

PREFACE

Shri Inder Kumar Gujral, a humanist and a diplomat was born at Jhelum (in undivided Punjab) on 4th December, 1919. He belonged to a family of Freedom Fighters and he too actively participated in the freedom struggle from a young age in 1931 at the young age of 11 faced police action. He organized movement of young children in Jhelum town. In 1942, he participated pro-actively in Quit India Movement.

He was a visionary leader and a veteran politician holding very vital positions in many Governments over the years. He was influenced by nationalistic ideas as a student and joined the All India Student Federation and the Communist Party of India. He joined the Indian National Congress in 1964 and became a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha. He was close to Smt. Indira Gandhi and was the Minister of Information and Broadcasting during the emergency in 1976 in the Government headed by Smt. Indira Gandhi. He was appointed the Ambassador of India to the erstwhile Soviet Union in 1976 and continued during the tenures of Shri Morarji Desai and Shri Charan Singh as Prime Ministers. Gujral left the Congress Party in the mid-1980s and joined the Janata Dal. In 1989, Gujral was elected to the Lok Sabha and became the External Affairs Minister in the V.P. Singh Government in 1989-1990. As External Affairs Minister in V.P. Singh led National Front (1989), he handled the fallout of the Kuwait crisis following Iraqi Invasion that displaced thousand of Indians. In 1996 he became the Minister of External Affairs again in the Deve Gowda Government supported by the Congress Party and developed the Gujral Doctrine during this period. He was a very warm personality and maintained congenial and cohesive relations with one and all. Due to his affable mannerism and acumen for politics he became the 12th Prime Minister of India in 1997. His term lasted for over 11 months, including 3 months as caretaker Prime Minister. During this time, he attempted to improve relations with all neighbouring countries including Pakistan which was later reformed when he became Prime Minister.

It recognized the supreme importance of friendly, cordial relations with neighbours. These principles are:

- * With neighbours like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, India does not ask for reciprocity, but gives and accommodates what it can in good faith and trust.

- * No South Asian country should allow its territory to be used against the interest of another country of the region.
- * No country should interfere in the internal affairs of another.
- * All South Asian countries must respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- * They should settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations.

Shri I.K. Gujral was fluent in Urdu and was very fond of poetry. He held the post of Chancellor of Maulana Azad National Urdu University. When one goes through his speeches in the Parliament, traces of these qualities can be found. He rose through the ranks in public life started from Vice-President in New Delhi Municipal Committee in 1958, Union Minister and India's ambassador to the USSR and later the Prime Minister. Gujral was a member of the Club De Madrid. Shri Inder Kumar Gujral married Ms. Shiela Gujral and had two sons Shri Naresh Gujral who also became a Rajya Sabha M.P. and Shri Vishal.

His book, 'The foreign policies of India' talks in depth about the aspirations that he had for India and how he wanted India to have warm relations with the neighbouring countries.

Shri I.K. Gujral passed away at the age of 92 in 2012.

*Secretary-General
Lok Sabha*

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**MOTION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
22 April, 1997**

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I beg to move:—

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

Mr. Speaker, Sir, while I am putting forth this point before the House, I am well aware that the term of my Government is beginning today, therefore it would be better to talk of days to come since it would be suiting the occasion and praiseworthy too. But whenever we talk about policies and days to come in India, it becomes necessary to glance at the past and it is easy too, specially in the year when India is celebrating fiftieth anniversary of its independence, a number of people like me and Chandra Shekharji are present in the House who have participated in the freedom struggle of India. That was Unique moment.

Only yesterday, I visited Gandhi Memorial, where Shri Bommai had made arrangements for bringing some papers related to Gandhiji which have been made public today. While talking about Gandhi, I started recalling some fond memories of my life. I would like to reiterate which I have already said that I had the first glimpse of Gandhiji at the age of 11 years. The session of congress was going on in Lahore where Gandhiji had come and I heard him as a child he was uttering that India must get freedom this time. This occasion cast an impression on my thought. I had said one more thing about Gandhiji. When Gandhiji said about starting Dandi March, my parents were already attached to him. The day on which satyagrah was to be started, some friends came to met my father that evening. My father was an advocate, and they were good friends of my father. I always remember what one of his friends uttered to him, "you are an educated person, that old fellow has gone mad because he thinks that this strong Government will fall down by making a pinch of salt".

**Now, I remember those utterances as to how the pinch of salt had
changed the history of India because the pinch of salt
had given a new turn to our traditions.**

It had taken a pledge from the countrymen that we will remain faithful to the religion propounded by Gandhiji *i.e.* Satyagraha, non-violence and friendship.

Some newspapers had written about me that I have nostalgia of Lahore. I accept that it is true. My first nostalgia is that I had seen the session of Congress and whenever I go to Lahore, I remember three places very much. One of them being Central Jail where my father was prisoned, Secondly women's Jail where my mother was prisoned and the third children's jail where I was kept. Whenever I visit these places, I remember all the fond memories and traditions and think as to how many promises we have been able to fulfil and how many are still to be fulfilled.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had uttered a very important thing from this seat which he termed 'tryst with destiny'. Talking about Jawaharlal Nehru is like lighting the course of the Sun. Now, I can claim that our policies have been formulated on the promises which were made by Jawaharlal Nehru and to which he always stuck and again the policies likely to be formulated by this Government will find inspiration from 'trust with destiny' made by Jawaharlal Nehru. Those promises are promises made by the country and not the promises made by congress party, neither by a tradition nor by any particular community. Atalji, Jaswantji, Chandra Shekharji and a number of names are covered by the same promise.

Today, I am on my legs to say only one thing that when I ask for your vote, I ask it in the name of confidence, to fulfil those promises which are witness to all the past and traditions having roots of secularism.

I remember one more thing. The session of congress party was going on. Since my father was in congress, he took me also with him; then I was a child. For the first time Congress passed a resolution that since this country is a country of diversities, its unity will remain in diversity. The people have different religions, different languages and wear different dresses, still we are one. The promise made during the Congress session to maintain that unity still exists. That time congress or Parliamentary congress was a platform, a movement which was leading the country towards the freedom. They were named as secularism afterwards. We started saying that there is unity in diversity irrespective of religion, place of residence and language. I make another promise in the name of this unity and that is — this Government will uphold all the traditions of secularism. But the secularism has not taken help of revivalism. If we look back, we find that we have strong roots, we have own culture about which we are proud but with that we have to look forward. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru used to say that we should think scientifically. We should not wonder on the lighting of a bulb but we should explain a child as to how the bulb lits up. It is not a matter of surprise, it is scientific temper. Much before Gandhiji,

Buddha was born in the country, I always remember a thing said by Lord Buddha:—

"Do not believe me because I say so. Do not believe it because in such and such a book it is so written. Always question" That questioning mind is what is called scientific temper."

And for that purpose, my third promise is that we have to had the country towards scientific temper.

I promise you one thing more. This country is of poor and down trodden people, who have been deprived of justice for the ages. To be untouched was considered their fault. Not to talk of touching them, even their shadow was considered unholy. We have been trying to remove it for the last fifty years and have succeeded in it, but not to that extent. Untouchability has not been removed from the country. It would not be fine to say that Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people have now got their rights. Therefore, it would be the endeavour of my Government to provide justice to these backward people who have been denied justice for the ages, whether it is called social justice or socialism or any other name, our country cannot progress until all of us unit no matter to which caste or religion, history we belongs.

One thing should also be kept in mind that we people think that we are kind to some are if they get their right. We cannot be kind to any body. This country belongs to all. This House represents this democratic country. This House represents those traditions which India wants to cherish and would continue to cherish and I also want to contribute in it. So, I want to make one more promise for the progress of the country that we have established new traditions in this country. We make national consensus on the fundamental issues. We talk of national consensus even in foreign policy. We should try to make national consensus in respect of economic policy also.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, basically in democracy we cannot see profit in respect of everything. In democracy we argue on common things. We may have same opinion or divergent opinion on some issues. But we are not enemy of each other. We may have different opinions, but we don't oppose each other. The same relation should continue and this is the way of running the democracy. I would try that this tradition may be maintained. The country would progress if this tradition is maintained. Today the country has entered the age of coalition. There is coalition everywhere. It was there in the Government of Atalji and also in other Governments.

It is easy to form coalition Government, but it takes time to learn the culture of coalition Government. Today when the Government are formed and fall I see it with positive attitude that at last we have decided politically to make coalition Government but we have to learn how to behave with each other, how to fulfill promises, how to co-operate with one another and not to do any-thing for which we have to feel sorry. Many a times I feel disappointed, but we should not give up hope. We have to find a way out of this state of despair.

There are many problems before us which require consensus. My friend Mr. Soz is here who represents Kashmir. Kashmir has taken a new turn today. Election has been conducted there, Government have been formed and members are representing the people. It does not mean that the tribulations have ended. They are still there. When I address my brothers, they also include my sisters. When I am talking about Sushmaji, I want to talk about women. Women have not received their due in this country. It is a reality. We may say that it is written in our religion, but women have not received their due in politics. It would be my endeavour that women receive their due. Gandhiji had also said it many a times.

I am saying one more thing. When the Government were formed in the year 1937 for the first time during the British rule, Gandhiji had insisted on two things. One thing, he had said that there would not be any Government in which there was no woman Minister. Second thing, he had said that there would not be any such Government in which there was no Minister belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. We have to fulfil what Gandhi had demanded for. I am promising you one thing more that we should not forget that the population of the country has been increasing rapidly. There is no clock in my room so far but earlier when I used to go to the room of the Prime Minister, there was a population clock there. When I used to see the current date of population, I would not sleep the whole night. Today, our population is more than 95 crores. We have talked much that we would do this and that. We have achieved success to some extent, but not to the required extent. One thing should be kept in mind that family planning would succeed only when women would get their right. The illiteracy among women would not end until we create an atmosphere in the society for sending women to schools and colleges. I also promise you and I would try to go to that side.

One more thing should also be kept in mind. Once there was a Conference in Sweden and the issue of environment was raised in that. At that time I was the Housing Minister, also had the opportunity of accompanying Indiraji. One thing has emerged there that pollution and

poverty are the two sides of the same coin and our environment cannot be improved until we remove poverty. So, as long as poverty would be there we cannot remove illiteracy. Someone had said:—

"Tell me one country which has literacy and is backward, and tell me another country which has illiteracy and is advanced."

We would also have to promise that we would pay particular need towards literacy. I would not speak in details but briefly.

I was associated with the earlier Government and that Government had formulated a foreign policy. You all are supporting me in regard to that foreign policy. One same foreign policy would continue, we would go ahead with the same foreign policy. New relations would be established with the help of it. When I sat in my office for five minutes today, I received messages and telephone from our neighbouring countries. It is part of the changed atmosphere which we admire. It has not been done by me.

It has been done with your consensus and it would be the basic policy of this country to maintain consensus. We have make that consensus on our policies and also to go ahead with them. Consensus has taken the place above social justice in our country.

Fortunately, there is no such party, which does not agree with it we have to take more steps in this regard. I want to make one or two more promises.

One promise is this that till I remain Prime Minister in this Government, it would be transparent. It would try to be accountable. Whenever you would like to know anything, I would not mind that. Whenever you would say that we have committed mistake - many mistakes are committed, honestly, I would ask for your indulgence for that and you can criticise us for the mistakes committed with bad intentions and for that I would take the responsibility of each of my colleague. I would not protect any of my colleague for that. At the same time I would not allow witch hunting in this country. That atmosphere would not be created.

..... **xxx**

..... **xxx**

..... **xxx**¹

I must make one thing very clear that the farming community is the very basis and pride of this nation. As long as this Government keeps its close rapport with the farmers of India, safeguard their interests and makes earnest efforts for their welfare, it would be stable and become more strong. I solemnly assure the farmers and mill workers who toil throughout

the day to earn their livelihood that the Government would pay more attention to their grievance than before.

I would not speak at length now. In the evening, when all brothers would have expressed their views, I would speak.

I hope, Sir, you will give me another chance in the evening and I then will be able to meet these points.

At the moment, I would only like to say that our nation faced a challenge today i.e. the challenge of internal as well as external stability. Internal stability could be achieved through social justice, secularism and communal harmony and external stability through mutual discussion and consensus. Before concluding, I would like to touch upon one basic point. This government will function as far as it is possible and perhaps little longer than possible. This would be possible only when we have consensus on the major issues. My friend Shri Chidambaram is sitting beside me and I would like to mention his name before I conclude.

And I hope, my message is reaching him through translation, otherwise I will speak in English.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**²

Secondly, I would like to appeal Shri Moopnar in this House, He may bear grudge against some people, who might have offended him. I had gone to see him, earlier, I again visited him in the morning also. I had quoted a Saying in Punjabi to him. In Punjabi, there is a saying, "Khare Dadhi Wala, Pakada Jaye Mooneltoon wala". It means to dark up the wrong tree. Why are you attacking me? What have I done?

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**³

I sincerely hope that my appeal will be reported to and I am very grateful and again repeat that the views put forth before you by me will be supported by the entire House. Thanks.

..... **xxx** **xxx** **xxx**⁴

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was saying that I had heard your voice. My friends had met me in the morning and they had praised me for having delivered my speech in Hindi after assuming this post.

Hindi is my mother tongue, I have been brought up in the same language and I also represent the same culture from which this language has originated. All languages whether it is Hindi or Urdu have originated in this country. They have not come from outside.

Therefore, whenever I speak this language, a common man can understand it, I am neither a 'Pandit', nor a 'Gyani' nor a 'Maulavi'. I am of the view that whosoever speaks from this post in any language, his line of communication should be linked with his people. I was trying to speak in English because there are so many people in the country who do not understand Hindi even today.

