acting in pursuance of the Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of India and the Russian Federation of 5 October 2000 and the Moscow Declaration on International Terrorism by the Republic of India and the Russian Federation of 6 November 2001.

Expressing concern about the growing terrorist threat.

Condemning all forms of terrorist activities without any exception, Recognizing that terrorism poses a threat to the international peace and security, development of friendly relations among States, as well as to the enjoyment of basic human rights and freedoms, Bearing in mind the existing links between all forms of organized crime, primarily between terrorism and crimes related to narcotic drugs and various smuggling activities,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

1. The Parties shall, in accordance with their national legislation:

(a) exchange information on terrorist groups whose activities undermine their interests, including information on the establishment of contacts between terrorist groups of both countries;

(b) exchange information about possible terrorist acts against their countries and nationals, including through diplomatic channels, as necessary;

(c) when their interests are affected, the Parties shall interact with each other in actions to prevent and investigate terrorist acts, search for and detain persons responsible for committing them.

2. The Parties shall cooperate in providing security during contacts at State and Government levels, as well as during international public sports and other events.

3. The Parties shall interact in providing security of transport communications between both countries and, for this purpose, shall take measures to share information and experience between respective security authorities.

4. The Parties shall maintain contacts on matters related to the prevention of terrorist acts with possible use of nuclear, chemical and biological materials.

5. The Parties shall take measures to exchange information and cooperate in prevention and suppression of illicit drugs and arms trafficking, which plays an important role in financing terrorist organizations.

6. The Parties shall share knowledge and experience in prevention and suppression of specific terrorist acts, such as taking of hostages and skyjacking, and shall conduct relevant joint activities.

7. The Parties shall organize, on a mutual basis, training of their counterterrorist units personnel, as well as exchange of knowledge and experience with a view to improving equipment, weapons and technical protection.

8. The Parties shall facilitate exchange of appropriate equipment and technologies.

9. The Parties shall cooperate and assist each other:

(a) in studying the causes, substance, structure, dynamics and manifestations of terrorism;

(b) in exchanging relevant scientific and training materials, experts and trainees;

- (c) in organizing joint working meetings, workshops and seminars;
- (d) in identifying, preventing and suppressing the funding of persons and organizations involved in terrorist activities;
- (e) in exercising control over the organizations conducting money or other property transactions to counteract legalization (laundering) of income from criminal activities for the purposes of financing terrorism.

10. In order to improve the efficiency of their cooperation under this Memorandum the Parties may designate, on a mutual basis, responsible liaison officers.

Article 2

The Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation shall establish a Working Group on combating terrorism. The activities of the Group shall be governed by the Annex constituting an integral part of this Memorandum.

Article 3

This Memorandum shall not affect the rights and obligations of the Parties resulting from other international treaties or convention to which they are parties.

Article 4

1. This Memorandum shall enter into force 30 days after receipt of the last written notification about the completion by the Parties of their domestic procedures necessary for its entry into force and shall remain in force for one year.

2. This Memorandum shall be automatically extended to subsequent one-year periods unless one of the Parties, at least 90 days in advance, shall notify the other Party in writing of its intention to terminate it.

Done at New Delhi on 4 December 2002 in two copies, each in the Hindi, Russian and English languages, all texts being equally authentic.

Sd/-

The Prime Minister,
The Republic of India

Sd/-

The President of The Russian
Federation

Annex

The Establishment of a Joint Indian-Russian Working Group on Combating International Terrorism

1. The Parties shall establish a Joint Indian-Russian Working Group with the aim:

- to exchange experiences and results of assessments of actions of international terrorists, drug trafficking and their relationship;

- to coordinate approaches to combating international terrorism and drug trafficking;

- to exchange information on activities of the terrorist groups based in India and Russia or any other terrorist groups with transnational links;

- to suppress activities of terrorist groups, including those planning, supporting or committing terrorist acts against India and Russia; and

- to institutionalize cooperation.

2. The Working Group will:

- endeavour to uncover international networks supporting terrorist activities and illegal drug trafficking;

- consider procedures for the exchange of operational intelligence information;

- suggest means for enhancing cooperation in the following areas.

- (a) arrest, extradition and criminal prosecution of terrorists;

- (b) mutual technical assistance, in particular in the form of training of police and public security officers and exchange of professional experience;

- (c) identification, prevention and suppression of financial sources/flows of funds to terrorist organizations;

- explore ways and means of supporting legal measures against international terrorism and drug trafficking;

- exchange experience in preventing skyjacking, rescuing hostages and protecting of very important persons;

- cooperation in preventing access of terrorist organizations, acting against

any countries or from their territories, to weapons of mass destruction;

interact with a view to track and suppress legalization of income from criminal activities;

coordinate efforts with a view to promptly negotiate and adopt a comprehensive convention to combat international terrorism;

cooperate with a view to track activities of terrorist organizations with transnational links;

discuss means of coordination of efforts with Interpol, the United Nations and other multilateral fora;

upon mutual agreement of the Parties, maintain cooperation in other areas.

3. On the part of India, the Ministry of External Affairs will be the leading agency for coordinating activities of the Working Group, with the participation of representatives of the Ministry of Home Affairs and departments concerned with anti-terrorist activities as well as issues relating to the prevention of drug trafficking and money laundering. On the part of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be the leading agency for coordinating activities of the Working Group, with the participation of representatives of appropriate Russian departments.

4. The Working Group will hold its meetings at least twice a year in suitable for both Parties time. The meetings will be held alternately in New Delhi and Moscow.

The Working Group will abide by strict confidentiality in its work. Any information provided by one party to the other pursuant to cooperation under this Memorandum may not be disclosed to a third party without the consent of the party which provided the information.

Joint Statement

The President of the Russian Federation, H.E Mr. Vladimir Putin paid a state visit to India from 3-5 December 2002.

The President of the Russian Federation met the President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. The Vice President of India Shri B.S. Shekhawat, the Deputy Prime Minister Shri L.K. Advani and the Minister of External Affairs

Shri Yashwant Sinha and the Leader of the Opposition Smt. Sonia Gandhi called on the President of the Russian Federation. The Prime Minister of India Shri A.B. Vajpayee and the President of the Russian Federation held talks on a range of bilateral, international and regional issues.

The wide-ranging discussions took place in the traditional atmosphere of warmth and cordiality, trust and friendship and mutual confidence characteristic of the relationship between the two countries.

The Delhi Declaration on Further Consolidation of the Strategic Partnership between India and the Russian Federation, signed by the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation during the visit, aims at elevating the strategic partnership to an even higher and a qualitatively new level in both bilateral relations and in the international arena. A "Joint Declaration on Strengthening and Enhancing Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Russian Federation" was also signed. This document focuses in particular on upgrading bilateral economic relations — trade, investment, new areas of cooperation and science and technology projects with a commercial content. A number of other agreements were also signed to facilitate the further development of Indo-Russian relations in various fields of cooperation.

Both sides expressed satisfaction regarding the established practice of holding annual meetings at the summit level as well as meetings and exchanges at Ministerial and other levels. Both sides reiterated their determination to continue and further expand the excellent political contacts between the two countries. The regular and indepth Foreign Office consultations on a wide range of issues were considered useful and productive.

The enhanced level of interaction between the National Security Council of India and the Security Council of the Russian Federation has provided a valuable dimension to the consultations between the two countries on addressing common threats and challenges.

Both sides reaffirmed their intention to redouble their efforts to further strengthen trade and economic relations aimed at promoting investment, boosting trade as well as removing trade barriers. Sharing a positive assessment of the work of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation, the leaders stressed the need to adopt a farsighted approach/longterm strategy based on the changes

anticipated in the content of bilateral economic ties as well as emerging trends in the global arena. In this connection, the Inter-Sessional Review Meeting of the Co-Chairmen held in New Delhi in November 2002 was considered to be of significance.

Both sides noted that energy security was a promising area of cooperation between the two sides. This was demonstrated by the conclusion of an agreement enabling participation of ONGC Videsh Limited in the Sakhalin Oil and Gas Project in the Russian Federation. Both sides would hold regular bilateral discussions, through appropriate mechanisms, regarding global energy production and supplies, which impact on their mutual interests.

Both sides noted with satisfaction the progress being made in the implementation of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project and recognised that the expanded scope of the project would meet the interests of both countries.

The successful launch of the GSLV in April 2001, which used a Russian cryogenic stage, was an example of the productive potential of cooperation between India and Russia in the peaceful applications of space technology. Both sides reiterated their commitment to further expand cooperation in this area.

Both sides noted that expanded cooperation in the field of military technical cooperation, especially joint research, development and training, as well as interservices contacts, were consistent with the national security interests of both countries and for the cause of peace and stability in Asia and beyond.

Both sides agreed that it was important to strengthen the traditional contacts in the field of culture and consolidating the long-standing historical links between the peoples of the two countries. It was reiterated that Cultural Exchange Programme for the period 2003-2004 would be signed in the very near future.

India and Russia noted the need to protect and promote the unique artistic and cultural legacy of the Roerich family which has an abiding significance to Indo-Russian friendship.

Both sides decided to bring out a joint publication of the important agreements and documents signed between the Republic of India and the Russian Federation since 1993.

The two sides had an indepth exchange of views on regional and international issues of mutual interest and concern. They noted a high degree of mutual understanding and close proximity of views.

India and Russia, as strategic partners, reaffirmed their commitment to cooperate bilaterally and at international fora on issues relating to strategic stability for the development of a multipolar world based on a new cooperative security order. The relationship of friendship, trust and confidence contributed to Eurasian stability as a whole and was a factor of global significance.

The objectives of strengthening regional and international security as well as extending support for advancing towards internationally recognised disarmament goals, in particular, through systematic and progressive efforts aimed at reducing nuclear weapons globally with the ultimate goal of eliminating them, were considered to be of primary importance. India welcomed the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Weapons signed by Russia and the US to progressively reduce their strategic offensive weapons. India and Russia called upon other nuclear weapon states also to join the process of nuclear reductions at an appropriate stage.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening their system of national export controls without adversely affecting the peaceful application of dual use materials and technologies. They would also work towards further enhancing high-technology exchanges, trade and commerce consistent with the strategic partnership between the two countries.

Both sides confirmed their determination to contribute to the establishment of a just multipolar world based on the principles of respect for the UN Charter and international law in the interest of removing threats to international peace and security. They advocate further reforming the United Nations with a view to strengthening it as the central mechanism for ensuring international peace and security as well as democratising international relations. Both sides agreed on the necessity of continuing the reform of the United Nations Security Council with a view to making it more representative and effective. The Russian Federation reaffirmed its support to the Republic of India as a deserving and strong candidate for the permanent membership in an expanded United Nations Security Council.

