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Title: Requests the Central Government to respond on the decision of Government of United States for denying visa to Dr. R. Chidambaram and some other prominent Indian Scientists.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH (BHARATPUR): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have all read in the newspapers that the United States has denied a Visa to Dr. Chidambaram, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India. Dr. Chidambaram is not only an internationally known scientist. He was proceeding to America to attend an International Conference to which he had been invited. I, therefore, request the Government and the Minister present here to let us know as to what Government intends to do. A gesture of this kind on the eve of the visit of the Deputy Secretary of State of the United States to India can only be termed unfriendly.

Reciprocity is a part of diplomatic life. When I was the Ambassador in Pakistan, if the Pakistanis declared any member of my Embassy persona non grata, the Indian Government returned the compliments the next day. Similarly, the United States threw a Russian diplomat out the Russians reciprocated. I am not saying that we should retaliate in this manner. But, would you Mr. Minister please ask the United States Embassy in Delhi and our Embassy in Washington to find out as to why Dr. Chidambaram was denied a visa? He was not going there as a terrorist. He was going there as a scientist. Dr. Chidambaram is the Vice-President of the forum. And, I think, this Government should bestir itself and ask why this has been done. We have had no response from the Government. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Suresh Kurup has also given a notice on the same issue.

">SHRI A.C. JOS (MUKUNDAPURAM): Sir, we also associate ourselves with him.

">SHRI SURESH KURUP (KOTTAYAM): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government of the United States have denied visa not only to Dr. R. Chidambaram but also to some other prominent Indian scientists. The reason mentioned for denying visa to Dr. Chidambaram, a scientist of his eminence, is that 'he violated its 1998 Technology Alert List Regulation.' It is a very silly reason. This Regulation keeps foreigners, who could be engaged in espionage of technology, out of the United States. Like this, so many other prominent persons have been denied visas.

Sir, this is an insult to our country at a time when the Government of India is going out of the way to please the Clinton Administration. Already two rounds of secret negotiations have taken place between the so-called Special Envoy of the Prime Minister and Mr. Strobe Talbott. What was conveyed in these secret negotiations has not been brought before the House or before the country.

So, I would request the Government to come before this House with a statement. How are they going to respond to this dislike, this insult and also about the negotiations that are being conducted?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri Lal Bihari Tiwari.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI P.C. CHACKO (IDUKKI): Sir, let the Minister respond... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I cannot compel the Minister to respond.

... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the Government does not like to respond on this issue, I cannot direct them to respond.

SHRI A.C. JOS : Sir, it is very serious matter. The Government should respond ... (Interruptions)

श्री लाल बिहारी तिवारी (पूर्वी दिल्ली): सभापति महोदय, धर्मशिला कैसर अस्पताल वसुन्धरा एन्क्लेव के पास हिंडन कैनल व शाहदरा आउटफाल डेन के पास एक पुल दिल्ली सरकार के लोक निर्माण विभाग द्वारा बनाया जाना था, जिस पर लगभग चार करोड़ रुपये खर्च होने थे।

... (व्यवधान)

उसमें हिंडन कैनल का पुल का हिस्सा उत्तर प्रदेश सेतु निर्माण निगम ने बनाना था। वह लगभग समाप्ति पर है

... (व्यवधान)

सभापति महोदय : लाल बिहारी जी, एक मिनट रुकिये।

... (व्यवधान)

SHRI P.C. CHACKO : Are we going to ride over and take this insult? ... (Interruptions)... It is a matter of our country's respect.

">SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (BARAMATI): The hon. Finance Minister, who is a senior Minister, is very much present here. This is a very serious issue. In fact, yesterday, we saw in the newspapers that there was a statement from the Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs just saying 'unwarranted action'. I do not think, it is that simple. It is a question of prestige of this country. That is why, the Government should take this particular subject very very seriously and the Minister should reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Sinha, would you like to respond?

">THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): Sir, as I said on an earlier occasion...

SHRI A.C. JOS : It is a very serious matter.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: I never said that it is not serious. I have barely started.

Sir, the Government shares the concern of the Members in this regard. I shall convey the feelings expressed here in this House on this issue to the hon. Prime Minister who is also the External Affairs Minister. The Government, I am sure, would like to respond to this. At an appropriate time, the response will be coming forth.