I spoke in Hindi in the morning and if you permit, I would like to speak now in English so that my voice could reach to those people who do not understand Hindi.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I rise this evening to continue what I had submitted to the House this morning seeking its confidence, I am not in a mood to defend or offend anybody. That was not my purpose. My purpose basically was that we, in this House, should look at my commitments that I was trying to make in the morning itself. The debate, as it developed, has highlighted two things. One is, all sections of the House have tried to mention my name in their words for which I am grateful and therefore that induces more humility in me. So, when I speak from this seat and when I look down in this seat, there are three blocks shown here. One of these shows that Jawaharlal Nehru sat here. The second block says that Indira Gandhi sat here. The third one says that Lal Bahadur Shastri also sat here. When I look at their names, I find myself a very small person, I find myself a very humble person. But I am grateful to you that you have honoured me. The more you honour me, the more humble, I feel.

Which is called 'Namrata' in Hindi. I speak with humility and I would like to submit that whatever promises I had made in the morning, I stick to them. Before speaking further, I would like to make clear that I had begun my speech with a point in the morning.

In the morning I had said that I am speaking on the 50th year of Indian Independence. This 50th year is not just numerical because everybody adds years. You cannot stop that process; whether we think in terms of an individual's age or we think in terms of the growth of a nation or we think in terms of the development of history, there are certain factors which are beyond us and adding years is one of them. Therefore, when we look at 50 years of India's Independence, I think, as a nation, we owe to ourselves and I mean, all sections of the House not me only. We owe to ourselves to look back and also look forward.

When we look back, I reminded in the morning to my friends that we look back with a great deal of pride-not only me, not only the friends who are sitting here, but all sections of the House-the legacy of the freedom

struggle. That freedom struggle was not fought by one individual. It was not fought by one particular party, although Congress was the name. But Congress was a platform and Congress had a bigger dimension than the party think of itself today.

I do not know how many amongst us or in this House choose to remember that tradition when Congress was not only spelling out that why it was resisting and fighting colonialism, but it was also spelling out, at the same time, the future of India.

**I think our freedom struggle was unique in one sense
which I cannot think of in any other freedom
struggle in the world that while fighting,
while struggling and while resisting
imperialism, we were spelling
out the future of India.**

The forefathers or the founders or whatever you might call them, call it Mahatma Gandhi, call it Jawaharlal Nehru, call it Sardar Patel, call it Maulana Azad or whatever you might call, they spelt out for us what shall be the shape of India. The Constitution of India is not just a document, it is not just a book, although we take pride in saying that the authorship of this, to a large extent, is due to the contribution made by Baba Saheb Ambedkar, but it spelt out those very promises which the freedom struggle had made.

One promise was democracy. The second promise was unity of India and also a unity of diverse India. This promise was made by saying that we, as I said in the morning in Hindi, belong to different religions. We have different ways of lives and we speak different languages; yet we are one. The freedom struggle unified us and that is one of the things which freedom struggle gave us. It also gave us a liberal outlook as my friend Shri Chidambaram was saying. The liberal outlook was not spelt out by me or by the college or by the school where I went. The liberal attitude was given to me by those who were leading the freedom struggle. They said that unless your mind is open, unless your heart is open, unless your outlook is wide and unless your vision is wide you can never lead India. That is what we are trying to follow, it is there in the legacy of India. Therefore, I only promise myself to you that if by chance of history or by whatever luck you might say, I have been called upon to sit here, I want to uphold that legacy.

That legacy has also spelt out the postulates of Indian future and India's future held many promises. As I said, it also made promise to those

who go by the name of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes first and foremost. I remember— as a younger man and many of you might have been younger men— when the freedom struggle was going on, Gandhiji went on an epic fast. Why did Gandhiji fast? Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote an article at that time and I remember that article. Pandit Nehru thought at that time that Gandhiji was derailing the freedom struggle. He said, 'perhaps he was de-focussing the issue from the main struggle to the other side'. He went on a fast to emphasise one thing that every human being has a right to go to a temple of his choice. That is why, he went on a fast and he was going to die. That was the spelling of Gandhiji and that is why Gandhiji became the Mahatma and that is what elevated him. When he elevated himself, he saw the miseries of that man who was denied entry to a temple and he saw the humiliation of that man. He saw the indignity of that man and when he saw the indignity and inhumanity of that man he said, 'I would rather lay my life for this till he enters the temple'. Gandhiji himself never went to a temple. He was a religious person but not of a temple going type. He was not a revivalist. He was not an obscurantist. He was one of the most modern men in our history who were ever born. He transformed our social thinking.

I remember again, if I may turn slightly autobiographical that when my mother went to jail for the first time, my grandmother wept and wept for days and she said that she was not crying because her daughter had gone to jail, but that she could not show her face in her village because they would say, 'your daughter has gone to jail'. Gandhiji turned it into dignity and going to jail became an emblem of dignity. He turned our values. Again the values he turned were to treat human beings as human beings. We may be Muslims and we may be Hindus. I do not want to spell out the castes, there are several, yet there is unity in India. The unity of India will never be physical unity. We unify the nation not in terms of making the Constitution or laws here. We can unify the hearts.

My friends there were asking about the status of Muslims; some friends were asking about the status of Sikhs; and some Members were asking me about the status of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. They all represent human beings. They all represent the aspirations. They all represent their stake in this nation. Unify them and India is unified, divide them and India is gone.

What are we discussing today? Are we trying to define secularism? Are we defining this 'ism' and that 'ism'? Are we writing a thesis for a doctorate? Are we going to Harvard university to tell them how we look at that? We spelt it out in terms of our own experience; we spelt it out

in terms of our social reality; and we spelt it out in terms of our legacy. If these three things are kept in mind then everything falls in its own place.

We may differ in this House. I have respect for Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee beyond my words. When he was the Foreign Minister I was his Ambassador. I know his values. I know what he believes in and what I know, I respect him for that. There may be difference of opinion amongst us and that is what democracy is all about. If there is a difference of opinion then what can one do?

Of course, Shrimati Sushma Swaraj is sitting there.

She was very eloquent. I do not know how to reply. Only one couplet of Urdu comes to my mind.

**Tum Mukhatib Bhi Ho, Karib Bhi Ho, Main
Tumko Dekhoon Ya Tumse Bat Karoon.**

This is the situation. But all the same, I think, now we have come to a stage when we have to look in terms of several things. In the morning, Sir, I talked about the security of India. We know that a massive nation like the Soviet Union collapsed. We have seen it. Why did it collapse? I think, Atalji should tell us more than that I can tell you. I had lived in that society for five years, which looked so durable, which had all the tanks, which had all the planes, which had everything, but it collapsed. Internal security was not there. People had lost faith in their internal security.

I went there recently and I was asking one of my old friends of those days, who even now occupies a very important position in the present system. I said, "I am dying with wonder; I lived here for five years, everything looked fine, but then what happened?" This gentleman, I do not want to name him because he might be embarrassed there, said that he could tell me only one thing, that is, that they never had a State; they had a party. When that party collapsed, the State collapsed.

That is what we want to avoid here. We do want to make a situation where State is not more important than anything else. State is supreme and State does not belong to a single party. State does not belong to a single ideology. State does not belong to a single religion. State does not belong to a single caste. State belongs to all of us and the State of India, the glorious State of India, the great State of India, which has survived will survive if all of us place faith in that. Now, State speaks through the people. State always speaks through institutions. Judiciary is one of them. If we make a promise to the judiciary and do not fulfil it, the State is harmed. Let us not do it. State also speaks through this House. If we do not really spell

out and also respect them, then you cannot hold my hand, Rashtrapathi cannot get me arrested, but the State gets damaged. When the State gets damaged, I think the future gets damaged. State also gets damaged when many people lose faith in it. State gets damaged, when a young man is unemployed in the street. He loses faith in the State-first in the Government, and then in the State. You can remove a Government by a vote, but you can only undermine the State. Therefore, this undermining process must be stopped.

When we talk of secularism or we talk in terms of having some sort of a unity amongst us, we want to safeguard that. That is again one of my commitments which I would like to fulfil. I would also like to say, at the same time, that in this country there are several dimensions of our social life. We always take pride in the fact that farmers in this country matter. Yes, they do. And that is why, the great man, Lal Bahadur Shastri, said, "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan". He meant something by that. It was not a mere slogan. He was spelling out India. He knew that India meant these two segments of society particularly. I commit myself to that.

I commit myself also to all those issues which again spell out the policies. Atalji rightly said and I agree with him and I want to endorse it. Why has our foreign policy succeeded? It has not succeeded because Jawaharlal Nehru spelt it out. It has succeeded because when Atalji sat here, he said the same thing. When I sit here, I say the same thing. When Narasimha Raoji sat here, he said the same thing. When Chandra Shekharji sat here, he said the same thing. That is India. That is why, India's foreign policy succeeded. We can differ in details, sometimes. We can differ in drafting, sometimes. But consensus basically means that we uphold it. Why did Narasimha Raoji send Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, year after year, to the United Nations? Why did Narasimha Raoji depute me to the Human Rights Commission when we were confronted by a neighbour, whose name I do not want to mention?

It is because he wanted to give a message which every Prime Minister must give. I will continue to give that message whenever we go abroad, that we are one and we represent India. We do not represent parties. We do not represent differences. We represent the unity of India. That is why, if it is my good luck to sit when the next session of the United Nations comes, I will see that Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee will still lead that delegation because he does it so well and I am impressed by his performance. Not only that, he is a high statured man. We in India take pride in this fact and that is our pride I think. Our pride is this that whether my friend

Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao or my friend Shri Chandra Shekhar or my friend Shri Sharad Pawar sits here, ultimately when we go abroad, as Sir Winston Churchill once said:—

**"I shall never criticise my nation abroad.
I shall never spare it internally."**

Therefore, that is how we proceed and that is the basis on which we want to build our nation.

I wanted to have the note which every Prime Minister has been getting from every Department. You know it, Mr. Speaker, you have been a Minister yourself. You know that neither you draft it nor do I. These notes come to me. I could have spelt out those notes and taken this time to spell out the details of policy of every Department. But I know the time is up. I will not take your time for this purpose now. But I will take your time next week when we discuss the Budget because that will be the time for me to spell out the details of policy. Today let me only spell out the postulates and caution the nation only on two things.

Again, I resort to Urdu when I say what Iqbal had once said:—

**'Aine Nau sa Darna, Tarje Kohan pe Arana. Manzil
Bhi Kathin Hai, Kaumon ki Zindgi main'**

This is a difficult moment for us and at this difficult moment, we must transcend, bypass and swim through collectively together. In our history, we have seen moments when we had made mistakes, but if we had not made those mistakes, we would perhaps not have surpassed.

Again let me conclude by drawing your attention to another Urdu couplet which said:—

**'Wo Waqt Bhi Dekhe Hain Tawarikh Ki Rahon Ne
Lamhon Ne Khata Ki Thi, Sadiyon, Ne Saja Pai.'**

**I do not want the nation to perish. I commit myself
only to one thing. My commitment is born out of
my faith in this nation, my faith in the legacy of
this nation and my fundamental faith in
having that trust in the nation which
Shri Jawaharlal Nehru promised.**

He did not spell out for himself. He was promising for all of us. He was promising for generations to come. I think this burden has come on us now to spell out and see the vision of 2020 not only in terms of

years, but also the vision. 20:20 eye sight is always a good eye sight without fail. They are ideal glasses. Anyhow, I try to wear them insofar as political vision is concerned. Let all of us differ a little, please. Sometimes we can disagree. Sometimes we can disagreeably disagree. But let us all the same remember what India we want to build in this 50th year of the Indian Republic. In this House, I promise you one thing. I will try to continue practising the type of consensus that I tried to practise and I am glad Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee appreciated that point in the foreign policy. On that consensus basis, I am sure, we all can be proud of India in the coming years.

BACK NOTE

I. Motion of Confidence in the Council of Ministers, 22 April, 1997

1 SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow): Mr. Speaker, Sir, what is the need of saying that witch hunting will not be allowed. Has there been any witch hunting? It has happened so far? You want to hush up those pending caps by saying that witch hunting would not be allowed.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Atalji, I have been in power just for the last 24 hours. I have not seen the files.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN (Mumbai - North East): You have repeated it twice.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: I have not yet seen the files.

If you had asked me about the file related to Bangladesh or C.T.B.T. I would have explained. But, let me see the relevant papers to enable me to report to your queries. That is why I am making a promise that after looking into the papers, whatever you ask me. I shall report and for that I shall be accountable to you.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar): Whenever the Congress Party has supported this Government, it has never asked and will never ask them to do anything in any case which the court will decide. We want to say that we have not decided it. These people were unnecessarily saying that.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I feel that Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev could not understand my utterances in Hindi. I have never said that some body has recommended it to me.

I have never said that I have raised my finger towards anyone. I don't know what he understand. I am speaking in Hindi or Urdu. Today, we speak in a different language. I can neither call it Hindi. The language in which I am interacting with you is the language of communication and I am using the same one.

2 SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): We will send him there.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Then I will speak in English. And I am speaking in English to appeal to him to please come back and take charge.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: He spoke from here last time when he was there. Now, he is sitting next to me. He will be sent there.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: He is welcome here.

SHRI A.C. JOS (Idukki): Shri Somnath Chatterjee is the only obstruction for him to cross over to that side.

3. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI (Allahabad): Hon'ble Prime Minister, Sir, it is just opposite here, "Kiya Moonahlon Wale Ne Hai, Aur Pakada Dadhi Wala Gaya Hai".

4. MR. SPEAKER: Motion moved:—

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

At the outset, may I appeal to all the hon. Members who are participating in this debate to be very-very brief? I think, it is the content of the speech and not the length of the speech which the people are looking for. So, please be very brief.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ (South Delhi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I on behalf of my party rise to oppose the confidence motion moved by the new Prime Minister of India, Shri Inder Kumar Gujral for discussion in the House.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was viewing your interview on Doordarshan the day before yesterday in which you said that the 11th Lok Sabha of which you have got the privilege to become the Speaker, would be talked about for having taken up in maximum number of confidence motions.