Both sides confirmed that international terrorism, religious extremism, separatism and secessionism, transborder organised crime and illicit traffic in arms and drugs constitute a growing and serious threat to international peace, security and stability. The tragedy involving hostage-taking in Moscow in October 2002 as well as the wave of terrorist attacks in India and other countries demonstrate that the international community is faced with an extensive threat by the forces of international terrorism, India and Russia firmly reject and condemn all types of terrorism, based on any ground — political, religious or ideological — and wherever it may exist. It was emphasized that the counter-measures against this menace should be taken on a comprehensive and sustained basis. Such measures should be directed also against those States, entities and individuals who support, fund or abet terrorists or provide them shelter or asylum to engage in cross-border terrorism. There should be no double-standards in the fight against terrorism. Both sides also reaffirmed the relevance of the Moscow Declaration on International Terrorism of 6 November 2001. They stressed the importance of strict implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on the Fight Against Terrorism, in particular Resolution 1373. They also advocated intensifying efforts to finalise in the United Nations the draft International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the draft Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism. Roots of terrorism which lay in their common neighbourhood posed a threat to their security interests. Both sides would take preventive and deterrent measures in meeting these threats and cooperate in this regard. Both sides declared their determination to enhance collective and bilateral efforts to prevent and suppress terrorism. This determination is reaffirmed by the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding on Combating International Terrorism during the current Indo-Russian Summit.

In their in-depth discussions regarding developments in Afghanistan, both sides noted the continuing threat to security in Afghanistan. Concern was expressed at the possible regrouping of former Taliban and *Al-Qaeda* elements and their continuing links with their sponsors. At the same time, both sides expressed the hope that the Transitional Administration of Afghanistan will succeed in restoring peace in the country, rehabilitating economic and social infrastructure and ensuring economic recovery. They stressed that it is in the

interest of the international community to see a stable and sovereign government in Afghanistan. All States concerned should, therefore, maintain a consensus on continuous support to the Transitional Administration. Both sides supported further increasing international economic and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and agreed to continue to closely coordinate their actions. India and Russia made a positive assessment of the continuing utility of their Joint Working Group on Afghanistan, established during the visit of President Putin to India in October 2000.

Both sides considered security and stability in Central Asia to be of vital significance to them and supported further consolidating the secular and democratic way of life chosen by the people of Central Asia.

Both sides discussed in detail the current situation in South Asia. They stressed the importance of Islamabad implementing in full its obligations and promises to prevent the infiltration of terrorists across the Line of Control into the State of Jammu and Kashmir and at other points across the border, as well as to eliminate the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan controlled territory as a prerequisite for the renewal of the peaceful dialogue between the two countries to resolve all outstanding issues in a bilateral framework as envisaged in Simla Agreement of 1972 and the Lahore Declaration of 1998.

Both sides noted the ever-increasing importance of Asia-Pacific Region and stressed the significance of the bilateral and multilateral relations with the countries of this region in the interest of stability and security in this vast region.

Both sides strongly opposed unilateral use or threat of use of force in violation of the UN Charter, as well as interference in internal affairs of other States. It was stressed that a comprehensive settlement of the situation around Iraq is possible only through political and diplomatic efforts in strict conformity with the rules of international law and only under the aegis of the United Nations. Both sides noted the importance of continuing intensive work with the Iraqi leadership in order to encourage it to cooperate in good faith with the United Nations.

Both sides expressed their concern over the developments in the Middle East where a critical situation still persists. They advocated urgent measures to

resume the Israeli-Palestine dialogue and noted that there is no alternative to the peace process. They strongly condemned any acts of violence against both Palestinians and Israelis and called for the earliest possible implementation of Resolution 1435 of the United National Security Council.

Both sides expressed their confidence that the visit of the President of the Russian Federation to India and the discussions held during the visit would contribute to further development of strategic partnership between the two countries, and to the expansion of bilateral cooperation and interaction aimed at strengthening international stability and building of a just, fair, democratic and multipolar world order.

The President of the Russian Federation invited the Prime Minister of India to visit the Russian Federation. The invitation was accepted with gratitude. The dates for the visit will be decided through diplomatic channels.

New Delhi;
4 December, 2002

BACK NOTE

LVI Visit of Shri Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation to India, 11 December, 2002

NIL

RELIEF TO DROUGHT-AFFECTED STATES

18 December, 2002

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have earlier announced that the current year's interest on both the kharif crop loan and agricultural term loans will be deferred and the loans proper will be rescheduled into term loans; to be recovered over the next 5 years in the case of small and marginal farmers, and 3 years in the case of other farmers. In addition, interest, for one year, on both these types of loans, amounting to Rs. 6040 crores, having been deferred, was to be spread out over several years as a liability.

2. In order to further mitigate the hardship of our farmers in these States, I have now, decided to waive completely, the first year's deferred liability of interest on Kharif loans, as a one time measure. Such of our citizens as having availed of this facility shall be entitled to obtain an endorsement of this waiver directly from their loaning Bank. Appropriate guidelines in this regard will be issued by the R.B.I.

3. As for Agricultural Input Subsidy, my Government had already announced a grant of this to small and marginal farmers, amounting to over Rs. 1490 crores. In view, however, of the severity of the drought, I have decided that this Agricultural Input Subsidy will now be extended further, to cover all other farmers too, for both the sown and unsown areas, upto a ceiling of 2 hectares, as a one time measure and in relaxation of existing guidelines. On the basis of assessment to be made by the Ministry of Agriculture, in consultation with the Finance Ministry, all the 14 affected States will receive additional amounts, based on actual land holding and cultivation patterns. These States will therefore, now receive in excess of a further Rs. 555 crores, for combating drought, to be met from either the Calamity Relief Fund or the NCCF.

4. For cattle, further additional amount of Rs. 25 crores will now be provided to the Department of Animal Husbandry, for support to such 'gaushalas' as tend to more than 1000 heads of cattle. Releases may be permitted directly to NGOs running such 'gaushalas'. A Committee comprising of officers from the Department of Animal Husbandry, Ministry of Finance and the PMO

will authorise such releases, in tandem with the like and simultaneous disbursements from the Prime Ministers Relief Fund.

5. I wish to add that the Government has already earlier approved additional assistance for cattle in which a further sum of Rs. 70 crores for cattle care has already been allotted to Rajasthan. I had also sanctioned free transportation of cattle-grade feed and fodder to State Governments; the period of such free transportation of water and fodders will continue until the end of June, 2003.

6. On the foodgrains front, the Government has already sanctioned an allotment of 38.75 lakh metric tonnes of rice and wheat, costing over Rs. 4000 crores; free of cost to the 14 drought-affected States of which 19.50 lakh metric tonnes for current drought. This tonnage is for three months only, that is, up to January, 2003. More foodgrains will thereafter be made available to needy States. It is desirable that there be systematic monitoring, however, of the actual utilisation of this foodgrain in generation of relief employment. Of course, States are free to seek additional allocations following utilisation of the allotted foodgrains. It is in this context that PDS functioning must be improved.

7. I recognize that acute water shortage exists, particularly in the drought affected areas of Rajasthan. I have, therefore, instructed the Ministry of Railways to run additional water tanker trains to, in part, mitigate this critical deficiency. The Ministry of Water Resources will immediately appoint a task force to assist the affected States in this regard. I am also instructing the Ministry of Petroleum to examine the possibility of deep drilling rigs being employed for sinking deep tube wells.

8. We will meet the challenge of this drought unitedly and shall ensure that the difficulties of our citizens are mitigated.

BACK NOTE

LVII Relief to drought-affected States, 18 December, 2002

NIL

DISCUSSION REGARDING PRICING OF SUGARCANE

19 December, 2002

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to speak very briefly. I have not risen here to reply to the discussion. The reply would be given by my colleague Shri Sharad Yadav. I am taking your time to clarify one or two issues.

As the House is well aware that the Union Government fixes the Statutory minimum price of the sugarcane. It is the minimum price below which no sugar mill can procure sugarcane from the farmers. Sugar mills with mutual consent, can give more than the minimum price fixed to the farmers and it has also been the case. This year the Union Government have fixed the statutory Minimum Price at Rs. 64.50 per quintal where the recovery level is 6.4%.

As the statutory Minimum Price is linked with recovery, for the farmers in the areas of those mills where recovery is better, it is fixed at higher rate. At present, the average statutory Minimum Price is approximately Rs. 74 per quintal in Uttar Pradesh.

We are aware of the problems being faced by the farmers and to provide them relief we have decided that the Union Government would increase the Minimum Statutory Price of sugarcane by five rupees per quintal which would be applicable in all the States.

Besides, the Government of Uttar Pradesh have also taken some steps to provide relief to the Sugarcane farmers. The Government is providing a relaxation in purchase tax and the entry tax of sugar and providing grant of Rs. 4 per Quintal on the commission of Sugarcane societies. The States Government is providing this relaxation and grant to the sugar mills with the objective that they would include these four rupees in the payment made to the farmers. This way the sugarcane farmers of Uttar Pradesh would get an increase of nine rupees per quintal.

All of us are aware that the prosperity of the sugarcane farmers is linked to the development of the sugar industry, through which large number of needy persons in rural areas get employment. Hence it is imperative that we keep the sugar industry in good condition. As the sugar industry is

facing a crisis, we need to take steps to overcome the present crisis as soon as possible. The prices of sugar have declined a lot in recent months and one of the reasons for it is that several sugar mills have, through judicial intervention received orders to release sugar besides the quota assigned to them by the Government of India. It has led to increase in supply of sugar and decline in prices. In these circumstances, the need is to continue with it and effectively implement the current 'release system'. Accordingly, the decision has been taken to continue the 'release system' and to make meaningful efforts to restore stability in the market price of sugar.

As the hon'ble Minister of Food told us, the Central Government have decided to create a buffer stock of 20 lakh tonnes of sugar. It will yield Rs. 786 crore which will be used in the payment of the outstanding dues of sugarcane farmers.

In my opinion, the above mentioned action would provide substantial relief to the sugarcane farmers and the condition of sugar industry would improve.

