

Title: Regarding recent official visit of Prime Minister to the United States of America.

**12.01 hrs.**

## **STATEMENT BY MINISTER**

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am honoured to present to this House a statement on my recent visit to the United States. President Bush invited me to pay an official visit and my wife and I were received by President Bush and the First Lady Mrs. Laura Bush with great warmth and with full ceremonial honours. My talks with the President covered a wide range of bilateral and global issues. The Vice-President and senior Cabinet Members of the US Administration such as Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice, Defence Secretary Mr. Rumsfeld and Treasury Secretary Mr. Snow also called on me during my stay. I had the honour to be invited to address the Joint Session of the US Congress. I believe that the visit was a success in furthering our foreign policy interests and in terms of its substantive outcome. Sir, it was evident that the United States wished to signal that we are embarking on a transformation of our ties so as to realise their inherent potential.

A copy of the Joint Statement issued during my visit is being placed on the Table of the House. Sir, the purpose of my visit was to sensitise the US Government about the full extent of the changes that have taken place in India since 1991. These changes have given us a stronger capability to work with the United States on more equal terms as we address common concerns and challenges. I also sought to emphasise that the Indian economy is stronger than it has even been and we hope to participate in and benefit from the economic processes of globalisation. We are determined to be a competitive destination for investment, including foreign investment and the US business community could contribute to development in India through greater investment and trade. We are uniquely placed to enter into such mutually beneficial interaction drawing on the strength of our knowledge sector. Hence, another important goal was to underline to the United States that the emergence of India as a centre of knowledge-based industries and services would provide a good base for long-term collaboration between our economies. The expansion of the Indian economy and acceleration of our growth rate is crucial not just for our own people but would be beneficial to global economic progress and stability.

My discussions in Washington with President Bush and members of his Administration were productive and helped advance these national goals. Both sides agreed that our relationship was based on shared values and shared interests that included the strengthening of democratic capacities where desired and without coercion, and in combating terrorism without selectivity or segmentation. The conclusion of the United Nations Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism proposed by India, at an early date, was deemed a priority by both countries. On the economic side, we welcomed the launching of a CEOs Forum that has brought together the best business minds of both countries. We discussed the urgent need for modernization of India's infrastructure and our quest for greater investments in this sector, in view of its centrality for the continued growth of the Indian economy. Recognizing the importance of the rural economy, we also agreed on an agricultural initiative aimed at facilitating a new generation of research and agricultural practices to build on the green revolution.

Sir, appreciating the importance of technology to India's economic and social development we also discussed measures that would ensure more liberal and predictable access to US high technology. We will endeavour to build closer ties in frontier areas such as space exploration, satellite navigation and launch, and related commercial activities that would greatly benefit our space industry, which is now recognized as a global leader. A Science and Technology Framework Agreement has been agreed during my visit that provides for expanded joint research and training. Underlining the intent of working at a new level of cooperation, the United States announced the removal of five Indian organizations from its Entity List – three from the space sector and two from atomic energy – and indicated further review in this matter.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, India's quest for energy security as an essential component of our vision for our development was a significant theme of my talks. I elaborated the imperative need for India to have unhindered access to all sources of energy, including nuclear energy, if we are to maintain and accelerate our rate of economic growth. I am pleased to state that the US understood our position in regard to our securing adequate and affordable energy supplies, from all sources. This approach, I underlined, would enable us to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. This would have concomitant advantages for all in terms of reduced pressure on oil prices and environmental sustainability. It was in this context that we affirmed the importance of cooperation in the civilian nuclear energy sector.

