

>

Title: Statement made by the Minister of External Affairs regarding certain issues in respect of Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation Agreement with USA.

MR. SPEAKER: Please listen. I beseech you. I am not denying any hon. Member's right on the issue that you have been trying to raise, of course, contrary to the procedure. But the hon. Minister of External Affairs wishes to make a statement. Please let us first hear his statement.

...(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Sir, the hon. Members, in the morning, raised certain issues in respect of the deal with the US on the authority of the nuclear test ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Minister of External Affairs is making a statement and you do not want to hear him.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: We did not have any authentic version of the statement of the spokesperson of the State Department of USA. But as the hon. Members raised this matter on the basis of the media reports, I think, I should clarify the position and I am doing so now.

India has the sovereign right to test and would do so, if it is necessary in the national interest. The only restraint is our voluntary unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, declared by the previous Government and being continued by the successor Government. There is nothing in the bilateral agreement that would tie the hands of a future Government or legally constrain its options. A decision to undertake a future nuclear test would be India's sovereign decision, resting solely with the Government of India. ...(Interruptions)

14.01 hrs.

(At this stage Shri Shailandra Kumar and some other
Hon'ble Members came and stood on the floor near the Table)

...(Interruptions)

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Nowhere – I repeat, nowhere – in the bilateral agreement on Cooperation for Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy with the United States of America, is testing mentioned. The bilateral cooperation agreement contains elaborate provisions in Articles 5 and 14 to ensure the continuous operation of India's reactors. These include fuel supply assurances, the right to take corrective measures, and a strategic fuel reserve for the lifetime of India's reactors in case of cessation of cooperation.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I will allow you tomorrow to raise the matter.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I will allow you tomorrow to raise it.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Now, let us go to item no. 2, Papers to be laid on the Table.

14.02 hrs.