BACK NOTE

LVIII Discussion regarding Pricing of Sugarcane, 19 December, 2002

NIL

**RALLY BY WORKERS AGAINST THE ECONOMIC
PROBLEMS OF THE GOVERNMENT RESULTING
IN UNEMPLOYMENT**

26 February, 2003

Mr. Speaker, Sir, undoubtedly the issue that has been raised by the opposition is serious. However, it is also a fact that it would have been better if the opposition would have raised this issue after the Question Hour instead of raising it now. I do not know how much employment has increased in half an hour, however, I certainly know that we have spent half an hour for an issue on which there is unanimity in the House.

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There is serious problem of unemployment in the country. All political parties want to fight against unemployment, all parties want to generate employment opportunities, however the parties particularly the parties which are in power either in Delhi or in Calcutta know it well that there are problems in this regard. I am ready to ponder over those problems.

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When you decide. However Somnath Babu, nothing is going to come out, the way things are being discussed. You have raised this issue and you may deliver speech among workers. I also did the same thing however, I found that the problem has not been solved.

Serious efforts are being made to generate employment opportunities. I would like to mention a figure. We had talked about one crore employment opportunities. Our target was one crore. Out of that one crore we could provide employment to 70 lakh people. We are ready for the discussion. Come on let us hold a discussion on it.

BACK NOTE

LIX Rally by Workers against the economic problems of the Government resulting in Unemployment, 26 February, 2003

1. MR. SPEAKER: Please keep quiet now. The hon. Prime Minister is speaking, at least you please do not speak.
2. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: By when?

REPLY TO THE MOTION OF THANKS TO PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

3 March, 2003

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I regret that I was not present in the House while discussion on the Motion of Thanks on President's Address was going on. I had to go to Kuala Lumpur to attend the summit of the Non-Alignment Movement. But as far as possible, I have tried to read the speeches of hon'ble Members. Over all, the discussion was good. In the beginning comments were made on one point that the Address was very lengthy. Shri Somnathji has said that it was not only lengthy but it had no depth also.

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I do not agree to it. The address is good and it covers most of the subjects. It calls for the country to do hard labour so that our target for increasing growth rate can be achieved. I was having a look at the old Addresses delivered by former Presidents which were more lengthier than the present Address.

I was also among one of them who listening to those speeches. I do agree that all subjects should be covered but in brief so that the chairman of Rajya Sabha *i.e.*, the Vice President does not face any difficulty. I will try to reply the issues one by one which have been raised here however it would not be possible for me to give reply to all the questions.

During the course of discussion, serious concern has been expressed on the drought hit areas of the country and this concern is natural. 14 States are affected by drought and there is acute scarcity of drinking water. There is no fodder for animals. At many places people are leaving their hearth and home in search of employment. But we should accept that we have been able to control the situation cropped up as a result of drought of such a magnitude. Prices have not gone up. Full efforts have been made to make grains available to the people through 'Antyodaya Yojana'. Now the Government have resolved to extend benefits under 'Antyodaya Yojana' to 1.5 crore families out of approximately 6 crore families living below poverty line. Orders have been issued for enhancing allocation of foodgrains from 25 kgs per month to 35 kgs per month with effect from 1 April. Hon. Finance Minister has made an announcement to this effect in his speech.

For me it is easy to say so. Soniaji has raised an issue and I would like the House to ponder over that issue seriously. It is regarding those who are separated from their families and who do not get employment. And if they get employment they are not able to take it up so how can they earn their livelihood? When we talk of food security we should consider them also. I would like to discuss this matter with leaders of all the parties. We should find out some way out. Our godowns are full of foodgrains but still people die of hunger. It means the system is faulty somewhere but it is not only because of failure of system but the conditions are also such.

The issue of employment was raised at a large scale. Before that, I would clarify one thing that the Government have made no discrimination in allocation of foodgrains to the States nor will it do so. It is a matter of honesty for me. We cannot discriminate on Political lines in providing relief to drought affected people. Neither the Government can adopt such policy nor it has adopted it in past as it would be inhuman to do so. We want every hungry person to get food but people level allegations against us.

Sonia ji wrote a letter to me regarding Rajasthan which I had replied. I have some figures which I would like to place before the House. Rajasthan was allocated 29 lakh tonnes of foodgrains which is the maximum quantity allocated to any state and amounts to 44 per cent of total allocation. But we have not obliged them in any way. The situation is such in Rajasthan. Perhaps Rajasthan is the worst hit state by drought. Therefore, I had toured Rajasthan before taking up relief measures. There I had announced a relief package of Rs. 50 crore. People asked me since the State is yet to be declared drought affected then why have you announced relief package? I said that situation seems to be serious and it may turn more serious in the days to come. Current relief package is almost three times more in comparison to package provided in 1987. No doubt, the drought is more serious this year. This allegation is baseless that the allocation of foodgrains has been delayed. The Government try to release second instalment only after first one is exhausted and second instalment is demanded. Demand for second consignment from Rajasthan was received even before exhausting the first consignment. Second instalment was released before the first instalment exhausted. Foodgrains component under Food for work programme has not been reduced, only some figures were made available. There is a provision of providing 5 kg. foodgrains per day under 'Sampurna Rojgar Yojana'. But it has been increased to 8 Kgs per day in severely affected areas whereas elsewhere it is 6 kgs. Perhaps, this difference may have created some misunderstanding. The criteria

created by drought and suggestions are invited in this regard. It is also the responsibility of representatives of people to make 'Antyodaya Yojana' a success. If Members of Parliament visit their constituencies and monitor implementation of this scheme, I think it would be greatly beneficial.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the health of economy of the nation has been reflected in the Budget and Economic Survey. There are certain good aspects which cannot be overlooked. It is a matter of concern that the growth rate has come down but the Government are determined to achieve 8 per cent growth rate. The continuous drought of last two years has affected agriculture sector which has an overall impact on national income. However, there are some positive signs also. Our foreign exchange reserve has surged to 75 billion dollars. As per *Economy Magazine* of 1st March, it is more than that of America, Russia, France and Germany. This year it has increased by 25 billion dollars which is equal to our total foreign exchange reserve during 1998. Since, the situation has improved on this front we are repaying the loan before time. It also indicates that the situation in the country is suitable for investment. The foreign investors as well as international Capital Organisations have also accepted this fact. When it is said that investors would hesitate in investing in India as our relations with Pakistan are tense, I may state that the Government has not so far come across such a situation.

Though, we are a nuclear state, we are a responsible nation too and the entire world accepts this fact. No country has questioned our intentions. Rather, doubts have been raised on the intention of neighbouring nation. But if anyone says that it is not good then we did not create tension. If America is unable to put pressure on Pakistan it is America's weakness. If assurances given to us by Pakistan could not be fulfilled then we will bear this fact in mind while framing our foreign policy in future. But it is not good to not believe anyone. We have always tried to avert war. However, when things reached a climax and there was an attack on our Parliament, it was felt that the nation would retaliate. Then tremendous international pressure was put on Pakistan at that time. We were also given assurances. Thereafter antiterrorism statement started emanating from Pakistan and it seemed that Pakistan will rein in terrorists and would stop crossborder terrorism. But utterly confusing picture emerged from there. Sometimes it looked as terrorists activities have decreased but at the same time we also witnessed spurt in terrorist activities. However, we were always on guard.

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I would reply to it also. I had said that if there is a war it would be a decisive one. Since our purpose was served without war, there was no need for it.

We defeated our enemies at diplomatic levels. We got world wide support. Though it was not enough but there were some good signs also and keeping that all in view we have taken decisions for the future. We would act according to the changes in the situations.

I would also like to make it clear that the issue of terrorism was widely discussed during NAM conference. It is a topic of discussion in our country also. People ask us is it not lair to resort to terrorism if injustice is being done to you. But we say that terrorism is a bad thing in itself so resorting to it for any cause will demean that cause.

I would like to Quote extract from the speech of Dr. Mahathir:

“Truly the world is in a terrible mess, a state that is worse than during the East West confrontation, the Cold War. All the great hopes following the end of the Cold War have vanished. And with the terrorists and the anti-terrorists fumbling blindly in their fight against each other, normalcy will not return for quite a long time.

Surely, at some stage. we must ask ourselves why this is happening to the world. Why is there terrorism? Is it true that the Muslims are born terrorists? How do we explain the pogroms, the inquisitions and the holocaust which characterize Christian Europe for almost 2000 years?

The Christians too were terrorised, not by Muslims but by fellow Christians who condemned them as heretics.

So, it cannot be that Muslims are the sole cause of all these problems. If they are not. then is it a clash of civilisation, a clash of the Muslim civilisation against the Judea Christian civilisation that is responsible?

Frankly, I do not think so. I think it is because of a revival of the old European trait of wanting to dominate the world. And the expression of this trait invariably involves injustice and oppression of people of other ethnic origins and colours.”

The countries that assembled in Kuala Lumpur were quite concerned about the problem of terrorism. Their presence in large numbers and their efforts to solve the burning problems give strength to the fear that a unipolar world is going to take shape due to world war. Serious efforts are on for creation of a multi-polar world. I think terrorism is a challenge in this regard. A resolution on Iraq was also passed whereby it was hoped that

Iraq will implement all provisions of the resolution. Then only the embargo and sanctions imposed on it would be lifted. I ask every foreign dignitary visiting our country as to whether there would be war. No one says. 'No. We have prepared ourselves to the face the outbreak of war in Gulf as our interests are linked to the situations prevailing in Gulf. About 40 lakh Indians are working there. I would like this issue to be taken up separately. I would like that it is taken up separately and I would be very happy if you wish to discuss about NAM.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if permitted, I would like to lay the copy of my speech delivered on the Table of the House. I am laying a copy of my speech delivered at NAM Conference. I am also laying a copy of resolution passed there alongwith it. I had a discussion with my colleagues before I left for Kuala Lumpur but need for a formal meeting was not felt. These are very delicate issues which are a litmus test for our diplomacy. Entire nation and the House will have to stand united and come forward to face the present crisis prevailing the world over.(Interruptions)

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The Government have made its stand clear and if the need arises again I may call them all for consultation. But I do not think we have divergent views in this regard. Only the difference is how to express them. Now it is said that present situation does not call for non-alignment. I was a supporter of the policy of non-alignment even when I was in opposition. No doubt, now the world order is changing and the cold war has come to an end. Now Militarily the world is not divided into two groups and all other countries will have to come together to ponder over seriously the sovereignty of a country under threat.

Sir, I am aware of the views of Somnath ji and his party. But he goes too far, we are not ready for that. We look for a middle path to get a way out. This is an old Policy.