MR. SPEAKER: Sir, this is absolutely correct. Out of the nine confidence motions taken up so far four or five confidence motions have been taken up in this Lok Sabha only.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are absolutely correct. Infact, it is first time that a former Information and Broadcasting Minister has been elected as the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Therefore, this Government has decided to make a serial on the confidence motion and we are here seeing the third episode of this serial. Mr. Speaker, Sir, while moving the confidence motion, the Prime Minister said in the very first sentence of his speech that it would be better if he spoke on some issues which may confront us in future. We heard these points but it would have been better if he had spoken on some past events. We all will see what this Government does in the future but he had better spoken about the events which led to the formation of this Government. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the events of past 10 days on the political front of this country are utterly shameful. The history of last 10 days is that of disloyalty. Those minister

who are sitting on this side today. Mr. Speaker, Sir. When I was entering the House on the day, the confidence motion was to be moved, one journalist asked me as to what would happen that day, I had replied that either the Government would fall or loose its honour but, I had never imagined that the Government would fall one day and loose its honour the next day.

The same Government which fall on 11th April, after loosing its honour and indulged in open calamny of the largest democracy of the world, has resurrected again. Those minister who were swearing to swim and sink with Shri H.D. Devegowda in this very House, are today again sitting. On that side under the leadership of Shri Inder Kumar Gujral. It was not you and I alone who viewed the proceedings of that day, but millions of Indians also viewed it as it was telecast live on Doordarshan, Shri Ramvilas Paswan had vehemently opposed the demand of the congressmen to change the leader and questioned if it was a matter of fun to change the leader. I have with me the copy of his speech. I would like to read it out sentence by sentence.

STATEMENT REGARDING NINTH SAARC SUMMIT, MALE

16 May, 1997

I have the honour to present before the House a *Suo Motu* Statement on my participation in the 9th Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation which was held in Male from May 12-14, 1997.

Cooperation amongst the 7 Member States of SAARC has been increasing in recent years and the Summit further exemplified the strength of the Association.

For the information of Hon. Members, I would like to summarise the principal development at the Summit:

An earlier decision of SAARC was to work for a South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) preferably by the year 2000 but in any case before 2005 AD. The 9th Summit has now agreed that SAFTA should be realised by the year 2001, thus advancing the final target year by four years. This is an important decision which reflects the growing sentiment among the Member countries to consolidate economic interaction speedily.

Another significant step was the decision to set up a Group of Eminent Persons in order to develop a long range vision for the SAARC. There was general agreement amongst the Heads that SAARC was now in a position to strengthen its activity in core economic sectors, for which an agenda should be developed.

The question of sub-regional cooperation in South Asia came up. Prior to the Summit, some differences of opinion had been expressed on the appropriate relationship between sub-regional cooperation and the regional structure of SAARC. Whereas our preference from the start was that projects for sub-regional cooperation should be developed within the SAARC, as specifically provided for under Article 7 of the Charter, some other countries had initially felt that it was better to keep sub-regional efforts outside the SAARC.

Happily, the issue was resolved to the complete satisfaction of all parties by agreeing that specific projects for sub-regional cooperation would be developed and processed through the Secretariat and endorsed inter-governmentally through established processes of SAARC prior to their implementation. This has made it possible for a number of useful projects involving some but not all of the members, including a quadrilateral initiative

involving Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal based on a Nepalese proposal, to be developed in a manner that will enhance the flexibility and strengthen the functioning of the SAARC.

Particular emphasis was placed at the Summit on the problems faced by women and girl child in the society, particularly the girl children in especially difficult circumstances, was decided that the decade 2000-2010 would be designated as the 'SAARC Decade for the Rights of the Child'. SAARC will also pay particular attention to the evil of trafficking in women and children.

SAARC activities in the area of education will be expanded to cover Distance Education, and the facilities of Open University and Distance Education institutions will be expanded across the region with the possibility of the formation of a Consortium of Open Universities.

Important initiatives were taken in the field of environment, and included such aspects as developing common minimum standards for air and water pollution, trans-boundary bio-diversity conservation and evolving a SAARC Convention on Prevention of Illegal Trafficking in Flora and Fauna. SAARC Environment Ministers will hence-forth meet annually in view of the importance of this area of cooperation.

The process of progressive relaxation of visa requirements for inter-SAARC travel continued and a number of new categories would henceforth be exempted. These include all Cabinet members of the SAARC countries, heads of the NGO apex bodies and a number of others.

In order to promote cooperation among the professional organisations and voluntary groups across the SAARC region, it was agreed to create a new category of 'SAARC recognised bodies' which will enable such groups to come together for coordinated action with the SAARC Secretariat playing a supportive and encouraging role. This decision will facilitate creating of new channels of region-wide cooperation and people to people contacts.

It was agreed that the third meeting of Finance and Planning Ministers, in the context of the SAARC mechanism overseeing the progress in poverty eradication of the region, will be held shortly. In the current year, specific attention would be paid on participation of the target groups in the formulation and implementation of poverty eradication programmes and 1997 has been designated the "SAARC Year for Participatory Governance".

I wish to emphasise that the member States' approaches at the Summit were very positive and constructive which augurs well for the future of SAARC. There is a strong desire among member States to enrich the work of SAARC and strengthen it every day.

In view of the growing climate of close cooperation, it was also decided that informal political consultations amongst the SAARC leaders would be useful.

One of the related positive features of the SAARC Summits is the opportunity it offers Heads of States or Governments, and Foreign Ministers to have exchanges towards strengthening bilateral relationship amongst themselves. I had meetings with all other Heads of State and Governments at the Summit in a most cordial spirit.

My meeting with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has attracted a great deal of attention. I was glad at the opportunity to meet him and to discuss our bilateral relations. This represents an initial step in our efforts to develop structured dialogue between our two countries, which has been unfortunately missing from the agenda for the last several years. We were able to agree that our Foreign Secretaries should meet once again in the near future, in order to work out all aspects on the basis of which the dialogue can go ahead. We also agreed on a number of other useful measures such as installation of a hotline, the release of fishermen held by the two sides and the need to ease travel restrictions. Both sides will take steps to curb hostile propaganda if any and statements that may strain bilateral relations.

My meeting with the Prime Minister of Nepal reaffirmed the close friendship between our two countries. It was agreed that I should visit Nepal at an early date, probably in the first few days of the coming month. Similarly my meeting with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh was most friendly. Relations between our two countries have developed extremely well and we have greatly strengthened our mutual cooperation. We reviewed the implementation of the landmark water sharing treaty which has been implemented successfully through the first dry season of its duration, despite an unanticipated water shortage in the river.

I greatly welcomed the opportunity to talk to His Majesty the King of Bhutan, who is a great friend to India. He chose to transit through New Delhi on his return home and I had a further opportunity of meeting him during his stop over.

Similarly, I greatly valued the opportunity of renewed contacts with Her Excellency the President of Sri Lanka. We were able to exchange views on a number of issues. We look forward to the next SAARC Summit which would be hosted by Sri Lanka next year, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary of Independence.

Finally I had a very friendly meeting with our host. His Excellency President Gayoom of Maldives. I was glad to have the opportunity of visiting Indian cooperation projects in Male, a hospital and training Institute, which are both doing well.

This brief review will, I hope, bring home the fact that on the whole, we enjoy excellent relations with our neighbours in the region. Where problems persist, we have embarked on a process which, I am confident, will yield results in the future.

BACK NOTE

II. Statement Regarding Ninth SAARC Summit, Male, 16 May, 1997

NIL

ADJOURNMENT MOTION ON POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS IN BIHAR

24 July, 1997

I am grateful to you, I am also grateful to the Leader of the Opposition that he has drawn the attention of the House to this very vital issue. I think, on one point, all of us - I emphasise the word all - agree that corruption is something which requires our attention, our urgent attention and also very firm attention.

The first day when I spoke in this House seeking a vote of confidence, I had promised three things. I am glad and grateful to the Leader of the Opposition that he has repeated all the promises that I had made. I repeat them again and I confirm them again.

I am also grateful to the Leader of the Opposition that while reminding me of my promises, he has not made an allegation that I am backing out of it. The main point today is - it is very important for us to keep it in mind - to see what is the Motion before the House.

He has at length spoken about Bihar. He has every right to do so and I will come to it. I think, it is important for us to talk about it and it is important for us to pay our attention to this. But one thing is very important and that is that, although in the end, he said that he has moved this motion to draw our attention to it. If it was the intention, then it should have been done under some other rule in the Rules of Procedure, and not under the Adjournment Motion, as my friend, Shri Somnath Chatterjee had pointed out.

But anyhow, I will not take your time on that. As you know Sir, I have told several times and I repeat again that I have great respect for Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee for several reasons. One of the reasons is that he is very sober, he is very balanced, he is very prudent and he also is not known as an activist. Therefore, when he talks of passivity, I think, there is either something wrong with the translation of the word or there is something which English has confused him about. The main point basically is that from the day I assumed office and that was not long ago, from the first day I have been saying that any person in public life, be he a Minister or be he a Chief Minister or anybody who is charged for corruption should step down voluntarily. I have said it in public and I have demanded it in public. I have said it privately and I have also conveyed my message privately and I am saying again today that anybody who wants to act and work in public life should keep himself above all suspicion because

unless we build that type of probity in our life, life can never go on. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that in this 50th year particularly all of us have to determinedly move about it. He has objected and I am surprised that he has objected as to why do I ask the public to cooperate. Is it not a fact or does he not know, because he also contests elections, that people come to him and tell him that for getting an electric connection, people have to pay money. Do people not tell him, to get a map or a plan or anything approved, people have to pay money? Does he not know that every police station has complained against? Does he not know that day-to-day life has become miserable, impossible and difficult because of corruption? Does he not know it? And if in that context, I had asked the public cooperation, did I do a wrong thing? Can you possibly eliminate corruption only by attacking politicians? Yes, it is important. All of us who occupy high office, it is important for us to remain above suspicion. Otherwise, we cannot possibly run democracy. I totally repeat what he has assigned to me that public life cannot be run without probity and morality. Morality is always very important and that was the essence of our freedom struggle. Gandhiji always talks of ends and means and those ends and means still matter to all of us. Therefore, I think, on this particular issue at least we should not have been divided. On this particular issue, I think, we should unitedly respond. He has just now drawn my attention to the judgement of the court and I have also received the message almost simultaneously as he did. And my response would have been there even when he would not have read it. I can only assure him that we will definitely respond to the situation. After all, Central Government has two agencies through which it runs. So far as States are concerned, CBI is often mentioned about. What is CBI? The CBI is prosecuting Shri Laloo Prasad Yadav. Is it or is it not? Is it not a fact that CBI is an Agency of the Government of India? Is it not a fact that CBI's constructive responsibility for its actions, to this account, I am accountable to this House? If that is a fact, then where does passivity come in? At one time it was said that nobody should interfere in the functioning of CBI. It is correct. We have not. And that is why, we have let it go on and that is why we have been endowed as you have seen in the court itself. CBI has been the agency which has been resisting what is called.

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I wish that an experienced man like Shri Atal Bihar Vajpayee should not have talked about Governor. Governor should not be discussed here. His conduct should not be discussed here. Governor is the Head of the State and in that capacity, it is for him to decide what he wants to do

and what he wants to say. To give permission, to withhold permission, to dismiss a Government or not to dismiss a Government are his own area of action and activity. I can only say and I have said it in public that we have not at any stage tried to tell the Governor as to what he should or should not do. My words should be taken for it. That is why when he gives permission, also a legal point arises. That legal point, I am told, was the advice given by the legal authorities. That is when the Governor gives permission. I am not defending it. I am only explaining the legal position. This is the advice given to the Government by the Solicitor-General. He says, "In giving sanction for prosecution, the Governor does not pass any judgement on the guilt of the accused. Whether sanction is or is not necessary is determined by the references to the allegation, any complaint and no defence is asked for". He is quoting one case, called Hari Ram Case in AIR, 1939, etc.. etc. I could place the details on the Table of the House so that the House could look at it. The allegation, therefore, is that whatever is true or is not true is to be judged by the Court.

While giving the permission, the Governor only gives the sanction for prosecution to see that there is some foundation for the charges so that the prosecution can proceed which it cannot in the absence of the sanction for the prosecuting public servant. That guilt of the accused is only determined by the verdict of the criminal Court in whose jurisdiction it may lie.

My purpose is not to defend anybody. My purpose is not to say whether it is right or wrong. My purpose is only to apprise the hon. Members of the house what the legal authorities have told us only this morning. I summoned him. I talked to him what is the position *vis-a-vis* Governor.

My friend, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, has also drawn my attention to what Shri C. Subramaniam said. I was also present. I also heard him. He had said, "Governor should have withdrawn his pleasure". He did not. That is something which I can neither defend nor see a complaint against. None of us can because it is for the Governor to decide whether he defaulted or did not default. My only one responsibility was, which I have discharged fully, against one of my Ministers. Permission was given to take action against him or prosecute him. I asked him to resign that very day and Shri Verma resigned. He is not in the Government. I discharged my responsibility fully that day.

Therefore, I upheld what I had been saying. Today, I can only say this thing and I will proceed from this. The point therefore is most important. Public life, I repeat, cannot be really advanced particularly in

democracy unless we hold the morality as a person. The morality is extremely important for us. Therefore, we have to be very cautious on this that no finger is raised on us. I totally go with that and equally important for me is to say this. Again I repeat that the conduct of all of us is always under scrutiny. Each one of us sitting in this House or may be in the Legislatures lives in a glasshouse. They are all being observed all the time. That is why it is important for us to keep in mind the fact that people who have elected us or may elect us tomorrow again or may not, they are all the time watching us. And if somebody falls short of it, of course, ultimately people decide, but I am not passing on the buck. There is some responsibility that I have. But I am also more than that. It is the responsibility on my part that I uphold the rule of law.

I hope, nobody expects me to go beyond the rule of law. We have once experienced in this very House when the rule of law was flouted. And friends like Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and others were in jail for several months because they were not conforming with that big fiat. I do not want to rule by fiats. I do not want to become an authoritarian. I want to assert not my authority but I want to assert the regality or the majesty of the rule of law. And that is what we are all about.

If we do not observe the rule of law, then who else will? That is why I understand fully that where my area is and where the Court's area is confined to. This system has been built, I think, with great vision. The Constitution is a witness to that, an evidence of that. The judiciary has its own area. The Executive has its own area. And this Parliament has its own area defined. Therefore, we do not want to go beyond that.

