

>

Title: Purchase of an abandoned American Warship by India as per the reference made in the CAG Report.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (PANSKURA): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is a Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for the year ended March 2007. On page 14 of the said Report a serious indictment has been made of the defence purchase made by the Government of India. If you kindly allow me to quote :

"Navy acquired an aging foreign ship after refurbishment at a cost of USD 50.63 million without physical assessment of the ship. Poor condition of the ship entails significant changes in the scope of the repair work with the cost for repairs going up from USD 15 million to USD 36.94 million."

Navy did not bring all the cost for consideration of the competent authority while seeking approval. It is a very serious question, which involves politics, corruption, economics, and everything. The ship was 36 years old, and this 36 years old ship was purchased.

Secondly, the American Navy decided to abandon the ship by 2006 if nobody purchases the ship. There was not only a price of US Dollars (USD) 50.63 million, but the cost of repair had shot up to USD 36.94 million from USD 15 million, and this was done without physical verification of the ship. It is a vintage ship and it was an abandoned ship, which was of no use to the American Navy. At a time when they were all going to decide to abandon the ship, suddenly a contract of purchase and sale was entered into by the Government of India with the Government of United States through the Defence Department.

Therefore, a number of questions arise from this. Why such a poor-conditioned ship was purchased? Why was a 36 year old ship purchased from them? Why was so much money spent from the foreign exchequer? Why notice of the competent authority was not drawn to it? Why did the Government of India take the liberty of taking over a vintage ship from the American Navy?

What is the next development? The next development is that six Indian sailors have died because of chlorine exit from the ship. Earlier, when this ship was in the custody of American Navy, three sailors had died in a similar fashion. Therefore, it was a recurrence of a similar incident. Was all this not known while the purchase was being made? How could this happen? The basic question to which I would like to draw your notice is this. How this irresponsible, *â€¦*, uneconomic, *â€¦* was done by the Government of India? It needs a statement from the Government of India.

Sir, two things emerge from it. ...(*Interruptions*) Was it an economic decision? Was it a political decision to come close to America? Is it a part and parcel of strategic defence partnership between India and the Bush Administration?[\[r22\]](#)

The main question is that our defence requirement has been undermined. At a time when we need a strong defence to protect our freedom and sovereignty, a vintage ship had been dumped on us to the great detriment of the India's defence preparedness. *â€¦* I charge the Government, and I wish the Government ...(*Interruptions*)

सभापति महोदय : वार्ज प्रोसीडिंग्स में नहीं जाएगा।

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : Sir, I charge the Government for not doing its job. ...(*Interruptions*)

मोहम्मद सलीम (कलकत्ता - उत्तर पूर्व) : सभापति महोदय, सीएजी की रिपोर्ट में वार्ज है।...(व्यवधान)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : Sir, I charge the Government for not doing its job, and doing something that is against the national interest of the country.

सभापति महोदय : ठीक है, इसे देख लिया जाएगा।

आचार्य जी, चार लोगों ने नोटिस दिया है। मैं चाहूंगा कि आप संक्षेप में अपनी बात कहें।

श्री बसुदेव आचार्य (बांकुरा) : सभापति महोदय, मैं संक्षेप में बोलने की कोशिश करूंगा।

There is a C&AG's Report on the purchase of US Naval Ship USS Trantton. ...(*Interruptions*) Now, it is known as *Jalaswa*, which is a damning indictment that puts a question as to why this ship was at all bought. This ship is a

*Not recorded

1971 vintage ship that was bought when the US Naval itself concluded in 2003 that it was not suitable for modernization, and should be decommissioned in the year 2006. The ship was bought by paying USD 50 million and without doing any visual inspection. Why the visual inspection was not done? Why did the Government of India hurriedly take a decision to purchase it when the Government of India was aware that in 2003 itself the US Navy decided to decommission it in the year 2006? Why was it decided to purchase this ship in spite of knowing this situation?

A restriction was also imposed by the US that there should not be an offensive deployment of that particular ship. Why did the Government of India accept this condition that this particular ship would not be deployed for offensive? I would like to know this. Was the Government of India not aware at the time of purchase of this ship that three sailors had died earlier because of gas leak? Further, six sailors of our country including one official also met with the same fate and died because of gas leak. ...(*Interruptions*) We would like to know this. Why is the Government going for such a defence deal with the United States of America?[\[r23\]](#)

13.00 hrs.

Sir, it is because of the *â€* that Government of India is buying. We are forced to buy military hardware, arms and defence equipment.

Sir, I demand that Government of India should order a probe and also assure this House that such dubious purchase of arms and equipment will not be resorted to in future. This is because of result of Defence Framework Agreement and Strategic Relation Agreement with the United States of America. We demand that a statement should be made. The Government of India owes an explanation to this House. I demand that the Prime Minister should come and make a statement to this House. ...(*Interruptions*)

सभापति महोदय : रिकॉर्ड में नहीं जा रहा है।

...(*व्यवधान*) *

* Not recorded

सभापति महोदय: बिना अनुमति के न लिखें।

â€(*व्यवधान*)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): Sir, other Members have also given notices.

सभापति महोदय: आचार्य जी, आपकी बात हो गई है। आप बैठिए।

â€(*व्यवधान*)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, you allow at least four Members to speak.

सभापति महोदय: नोटिस बहुत हैं। माननीय सदस्य की बात सुन ली जाए।

â€(*व्यवधान*)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, it is a very serious matter. We have raised a very serious matter. You at least allow four Members to speak.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (HOOGHLY): Sir, you have given me an assurance during the beginning of the Question Hour that I shall be allowed to speak after the Question Hour. ...(*Interruptions*)