Nine lakh 60 thousand opportunities have been created in the field of construction, 20.30 lakh in trade and hotel Industry and 7.5 lakh in the field of transport and communications. Though there is some decline but even then our date confirms that approximately 80 lakh, more than 70 lakh employment opportunities have been created, but I believe....

You can hold discussion. No, this is not the question. I am ready to discuss it. If we have to call all those people back who have gone to foreign countries, we will make arrangements for it. I would like to assure you that we will not put them in any problem. A lot of discussion has taken place in this regard. Not only in the context of Hon. President's address but also

during the questions and i.e. about the situation of employment. How much job opportunities have been created and how many people have got employment. When on that day I submitted that as per my knowledge and calculation, about, 70 Lakh people have got jobs then this was challenged. I am ready to hold discussion on it. Employment does not mean government jobs and this number of 70 lakh, if you want I can tell you item-wise that in which field and where people have got employment. This includes Government schemes as well as non-Governmental schemes.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, when it was said that we will try to give employment to 1 crore people that did not mean that the Government would call 1 crore people and offer them jobs. Have you taken it like this?

It was said in the context of accelerated economic development and that too in such a way that it generates job opportunities. We want that people should get job and it is an independent process. Again I have received same data which confirms my statement.

"The net job creation in 2002-2003 is accordingly nearly 84 lakh."

Similarly, last year, nearly 9 lakh jobs were created and the year before that, more than 75 lakh jobs were created.

I do not understand that when Government says that people are getting jobs and you contradict it. what is the politics behind this?....(Interruptions) What kind of scientific view is this? You cannot challenge the Government data.....(Interruptions) even then I do not think that it is satisfactory, If you say that 1 crore is not enough because much more people than that are unemployed then we are prepared to discuss it with you. We will try to find a way out.....(Interruptions)

I remember that the question of employment has been raised in this House time and again. What should be the per capita Income but everybody will accept the fact that the number of people living below poverty line has decreased. These are Government data.....(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise one more issue, which is about the statement of leader of Opposition.

"The Government is using terrorism as a pretext to polarise our society."

This sentence is very unfortunate(Interruptions) One has many choices for politics. At last the people will give their verdict. Just like they did in Himachal and before that in Gujarat.....(Interruptions) who is talking

about division of the country, where conspiracy is being hatched for the disintegration of the country. Who is doing this.....(Interruptions) this is wrong. You exaggerate the facts that is why it appears that there is a severe crisis. The Government is capable of facing any situation because, it has the support of people. The country will never leave its secular nature. Now Soniaji has objection over it that secularism was mentioned in a single sentence. Whether a sentence is not enough? When the constitution was framed for first time secular word was not used for once in it.....(Interruptions)

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BACK NOTE

LX Reply to the Motion of Thanks to President's Address, 3 March, 2003

1. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): It was lengthy and had no depth at all.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Since when you have started finding depth in the President's Address ?

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: This is the Vajpayee formula', not to answer any question.

2. SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (MIRYALGUDA): Sir, I would like to submit, with all the emphasis at my command, that his impression about the work done in Andhra Pradesh is absolutely incorrect and unfounded.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): You please go and see the works that have been executed in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Yerrannaaidu, I have not permitted you to speak.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU: The Chief Ministers of even Congress ruled States had sent teams to the State of Andhra Pradesh to see the works done. It has come in the newspaper also.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. You had your turn.

3. SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY (BERHAMPUR WEST BENGAL): But no decisive war was fought.

4. SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): The Prime Minister gave an Information. After the interaction, you are convinced that there is a possible attempt to attack Iraq that the Indian people should be ready for any eventuality. The life of forty lakhs of Indians is at stake in the Gulf. Where do we stand if such a situation arises? Of course, we all stand together; there is no problem. But where do you stand? Where does the Government stand today?

5. SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI (AMETHI): Hon. Speaker, Sir, when we raised the question of Berozgari, that is, unemployment or under-employment, we were referring to the promise made by the Prime Minister, by the NDA,

by the BJP coalition. Before they actually formed the Government, they promised during the elections that they would give one crore jobs per year. That was what we said on that day. It means that you should have given at least three-and-a-half crore jobs. You should have been able to give jobs to that extent.....(Interruptions) If you have to fulfil your promise, you should have given three-and-a-half crore Jobs. That was our point made on that day.

6. SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: It was not needed at that time.(Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Yes it was not needed. Therefore, whatever we are doing or saying in that also it is not needed. It is not correct that we should shout the slogans of secularism, organise morcha and gather everybody, break our supporting parties and divide our own country.(Interruptions) We should not bring the issue of terrorism in it because it will malign our position in world scenario. The world community will say that you do not have the problem of terrorism in your country it is your mutual tussle which is given the colour of terrorism. Do we really want this to happen.(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have supported them on all issues relating to terrorism, except POTA which is being misused now and everybody admits that.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Somnath Chatterjee, he is not yielding. Please take your seat.

SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA (AMBALA): Mr. Speaker Sir, please ask them to stop the running commentary.(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I have stopped that.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think I have touched many issues and I would like this vote of thanks to the President's Address to be passed unanimously.

MR. SPEAKER: The Prime Minister's Statement is taken as laid on the Table of the House.

SITUATION REGARDING IRAQ

12 March, 2003

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the situation relating to Iraq has been rapidly changing over the past few weeks. India has consistently stood for a peaceful resolution of the Iraq issue. The peace and prosperity of the Gulf is of vital interest to India give our long standing political, cultural and economic ties with the countries of the region. There are over 3.5 million Indians working in the gulf, whose welfare is of great concern to us. Their remittances are an important source of foreign exchange for the country. Over 60 percent of India's crude oil imports are sourced from the region. The Gulf countries have also emerged as important destinations for our exports.

India recognized the validity of the unanimous decision of the UN Security Council in its Resolution 1441, which provides for the disarmament of Iraq and also reaffirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, Kuwait and the neighboring States. Resolution 1441 provides a stringent regime of inspections designed to meet the international community's desire that weapons of mass destruction are eliminated from Iraq. We believe that Iraq must cooperate actively with the inspection process and comply fully with all relevant Security Council Resolutions. If the pace of this cooperation had been quicker, it may have enabled UNMOVIC and IAEA to certify to the UN Security Council that Iraq was in full compliance of Resolution 1441.

The work of the Inspectors is continuing in Iraq. The Security Council should decide on what further action needs to be taken. The international community must take a very careful look both at the objective of achieving Iraq's full compliance with UN resolutions and at the means to be adopted to reach this goal. This can best be achieved by a collective decision through the United Nations. If permitting more time and formulation of clearer criteria can facilitate a decision within the UN framework, we believe this option should be given a chance. We hope that the members of the Security Council will harmonise their positions to ensure that its final decision enhances the legitimacy and credibility of the United Nations. If unilateralism prevails, the U.N. would be deeply scarred, with disastrous

consequences for the world order. The Government of India would strongly urge that no military action be taken, which does not have the collective concurrence of the international community.

India has voiced its concern on various occasions about the difficult humanitarian situation in Iraq. The Iraqi people have suffered severe shortages and hardships for over a decade. We have consistently stated that if Iraq complies fully with the provisions of relevant Security Council resolutions, then sanctions against that country should be lifted.

While we sincerely hope, in the interest of all humanity, that the matter can be resolved peacefully through the United Nations, my Government has drawn up contingency plans to deal with any eventuality. There are less than 50 Indian nationals in Iraq at present and they have all been advised to leave the country in the coming days. It is unlikely that there would be any large-scale dislocation of the Indian communities in the neighboring countries on a possible outbreak of hostilities. Nevertheless the Ministry of Civil Aviation has drawn up plans to evacuate Indians, if necessary. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has taken steps to shore up our inventories of crude oil. While no major dislocation in crude oil imports is envisaged, India has adequate foreign exchange reserves to meet a higher crude oil import bill if prices continue to rise in the short run.

BACK NOTE

LXI Situation regarding Iraq, 12 March, 2003

NIL

VISIT TO JAMMU & KASHMIR

23 April, 2003

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I went to Jammu & Kashmir on a two-day visit on April 18-19, 2003.

'Also placed in Library. See No. LT 7407/20033.

I had five programmes in Srinagar. The first had to do with the Foundation Stone laying ceremony for modernization of Srinagar Airport. This project would double the capacity of the airport. We would like international air services to start from Srinagar.

The second programme related to the National Highway Development Project. Under this, work on a four-lane highway from Srinagar to Kanyakumari was launched. The newly elected Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Shri Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, had been insisting that work on this project in the Kashmir Valley should start as early as possible.

In my public rally, I congratulated the people of Kashmir on participating in the Assembly elections in large numbers. They exercised their franchise defying the threat of bullets. I assured the, **"We have come here to share your pain and suffering. Whatever complaints you have, try to address them collectively. Knock on the doors of Delhi. Delhi will never close its doors for you. The doors of our heart will also remains open for you"**.

I assured the people of Jammu & Kashmir that we wish to resolve all issues—both domestic and external — through talks. I stressed that the gun can solve no problem; brotherhood can. Issues can be resolved if we move forward guided by the three principles of *Insaaniyat* (Humanism), *Jamhooriyat* (Democracy) and *Kasmiriyat* (Kashmir's age old legacy of Hindu Muslim amity).

In my speech, I spoke of extending our hand of friendship to Pakistan. At the same time, I also said that this hand of friendship should be extended by both sides. Both countries should resolve that we need to live together in peace.

My last programme was about the start of work on the construction of Udhampur Srinagar Baramula railway line. It is our resolve to ensure that

train services start in Kashmir Valley before August 15, 2007.

Unemployment is the greatest problem facing the youth of Jammu & Kashmir. We have decided to facilitate creation of one lakh opportunities for employment and self-employment over the next two years. For this, a special Task Force would be set up with representatives from the Central Government, State Government, industry, commerce, banking and financial institutions. The Task Force will present its report by June 30 and implementation would commence from August 15 this year.

At a press conference before returning to Delhi, I expressed the hope that a new beginning can take place between India and Pakistan. I said that we have extended our hand to friendship. Let us see how Pakistan responds to this. Stopping cross-border infiltration and destruction of terrorist infrastructure can open the doors for talks. Talks can take place on all issues, including that of Jammu & Kashmir.

BACK NOTE

LXII Visit to Jammu & Kashmir, 23 April, 2003

NIL

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING INDO-PAK RELATIONS

2 and 8 May, 2003

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I received a telephone call on the evening of 28th April, from Shri Jamali, P.M. of Pakistan.