But more important, I would repeat again and again, is credibility in public life. It is extremely important that we remain credible. I have and I can assure you again and repeat, both in private and in public. I advised the Chief Minister of Bihar to step down. But he did not.

Now, after that, the question of article 356 arises. I think, again Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and myself both were present in the Inter-State Council meeting when the Chief Ministers belonging to his Party, more than any others, were cautioning me again and again not to use article 356. They were saying again and again that article 356 should be used with caution. They were telling me again and again. Please let me finish. The main point was when the Inter-State Council met under the Chairmanship of my colleague, the Home Minister, they identified two areas and there was an agreement that article 356 should be used when an external threat is there, or when there is a danger from terrorism and the State administration gets mixed up there. The third area on which there was a sharp difference was

on the question of secularism. We, on this side believe that placing any State Government which does not believe in secularism under President's Rule should be justified. But I did not force it on that day also. Shri Vajpayee was sitting there and his colleagues were also sitting there and I said, 'all right, let us again persuade each other; let us again talk to each other'. But my belief is firm and that is, Indian unity can be sustained only on the basis of secularism. Unless we remain secular, we will not be able to keep this nation together. But some people do not believe in it. But then it is a matter of their belief. But we firmly believe in it. That is why we said that day that article 356 can be imposed only under those circumstances and we want to say it again.

Sir, I am not going to speak for a long time here. So, the main point which I would like to repeat and again I want to draw the cue from my worthy colleague Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee who said that there should be quick judgement. Yes. I have written to all the Chief Ministers. I have written to all of them requesting them to set up special courts for this purpose. Some of them have replied and some of them have not. Most of them who have not yet replied belong to your Party, not to my Party. All those who have assured me that they are setting up special courts or have set up special courts are from this side. I would like to urge upon you. Please tell them; please ask them; please beseech them, please request them; go on your knees if you have to, to set up special courts so that the special courts dispose them off very quickly and everything gets quicker.

Therefore, one thing that I must say is that let us draw a distinction between legality and probity is important; but legality sacrosanct. We must not do anything which can smack or even smell of illegality.

Because if this House starts doing it, then who else will uphold the rule of law? That is why, I feel, therefore, that this is more important for us to keep in mind.

The other point to which I would like to draw your attention to it after all, who has chargesheeted Shri Laloo Prasad Yadav? The CBI. Whose agency is the CBI? Centre's. In which Department of the Government of India does CBI function? The Prime Minister's Officer. If this is passivity, I do not know what is activity. If there is passivity, that the Department functioning directly under my charge, not only does it chargesheet; but also does it oppose the anticipatory bail, then with what base, at what level and now am I accused of passivity?

This is the Department which functions like this. Five IAS officers have been accused in this. I must explain that also. The permission of the

Government of India has been sought. The Government of India have found that against two officers there is enough evidence and they should be prosecuted. One officer has retired. Therefore, it is for the CBI or anybody else to decide whether they want to prosecute him or they do not want to prosecute him. Against two officers, Government of India did not find enough evidence but all the same, again to uphold the rule of law. I have referred this to the Attorney General. I have asked the Attorney General's advice as to whether the Government should or should not give permission. The Law Minister says that this is now under consideration. Therefore, I would only say that when we are thinking in terms of a situation, let us not play politics. This is not a political issue. This is an issue, you have rightly said, about the future of the public. This is an issue on which all of us should unanimously, in unity, raise our voice if we want a clean public life. I can only assure you, my language may or may not be soft, my determination is very serious. I have given this promise to you earlier and I repeat it.

At this moment, my friend has drawn my attention to the latest judgement given by the High Court. As a result of this, a new situation has arisen.

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Sir, in conclusion, I would say that if I had spoken before the judgement, the judgement to which my worthy friend Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has referred to, I would have said that there are two or three options open all the time. One is persuasion, trying to draw attention to morality and probity. If our Party was functioning as it should have been, which unfortunately is not the case, inner party pressures could have been built. Second, of course, was the other way about and that was if somebody who is being accused had realised for himself that it is in his own interest also to step down. He has not done it. Now, with the denial of the anticipatory bail a new situation has arisen. I can only assure that the Government will take due cognizance of it and will not be found wanting. But it will not act in a hurry because I must see to it that legality is preserved and the rule of law is upheld.

May I say lastly before I sit down that my commitment is to three points which I made in the beginning of my tenure? We shall not spare anybody - be it anybody, belonging to this side or that side - who indulges in corruption, we shall not. We shall always be transparent. For transparency I have taken some steps further. You know that the Government of India have been blamed in the past regarding kickbacks and all that. I am setting up an independent machinery to see that all major purchases pass through

that transparent machinery. I am also setting up a machinery to see to it that anything purchased in India, particularly the larger equipment etc., imported from abroad, passes through that needle's neck so that probity is established.

I have said one more thing and I repeat it that I am against witch-hunting. You know what has happened in *havala*. I do not know if you view it as witch-hunting or not. Whether you support it or not. I do not know. But I promise one thing, I stand committed to upholding the rule of law and doing all my bit and all my might against corruption. Be it anybody, he may be belonging to any party, no accommodation and no room will be given for such a person. He has no place in our public life who does not uphold the probity, morality and also the high values for which this country fought and ultimately liberated itself.

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BACK NOTE

III. Adjournment Motion on Political and Constitutional crisis in Bihar, 24 July, 1997

1 AN HON. MEMBER: Grant of bail.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: I sometimes miss the legal word and I start using non-legal words.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: So many illegalities are there.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Not illegal, non-legal.

2 SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Whether warrants have been issued?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Why are you in haste and worried everytime. I know that you have personal vendetta with Lalooji.

3 SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Hon. Prime Minister, what will you do after his arrest?

SHRI TARIQ ANWAR (Katihar): Mr. Chairman, Sir, while Presenting the Motion, Hon. Atal Bihari Vajpayee mentioned the conventions and traditions of Congress Party. He also stated in his speech that it is the convention and tradition of the country. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee mentioned the convention and tradition followed by the Congress Party since the very first Prime Minister Late Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru to Shri Narasimha' Raoji. He also mentioned Krishnamachariji, Malviyaji and Shri Pratap.

STATEMENT ON NAGALAND PEACE TALKS

25 July, 1997

Sir, this august House is aware of the history of insurgency in Nagaland.

The fratricidal confrontations amongst the various Naga groups and the State authorities have led to loss of life, seriously disturbed the public order and thwarted the economic development of the State. The people are fed up with the violence and yearn for peace.

Soon after assuming office, I had visited Nagaland and other States in the North-East. I had reiterated Government's willingness to hold talks without any prior conditions with the underground elements.

In talks with the Issac-Muivah group of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, it has now been agreed to ceasefire for three months with effect from 1st August, 1997 and initiate discussions at political levels.

Government are also in touch with the other insurgent Naga groups which also have committed to suspend their activities.

BACK NOTE

IV. Statement on Nagaland Peace Talks, 25 July, 1997

NIL

**CLARIFICATION ON STATEMENT
IN JAMMU & KASHMIR**

28 July, 1997

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Sir, before I come to the point, I strongly protest against the observations made by my friend that I said something in the morning and said something else in the evening. I am always consistent in my statements on every issue and I continue to do that. And now we have come to this issue.

I had gone to Kashmir for two days. During my visit. I had the opportunity of not only laying the foundation stone for the new railway line that we are going to build in the Valley itself from Kazikund to Baramulla. The idea was that the railway line that is coming *via* Udhampur in one direction naturally goes through a different terrain, and it is taking more time. In the meantime, we have felt and thought that it would be more expeditious and useful if we lay the railway line also simultaneously in the Valley itself. Later on, through the tunnel it could be joined.

This will also be an effort to try to provide more employment there. Therefore, this year, we have earmarked about Rs. 75 crore for works in the Valley itself.

Apart from these two functions, I also had the opportunity of addressing the Army Jawans, their leaders, the BSF Jawans and their leaders. These were the four functions that I had attended. What is the situation in Kashmir? The situation in Kashmir today is, fortunately we have turned the corner. It is not that the insurgency has ended but by and large I think both the Governments—the Government of Jammu and Kashmir and the Central Government—have been able to get better of the insurgency. All the same, from across the border, the insurgency is being sustained and a large number of weapons have been captured. I have seen two collections of those weapons which are very large and very sophisticated. I have also seen the figures of the various skirmishes that take place from time to time I must say to the credit of our armed forces and also the BSF and other paramilitary forces that they have been able to safeguard our security firmly and with a great deal of efficiency. At the same time, we have been for the last three-four months, there is a consistent firing across the border and my friend, the Defence Minister, should be able to tell us more about it. This is also being resisted with firmness.

Our policy has another dimension also. Not only this Government but previously also we have been trying to get back those estranged youths, who I believe, have been led astray by the false propaganda against India. Some of them have come out and some of them have been absorbed in various services also. What I was saying exactly has been now clarified. If at all a clarification was called for in the interview that I gave on the plane to *The Hindustan Times*. The main point is that we are always willing to talk to those young men who are our own children, and who are our own boys who have been led astray. Naturally, it is implied and also understand that they must give up arms and they must come back home, I will use to exact word. My friend was present there when I was saying that I was talking like a father to the young children that if in the family the sons go astray or get alienated, it is my duty as head of the family to invite them back, try to remove their doubts and suspicions. I stand by that. That is what I said in all the two speeches. Fortunately or unfortunately, I was speaking, particular, in Quajigund in Urdu. I know Urdu very well. So, I was speaking in chaste Urdu. So many of my own friends, perhaps, do not understand Urdu. Therefore, when I was talking about these boys, they thought that I was talking to the militants across the border or those who have been supported by Pakistan No; not at all.

Two things are very clear in my mind. On the very first day and every time I spoke in the House. I had clarified one thing. There is no compromise on two issues, secular unity of India and also the integrity of India. Jammu and Kashmir is a part of India. The whole State of Jammu and Kashmir is a part of India and shall continue to be so. There is no compromise on that. Therefore, there is no reasons for me to say and I was surprised that my friend, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, such a seasoned diplomat himself, should have to, in a hurry, condemn me without verifying the facts and should have made a statement which I very much regret because I have great respect for his maturity. But I would say only this thing and I reassure the House that no new policy statements have been made. This has been the policy of the Government of India, not my Government only but the Governments which have preceded this Government. Even when Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was in power for thirteen days, the same policy was followed. Therefore, I would repeat India.

Well, I will not pass judgement on this. But I would only say this thing. Let me say in this House that I feel I represent the voice of this House when I say this thing that India has a Government, Jammu and Kashmir has a Government. Both of us are keen that alienated youths should come back. We are keen that they should find their place in our society. We are keen that the type of inter-communal relationship that existed in

their State for centuries should be sustained. We are keen that that type of life must come back of which Kashmir used to be proud of. That is what we are trying to say.

So far as the discussion about these boys are concerned, all the time, they are going on and that is "why, some of these boys have come back already.

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BACK NOTE

V. Clarification on Statement in Jammu & Kashmir, 28 July, 1997

1. SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Chittorgarh): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to express my grave concern as well as objections. It is not my personal objection but the objection of the party too. We have undergone bitter experience during a few months' tenure about the hon. Prime Minister as to how he retracts from his statement. We have several such experiences but when the hon. Prime Minister makes statement on basic issues of National interests and makes objectionable policy statements while the Parliament is in Session and then denies having made such statements, then we cannot remain mute spectator without commenting on it or raising objections against it. I have to mention two points clearly. The hon. Prime Minister during his recent visit to Kashmir Valley has only laid down foundation stones at those places which have no tram services. During his visit to the valley he made a statement that he was ready to hold talks unconditionally. Next day, news quite contrary to it was published in the newspapers. It was very important statement in itself. There was an unopposed Motion of Parliament. Unconditional talks are to be held but with whom? Whether with Afghanese, Sudanese or other external forces already operating there? Next day he contradicted having made any such statement and something else appears in the Newspaper. In this regard, I feel my duty to tell you that my party wants peace in all the States and in the country and does not oppose it but strange news about Nagaland are pouring in. If the peace in the country is decided in United States and that too on some one's initiation, we cannot accept it. It is a very important issue which the hon. Prime Minister does not think it necessary to mention in the Parliament but such statements are being made. Whether the other hon. Members agree or disagree with it but I would like you to issue an order to the hon. Prime Minister to come to the House and give clarification on these two issues.

I would like to make one more request. Since the hon. Prime Minister is banking on the support of Congress Party and whether the hon. Prime Minister did something or did not do anything on the issue of Kashmir and Nagaland or made any statement, I shall be failing in my duty if I do not say that the Congress Party should also clarify whether it supports or oppose the policy statement made by the hon. Prime Minister? I had to submit only these two points.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Ballia): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I basically agree with what Shri Jaswant Singhji has stated. The statements made during the last two-three months from abroad as well as from within the country are very objectionable and are ominous signs for the future of the country. I do not want to go in detail in this regard. But we have received information that some foreign country directs our country to adopt any particular policy or follow any direction and our country keeps silence, I think, there would be nothing more improper than this. When economic policies were being adopted in the past, I had stated that when we allowed intervention in our economic policies, we should be ready for intervention in our politics. But I had never thought about political intervention in such a clumsy manner. An emissary of a particular country was constantly allowed to visit Kashmir and talk to the local people. Not only this, the Department of External Affairs of that country has been constantly informing that they were suggesting the Government of India as to what set should be taken on Kashmir issue. There can be nothing more unfortunate than this. The hon. Prime Minister is my friend. There can be nothing more improper than this that the hon. Prime Minister makes a statement one day and retracts it the very next day and that too when the Parliament is in Session.

I would like to say that not only Jaswant Singh or his party but the entire elite class of the country is concerned with it. I believe, Somnathji would be more concerned.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolgpur): I must respond to his observations. Naturally, my Party is a Party which brings sanity into this whole affair or in every affair. We have shown how probity and morality should be the order of the day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, so far as we are concerned we want normalisation of relations in Kashmir. There is no doubt that it is an integral part of India. There is no question of, in any way, compromising on that issue. We have seen that only the last Prime Minister and the present Prime Minister have taken some steps for normalising the situation there. There have been period of confrontation and trouble there.

