

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:31
ANSWERED ON:24.02.2010
INDIA S POLICY ON AFGHANISTAN
Gowda Shri D.B. Chandre;Jeyadural Shri S. R.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any Conference on Afghanistan was held recently;
- (b) if so, the details of discussions held in the Conference and the stand taken by India on the issue of Taliban;
- (c) whether major countries and the United Nations have shifted their stand on Taliban;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the future strategy chalked out/being decided by the Government of India on its Afghan policy in the changed scenario?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 31 REGARDING 'INDIA'S POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN' FOR ANSWER ON 24.02.2010

(a) Yes, Sir. An International Conference on Afghanistan was held in London on January 28, 2010.

(b) The London Conference had three broad agenda items: security; development and governance; and regional cooperation. The Conference was co-hosted by Afghan President Hamid Karzai, UN Secretary General Ban ki- Moon and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Over 60 countries, along with representatives of certain international organizations, were invited to the Conference. EAM led the Indian delegation to the Conference.

In the Communiqué issued after the Conference, the international community underlined its support for the Government of Afghanistan and its security, development and governance, and pledged to maintain its long-term commitment to Afghanistan. India's stand was to ensure an emphasis on the international community's long-term engagement in Afghanistan, the central and coordinating role of the UN, a focus on the resolve to combat terrorism, condemnation of terrorist groups, and the importance of the Afghan National Security Forces assuming a leading role in ensuring security. While supporting the Afghan Government's efforts to reintegrate those individuals who abjure violence, give up the armed struggle, accept the values of democracy, human rights and pluralism as enshrined in the Afghan constitution and do not have ties with terrorist groups, India stressed on the need to ensure that the Afghan led peace and reintegration process should be inclusive and transparent.

(c) to (d) The participants in the London Conference, which included major countries and was co-hosted by the United Nations, reiterated their resolve to combat terrorism and condemned in the strongest terms all attacks by the Taliban and their extremist allies. The London Conference did not endorse reintegration with the Taliban as a whole, but welcomed the plans of the Government of Afghanistan to offer an honourable place in society to those willing to renounce violence, participate in the free and open society and respect the principles that are enshrined in the Afghan Constitution, cut ties with Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, and pursue their political goals peacefully.

(e) India is actively engaged in assisting the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan in the reconstruction and development of that country as a means to bringing about stability in Afghanistan. As a neighbour of Afghanistan, India cannot remain immune from developments there. It is committed to supporting the Government and the people of Afghanistan as they build a democratic, pluralistic and prosperous country. India believes that in this period of transition in Afghanistan it is imperative to strengthen the Government of Afghanistan and its capacities at various levels. India will continue to consult with countries in the region and beyond in support of peace and stability in Afghanistan. India will continue to press the international community to act effectively to ensure that terrorist and extremist groups targeting Afghanistan from beyond its borders are denied safe havens.