P.M. Shri Jamali conveyed his appreciation and thanks for the comments I had made in Srinagar and my remarks about India-Pakistan relations contained in my statement in the two Houses of Parliament. He also condemned terrorism.

As hon. Members are aware, we are committed to the improvement of relations with Pakistan, and are willing to grasp every opportunity for doing so. However, we have repeatedly expressed the need to create a conducive atmosphere for a sustained dialogue, which necessary requires an end to cross border terrorism and the dismantling of its infrastructure.

We discussed ways of carrying forward our bilateral relations. In this regard, I emphasized the importance of economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, people-to-people contacts and civil aviation links. These would create an environment in which difficult issues in our bilateral relations could be addressed. P.M. Jamali suggested resumption of sporting links between the two countries. We agreed that, as a beginning, these measures could be considered.

In this context, it has been decided to appoint a High Commissioner to Pakistan and to restore the civil aviation links on a reciprocal basis.

I also emphasized the importance of substantive progress on the decisions for regional trade and economic cooperation taken at the SAARC Kathmandu Summit. Agreements arrived at Kathmandu must be implemented.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, House will always be taken into confidence regarding the ongoing talks with Pakistan, Government do not intend to conceal anything. However the insistence to reveal all, which is being discussed will not be of any help in the discussion. I am ready to hold a discussion on Indo-Pak relations if the House wants so and it is upto Mr. Speaker to allot time for it.

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You have to give the assurance that the number of Members present during the discussion should be fairly large.

Shri Patil Saheb has asked a question and has quoted some General Saheb. I have also seen that quote. I have tried to find out the truth regarding it. It will not be right to say that it is the attitude of the United States of America. Several speculations are being made at present. Several persons want to play the role of mediator but they are not clear about as to why and how they want to mediate. India considers the Kashmir issue as bilateral one and the intervention of a third party is neither desirable nor acceptable to us.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank all those hon'ble Members who participated in the discussion. There are some issues on which there is a broad consensus in the House. The issue of our relation with Pakistan is one such issue. There may be difference of opinion among us, but inspite of that, we all work together to achieve the goal and our last goal is to ensure the victory, glory, fame and unity of India. A number of old issues have been raised in the discussion. It started from Lahore onwards. But I do not accept any blame for going to Lahore.

We have to live with our neighbour as a friend or whatever manner. But we should not lose any opportunity of building good relations. Our development depends on internal and external peace. We do not want to buy weapons for war and to use our resources to buy such weapons but when our freedom or integrity is in danger and we have to be ready to bear all costs and defend ourselves. I have told my Pakistani friends a number of times that we can change our friends but not our neighbours. None of us can get away from each other. We have to live here. Now one way of living together is to live like neighbours and friends and second way is to keep quarreling and fighting and give the world chance to laugh at us and take wrong way as a result of misconstruing the emotions of our people. Therefore we should be friends with our neighbours to the extent possible. That is why I went to Lahore. It would be wrong to say that no home work was prepared before the visit. This charge has also been made about the Agra talks. What does it mean? The structure of the Government is very much intact and my Government has not made any drastic change in the

Ministry of External Affairs. I think that my friends would agree that the clever diplomats pass the buck on their officers but the External Affairs Ministry protect its officers. We had full preparation, but in between the Kargil issue cropped up which was essentially due to power struggle between their Government and Army General. The Lahore declaration signed by the two countries said that dialogue would be held and all issues will be solved peacefully. We had agreed on it. The declaration was silent on Kashmir as in our discussion. It was agreed that Kashmir issue is a tangled one so it be deferred and it would be better if we resolve other issues and go forward.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am aware of it. But its form is there for all to see. Like Agra, Kashmir was not the Central issue in Lahore declaration also. Now it has been made so.

I am referring to the talks that took place. When General Musharraf came to Agra, during the discussion he did his best to have his way on Kashmir. Now he says that nothing of that sort took place. General Musharraf had to return with empty handed from Agra. I am being held guilty of not preparing any home work. Had there been no preparation, we would not have been able to successfully repulse the Pakistani attack in Kargil. We did not allow Pakistan to succeed in its design. Their domestic trouble reached an extent that their Prime Minister had to resign. They could not work unitedly. I am saying all this only to underline the fact that our efforts are well-intentioned. Sometimes it succeeds and sometimes it fails. Ceasefire has been declared a number of times. There is consensus that the two countries have friendly relations, especially, with regard to Jammu Kashmir, but it could not be realised. Terrorist groups were split and differences surfaced among them. What is their condition today? I would not like to go in detail. Now it is being said that I had said that we would not take with them unless cross border terrorism is stopped. Of course, I had said that but my goal was to stop cross border terrorism. I decided to strive towards that goal and we worked so enthusiastically that, except a few countries, all countries of the world were of the opinion that the cross border terrorism be stopped. We succeeded to turning world opinion in our favour. I do not say that our war against terrorism will be fought by others but, it gave us scope for agreement and

not under one umbrella. It is quite a serious matter if it is so, but reality is different. We got a hint that there is a wave of change and the people of Jammu and Kashmir have given a befitting reply. I found it was right time to improve our relations provided Pakistan stops crossborder terrorism and destroys terrorist camps which have come up there. It is just a rehearsal and the talks are yet to start. When I had telephonic talk with the Prime Minister of Pakistan he invited me to play hockey in Pakistan. Then I told him that he had been a good player of hockey. I know that he has captained Pakistani Team and used to select his player. I asked him what will be the reaction in a situation when a hockey match between India and Pakistan is being witnessed by the entire town and meanwhile the news spreads that terrorists have massacred 50 innocent men, women and children in Jammu? What shall be the reaction to this? Will it create friendship? Therefore, I told that first terrorism should be stopped. I do not want to repeat what he said but he told that they are also fed up of this terrorism, and that they are fighting terrorism in their country, now we would fight it out unitedly. Only after that, we thought of the idea of exchange of views. I would assure the apprehending Members that we will definitely tread the path cautiously.

If we become inactive, take no step or initiative and sit idle it will not behove for a large country like India. India occupies a prominent position in the world. Everyone is aware of our feeling of dedication to peace. People have not supported Pakistan sponsored terrorism they have supported the elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Foreigners who came to watch the electoral process have realised that the people have expressed their opinion peacefully even in the face of bullets and the world should respect it. At least we should give there due importance. It is a beginning of a new chapter, let us extend it further. None wants to lose Jammu and Kashmir. I do not know how Soniaji has said so. Who says Jammu and Kashmir will go to Pakistan. No, it will not go. Can a person saying so can afford to stay here? None has said so I do not want to go into it. **No one can divide Jammu and Kashmir. There are three parts, three separate divisions of Jammu and Kashmir. They have been staying together for the last several years and they would stay together under new arrangement also.**

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Some more questions were raised. Pakistan is suggesting of

denuclearisation of South Asia which is not acceptable to us. Pakistani Atomic Programme is India specific whereas ours is not Pakistan specific. We are not only concerned about Pakistan, we are concerned about our entire neighbourhood. We had adopted a nuclear doctrine and we have assured that we will not attack first whereas Pakistan has not made any such commitment. Not only that, it has refused to make any commitment to this effect. Then what is the meaning of 'No war Pact'. Malhotra ji has quite rightly said that it should be, 'No proxy war pact'.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, other questions were also raised. Not going in details, I would like to say that entire world is facing a crisis and in that situation if no concrete decision is taken then crisis will deepen further.

It is not an offence to seek peace. Though it is different whether we succeed or not. Who wants failure? But, with the apprehension that we may fail, we make no effort, is not good. A large country like Independent India cannot take this type of decision.

We had not opposed Simla Pact because it contained element of friendship. That time I had opposed it because it did not resolve Jammu & Kashmir issue.

We may have divergent views and no doubt these are. But when the world looks at India, it expects us to speak in one voice, that we would sit together and resolve our difference.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I convey my thanks to all and expect that the consensus arrived at this juncture would be maintained.

BACK NOTE

LXIII Recent Developments Regarding Indo-Pak Relations, 2 & 8 May, 2003

1. SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL (Latur): The Leader of the Opposition and the Congress Party have been saying that dialogue is one of the routes which has to be taken by our country to solve the problem between India and Pakistan. Having said this, I would request yourself that this issue should be taken up on the floor of the House and all other hon. Members also should be allowed to make their statements at a later stage, convenient to both the sides.

I have one or two questions to ask the hon. Prime Minister and I hope that he would enlighten us on these questions. Gen. Jay Garner is alleged to have made a statement with regard to the Kashmir issue. It is reported in The Indian Express and Asian Age. I seek your permission to read out a portion of it to the House.

"We will ensure that a permanent solution of the perennial Kashmir problem is in place by December 2004 at the latest. US Government has decided to solve this problem once and for all. South Asia is the world's most volatile region, especially because of the proven weapons of mass destruction it possesses. It is even more dangerous than North Korea because of the history. A Kashmir roadmap will follow in the wake of the West Asia roadmap aimed at resolving the Palestinian issue."

Has the Government seen this report? Would the Government ascertain if such a statement has been made, and what would be the reaction of the Government to such a statement, if it is true?

We would request the hon. Prime Minister to enlighten us on this issue. This has relevance to the talk between India and Pakistan.

2. MR. SPEAKER: Business Advisory Committee is also there.

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH: The House accepts the proposal of hon. Prime Minister to hold a discussion on it next week.

3. MR. SPEAKER: When Prime Minister has said here that firstly it will be approved by the Business Advisory Committee then it will be discussed. Right now, what is the need to raise questions on it. The Bill presented by Shri Arun

Jaitley is to be introduced first, and Zero Hour would follow.

4. SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: I have the Lahore declaration with me. It says that.

"have agreed that their respective Governments shall intensify their efforts."

MR. SPEAKER: I can permit you to put questions after the Prime Minister completes. Now, you may please sit down.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: "at resolving all issues including the issue of Jammu & Kashmir." He said that there is no mention of Kashmir. Now it is before you.

5. SHRI AVTAR SINGH BHADANA (Meerut): It was BJP's defeat.

6. SHRI AVTAR SINGH BHADANA: There was a time when we were sitting at treasury benches and you used to sit here. We would again occupy that place.

7. SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: Please tell what shall be the new arrangement? Is he repeating old theory of RSS and America regarding division of Jammu and Kashmir in three parts i.e. Laddakh, Kashinir and Jammu?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: What is he saying?