I do not wish to go into that. We welcome any move made by the hon. Prime Minister to normalise the situation, to bring back some misguided people to the national mainstream. But, since very senior leaders like Chandra Shekharji and Jaswant Singhji have raised certain questions on this, I think that it will be proper for the hon. Prime Minister to come to the House and make it clear as to what he wanted to say, what his policy is or what has been his call while he was there.

Therefore, I would request the hon. Prime Minister to come and make it clear before this House. I am sure he will never compromise so far as India and its relations with that part of India and relations of other parts of India with that part of India are concerned. All efforts to normalise the situation should be welcome. But let the Prime Minister say, 'Yes, Sir, on the first day there was some statement and today some other statement has come'. We cannot always respond on the basis of newspaper reports. Therefore, it would be better if the hon. Prime Minister could come here and say what the position is.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (Baramati): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I do support the view which has been expressed by my hon. colleague Shri Somnath Chatterjee.

By and large, there are no two opinions on this issue. In this august House, on a number of occasions, by and large, there has been unanimity among most of the political parties on this. Any effort to normalise relations with Pakistan is definitely welcome. Any effort to improve the situation in Jammu and Kashmir is also welcome. But, in the last few days, a number of statements have appeared in the newspapers. I do not know how far they are true and what exactly is the position. There were certain occasions when certain important representatives of the nation have visited that area giving some suggestions, talking with a number of local people. We have not, at least I have not, got any details about that. So, I think that it will definitely be better if the Prime Minister himself comes and makes a statement and briefs Parliament when it is in Session. The country should at least know about all these things.

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA (Udhampur): Sir, ...

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: From your side, Shri Jaswant Singhji has spoken, if any particular matter has been left, you can tell.

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA: Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, Prime Minister has attended four main functions there. In three out of them, he repeated the same statement that he wanted to have unconditional talks and in fourth function it was said that until they give up arms, there would not be any meaning of talks. So far as the matter of normalcy in Kashmir is concerned, every party wants to assist the Prime Minister in this regard. But one thing should be kept in mind that there is an elected Government there, you have elected a Government there. I have talked to some Ministers there. They all say that there is a lot of difference in our perception, their perception and the perception of the Central Government. They want to deal with those ultras in one way and Central Government is dealing in other way. Our Kashmir problem is lingering on due to this

confusion. Therefore I want to request you that the Prime Minister has come, he should at least take the House in confidence and make it clear that both the Governments work on one line. I want to request him that we should not encourage the militancy there. A little normalcy has been brought in the situation by Armed Forces and Security Forces.

SHRI VIJAY GOEL (Sadar Bazar): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also want to say something.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please sit down. Let me say something.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: See, there is an established convention. Parliament is in Session. No policy statement should be made outside the Parliament. The Prime Minister should clarify as to what he has said.

SHRI MANGAT RAM SHARMA (Jammu): Please give me time to speak.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You please sit down. I have called the Prime Minister.

SHRI MANGAT RAM SHARMA: I had requested you earlier also.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You say whatever you want to say Gujral Sahib, please let him say what he wants to say.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR (Mumbai North-West): Sir, I have been raising my hand on this since the very beginning.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (Mumbai South-Central): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, no one has spoken from our party also.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I admit that no one has spoken from your party also.

SHRI MANGAT RAM SHARMA: Sir, first of all, the Prime Minister of Congress Government and after that the two Governments which came to power with our support, they took initiative in Jammu-Kashmir. They gave economic package for that State. I appreciate the interest being taken for bringing about normalcy there. They did a good job. It should be appreciated. My second point is that the Prime Minister should clarify his last statement. He has stated that the Union Government and the State Government are ready for talks with those local militants who are ready to come forward for talks after giving up arms for joining the mainstream. In my view it is worth appreciating. We must hold talks with the people of our State and the condition should be made normal.

Secondly, I would like to say that there is militancy in three districts.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leave aside that issue. The Prime Minister would himself clarify.

SHRI MANGAT RAM SHARMA: He would clarify only when I will raise the point. If I do not raise the issue, how can we clarify. I want to say two things.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Prime Minister's statement is being discussed.

SHRI MANGAT RAM SHARMA: First let me say what I want to say. Then the reply to my point would come. Militancy has increased more in three districts, Puncch, Rajauri and Kargil. Items pertaining to Jammu in the package programme announced by Deve Gowdaji are not being implemented.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is all right. You have expressed your point.

SHRI MANGAT RAM SHARMA: Whether the items of package programme pertaining to Jammu are being implemented?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is all right. You have expressed your point. Now you please take your seat.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: Sir, Whatever statement Shri Jaswant Singh has made in this House, I fully endorse that. Secondly, it is our experience for the last one-and-a-half years that we have been discussing the Jammu and Kashmir issue very often. It is a good sign that we are trying to negotiate and trying to establish peace in this part of the country, Jammu and Kashmir. At the same time, when we put certain conditions and when people from within had such a dialogue, I can understand it. But those people are encroaching on our land property and firing the people and killing the people. The Government of India should clarify its policy as to whom and with whom they are going to have negotiations and what action the Government of India is going to take eventually. Not only that, what message the Government of India intends to pass on to all these culprits, extremist and to those who are unnecessarily facing problems in Jammu and Kashmir. That is also a very important thing and that message should be clear. In that case, I would humbly request the hon. Prime Minister to clarify the policy.

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI (Shahabad): Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, while agreeing with what was said by Shri Jaswant Singh ji, Shri Somnath Chatterjee, Shri Chandrashekhar and Shri Sharad Pawar, I am sorry to say that, particularly, the Hon'ble Prime Minister not only in this

case, but in other cases also, makes one Statement in the morning and an other in the evening. It creates confusion.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): What are you saying? In which case I have done so?

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI: I would like to know from him that when he made the statement in Kashmir that they were prepared to hold talks with militants unconditionally, then had any militant organisation proposed to hold talks un-conditionally. He said one thing on his behalf but he changed his mind after coming to Delhi He should clarify that point also.

2 SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: You speak in simple Urdu. If you speak in chaste Urdu, they do not understand I ...

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the statement made by the hon. Prime Minister on Television and the statement made by him in the House are self contradictory. In the bulletin of 8.30 on TV it was stated that Prime Minister has said that we are ready to talk with terrorists without any pre-condition and in the news bulletin later it was said, as per the news received just now, the Prime Minister has said no negotiation will be held with the terrorists until they surrender their arms, which statement is true?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Look, please listen to me for a minute. If you want debate for the sake of debate, I can also do so. But remember one thing that the security of India, the Defence of India is the first and foremost responsibility of any of the Government and I cannot concede on that and nor there can be any compromise on that. No Government can do so. If any newspaper correspondent or reader.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN: This is what I saw on TV.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: I have no monopoly on TV. I am not the news reader. This is not the way.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN: Please get it investigated. The people throughout the country listens to the news bulletin. You can get the records of that day.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: That is what I am saying. The country will remain united and we will not allow anyone to break it in the name of religion.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN (Mumbai North East): I fail to understand the logic. These days the hon. Prime Minister appears on the screen so many times that he himself seems to be the news reader.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: I would submit that they want to disintegrate the country in the name of religion.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Prime Minister is getting agitated unnecessarily. We think that the statements which appear in print and are reported on TV are true.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: You should go through the last statement also which is on record. If you have read it then you must have understood it.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN: Our charge is that generally there is contradiction in your statements on TV.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: If there is contradiction in first and last statement the misunderstanding in the minds of people is but natural.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Let it be in the minds of the common people but not in the minds of intelligent people like you.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Prime Minister for telling me that there should be no misunderstanding in my mind. But there should not be any such thing which would create such misunderstanding.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Therefore, you should be fully attentive while giving statements.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: If we have to take care of everything what will the Prime Minister do.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now I suggest that the matter may be treated as closed.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Sir, do not teach me patriotism. I know what patriotism is.....

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I humbly request the hon. Prime Minister to be cautious because it does not behove him. First of all I do not want to be drawn in this controversy. One gets agitated when one comes to know that some elements want to disintegrate the country in the name of religion. We are also of that view. But this country will never disintegrate in the name of religion. Mr. Prime Minister I have not seen you getting angry not even single day on the statements coming from abroad in regard to disintegration of the country. So many statements were made during the last two months. Was it not the responsibility of the Government of India to deny those statements. Before getting angry with Shri Atal Bihari, Mr. Prime Minister learn to be angry

with yourself. Why does your Government remain silent when wrong statements are made by foreign countries about India. This creates misunderstanding all over the world. This anger is not going to wipe out that misunderstanding.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I hold Shri Chandra Shekhar ji in high esteem. He is also my old friend. Which statement from abroad have not been replied. Tell me about one such statement, which has not been replied.

Whichever it may be, anyone talking about the disintegration of the country, whether in the country or outside will be given a befitting reply.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): Whosoever it may be but BJP will never disintegrate the country.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Prime Minister must accept it that there is misunderstanding because of his contradictory statements about the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. If this matter is raised in the House, it gives him an opportunity to clarify the position. Instead of clarifying the position he is charging us. You are charging us of disintegrating the country in the name of religion. This charge is baseless and mischievous.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Was the Babri Masjid demolished just for the sake of it?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, just now the hon. Prime Minister was speaking in regard to disintegration of the country.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: I was mentioning about the demolition of Babri Masjid.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, now the Prime Minister has turned towards Babri Masjid demolition.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: The demolition of Babri Masjid was the sign of disintegrating the country.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if this issue goes further then I think the hon. Prime Minister will lose his cool and say things which would not behave him. If you want to have full debate on Babri Masjid then we are also ready.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Let it take place.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, after all a resolution was adopted in this House in regard to Jammu and Kashmir and the Prime Minister also admits that he is bound by that. Every Government is bound by that. His first statement as reported said that he was ready for talks without any pre-conditions, now it is natural.

Now keep sitting. Do not interrupt. I am saying so because if you interrupt like this, we will also interrupt and the House cannot be run like this. You should have patience to listen also.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): You should also not lose your temper.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the news agencies or television report two different statements of the Prime Minister and the entire nation listens to them, is it not natural that a question comes to one's mind that after all what the Prime Minister has said. Your later statement was right. But this proved the point that your earlier statement was wrong. How a negotiation could be possible with those people without any pre-condition who want to dictate terms at the point of gun, who want to take away Kashmir from India, who are joining hands with foreign countries. Question of holding talks with them without any pre-condition should not arise. Had the Prime Minister confined his clarification to this only instead of making unnecessary remarks, it would not have resulted in so much heat. Let us see to what extent you have cooled down.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I appeal to the House that the matter has been clarified and it should be treated as closed.

But how it is all right.

Let me sum up. I am glad that we are now talking to each other in the way we should. The main point is that I am happy and grateful to the hon. Leader of Opposition, who is a kind friend also that he has drawn my attention to the Resolution of Parliament. The Resolution of Parliament is binding on all of us and that shall always be because we are all committed to that. That is why, I said in the beginning and I repeat, 'there is no compromise on the secular unity and also on the integrity of India'. When I say 'integrity', I include the entire Jammu and Kashmir State which was there before 1947. This is what I want to clarify.

So far as talking to those who are estranged, who are alienated youth, our own kin is concerned, if they want to come and talk without any pre-condition, I am going to talk to them.

INSURANCE REGULATORY AUTHORITY BILL

6 August, 1997

Sir, I have heard with great respect, the viewpoints of various sections of the House. I do share that some apprehensions have been raised which this Government does not want to push forward. We are very keen that the general consensus of the House should be respected and we will respect it.

May I suggest that for the time being we do not move further; we stop as it is. We will come back after discussion with all of them. We will not even move this Bill. We can come back to you. Let me finish.

I will suggest to the hon. Members that we do not move the Bill.

We keep the Bill back. We discuss amongst ourselves and in a modified form after the consensus is evolved— we will come back.

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Sir, I am grateful to the Leader of the Opposition because he has seen my submission in the correct manner. I can assure you that there is no intention on our part - on the part of the Government to do something behind this House. We will not do that. Whatever policies are made will be made in the open and, with the consent, knowledge and approval of the House. Therefore, when we defer this, please take it in that spirit. We have seen the spirit of the House and we will respect it.

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BACK NOTE

VI. Insurance Regulatory Authority Bill, 6 August, 1997

1. SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dum Dum): For two or three days or even four days, we have repeatedly approached the Minister of Finance. We have approached the Prime Minister also precisely for a discussion on our amendment so that even before placing all this before the House, we can try to see each other's point of view. That was turned down. We are happy that even at this late stage, the Prime Minister is prepared to consider that. We are happy on that for the last four days, we have tried it.

SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA (Pudrauna): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am on a point of order. The question of withdrawing the motion does not arise when process of division has already been started. Please give ruling in this regard.

MR. SPEAKER: Enough, enough. Now, please listen to me. The procedure is very clear.

MR. SPEAKER: I have said before the lunchbreak that there is a precedent when a Bill even at a third reading stage was postponed. For that, the mover of the Bill has to move a Motion. If there is a consensus, it is all right. Otherwise, even for the postponement, I will have to put it to the vote of the House. I am very clear about it. Therefore, if you want to move a Motion for postponement, you can move it. But I will have to put even that Motion to the vote of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not think that there is any consensus.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, I do not want to do anything without a certain consensus in the House. I am not talking about unanimity. The point is that we got stuck on clause 13 with two very sharp positions. I am not scoring a point or anything on that One amendment has been defeated. They are entitled to press that point again after all. It is a democracy and a system. They can press their point even after that amendment is defeated.

Then, there is another amendment which is of a more restrictive nature. According to me, there is a wider support for that amendment. Therefore, after consulting everybody, I have proposed that perhaps there is a way out having regard to very many factors including the way LIC

and GIC are functioning. GIC is functioning in 35 countries. LIC is functioning in five countries. Having regard to all that, I said and I repeat it that there is no proposal to allow a foreign company or a multinational. But there is a proposal to modestly open the health insurance business to Indian companies. Therefore, I proposed the amendment, I am not moving it formally because I cannot do it without your permission. I have proposed an amendment.