Accordingly, a central element of my interaction with President Bush was the resumption of bilateral civilian nuclear cooperation between India and the United States, which had been frozen for decades. President Bush and I agreed that we would work towards promoting nuclear energy as a means for India to achieve energy security. The US side undertook to adjust its laws and policies domestically and to work with its friends and allies to adjust relevant international regimes. Full civilian nuclear energy cooperation would include, but not limit itself, to the expeditious consideration of fuel supplies for the Tarapur Plant. The US will also encourage other partners to consider similar requests favourably. We also obtained consideration of our desire to participate as full partners in the International Thermo Nuclear Research Project and the Generation IV International Forum. These programmes in frontier areas of science and technology have considerable potential for our country's, and indeed global, energy security in the future. The US agreed to consult other participants with a view towards India's inclusion. This is a testimony not only to the enormous international stature and respect achieved by our nuclear scientists but also a recognition of their attainments.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, our nuclear programme is, in many ways, unique. It encompasses the complete range of activities that characterize an advanced nuclear power including generation of electricity, advanced research and development and our strategic programme. Our scientists have mastered the complete nuclear fuel cycle. The manner of the development of our programme which has been envisaged is predicated on our modest uranium resources and vast reserves of thorium. While the energy potential available in these resources is immense, we remain committed to the three-stage nuclear power programme, consisting of Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) in the first stage, fast breeder reactors in the second stage and thorium reactors in the third stage. These would need sequential implementation in an integrated manner. Our scientists have done excellent work and we are progressing well on this programme as per the original vision outlined by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Homi Bhabha. We will build on this precious

heritage.

Sir, energy is a crucial input to propel our economic growth. We have assessed our long-term energy resources and it is clear that nuclear power has to play an increasing role in our electricity generation plans. While our indigenous nuclear power programme based on domestic resources and national technological capabilities would continue to grow, there is clearly an urgent necessity for us to enhance nuclear power production rapidly. Our desire is to attain energy security to enable us to leapfrog stages of economic development obtained at the least possible cost. For this purpose, it would be very useful if we can access nuclear fuel as well as nuclear reactors from the international market. Presently, this is not possible because of the nuclear technology restrictive regimes that operate around us. What we have now agreed with the United States should open up the possibility of our being able to access nuclear fuel and nuclear power reactors and other technologies from outside to supplement our domestic efforts. There is also considerable concern with regard to global climate change arising out of CO2 emissions. Thus, we need to pursue clean energy technologies. Nuclear power is very important in this context as well.

Sir, the Joint Statement recognizes that as a responsible State with advanced nuclear technology, India should acquire the same benefits and advantages as other such States which have advanced nuclear technology. As a result, we expect that the resumption of India's nuclear trade and commerce with the US, and globally, is an achievable goal, involving the dismantling of the technology denial regimes which have hitherto targeted India.

Predicated on our obtaining the same benefits and advantages as other nuclear powers, is the understanding that we shall undertake the same responsibilities and obligations as such countries, including the United States. Concomitantly, we expect the same rights and benefits. Thus we have ensured the principle of non-discrimination. I would like to make it very clear that our commitments would be conditional upon, and reciprocal to, the US fulfilling its side of this understanding. The Joint Statement refers to our identifying, and separating civilian and military nuclear facilities in a phased manner and taking a decision to place voluntarily civilian nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. India will never accept discrimination. There is nothing in this Joint Statement that amounts to limiting or inhibiting our strategic nuclear weapons programme over which we will retain unrestricted, complete and autonomous control. Sir, I repeat this sentence.

Reciprocity is key to the implementation of all the steps enumerated in the Joint Statement. We expect a close co-relation between the actions to be taken by the United States and by India. Indian actions will be contingent at every stage on actions taken by the other side. Should we not be satisfied that our interests are fully secured, we shall not feel pressed to move ahead in a pre-determined manner.

Hence, phased action, in terms of identification and separation of civilian nuclear facilities based solely on our own duly calibrated national decisions will be taken at appropriate points in time, consistent with our national security interests. Before voluntarily placing our civilian facilities under IAEA safeguards, we will ensure that all restrictions on India have been lifted. Our autonomy of decision-making will not be circumscribed in any manner whatsoever.