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: Does he want to divide it into three parts under new arrangement?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mulayam Singh ji, you do not leave your old habit. Dr. Lohia had advocated for confederation. Neither the confederation took place that time nor it is possible now.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: I am telling today in the House that if there can be no confederation then there will not be friendly relations between both the countries.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It is his opinion. My opinion is different. Though we have different opinion yet we are friends.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: I am welcoming his suggestion and support it.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Not only small confederations, now

countries of the world are coming together and we forming even larger alliances.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: He may please tell, whether it is his last chance or will he continue his efforts?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Entire Europe is coming together even old communist countries are joining them.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: Is it his last effort or will he continue it?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It is Dharma of present era. Now countries should not disintegrate but they should come together and work unitedly for economic development.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: That is right.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur): I am also with him.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Even comrade is with us.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Does he not want.

[English]

Do you not want my support.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: If Ramdas Athawale is with him, then there is no need for anyone else.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: If Athawale is with him, whole public is with him.

**REGARDING SUCCESSFUL TESTFLIGHT OF
GEO-SYNCHRONOUS SATELLITE
LAUNCH VEHICLE**

8 May, 2003

Mr. Speaker Sir, I would like to give a good news to the House.

Sir, I would like to inform the House of the successful second test flight of the indigenously made Geo-Synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV), launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota just a few minutes ago. The experimental communication satellite, GSAT-2, was injected precisely into its planned geo-synchronous transfer orbit.

This is a matter of great pride for all Indians. I am sure, the House would join me in congratulating all the personnel of the Indian Space Research Organisation and its associated research laboratories and industrial units for reaching yet another landmark in space.

The Minister of State for Space will make a fuller statement in the House later.

BACK NOTE

**LXIV Regarding Successful testflight of Geo-synchronous Satellite
Launch Vehicle, 8 May, 2003**

NIL

VISIT TO GERMANY, ST. PETERSBURG, EVIAN AND CHINA

23 July, 2003

Sir, in the last two months, I have had the opportunity to interact with a number of world leaders during my visits to Germany, Russia, France and China.

I visited Germany from May 27 to 30. I was then in St. Petersburg at the invitation of President Putin for the Tercentenary celebrations of that city. Thereafter, I participated in the G-8 enlarged dialogue in Evian at the invitation of President Chirac. I paid a separate visit to China from June 22 to 27.

The visits to Germany and China were bilateral in nature, while those to Russia and France were for prominent events to which only selected countries were invited. All these visits underscored our ongoing dialogue with key countries of Europe and Asia and an increasing acknowledgement of the growing salience of India in international affairs. They helped to consolidate our bilateral ties with these countries and to project our position on important issues at select international gatherings. Such visits also enable us to understand better the perspectives of others on issues of vital concern to the international community.

My visit to Germany was in response to Chancellor Schroeder's invitation, extended during his visit to India in October 2001. I had useful discussions with the German leadership on expanding and intensifying bilateral relations. We also had a detailed exchange of views on regional and international issues. Germany sees the need for uncompromising global action against the scourge of terrorism wherever it occurs and against whomever it is directed.

India and Germany are both keen to impart further momentum to trade and investment linkages. I highlighted the investment opportunities in India and the wide ranging complementarities between India and Germany, which encourage greater scientific and technological cooperation. I also had occasion to interact with a wide cross section of German parliamentarians, business representatives and Indologists. In Munich, I had useful discussions with the Minister President of Bavaria, Dr. Edmund Stoiber.

We value our continuing high level contacts with Germany as one of our most important interlocutors in the European Union, a member of G-8 and currently on the Security Council. In line with our agreement to have

annual summit meetings, we look forward to welcoming Chancellor Schroeder in India next year.

The 300th anniversary celebrations of St. Petersburg were grand and impressive. The invitation to India for this special event was a mark of the close strategic relationship between India and the Russian Federation. Equally, the extraordinary level of the international participation at these celebrations illustrated the importance of Russia and the international stature of President Putin.

My visit to St. Petersburg provided me the opportunity of bilateral meetings with President Putin, President Chirac of France, President Hu Jintao of China and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. I also interacted briefly with President Bush of USA.

In my meeting with President Putin, we discussed issues of bilateral, regional and international interest. We agreed to continue the wide ranging and extensive interaction between the two countries. President Putin reiterated Russia's commitment to further deepen defence relations with India. I hope to pay a bilateral visit to Russia in the near future, as part of our normal sequence of annual summits.

I thanked President Chirac for his initiative in inviting selected developing countries for a broader dialogue with the G-8. There was common understanding of the importance of a multipolar world, for which a restructured UN was essential.

In my discussions with Prime Minister Blair, we expressed satisfaction at the quality of our bilateral relations. Prime Minister Blair demonstrated sensitivity and understanding for our core security concerns.

In my meeting with President Hu Jintao of China, he said the new leadership of China placed great emphasis on developing friendship with India. We agreed that China and India, which comprise one third of humanity, should work together effectively to make the 21st century the Asian century.

India was one of 14 developing countries that was invited to the G-8 Enlarged Dialogue in Evian. The Dialogue enabled a free and unstructured interaction, which could highlight the varied economic, developmental, environmental, security and other concerns of developing countries.

In my remarks I underlined the immediate urgency for meaningful follow up on the Millennium Development Round to create a global trading regime, which would promote development. I emphasized the need to deliver on existing commitments and to explore new ideas for generation of additional financial resources for development, particularly in the least developed Countries. I suggested that though the Kyoto Protocol has not been ratified, the encouragement of clean energy development should be pursued, through incentives and transfer of technologies as envisaged in the Protocol. Developing countries should be fairly compensated for the use of their biodiversity resources and their traditional knowledge. I drew attention to the stark truth that unless there is immediate and tangible progress in these areas, the political support in developing countries for economic liberalization and responsible environmental measures will rapidly disintegrate.

On the margins of the G-8 Summit I had the opportunity to meet the Presidents of Brazil and Mexico. Both agreed on the need for a strategic alliance on WTO issues, promoting effective cooperation in groupings like the G-15, and strengthening the UN so as to effectively articulate developing countries' concerns.

The G-8 Enlarged Dialogue could develop into a useful forum of communication at the highest level between the developed and the developing world. A number of the participants at Evian felt that this initiative should be continued by future G-8 Presidencies.

I visited China from June 22 to 27 June this year at the invitation of Premier Wen Jiabao. My visit took place almost ten years after the last visit by an Indian Prime Minister to China. It gave me an invaluable opportunity to personally interact with the new Chinese leadership. I was received with great warmth and courtesy and was given the distinct impression that our desire for mutual goodwill and for diversification of our bilateral relationship was fully reciprocated. A recurrent theme in all my meetings was the commitment of both sides to strengthen the ongoing process of building mutual trust and understanding.

We concluded ten agreements, a list of which is placed on the Table of the House. For the first time in India-China relations a Joint Declaration was signed by the two Prime Ministers. The text of the Joint Declaration is

enclosed and was also placed on the Table of the House. The Declaration outlines the principles and shared perspectives which will guide the future development of our bilateral relations. It also confirms the commitment of our two countries to work more closely together internationally to strengthen the trend towards multipolarity, on WTO issues and on other areas of concern to developing countries.

The Declaration reflects the importance both countries attach to the settlement of the India-China boundary question. Principles for an eventual settlement of this question have been under discussion for some time now. Premier Wen Jiabao and I agreed that these discussions should be given a new momentum by exploring the framework of a boundary settlement from the political perspective of the overall bilateral relationship. We appointed Special Representatives for this purpose. The National Security Advisor will be our Special Representative. China has appointed its senior most Vice Foreign Minister as his counterpart. Premier Wen and I also agreed that the joint work on the clarification of the Line of Actual Control should continue smoothly and that peace and tranquillity in the border areas should continue to be maintained.

There was a special stress on our bilateral economic relations. A large delegation of senior businessmen from CII, FICCI and ASSOCHAM was in China in conjunction with my visit. I addressed two well attended meetings of Indian and Chinese businessmen in Beijing and Shanghai. Our Minister of Commerce & Industry met his Ministerial counterparts in Beijing. He also had extensive interactive sessions with relevant agencies and with Chinese businessmen. Our Minister of Communications, IT & Disinvestment had similar useful sessions in Shanghai.

There was a clear awareness on both sides of the potential of our economic relationship. This was reflected in the decision to set up a Joint Study Group to identify potential complementarities in bilateral economic cooperation. The JSG will recommend to both governments concrete measures to increase trade, promote investments and encourage greater cooperation between our business communities. We also decided to set up a financial dialogue and cooperation mechanism to strengthen our coordination in this sector.

Another development of significance is the Memorandum on border trade through Nathu La Pass on the IndiaChina boundary. This adds a third point of crossing for border trade between India and China. With this Memorandum, we have also started the process by which Sikkim will cease to be an issue in India-China relations.

On Tibet, I would like to assure this House that there is no change in our decades old policy. We have never doubted that the Tibet Autonomous Region is a part of the territory of the People's Republic of China. There can therefore, be no argument against reiterating it. We have said nothing new about the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or of Tibetan refugees in India.

Our cultural relationship also received a new impetus during my visit. We have agreed to establish cultural centres in Delhi and Beijing. I inaugurated a Centre for Indian Studies in Beijing University and announced some contributions from India to facilitate the functioning of this centre. Next year we have agreed to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Panchsheel which is one of the cornerstones of the India-China relationship. I valued the opportunity of visiting the White Horse Temple in Luoyang which marks the arrival of the first Buddhist monks from India to China and underlines the cultural and historical dimension of our interaction. The Chinese side has also agreed to consider my suggestion for opening of additional routes for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

The twin objectives of my visit was to establish close relations with the new leadership of China, and to impart fresh momentum to our increasingly diversified bilateral cooperation—were fulfilled. We have agreed to a wide ranging, mutually beneficial engagement with China, even while simultaneously addressing our differences through amicable discussions.

I have reason to be satisfied with the results of all these visits. Our dialogue with Germany has been reinforced. President Putin went out of his way to have a bilateral meeting with me, well after midnight on the very first day, despite his preoccupations as host of a large multilateral event. This signalled the importance he attaches to our bilateral relationship. President Chirac conducted the Enlarged Dialogue in a manner that highlighted the key importance of our views as a developing country. With China, progress has been made in enhancing mutual trust and understanding.

All the leaders I met naturally showed interest in the situation in South Asia. I was happy to note that all of them expressed support and appreciation for the hand of friendship we have extended to Pakistan and hoped Pakistan would reciprocate. All of them spoke strongly against the menace of terrorism. I believe my interlocutors have a proper appreciation of our policy of promoting peace, regionally and internationally.