At that stage, the Prime Minister interceded to say that he would like Shri Vajpayee and others to respond. All right, are we moving towards a meeting ground? I recognise your point of view. But on this, can we have a meeting ground.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No, no.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I am aware of your point. Even on this, there is no meeting ground. What the Prime Minister has proposed is; on this - the formulation which I have given and the formulation which you have - is there a meeting ground? Can we talk about it? So, the Prime Minister says, "Would you consider deferring this matter until we talk about it"? I would appeal to Shri Vajpayee to respond to this. We can have a meeting ground. We will involve them also. We will involve the Congress. They want some time to look at it. The Congress really wants some time to look at it. So, let us involve everybody. We can have a formulation which takes care of the apprehensions. You may say that Shri Jaswant Singh repeatedly said about some apprehension. I am trying to allay it. Let us see whether there is a way to allay your apprehension. I think Sections 13 and 26 are there. We will allay it even better. Let us try to meet. If there can be an agreement on that, we can defer the debate. Otherwise, I think, the appeal of the Prime Minister should be responded to by the Leader of the Opposition.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am connected with the Parliament since 1957 in one way or the other. But, the situation that has arisen today has never been there. The reason is that the Government do not form its definite opinion before introducing the Bill and it also do not assess as to whose support it would get and whose support it would not get. When the Government lands in trouble, then it starts working under pressure at every stage, it goes on following order of other parties.

Earlier, our party has said that we are against entry of foreign companies in the field of insurance but the Indian companies should get opportunities there. This fact was not accepted earlier but now it has been accepted. The Finance Minister has just now mentioned that only Indian

companies would be given opportunities in this field and an amendment in this regard is yet to come. It is a good thing and we like it. But there is a need to clear the doubts that have cropped up in our minds. In the morning, I had given a suggestion to adjourn the discussion for a while and the only purpose behind it was that the Government should ponder over the amendment by us. Can the Government ponder over it? What are the difficulties in it? The Finance Minister has just now mentioned about the difficulties and actually this should have come up first in the House and moreover, these difficulties does not look convincing.

The Government say that the Indian Insurance Companies are functioning well in abroad with the help of Indians settled there and also earning well there. These companies are working for the welfare of these people and if we publish in the newspapers here that entry of the foreign companies into our country is being banned then the Indians who are settled there may face the difficulties. I think, this logic is somewhat rationale. But, we must also admit that if we let even a small loophole, it would result in influx of foreign companies at large scale.

If Chandra Shekharji is making a negations, then what are the reasons behind it? Why a doubt has been cropping up in his mind that the country is compromising with its sovereignty. We have to keep in mind what my friend George Fernandes is saying imbued with patriotism.

Since, the Finance Minister has now said and the Prime Minister has also sought time, so I think that the House would not have any objection in allotting time. But, when you come up with a Bill, you should keep it in mind that the Bill should be such that it should clear all our doubts.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, I only wish to respond to one point. I have continually consulted the leaders of the Parties separately and I wish to point out that this Bill was referred to the Standing Committee and 44 out of 45 Members of the Committee have reported this Bill for adoption with five amendments.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Once again this is a distortion.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, all I would like to point out is, here is the report of the Standing Committee. Even after that - I am not going by this report alone. I have continually consulted leaders of Parties and now recognising the force of what you say, I am proposing this. I accept what you say. I only want to say that we want time.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar): You kindly withdraw the Bill as told by the Prime Minister. You should withdraw the Bill.

2 SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ (South Delhi): No deferment. The Government should withdraw the Bill.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: It should be withdrawn.

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI (Allahabad): It should be withdrawn.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): If the Government wants to achieve a consensus on this, let the Bill be withdrawn by them. A fresh Bill can be brought when there is a consensus.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Let the Bill be withdrawn.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Let the Bill be withdrawn.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: The Government should withdraw this Bill.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: On this issue, a consensus is required. When there is no consensus on the Bill, it should be withdrawn.

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI: Sir, let the Minister withdraw the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: I think this matter is very clear. There are two-three proposals now. I am very clear that everything has to be done with the consent of the House today. If it is seeking leave for moving a new amendment, it has to be with the leave of the House. If it is a motion for deferment of the Bill, it has to be again by a proper motion and it has to be with the consent of the House. If necessary, it has to be by voting. Withdrawal also has to be with the consent of the House. The Government has to make up its mind and take one of the three courses just now. Otherwise, I will have to put the amendments to vote.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: There is a consensus for withdrawal.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Let the Minister withdraw the Bill.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: If the Government decides to withdraw the Bill, there will be no opposition.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: I am again grateful to the Leader of the Opposition. I respect his words. We withdraw the Bill.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I beg to move for leave to withdraw the Bill to provide for the establishment of an Authority to protect the interests of holders of insurance policies and to regulate, promote and ensure orderly growth of the insurance industry and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193 ON STREAMLINING OF PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

8 August, 1997

Madam, can I intervene just for a minute?

Madam, I have heard a part of my hon. friend's observations and I agree with it because it is very important for us to have the Public Distribution System which can come to the help and rescue of the very poor sections of the society, and that is what the primary reason was for the Public Distribution System. With the passage of time, we noticed that the prices were going up primarily because the price paid to the producer was going up. Last year, for instance, the Government of India paid higher prices to the farming community, and rightly so. I have no grievance on that because I think that was the right thing we had to do. After all, the farming community constitutes the majority of the country and they must get their due for all the labour put in by them. Naturally that raised the price for the Government's purchase also.

Now, the question before the Government—not my Government but the previous Government, of which I was a member—was how do we come to the rescue of the poorer sections. We always were conscious of the fact that for those people particularly who live below poverty line, it is a terrible burden. My hon. friend has rightly pointed out that those who live in *jhuggi-jhoparis* or those who live on the roadside, who are a segment of the urban poor, suffer a great deal, not the rural poor or the better off. This is something which we have to keep in mind all the time. Therefore, this new Public Distribution System was devised. The idea was that we give at least some portion of the needs at a highly subsidised price. So, the scheme was that ten kilograms per family we give at half the economic price. That meant a burden on the finances of about Rs. 9,000 crore annually. The Scheme has been implemented. It is being distributed.

Now, with the passage of time—I have been travelling in various States, particularly in the backward States, and particularly the North-Eastern States, and also I have been talking to the Chief Ministers of various States, including their own Chief Ministers—it has been brought to our notice that there are certain distortions in the system.

One distortion is that we give ten kilograms at fifty per cent of the price, but no family can live with ten kilograms. Therefore, it will be very wrong to assume that a family of four or five people will consume only ten kilograms per month.

It is not sufficient. It is a very correct objection. For the rest of the need, they buy at the market price which is high. Therefore, ultimately the relief which is intended for them becomes very limited. Relief is there but not to the extent that one would like it to be. Keeping in mind the fact that these things have been brought to my notice, we have discussed it amongst ourselves and I am going to call very soon a meeting of the Chief Ministers to evolve a new scheme. In the mean time, we are trying to work out as to what other alternatives we can have. Naturally, my hon. friends will agree that we can have subsidising up to an extent not because subsidy is not needed but because subsidy has a certain sort of a weight on the finances and we have to decide how much we can afford.

I said that a subsidy of Rs. 9,000 crore is already there. Well, perhaps, marginally it can be increased also. Perhaps, we can do something different.

Therefore, keeping all this in mind, the Ministry has been instructed to work out alternatives and, I think, in the very near future I should be able to meet the Chief Ministers and sort it out. But before I sit down I must repeat what I said in the beginning that our sympathy is entirely with the suffering sections of the society. We do want to do something, particularly in this 50th year of Independence. It is a matter of regret and shame sometime that a very large number of people in this country are still below the poverty line, it is of no satisfaction to me that their number has decreased or the percentage has decreased. And to use Gandhiji's words, "As long as there is a tear in even one eye the country cannot consider itself free". Therefore, I share that. I think whether you are there or the friend sitting behind you, Shri George Fernandes and others, are there, we have spent all our lives feeling like this. I am saying that we did not go to the freedom struggle for the sake of a few who may be affluent. We wanted to build a system where more fair deals should be given to the poor.

Well, partly it may have been achieved but, I think, there is still much to be done and I think this Parliament, by and large, whether sitting on this side or on that side, is simply with a cause and, therefore, we share this. It is not a question of party. It is a question of general policy.

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Therefore, it is not a question of party, the main point is, therefore, it is important for all of us to share this. I assure the House that the moment we have worked out alternatives we will come back to the House, discuss with all of you, both in the Leaders' meeting as well as in the House and evolve a scheme which can be more beneficial to the poor.

Thank you very much.

BACK NOTE

VII. Discussion under Rule 193 on Streamlining of Public Distribution System, 8 August, 1997

1. VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (KOTA) : Please formulate some concrete plan.....

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Therefore, I think, it is important for us to keep in mind the fact....

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please do not disturb him.

**STATE OF DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS,
ECONOMIC SITUATION, POSITION OF INFRASTRUCTURE,
ACHIEVEMENTS AND POTENTIAL IN THE FIELD OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND STATE OF
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRY**

1 September, 1997

Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I address myself to the topic of the day, may I join my worthy colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, in extending to you my hearty greetings and greetings of this House on the occasion of your 50th birthday? We wish you many happy returns of this day.

You were born a fortnight after India became free. It, therefore, looks curious of Providence that your 50th birthday also occurs in the 50th year of Independence. I believe that a greater future awaits you in the service of the nation as a greater future awaits this nation. My compliments to you!

Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I also compliment you for this novel idea that you projected regarding this discussion itself? I must say and I confess that—of course, it was unprecedented—in the entire history of 50 years of our Republic, this has happened for the first time.

Once again, I join Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in complimenting you for this perception. Many of us — I have been very frank — both on that side and this side were initially having doubts as to how this would proceed, how much interest will be taken, how many Members will really speak on the subjects that we were thinking of. Sometimes these doubts were also verging on scepticism. This discussion, I must say, as it proceeded for so many days and in such a laborious way the Members have participated, has belied those disbeliefs and those doubts.

The discussion has been of a very high level. I think never in my long association with Parliament have I witnessed so much enthusiasm and so much interest on the part of Members that they could sit overnight and participate in the debate. And also, as Atalji rightly said, all of them — I must compliment all my colleagues in the House from all sides — took pains to prepare themselves on the subjects they were speaking. The same thing happened with the House also. Therefore, in a way it is a compliment to the entire Parliamentary system.

Hon. Members, I must say, have exhibited remarkable courage, vision and capacity to rise above the normal din that we witness in our

debates in normal times. That has been belied in these five days. Collective introspection is something new for us but all the same I think this could be the best homage that this House could pay to the Golden Anniversary of our republic. Therefore, all that has happened in the last few days is something, Mr. Speaker, for which credit goes to you once again. The discussion, may I repeat, sometimes continued, as I said, till the early hours of the day or night, I do not know whether day or night because sometimes the whole night sitting was going on. The discussion has been useful, educative and thought provoking and very often we discovered the un-discovered dimensions of our democratic polity. As an institution Parliament has touched new heights and its capacity to rise above the Party affiliations and examined with remarkable objectivity the achievements and shortfalls of these 50 years. Some of the speeches that one heard here and in the other House persuade us to believe that the nation continues to produce great minds and great ideas. The nation continues to rededicate itself, as it did on the first day of our Republic, and therefore, in that spirit this debate has proceeded.

I have taken note of what hon. Members have said. As my worthy colleague, the Leader of the Opposition has suggested, definitely we will go through all that has been said and compile them and also initiate action on various issues that have been mentioned here. I have been called upon to speak at this stage when I am expected to sum up the discussion. This is a very gigantic task and I dare not do it because it is not easy. All that has been said in the wise words that have been uttered in the last five days or so and the specific issues that have been raised, it may not be feasible nor possible for me to respond to all of them.

At some time, on some occasion some of my colleagues have participated in the debate and projected their points of view. I will not try to repeat what has been said. I will only try to say myself that the debate has inspired me a great deal. It has made me think a lot about what India is and what is the definition of India, particularly in the 50th year. We are re-defining ourselves and this re-definition has been very helpful because all my worthy colleagues sitting in this House and that House have put in very remarkable vision and ideas. Sometimes I felt that the discussion touched the borders of sublimity. Sometimes I felt that we are rising above ourselves in a sublime manner and I also felt that the most important was our country, our nation. The struggle for independence has been the background of our discussion. We have also seen and felt that this struggle that we are talking of which built the freedom on 15th August, 1947, was in a way, I think, the continuation of our civilization.

When we look at our civilisation, its peaks and valleys, we discover what made our freedom struggle succeed. The saga of freedom struggle is a long one. I will not take your time to talk about the freedom struggle, its life and the history which it had passed through. But one thing was very clear.

When we look back to those eras, the Gandhian times, we go back to this perception again and again that freedom struggle succeeded primarily because it was deeply rooted in our own soil, in our own civilisation, in our own culture.

Gandhian vision and his sources of inspiration were all indigenous. Gandhian sources of inspiration were not alien. They were not imported from other countries; they were born here.

When Gandhiji talked, again and again, of dharma; dharma, being the basic root of Indian freedom struggle, was something which really brought to our minds and to our struggle a new orientation. Of course, when he talked of dharma he meant something different than religion; he meant something different than cult; he meant something different than, what we commonly call, the Church. He meant dharma in a wider definition. I am one of those who believe, and I think this House also believes, that one word which cannot be translated into any non-Indian language is the word dharma. That was where Gandhiji went home.

Gandhiji never tried to build a cult. He never tried to build a math. It was basically an approach that was based on compassion more than anything else. In this, when we look back at Gandhiji, his perceptions, his vision, his way of conducting things more and more, an idea comes to my mind, and that is, his compassion often reminded of the Great Buddha. To me, he brought continuity of that compassion which Buddha spelt out for the whole world. Very often, the ideas and ideals that were originally in Gandhian thinking were so unfamiliar to us. Sometimes they bewildered us and sometimes they gave a new interpretation and a new meaning to those very words. He started thinking differently on one wider scale of the nation. It is a remarkable thing that Gandhiji used old idioms, old dictums and old words that we have been used to; gave them a new meaning and used them for mobilisation, for mass upsurge. Some people who thought that they were intellectually bright at that time were bewildered. Sometimes they were confused because they were not really prepared to see that old idioms could be given new meanings of the type that Gandhiji was giving them.