I wish to emphasise to this House that the basis for this understanding was a clear recognition that India is a responsible nuclear power with an impeccable record on nuclear non-proliferation. Our strategic policies and assets are a source of national security and will continue to be so, and will remain outside the scope of our discussions with any external interlocutors. I should like to take this opportunity to assure hon. Members that the Government will not allow any fissile material shortages or any other material limitations on our strategic programmes in order to meet current or future requirements. The defence and security interests of our country are our highest priority and we will continue to remain so.

Our policies and actions have earned us global recognition and widespread esteem, which I am sure, the House recognises and welcomes. This allows us not only to make a credible case for an end to three decades of technology denial but also to find a central and growing place in international organisations.

Sir, I used the occasion of my visit to the US to spell out the basis on which India has made a compelling case for the expansion of the UN Security Council, and for our admission as a Permanent Member. The US has a different position on this matter and has not found it possible to endorse India's position. It is my hope, however, that over time the US will recognise the validity of what we say. In fact, the Joint Statement itself reflects growing US recognition of this position. It states "international institutions must fully reflect changes in the global scenario that have taken place since 1945." The US President also reiterated that international institutions are going to have to adapt to reflect India's central and growing role. In this regard, global initiatives that we have initiated with the United States, will include disaster, relief, HIV/AIDS and strengthening democratic capacities in societies that seek such assistance testify to the greater recognition of our strengths and capabilities.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I sincerely believe that my visit to the United States has led to greater understanding and appreciation of our concerns and interests. It has contributed to significant initiatives that have important economic and developmental implications for India. I have made a strong case on behalf of the Indian people that our voice be heard when decisions that affect us are made in global councils. I am confident that this House would welcome these developments.

Sir, I would like to conclude by stating that we can feel justly proud that our achievements are being recognised globally. This is a tribute to our scientists, our engineers, our teachers, our workers, our farmers, our entrepreneurs and our professionals. We are now a nation of over one billion people. We are the world's fourth-largest economy, with the second highest rate of growth today. The manner in which we have achieved this progress within the framework of a democratic dispensation is the subject of admiration and respect. Increasingly, India is seen as a benchmark for the rest of the world. I therefore believe our strength lies in the essential correctness of the path we have chosen, and in the creativity and enterprise of our people. This has enabled India to stand tall in the comity of nations.

Sir, I realise that there would be criticism in some quarters regarding aspects of the Joint Statement. Constructive criticism is part of

the Parliamentary tradition, and I welcome it. This adds clarity to our debates and vibrancy to the institution of our democracy. I can however assure this august House, and through it, our nation, that my visit to the United States was undertaken solely with the purpose of enhancing relations with one of the world's pre-eminent powers, so as to widen our developmental options. It was my endeavour to expand our access to energy supplies to fuel our growth, while protecting our strategic interests. I believe our effort to undo some of the long-standing restrictive nuclear regimes will enable us to secure access to the significantly greater quantities of energy that we will need to spur massive economic growth in our industrialization programme. Once secured, cheap and affordable energy will enable India to leapfrog its current pace of economic growth, to secure the future for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, all of us gathered together in this august House recognize that inspired by our freedom struggle, we have inherited a proud and patriotic tradition. Our commitment to work for universal nuclear disarmament so passionately espoused by former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in the long run will remain our core concern. At the same time, Sir, I can assure the House that we have never made, nor will we ever make, any compromises insofar as our fundamental and strategic needs are concerned. Our inheritance gives us confidence, our experience gives us courage, and our belief gives us conviction to assert today that our nation stands on the threshold of an even better future. I, therefore, venture to think that my visit to the United States has opened up new opportunities and possibilities for promoting our energy security and pathways to accelerated social and economic development. We must all work together as a united nation to realize these opportunities to make India a major powerhouse of the evolving global economy.

**(Placed in Library, See No. LT 2384/05)**

MD. SALIM (CALCUTTA – NORTH EAST): Sir, I hope that it will be converted into a discussion. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please give notices. On Monday itself, we will have a discussion on the Prime Minister's Statement. I believe, the Prime Minister will be available. Therefore, hon. Members may give notices. I will allow a discussion on Monday itself.