BACK NOTE

**LXV Visit to Germany, St. Petersburg, Evian and China, 23 July,
2003**

NIL

WORKING OF THE INVESTIGATING AGENCIES, PARTICULARLY THE CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

5 August, 2003

Mr. Speaker, Sir, several hon. Members have spoken on the subject, and commented upon the Government's responsibility *viz-a-viz* its investigating agencies, particularly the Central Bureau of Investigation.

The jurisdiction of the CBI to proceed with any case, whose investigation it has taken charge of, is not subject to Government control. This also holds true for the cases relating to the criminal prosecution in Ayodhya matters.

As to who is to be prosecuted, under what Section are the accused to be prosecuted, what the evidence is against the accused, are all decisions that the CBI as an investigative agency has the responsibility to decide. No one can interfere in this matter, or with the discretion of the CBI.

My Government believes that investigative agencies must have full autonomy to proceed with the matters as per law. Hon. Members may recall that after the Supreme Court's judgement in the Vineet Narayan case, the Director of the CBI is no longer appointed by the Government, but by a Committee headed by the Chief Vigilance Commissioner.

The CBI derives its powers of investigation from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act. Section 6 of the Act specifically requires that no member of the Delhi Special Police Establishment can exercise powers and jurisdiction in any State, without the consent of the Government of that State. The Union Government's interface with the CBI is limited only to providing budgetary support and exercising administrative superintendence.

Even though cases in Ayodhya matters are pending against some of my own distinguished colleagues, my Government has neither withdrawn those cases nor taken any steps to interfere with the functioning of the CBI. Neither I nor my Office has ever interfered in these matters.

The Ayodhya cases are pending in courts. There has been a protracted litigation. The CBI has full authority to take any decision in these matters. The pendency of litigation involves the interest of justice. The interest of justice requires that the guilty should be punished and the innocent be acquitted. To evaluate the evidence and determine innocence or guilt is the function of the

court.

Of late, I have found an increased tendency where discussions about guilt or innocence of individuals are taking place in Parliament. Not only is this contrary to the rules, it subverts the rule of law, it also interferes with free trial. I would appeal to the hon. Members to seriously consider whether this practice should now be stopped.

BACK NOTE

**LXVI Working of the Investigating Agencies, particularly the
Central Bureau of Investigation, 5 August, 2003**

NIL

MOTION OF NO-CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

19 August, 2003

Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I speak on No-Confidence Motion, I would like to congratulate you for the way you have conducted the House for the last two days.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**²

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**³

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have witnessed so many No-Confidence Motion but I have yet to come across such a NoConfidence Motion. The scene that have emerged before moving the motion and after that during discussion is really different.

'Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

Nothing is coherent. But this is the way. At last when it was asked why this No-Confidence Motion is being brought, I didn't get any satisfactory reply. You can say that what is the need for a reply. Who understands the reply, they have got it. No-Confidence Motion is moved when Government is on the brink of a fall and No-Confidence Motion is used when the ruling combine is likely to break. However, in general situation No-Confidence Motion is used as a weapon to keep the government aware and to express ones views on any particular issue. But at this moment I am unable to understand its purpose. There is no question of breaking the government because this government would not break. You also do not want to topple this government this is a good thing because grapes are sour. Otherwise the Governments formed and toppled by you are in good number. Our coalition government is still untouched by you. But two days debate had not been able to throw any light on any new strategy to topple this government.

The nine point charges have been levelled. There are nine points and one chargesheet. It has set a bizzarre convention that parties are levelling charges against each other. There should be proper communication and discussion

among the parties. Nobody should speak in ultimatum language that we are levelling charges against you because you have put the defence security system in danger. This is not an ordinary charge that we have jeopardised the defence security system. The second charge is that we have weakened the national security in totality. What does it mean? How the security is in danger? How we have weakened our internal security? They should have substantiated their charges by producing concrete evidence. Can such allegations be levelled in Parliament? I do not want to go through all the nine points. An effort to destroy the public sector.

That very day Steel Authority got a new life. It has got established in a new form. Is it not something to enjoy?

It should be enjoyed. But it is said that we are destroying everything. Even after destruction people keep us here. This is not a good thing on your part. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been a Member of Parliament since 1957. Groups were never formed on the question of Foreign policy.

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I mean to say that there has been a consensus in the country regarding foreign policy. It existed earlier and exists even now. But it has been said that we mortgaged the foreign policy of India, such allegations have been made. What does it mean to mortgage; what was mortgage? That is why we refused to send troops.

A bilateral discussion took place when the question of sending troops surfaced and nothing is hidden there. Even for that doubt is being created that the troops didn't go because of us otherwise they would have gone there. How they could have gone? By your orders? But this thing has no meaning. Should I tell you now these things about foreign policy such as who decided to send the troops or that the people from that side were united, what was their first opinion and it changed later on.

There is no time to tell about it. It has hurt me. There may be differences on internal matters. We are having a democratic war. We want to bring change peacefully. There is no objection to it if you would like to change the Government. But will the country be divided like this even on the question of foreign policy? This is not the way to rule the country. That is why I feel doubt when you speak of running the country. It'll be good if you run the

country.

..... **xxx**

..... **xxx**

..... **xxx**⁵

We are not running it rather we have presented before you a framework of a coalition government and that coalition government is running for the five years even after your opposition and people are showing faith in the coalition government which is a good thing. Congress too needs friends now. Who can now come forward as a friend and which kind of friendship he will show? Will the behaviour of Congress change or not? Anyone who will become new friend will get pinned down again. I think these things are not clear. Coalition governments are the order of the day. Our country is great, it has its own culture and ancient civilization, means of production and it is marching vigorously on the path of progress. At the moment, it is natural that there may be indecisive political situation. You should decide which way to go and which way is the best? But there must be some basic things on which there should be consensus. There must be unanimity somewhere, if not in the policy then in the expression, feelings, language, style. I was shocked to read Shrimati Sonia Gandhi's speech. She has gathered all the words in a single para.

"The BJP led Government has shown itself to be incompetent, insensitive, irresponsible and brazenly corrupt."

Differences are bound to appear with those who work together in the political field for the country. Is this your evaluation about those people, is this your way of expressing the differences? It looks like a dictionary was opened and words were selected after a thorough search.

"Incompetent, insensitive, irresponsible."

But this is not a game of words.

It is said further:

"It was a Government that has betrayed the mandate of the people."

We are here because we have been elected by the people and we will be here as long as people's mandate is with us. What do you mean by your mandate?

"It is a Government that has betrayed the mandate."

Who has made you a judge. You are not ready for trial of strength here, but once elections will be held then we will fight against each other. But what is this? If you want to fight, there is civilized manner for that. Mind the dignity of this country. Problems will not get solved by sheer abuse.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I became Minister of External Affairs first time and delivered my first speech, I mentioned the names of every Minister of External Affairs preceding me. They all belonged to Congress party but had been the Ministers of External Affairs. I respect them all, but now it appears that values have been changed and we are leaving behind all decorum in the huddle of politics. I would say that each charge of none point chargesheet should be explained. You just see the way it has been told. Had done just nothing for farmers and agricultural labourers.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is democracy and there is responsibility in democracy. We level charges against you and you think every one should prostrate before you, every one should pay a proper compliment to you, this is not going to happen. Those days are gone. What do you mean by charge? What kind of language it is? If you have decided to change the format of language, I do not have any objection. But while competing with each other, we should not put a pressure upon each other's patriotism. We should not challenge each other's patriotism, should not cast a doubt over each other's patriotism. There must be a basic concensus, which is not taking place.

There was a discussion on foreign policy and I am issued with a FATWA that we have mortgaged the country's foreign policy. Let them reveal as to whom we have mortgaged our foreign policy and at what cost? Do you think that India is so cheap that it can be mortgaged? Don't you feel ashamed before mortgaging it? What do you mean by saying that India has been mortgaged, foreign policy has been mortgaged. The same Pokhran issue has been raised. Had you not wanted to make atom bomb?

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It is an open secret that preparations for conducting a nuclear explosion were since in the offing in our country. Is it not true that the Congress Governments also working in the same direction? The reason may differ. We can understand it by discussing together, but you were under pressure. Our

Government could not be pressurised by USA. Shri Venkatraman has written a letter to me. He was your President.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**⁷

He was our President also.

"I admire your courage and wisdom in launching the successful nuclear test. As early as 1983 when I was the Defence Minister, all the preparations for an underground test at Pokharan were completed and I myself went down to the shaft. But it was shelved because of the International pressure, the same thing happened in 1995."

You were making efforts in this direction which is a good thing. I want to congratulate you for that. But, what I did, you did not like. You should have some greatness. You participated in freedom struggle first alongwith others. You led the country. It is a matter of great pleasure, but at least, on the issue of foreign policy, we all should stand united, if there is grave danger to Integrity of the country, we all have to unite to fight it out. I remember the day when Panditji was the Prime Minister of the country and Indo-China war had broken out. At that time even the Swayam Sevaka of Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh were invited to participate in the Republic Day Prade taken out on January 26. Even though he himself had difference of opinion with the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh but since there was threat to the country, he called upon them to be united.

Yesterday, Priya Ranjan Dasmunsiji made a mockery of my emphasis on unity.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**⁸

I might have been mistaken. You were admiring me but I took it otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, during this two days discussion one heartening development has taken place. The long boycott of my friend and colleague Shri George Fernandes has come to an end. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is no laughing matter. He is our colleague. He has been a freedom fighter as well as a trade union leader. To treat him like this and say that he cannot speak in the Parliament and if he speaks, there will be walk-out, what kind of new untouchability is this? Should we behave with each other in such a way? However I would like to Congratulate George Saheb that he stuck to his guns. He endured humiliation and faced insult but did not deviate from his path of duty. In Tehelka scandal,

neither any charge was levelled against him, nor he was convicted and nor any explanation was sought from him.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**⁹

That report is with me. But it is true that the Congress Party has made changes in its stand. It is a gesture of greatness on their part but our communist friends walked out.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹⁰

If a sense of victory and defeat prevails in the mind, God alone can save this country.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹¹

To whom? It is not true. He did not come back on his own. It is we who have taken him in.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹²

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has been proved in the Parliament that false charges are being levelled against Shri George Fernandes.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹³

The charges were levelled against him, therefore, he had been removed. After all, it is with in the power of the Prime Minister to appoint a Minister. He did not want to come back. Now I do not want to debate on this issue any longer.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹⁴

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹⁵

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri George Fernandes has sincerely discharged his responsibilities. Whether it is desert or snow clad valley of Siachen, whenever he has gone to border, he has always boosted the morale of our soldiers which has not been done by any other Defence Minister before. To level false charges without any proof and then not to allow him to speak, was justice done to him? All of you were collectively involved in doing injustice to him? You people got afraid of one George?