As our mass upsurge turned into a tide and achieved what it did, the Indian freedom struggle fully appreciated the civilisational unity of India. The main quest of the Indian civilisation always was built on respecting diversities — the vast diversities that we in our lives experienced and continue to experience, different languages, different cultures, different historical experiences, different ways of life — and yet to find a strain where they all join. Gandhiji's basic contribution was to rediscover the unity of these diversities. This continues to be the benchmark of our nation. This, in these fifty years, we have learnt. We have, again and again, said that our liberation struggle achieved what it did because of this perception. If Gandhiji at that time had emphasised one thing, or had emphasised one religion, or had emphasised one way of life, the struggle would never have succeeded; India would never have been unified.

Therefore, we must repeat to ourselves, Sir, and with your permission I must submit to the House, that this unity of diversities is the flag that must continue to fly high on the strong mast of Indian liberation. This is the basic thing.

We do mistake in that sometimes. Sometimes we feel that, perhaps, uniformity is more important than unity of diversities. This nation, may I repeat in all humility, will never remain united, will never remain together; if we start trying to cast it in the mould of uniformity. We must respect our languages; we must respect our ways of life; we must respect our religions; we must respect our beliefs; we must respect our historical experiences. Then, and then only will this nation be able to continue to call itself with pride, a nation that is called India.

Indian nation is again a nation of diversities. That is the challenge, if I may say so, for the next 50 years or a century, that is before us. If we are able to recognise this fact then we do not get lost in the bylanes of trying to emphasise one way of life or one language or one religion, then we will never lose our way. If we do not that mistake will be very expensive for us. Sometimes political myopia, sometimes expediency of a particular movement, a particular election compulsion, may blind us and may try to emphasise one caste or one religion or one language to get votes. I think, one determination that must emerge from this House today is that we shall never let that happen.

Once we are able to emphasise that we have our diversities which we respect, that we have our different ways of living, that we have our different faiths and therefore, we shall respect each other. We shall not tread on other's toes. We shall not try to do things which can possibly

hurt the feelings and the emotions of another fellow Indian. We always talk in terms of India first and Indian first. Yes, 'India first and Indian first' is a product of this perception and it is a way of life. If we respect each other, if we do not try to break our perceptions, hearts and minds, then India's future will always be secured. This is the pitfall against which we must guard the mantra, if I may say so. I am not a pundit in the sense Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee is, but let me say that the mantra, to my mind, of a great unified India that stands on the threshold of greatness is three-fold: accommodate, tolerate — tolerate, respect diversities — and also discreetly mix continuity and change. Continuity is important because without continuity there can be stagnation. Our languages, our music, our poetry, our philosophies are all invigorated in the bygone centuries in the past and will continue to do so if we have the capacity to assimilate and adjust.

Years ago, an Urdu poet said:

**“Unan-O-Misra Roma
Sab Mit Gaye Jahan Sey
Kutch Baat Hai ki hasti
mitati Nahi Hamari.”**

What is that which has preserved us? What is this kuch baat? I hope, we will always keep in mind that this kuch baat is this unification of diversities, respecting, the process of assimilation, courage to assimilate, courage to reject what we do not want and the courage to assimilate what helps us. This invigorated our cultures in the past and will continue to do so. And that is why, I feel, this is very important, that we should discover this kuch baat, at every stage of our growth - today; yesterday, we did it; tomorrow, we must continue. To quote Iqbal:

‘Kuch baat hey key hasti mitati nahi hamari’

This is the legacy of our past and this is the challenge for future. This challenge, I think, we have made by continuing rediscovering ourselves, by continuing interpreting ourselves, by continuing redefining ourselves, by continuing invigorating ourselves, at the same time, keeping our feet firmly in our soil, in our tradition, in our civilisation.

That is very important. No change, as Nehru used to say, must throw us of our feet. No change must be such that we give up our roots. No change must be such it takes us away from our civilisation. At the same time, we should have the capacity. Yes, we had in the past to try to imbibe what you think is in our interest. The world today is now standing or has already entered a new era of change. Unprecedented, never seen in the

history of mankind, the technological change, the change ushered in by science. All through the history of man, ever since he was born, I do not think this kind of experience has ever been made. Therefore, now at this stage, we must decide for the future to come and this is my plea to you, Sir, and to the House.

India must decide that in the era of new change of technology of science, India must occupy a vanguard position, must be standing on the front benches, must stand in the front rows, imbibe new technology because new creativeness must be born out of this. Out of this new creativity shall India once again be great India that has always been.

Therefore, on these new frontiers of sciences, new frontiers of technology, new thoughts must be generated, new ideas must be born and new discoveries must be made. That is how we can also accept the challenge and also use it as our opportunities. Only this alone will facilitate, I repeat alone this one, our courage, our vision, our determination to occupy the front ranks of this change, shall we be able to occupy a position which will facilitate India crossing over the threshold.

India today stands on the threshold of greatness and that greatness is within our reach, within our grasp. We can do it and we must. That is a challenge for the next Century or, if I may say so, for next fifty years.

The Prime Minister of Malaysia had come here once. He had said, "The challenge is of 20:20". He was talking metaphorical and also, in a way, talking in terms of vision. After all the best eyesight in the world is 20:20. That is why 20:20 challenge we also have to accept. That 20:20 is a challenge of technology and is a challenge of change. Therefore, that discreet change must be the objective that India must, now, follow.

We must keep in mind, at the same time, Sir, that the social intellectual objectives of this nation is not to watch only with wonder what others are doing; it is not only to see that somebody has landed on the Moon; and it is not only to read in the newspapers that we can also get if others have gone into satellite technology. We have to do it ourselves. This drama of change, of big change, that the world is seeing must be imbibed, not only by a few scientists, not only by a few hundred of those who go to the technological institutions and not only even by few thousands but I think the challenge before us is that the Laxman Rekha must be crossed by the entire nation in totality. Unless the entire nation crosses it and enters into an era of technology, the nation will not really be able to gain its position. When I talk of the entire nation, I particularly talk of the youth.

Youth are a majority in this country. They are exposed to new education. They are exposed to new technology. It is the duty of this Government, it is the duty of this Parliament, it is the duty of all of us collectively to facilitate that youth gets into this new era of science and technology, not only the youth the women also.

The most backward section of our society is women. Through education, through giving them their due, through empowerment of women, we can facilitate that they are also able to walk into this new era of change and, particularly, apart from women, those sections of society which for centuries are suffering from bondage of backwardness. For centuries and centuries, society has been unfair to them. Since centuries and centuries, the society has not given them their due. Today, when it is technologically feasible, when scientifically it is possible to banish poverty and backwardness, all of us must move together.

If I am asked, what is the challenge before the nation today, I would spell it like this. Backwardness can be and must be banished, socially, economically and technologically. If we are able to do these three things, then of course, we will be able to take and show it to the entire nation the daylight. Exposure to a new light is a challenge for the future.

This is all inclusive vision — and I am saying it all inclusive — that inclusive means all sections of society, all communities, all religions, all areas of our life and all genders of our life — we must be exposed to this.

With this as a central point, all our policies regarding our education, social policies, political policies and policies on social change and social justice must be borne out of this basic perception. Once this basic perception is clear, then policy-making is a matter of detail. If you are confused in this objective, then policies are also greatly confused. The details, of course, can be worked out. Details can be discussed in this august body and House and changes can be effected.

When I talk in terms of expanding frontiers of science and technology, I am also conscious that a new generation is also occupying our lives and this new scenario is also having both positive and negative impacts on us.

We all talk of satellite. We all talk of television. We all talk of the programmes that we have been exposed to. This is not for me at this stage or at least this morning to try to spell out what our media policy should be. But I would also like to keep in mind the fact that satellites, TVs, various dimensions of telecommunications and also the transport and travel are

determining and influencing change in us. Attitudinal change is coming. The change is coming in social relationship. The change is coming in looking at each other that India also like the rest of the world has shrunk in size. Travelling has made it easier. Telephones have made it easier. The fax has made it much easier and so on and so forth. Now these social relationships are dramatic. The change is coming in the lives of all of us. When I say 'all' I mean all. Even those sections of society which are deprived, change is coming in them also. And that change spells itself in various ways sometimes in the shape of demands and sometimes in the shape of agitations. But this exposure to new world is now making its impacts. Sometimes, this impact is not positive, sometimes it affects negatively our cultures, sometimes, it negatively affects our ways of life, sometimes, it makes both positive and negative impact on our languages, on our music and on our literature. Sometimes, it is gainful, as I said and sometimes it is negative and partly harmful.

Therefore, when we review our cultural policies, when we review our educational policies, all these policies must try to be discreet — how much to change and how much to imbibe and how much not to imbibe. That is where the collective wisdom of this House will be very helpful.

It is not possible for one person, it is not possible even for a few in the Cabinet to try to visualise the entire drama. At a much wider scale, it is to be discussed, in this House and outside the House, amongst the intelligentsia, amongst the intellectuals, amongst the social organisations and amongst all the NGOs. They must tell us all the time. And this interaction basically is a real meaning of democracy. This interaction all the time is very important that we keep on focussing our minds on it.

But at the same time, when I pointed out that there can be some harmful impacts also, I must repeat with all the strength that I can, that we must under no circumstances — and I repeat — under no circumstances, shut our windows. We must not come to a stage when we close our minds.

India has never done it. All through our civilisation of history, the importance of India has been that it has always kept its windows open. Last time, when poet Tagore said that famous song we all remember “keep your windows open. Let the winds come in. Know how to imbibe them.” Gandhiji said the same thing. That is the mantra again for us for the future. Therefore, while determining the media policies, education policies, economic policies, we must know how to deliberate and also talk in terms of change, discrete change imbibing whatever we think is good for us, assimilating whatever we can.

India has never, in its entire history, been a rejectionist. India has never been a rejectionist. India has always been on the side of assimilation. Look at the fate of our music, look at our own languages, look at Hindi and Urdu's worth. Anything that I look at, I think it is a demonstration and manifestation, all the time, of our capacity to imbibe, taking and rejecting whatever was not good for us.

I have deliberately at this stage not mentioned the impact all this has on the foreign policy. I have talked of cultural policy, I have talked of educational policy and, I have talked of media policy. But, particularly, when I talk of foreign policy, I feel that the history of our civilisation has also been, as I said, non-rejectionist. But, at the same time, it has been open to the world. Whether I talk of today or I talk of yesteryear, India always was in the world vision. I cannot recall any phase in the long Indian history when India did not have a world vision. If it is the era of Ashoka, he was a person who talked in terms of sending a message of Buddha across the world. If we think in terms of any change in our society, we always, viewed ourselves as a part of the world and as a part of that outlook. Our nation-state — I emphasise about nation-state — when I say that, though our nation-state was born on 15th August, 1947, the Indian civilisation was much longer; the national perception was much longer; our commonalities and visions were much longer and, therefore, we had always imbibed the ideas, thoughts and philosophies from giving to the world and taking from the world. The uniqueness of this phenomena was that all the time India walked on a two-way stick. It let others come in; it also went out. That is why, India, all the time, gave to the world and brought the world to India.

When I think of Khusro or think of even further that, I always think in the sense that India was open to the world and world was open to India. That has been the basis of our perceptions. We have never confined to an era in the 5,000 years of our civilisation when different forms, different idioms were not used for this purpose going out to the world and taking to the world inside us. Primarily because of this, the Indian civilisation was invigorated. The interesting contour of our Indian civilisation, if I may say so, was an in-built resilience and all the resilience was that we did reject whatever was not suitable to us. We did take in whatever we think was good for us. But at no stage in our history we let others overwhelm us. This process of assimilation and defiance was simultaneous. All the time, we knew where to defy and also, at the same time, we knew where to take in situations.

Of course, the eras were different than today. The communications methodology was different. One had to walk to distant lands and the letters were also sent on the horseback. That is the time consuming factor. The result of it was that the focus of Indian sub-continent was proliferated. In the north of the continent, we interacted more with the landmass of Central Asia. We did that all historically. We mostly remained oblivious of the dangers coming from that side of the seas and not remained oblivious of these things.

I have been reminded of an incident when Aurangzeb's family wanted to go to Mecca. He had to take visa from the Portuguese from Surat. It did not occur to him that the seas around India also belonged to the Indian Empire. No, it did not. Similarly, we see that the military power was also not maritime oriented of the North. The South, on the contrary, went the other way. All States of the South were more conscious of the seas. Presumably, in Calicut, for instance, they were able to push back the Portuguese for nearly the best part of the century because it was a marine power. Also, in a cultural sphere, the South interacted more to the East, the Buddhist message going to other far-off areas like, Indonesia, Japan and China.

They had marine consciousness. But, at the same time, their security perception was not land conscious. And that is why there was a strange dilemma to see and perceive by both sides. The North was not sea conscious and the South was not so much land conscious. They both suffered in different ways. And that is how the sovereignty suffered. I think this myopia also ignored that the sea is now becoming increasingly important. As technology came, as the steamship came and as other technologies started coming in, it became more and more important for this sub-continent to see that ultimately the sea power matters. But, even more important than that, and I think more important for us, is to keep in mind in the present days the preparedness of our war machines. India, unfortunately, never became conscious of the fact that wars are not fought only with valour, they are also fought with technologies. And that is why when the Northerners and the across the sea powers started coming in, their war machines and war technologies were different than we had. We had all the valour but we were always one step backward.

At the time when Babar came, that was one manifestation. The time when the British came, that was another manifestation. When the Portuguese came, that was one more manifestation. Therefore, may I submit that this House may decide with determination and with commitment that this shall never happen again. In technology we shall never

be left behind. Our valoured armies, our brave armies, our brave forces, shall always be given the latest in technology that the security of India demands. This historical lesson we have learnt and this lesson of history we shall never forget. And that is why it is important that wherever we go, we must keep in mind that when on the cultural level we can keep our minds open, when we can keep on spreading the message of our civilisation, at the same time, on the level of security also we must keep our mind open.

