

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5849
ANSWERED ON:03.05.2000
VISIT OF BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY
RAMAKANT SOIRU ANGLE

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Britain Foreign Secretary visited India recently;
- (b) if so, the details of the discussions held with him; and
- (c) the outcome thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

- a) Yes, Sir. Mr. Robin Cook, the British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, visited India from 15-18 April 2000.
- b) and c) The discussions contributed to an enhanced understanding on bilateral issues as well as on developments in India's neighbourhood, non-proliferation and disarmament, international terrorism, the forthcoming meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group and the India-EU Summit. Both sides reiterated their commitment to strengthening bilateral trade and commerce to achieve a target of \$5 billion over the next two years. It was agreed to initiate in the year 2001, a formal, structured bilateral dialogue between senior officials on issues pertaining to non-proliferation and disarmament. Mr. Cook publicly stated that the U.K sees India 'as a natural contender for permanent membership of the United Nation Security Council'. During the visit, India and the U.K inaugurated the high-level, non-governmental India-U.K Round Table, which has been constituted recently to advise the Governments of India and the U.K on ways of enhancing and enriching the bilateral relationship.