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹⁶

Mr. Speaker, Sir, so many questions have been raised during discussion.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹⁷

All of us accept that everyone should be given a chance to express one's view point during discussion. After all, we have our own achievements during the last five years. If you have a right to express your views before the country, being in majority and from treasury bench, don't we have the right to express our views?

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹⁸

You are preventing, you are interrupting.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**¹⁹

Can anybody deny that country has made economic progress during the past five years? I don't want to explain It point to point. You know it yourself and you like it. Here, I would like to add one more thing. Recently, I visited China and afterwards I came to Kolkata. At that time, all the Marxist or Communist leaders who met me there, all of them appreciated me for taking right start in talks with China.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**²⁰

But, you did not say so after my arrival. Anyway, this is not the time to delve on it. I would like to say that if someone takes an initiative to amend the foreign policy so as to solve intricate international problems, it should be welcomed and at the same time if it is not welcomed for some reason and if some mistakes are committed for want of information, these need to be redressed. But for this, there has to be some kind of discussion on it and discussion should aim at evolving some consensus so that differences may not arise later on. Such discussion should take place in cordial atmosphere.

During a short period, I have got a chance to work with many leaders of the world. We are recognised by E.U. We are creating a place for ourselves in ASEAN. We are not only receiving their Corporation but also giving cooperation to them. This whole area has always been influenced by Indian culture. We had never focussed on it. Even if we paid attention towards it earlier it was very little. Now, there is a need to pay full attention to it. The circumstances of the world are changing very fast. No one knows what may happen next day in our neighbourhood. I am pointing toward Afghanistan neighbourhood. Will the terrorist again come to power there? All the foreigners

BACK NOTE

LXVII Motion of No-Confidence in the Council of Ministers, 19 August, 2003

1. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, please see this side.

MR. SPEAKER: Athawaleji, the hon. Prime Minister is on his legs. Please sit down. I will allow you to speak afterwards.

MR. SPEAKER: Ramdasji, what do you want? Once the hon. Prime Minister concludes. I will allow you to ask one question. Please sit down.

MR. SPEAKER: What do you want to ask?

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: During debate, you have allowed everyone to speak, please allow me too. Why should I not speak? Why this injustice is being done to me? You have allowed each and every party to speak. This is not a good thing, what is the need to speak them?

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: Go ahead, permission is granted.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (PANDHARPUR): I was not granted permission earlier. Have you allowed me?

2. MR. SPEAKER: Please speak whatever you want to say.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: What should I speak now as I am in no mood of speaking. This is not a good thing.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not want to say much here. The discussion is going on the No-Confidence Motion brought by Sonia Gandhiji. I rise to welcome Atalji and Advaniji. I rise because you are left with one hour before you leave. I do not want to say much. I like to say a poem:

"Atalji, apka najdik aya ha, Jaane ka waqt,
Kyonki NDA ke kuchh log ban rahe hain hamare bhakt,
Ab hamara ek hi lakshya hai, NDA ko satta se
hatana."

Our another aim is to bring all, Sonia Gandhiji, Chandra Shekharji, Sharad Pawarji, Mulayam Singhji, Somnath Chatterjeeji, Paswanji, Devegowdaji. Prakash Ambedkar and Laloo Prasadji. Our aim is to bring them in power.

The Government of Atalji.

SHRI PRAKASH PARANJPE (THANE): Your party has been divided

into eight places.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Prakash Paranjpeji, please don't disturb him.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Mr. Spekaer, Sir, Atalji ki Sarkar bahut hai....*

Adhyaksh mahodaya, is sarkar ke viruddha mein kya-kya bolun.

Atalji aapke pass hoga DMK ka Baalu Magar hamare paas hai majboot RJD ka Laloo. Atalji apke raj mein garibon ko nahi mil raha aaloo, ish sarkar ke khilaf bolna mein kaise talun*.

Desh ko bachane ki jimmedari mein kis par dalun,

"Advanlji hain apse bhi babul."

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Ramdasji, now please conclude. Now everyone have become aware that who is such person.

3. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Mr. Speaker, Sir,

"Atalji, Advaniji ko khilao soft Hindutva ka Aaloo,
George Fernandes nahin hai jyada...
Unke liye kafi hain hamare Laloo"

So, I support the No-Confidence Motion moved by Smt. Soniaji. You should rule the country for poor and dalits. Atalji, the colour of my Jacket is blue and colour of your Jacket is also blue. My party's colour is blue but your party's colour is not blue. Until colour of your party turns blue, you will not learn the secularism. So, I want to say that colour of your party should be blue.

MR. SPEAKER: I shall expunge unparliamentary expressions from the record. I shall also expunge the words which give the sense of allegation.

SHRI SHIVAJI MANE (HINGOLI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, is it proper to speak such things in the House?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE): Mr. Speaker, Sir, there should be some norms of Parliament, country's moat.

MR. SPEAKER: The words which I consider not proper and which are not according to the rules, shall be expunged.

* Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Ramdasji please sit down because Prime Minister is speaking.

4. SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: You brought the motion in 1962 while our armed forces were fighting with the China. You brought the motion when our Jawans were dying. This dates back to 8 November, 1962.

MR. SPEAKER: Whatever any Member speaks without my permission should not be recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. Please do not speak. Mani Shankarji sit down. Hon'ble Prime Minister is speaking.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I don't interrupt anyone.

MR. SPEAKER: Please keep quiet.

5. SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: You are running it.

6. MR. SPEAKER: Let the Prime Minister reply. Please do not interrupt him. I request all the Members that Prime Minister must not be disturbed. This will result in disturbing each other while speaking. Let him say whatever he wants to say.

MR. SPEAKER: You can put this question after his speech is over, how can you put on your question right now? This is not the procedure to interrupt him while delivering the speech.

7. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI: He was the President of the country.

8. SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: I did not make a mockery but how one would work with Narendra Modi, you must have experienced that.

9. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Where is the Commission's report?

10. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: They will also follow us.

11. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Please answer this simple question. He had given an undertaking to the country that he would not come back until he was exonerated. Why did you take him in? Please answer this simple question.

12. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Why have you taken him in?

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: The Commission of inquiry appointed in this case is still on. Why did you take him in?

13. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You had accepted his resignation then why have you taken him in?

14. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: What is the justification of that commission?

There is no justification for that commission of inquiry, which was appointed after his resignation.

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Sir, he has no right to disturb the hon. Prime Minister when he is speaking.

15. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: We would like to ask the Prime Minister, we are seeking clarification from him.

16. SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: No we are not at all. We are afraid of your own reputation.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. Nothing will go on record.

17. MR. SPEAKER: Please let the Prime Minister's speech be completed. The Leader of the Opposition has the right to reply and she can reply to those points.

MR. SPEAKER: So I shall request you not to interrupt him.

18. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Who is preventing you?

19. DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: You are preventing.

20. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Sometimes, you have done well.

21. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You just returned after abusing us. You did not do a right thing.

22. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You lost for the sake of Ms. Mayawati.

23. SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL: You are telling that it was all handiwork (Karastani) of the State Government.

24. SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when the Prime Minister began his intervention, he said that he was not aware if a No-Confidence Motion had been placed at a time when the Government was stable and that they could only be placed when the Government was on the verge of falling.

MR. SPEAKER: Please listen to the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down.

SHRI KIRTI JHA AZAD (DARBHANGA): Please tell Mani Shankar Aiyar to give his reply.

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI: There were a number of such instances when No-Confidence Motions were placed to expose the failures of various Governments and not to replace the Government. We can give these instances to the Prime Minister. In fact, at least two such instances were quoted in the afternoon.

I also understood, from what the Prime Minister has said, that No-Confidence Motion's wording was not to his liking. But surely a No-Confidence Motion by the Opposition has to be worded according to the Opposition's liking.

The Prime Minister also wondered why we are commenting on the state of the economy. I would like to say that if the economy is advancing so well.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down.

25. MR. SPEAKER: That issue is not being discussed right now Please listen the speech. I have allowed the Leader of the Opposition. Please sit down.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Sir, the Prime Minister very kindly spoke that we must respect each other. Now in his presence and in the presence of the entire Cabinet, this is happening. Nobody is taking any step.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA: Will the Leader of the Opposition read out her speech?

MR. SPEAKER: As per Rules, she is allowed to refer to the papers, which she is doing with my consent. Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, you please continue.

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI: I would like to know if.

RESIGNATION OF SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV FROM THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

10 December, 2003

The Delhi edition of The Indian Express dated 16.11.2003 carried a News story and VCD visuals allegedly showing Shri Dilip Singh Judev, then Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests, receiving cash from one Shri Rahul in the presence of Shri Natwar Rateria, Assistant Private Secretary to the Minister. Shri Dilip Singh Judev submitted his resignation which was accepted by the President on my recommendation on 17.11.2003. On my direction, the Cabinet Secretariat forwarded on 17.11.2003 press clippings from various newspapers to the CBI for appropriate action.

On the basis of the above Indian Express News story and other print and electronic media reports, the CBI registered a Preliminary Enquiry on 18.11.2003 against Shri Judev, his APS Shri Natwar Rateria, and Shri Rahul, purportedly a representative of an Australian Mining Company.

The decision to register a Preliminary Enquiry or a regular case or file a chargesheet is a decision taken by the CBI. The Government does not interfere in these decisions.

The CBI has also sent notices to both Shri Judev and Shri Rateria requiring them to appear before the CBI.

It has been the policy of my Government that all allegations pertaining to corruption should be thoroughly inquired into. Accordingly, the CBI is inquiring into this whole matter and it would be premature to state anything till the inquiry is complete.

As hon. Members are aware, the CBI has full functional autonomy and, under the recently enacted Central Vigilance Commission Act, the superintendence of the CBI in relation to offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act has been vested by the Government in the Central Vigilance Commission.

There should, therefore, be no fear or misgiving regarding the independence of this inquiry.

I would like to assure this august House that the truth will soon be out and the law will take its own course.

BACK NOTE

**LXVIII Resignation of Shri Dilip Singh Judev from the Council
of Ministers, 10 December, 2003**

NIL