Our foreign policy must keep in mind the fact that only those foreign policies ultimately succeed which in security conscious and are vigilant. And security is a wider conception. It is not only arms, it is also inner stability. It is also food security, it is also security of inter-relationship. If the armies are going to be involved more and more in our internal squabbles, then our security becomes dangerous. If our internal peace is not secured, then the defence becomes very vulnerable. If we keep on quarrelling amongst ourselves, we become a tempting target of those who want to come in. And that is why the broader concept of security is important. The main features of that broader concept of security, may I repeat, are technologically updating ourselves, unifying the nation all the time, trying to see to it that our inner squabbles do not reach that stage when armies have to be involved inside and also, at the same time, economic stability and economic social justice. Social justice is not only a matter of social justice, it is also a matter of security. Any socially unjust society can never be secure. Therefore, it is very important for us to keep in mind that when we talk in terms of social justice, it also has a defence orientation.

Some of us who are in my generation will remember that in our school and college days, we read the Discovery of India written by Nehruji, which he wrote without reference to any text book or to any reference book in the narrow cells of the jail. He reminded us all the time of two things. He reminded of India which had inherent strength, he reminded of India which had cultural roots in the soil, he reminded of India of the change that India was undergoing, he reminded of India which had the capacity to change with the times. Therefore, it was only till the colonial era came that this problem became very difficult. The civilisation and unity of India was disturbed by the foreign colonial rulers who came from the West and, therefore, the Westerners not only tried to destroy our civilisation and unity but it continued till we got back our courage to defy them. Once the defiance came and once our determination was roused by Gandhiji, we defied it continuously and the same process continued — both assimilation and defiance.

When I talk of Raja Rammohan Roy or I talk of Tagore or I talk of Sir Syed Ali, all these added one chapter or the other — assimilation and defiance. And that is how India's struggle took a new shape. When I think of Gandhiji and Tagore particularly, I think they were twins. They were twins in many ways and I am not going to quote what Tagore wrote nor I am going to draw your attention. But Tagore had one vision and that vision always was that he thought narrow nationalism is not the future of India. He always emphasised the humanism, the humanistic message of India. Two days back I was speaking in Shanti Niketan. Shri Somnath Chatterjee was there. In Shanti Niketan I reminded them of the famous novel which Tagore wrote that is Ghare Bore.

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When he wrote this, he always tried to remind us that even in the upsurge of nationalism we must not forget the world. And that was what Tagore told us. Gandhiji, in his 'Experiments with Truth', that began in South Africa, opened a new dimension for us. A while ago I have said that we were conscious of Central Asia, we were conscious of some parts of the sea and when the British came, the Portugese came and the French came, we were conscious of Europe.

Gandhiji added a new dimension to our knowledge — dark South Africa's role. We were not conscious of it till Gandhiji came on the scene. Gandhiji, I have said at other place, was physically born in India but politically he was born in South Africa. And, therefore, he now forged a new link between those hopelessly, helplessly struggling dark dimensions of the African soil with our freedom struggle. This became a part of our freedom struggle. Gandhiji and also Nehru particularly further opened our windows wider. Spanish civil war was going on. It looked very strange to some of us at that time when he decided to send a mission to Spanish civil war — all before freedom. China was struggling. Kotnis was sent. When we think of Russia he talked and saw of Soviet Union a new experiment in civilisation. It may succeed, it may fail. That was a different issue altogether. But he saw in that a political expression of social justice and also the world was brought close to us. They, both of them together, divided the world into two — the world of the oppressor and the world of the oppressed. And our sides were very clear. From day one in the freedom struggle itself we were on the side and a natural ally of those who were oppressed. When Nazism came and Tagore tried and wrote his famous poem which I will not read again, because of paucity of time. But Tagore gave a message that those coming from Japan, trying to profess Buddhism,

the compassionate Buddhism and treading in the civilisation of China, he raised protest against them. So did Nehru; so did Gandhi. That is how the freedom struggle's basic purpose and basic vision was spelt.

Sir, this rising Indian freedom struggle, since you were born 15 days after the 15th August, I must remind you, rose on the ashes of Nazism, it rose on the ashes of Fascism, it rose on the ashes of militaries and, therefore, there is a strange type of link that we have with the forces of peace. Nehru and Gandhiji together convened the first Asia Conference before even we became formally free. What was the message? The basic message was that we are all on the side of those who are still colonised. And the last de-colonisation which has been done now, the last but one perhaps, in a small way is the transfer of Hong Kong.

As Prime Minister here, I received an invitation from the Chinese to participate in that function in Hong Kong. We also received invitation from the British. We responded to the invitation of China. The British was a liquidation of empire. We have no sympathy with them.

We had all sympathies with the liquidation of imperialism in Hong Kong. With Hong Kong, we have one more link. After all, the opium war was fought from the Indian soil. What was the opium war about? Those who today protest against drugs, they forget that they went to war on the issue that British India must continue to have a right to transport, export opium to China. That was a war and, therefore, they took over Hong Kong. Therefore, we have a great sympathy and great admiration for those who have ultimately liquidated that.

The Asia Conference, as I said, was a message against colonisation. It was a message against war, it was a message against camps. That is how our foreign policy was born. Our foreign policy, and I think my worthy colleague Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao has spelt out himself, was not made in a book. It did not come out of any text-book; it came out of the experience of the freedom struggle. Therefore, out of this, we were able to learn three lessons.

There were three messages from those who were responsible for making it at one stage or the other. The first one is to stay free, keep Indian foreign policy free, independent, do not give in and keep your chin up all the time. I state with pride that in these 50 years, that has been done. No pressure on any Government, this one or the one preceding it, has ever succeeded on cowing down India. The second message, was 'always stand with the oppressed'. We have stood with the oppressed. The third message was 'always oppose tyranny wherever it is, and be always on the side of the peace'. Diplomacy in Indian history had a purpose. And the purpose was to transform diplomacy and not to transact.

There was no bargaining. Indian Foreign policy never entered into any negotiations.

It had never tried to give and take. It had stood for transformation of the attitudes, transformation of the world relationships, and never tried to transact. We always had ideals. Ideas are input but ideals have always been preserved. Therefore, on this, we built the concept of non-alignment. The non-alignment gave us new friends, those who had a colonial experience, those who had passed through difficult times, those who were victims of apartheid, colour victims, and also those who were standing on that side and I am particularly referring to the Soviet Union.

In the new phase that began on 15th August, 1947, we continued the same policies. We always stood on these basic things, whether it was Vietnam, whether it was Korea, whether it was China or South Africa. I can go on counting. There are numerous countries. Every time, our vision was clear. Our courage was our best ally. We never minded isolation because isolation does not decide it. Very often, we paid the price also, but all the same we never gave in. The Cold War did cause us difficulties. Therefore, we were misunderstood also. But the worst thing that happened to our region was that in this region of ours, tensions were imposed. Tensions were not born in, tensions were imposed in this region by arms and by everything else. Therefore, this was done all the time and that continues to cause us difficulties. We believe and the Indian foreign policy believes, not today but always, in the unity, friendship and cooperation of South Asia and we are trying to form that policy. We were partitioned geographically, physically but at the same time, this division is something which was furthered when the strategic perceptions underwent a change. Indian strategic perception was different than the one that was imposed from outside.

I am not going to take more of your time, Sir, but I would also say at the same time that the end of the Cold War now gives and imposes new challenges and new opportunities also. The world has not suddenly become peaceful. It is not. At the same time, the globalisation and regionalisation are the two things that have come to the fore and we see them sleeping in the same bed.

We have to have a global vision, but we have also to have regional initiatives. That is what we are trying to do. The next century is generally believed to be the Asian century. That is where the opportunity for India comes.

And that is where we now have to play our role. That anchor frame of succeeded in creating new relationships with Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka. About Pakistan, I refer in a minute. ASEAN is now our neighbour. By Myanmar joining the ASEAN, even our land borders have joined. Therefore, our neighbourly relations have to be inculcated there also. Similarly, Indian Ocean Rim Association is now our neighbour and we are now a founder member of that Association. The trilateral treaty between Turkmenistan, India and Iran now gives us a new access into Central Asia and we must build on that also.

In keeping with our firm approach of building strong ties of friendship and cooperation with all our neighbouring countries, we have always sought a relationship of mutual trust, friendship and cooperation with Pakistan. The resumption of Foreign Secretary level dialogue was a step in that direction. As hon. Members are aware, a joint statement was issued at the conclusion of Islamabad round talks in June. The next round is now due in Delhi in September and we have suggested the dates to Pakistan. Their response is awaited. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharief and I will be in New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly Session and if opportunity comes my way, I will be happy to meet him. Hon. Members will recall that I had a useful meeting with him in Male in May last.

Sir, I will take a minute more, before I conclude, to say something that I must say in passing. The relationship of India with the United States of America, the countries of Europe, Japan, China and Russia continues to be very steady and very friendly. The only thing that I would like to say here is that our relations with the United States of America are improving and a series of visits to India from Washington are planned for the coming months. As hon. Members are aware, President Clinton is also expected to visit India sometime next year. I have also received a proposal from the American side for a meeting with President Clinton in New York during the forthcoming Session of the United Nations General Assembly. While considering this proposal, I made it clear to the Americans that India-Pakistan relations and attempts at mediation between India and Pakistan are not to be on the agenda, a position which the Americans have accepted. I wish to reassure the House that the secular unity and integrity of India is not open to negotiations.

There is much to be discussed between two largest democracies in the world and if meeting takes place, I am looking forward to a friendly and substantive discussion with President Clinton which will focus on our bilateral ties and also on issues of common interests relating to Asia-Pacific Region, in particular.

Sir, if time had permitted I would have addressed to various issues. But I cannot restrain from referring to one issue which my friend Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has talked about. It is about corruption and criminalisation of politics. During the course of his speech, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had regretted that there was a delay in bringing the Lok Pal Bill before Parliament. He also suggested that all political leaders should be required to declare their assets, including those of their relatives. As hon. Members are aware, the Lok Pal Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on the 13th September, 1996. The Bill was referred to the Standing Committee of Parliament on Home Affairs which has since submitted its report. The recommendations of the Standing Committee are under consideration of the Government. A revised Bill, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee, will be introduced in the forthcoming Session of Parliament. Let us hope this law will be a significant step towards cleaning our polity and the evil of corruption.

Sir, Shri Vajpayee, referring to a news item in the Press, mentioned that 194 proposal of the C.B.I. for sanction of prosecution were pending in the Prime Minister's Office.

The factual position is that not even one is pending in the Prime Minister's Office. But all the same, there were 157 CBI proposals pending with different Central Ministries and State Governments. Out of these, 141 were pending with the Central Ministries. As a part of the drive against corruption, a special effort has been made to speed up the issue of sanction for prosecution in respect of public servants involved in corruption cases.

The Government of India has brought down the number of cases from 141, at the end of March 1997, to 79 at present. All Secretaries to the Government of India have been given strict instructions to clear the backlog within 15 days and to ensure that all fresh cases are decided in a month's time. There has also been concern expressed about the quality of investigation and follow-up of corruption cases in the courts. Measures to improve the present state of affairs including the setting up of an institutional mechanism in the Government is also being finalised. The Government is taking steps to review and streamline the existing vigilance procedures in consultation with the State Governments as to ensure that corruption cases are disposed of expeditiously in a time-bound manner. In pursuance, a Conference of the Heads of the Anti-Corruption Bureaus of States and the Vigilance Officers of various public undertakings has been fixed for 4th and 5th of September, that is, in two days' from now. This will be followed by a Conference of Chief Ministers.

Regarding transparency, the Government constituted a Working Group under the Chairmanship of Shri H.D. Shourie on Right to Information. We intend introducing the Right to Information Bill in the next Session of Parliament.

I will not take your time to dwell at length about the electoral reforms because I think that enjoys the consensus of the House. I will soon come with a Bill before an all-party meeting so that we can evolve a new consensus or a renewed consensus on this and come to a conclusion.

I could have talked about many other things, but I know the limitations of time. If you permit me, Sir, I will place them on the Table of the House.

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Sir, with your permission, I am laying on the Table of the House the notes that I have on Cooperative Federalism, on Planning: its structural role in the context of liberalisation, on Food Security and Public Distribution System, on Water Resources and Drinking Water, on Education and Literacy, on Population Issues, on Policy Initiatives in Infrastructure Development, on Bio-diversity, on the Panchayati Raj Institutions, and also on Social Justice that we have followed. This, I think, will help the Members because I may not be able to take more time.

Sir, my hon. friend has raised one point. Let me finish and then I will come to you.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying that I think the House and the Nation has benefited a lot from these discussions. Let me repeat what I said and pay my complement and homage to all the Members of Parliament, both in this House and that, with the remarkable way this discussion has been conducted. This was unusual in one way more. We were not having repartee, and we were not trying to cross swords here. We were all trying to present our vision of future.

I think it is the collective vision of the future of the nation.

BACK NOTE

VIII. State of Democracy and Democratic Institutions, Economic Situation, Position of Infrastructure, Achievements and Potential in the field of Science and Technology and State of Human Development in the Country, 1 September, 1997

1 SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : It is Ghare Baire.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Excuse me for bad Bengali pronunciation.

2 MR. SPEAKER: Please do so. Thank you very much.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (HOOGHLY): Sir, will you give me half-a-minute?

KUMARI UMA BHARATI (Kajuraho): The Prime Minister did not mention about the reservation policy for women.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Let me finish.

SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK (Phulbani): Sir, the Prime Minister, who is also the Foreign Minister, has forgotten one very important point. He has forgotten to mention about India's concern to stake its claim for membership in the Security Council. This matter has been discussed in the Congress Party. The Prime Minister is going to America and Mr. Clinton is also coming to India.

KUMARI UMA BHARATI : Mr. Prime Minister, please tell about the reservation for women.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not the way. Please do not spoil the solemnity of this occasion. It is not possible for the Prime Minister to mention everything.