

discussion with all the hon. Members of Parliament from Kerala. They have also emphasized that Mangalore-Shoranur doubling should be expedited. We are on the job. Due to this undergoing construction work of doubling from Mangalore to Shoranur, there is a problem. There is speed restriction at different levels and that is why, the trains are getting delayed. But if there is a fight everyday, we will definitely look into it and take the hon. Member's help also.

SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : My help is always there at your disposal.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, the hon. Member, Shri Vaiko has expressed a view which is the view of many passengers who were using the erstwhile Mangla Express through the earlier route. There is a very easy solution. There is already one Swarnajayanti Express which is a weekly train. It is running once a week only. You can easily make it a daily train. If you make it a daily train, that will cater to Shri Radhakrishnan's constituency as well as about eight States which will be benefitted. Will you be able to consider this positively?

MR. SPEAKER : This is a suggestion.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : I have already replied.

Setting up of N.S.C.

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*523. SHRI NADENDLA BHASKARA RAO :
SHRI MADHUKAR SIRPOTDAR :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to USQ No. 3421 on July 9, 1998 regarding National Security Council and state :

(a) the date on which the Task Force submitted its Report to the Government;

(b) the details of the recommendations;

(c) the details of the recommendations accepted and rejected by the Government, separately;

(d) whether the Government have since taken a decision to set up the proposed "National Security Council" and if so, its composition with arms and objectives;

(e) whether a decision to induct nuclear weapons in the Army has also been taken; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) The Task Force submitted its report to the Government on June 25, 1998.

(b) to (d) The matter is under consideration of the Government.

(e) and (f) It will not be in the interest of national security to divulge information in this regard.

SHRI NADENDLA BHASKARA RAO : Mr. Speaker. Sir, the Question is regarding setting up of the National Security Council. Of course, the hon. Minister has mentioned the date on which the Task Force has submitted its Report and all those things, but the details of the recommendations are not given. The hon. Minister has not mentioned what were the recommendations which were accepted and what were the recommendations which were rejected. I would like to know whether there is a decision to set up the National Security Council at all. If it is so, its composition may kindly be explained. Who will be the members? What are the activities of the National Security Council? Was there any decision to set up the National Security Council? All these things should be explained.

Regarding the last Question, of course, in the interest of the nation, the hon. Minister has said that they should not be disclosed. I agree with that. With regard to the nuclear weapons, I forego that part. But he may kindly elaborate the rest of the Question regarding the setting up of the National Security Council, and the composition of the Council.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Sir, when I said that the matter is under the consideration of the Government, it was implied that till the Government has taken a total view of the Report of the Task Force and come to certain conclusions, it would not be proper for me to make any statement.

SHRI NADENDLA BHASKARA RAO : No, I have requested the hon. Minister to elaborate the recommendations made by the Task Force. If the recommendations were given, what were the recommendations which were accepted and what were the recommendations which were rejected?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : That is precisely the point. The matter is under consideration. Acceptance and rejection will arise only when a final view is taken on the Report.

SHRI NADENDLA BHASKARA RAO : Once accepted, the recommendations can be spelt out which are the recommendations that have been accepted. There is nothing wrong in test.

MR. SPEAKER : What is your supplementary?

SHRI NADENDLA BHASKARA RAO : I know it concerns security.

SHRI MADHUKAR SIRPOTDAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this question is a very specific question, but the hon. Minister of Defence has said that because of the secrecy and national interest he was not disclosing certain

information. The Report of the Task Force has been submitted for the consideration of the Cabinet. So, naturally there are all limitations in replying to this question. I can understand that. But my anxiety and worry is that, even after the decision of the Cabinet in what form will this National Security Council be constituted and while finalising the National Security Council which are the aspects that the Ministry of Defence is going to take into consideration?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : The consideration of the Report has not reached a stage where it could have been referred to the Cabinet. Once the Report is considered by the Government and certain conclusions are arrived at, it will go before the Cabinet, and then it will be possible for me to speak on that.

MR. SPEAKER : Major Khanduri. Sorry, Major General B.C. Khanduri.

(Interruptions)

MAJOR GENERAL BHUVAN CHANDRA KHANDURI, AVSM : The constitution and effective functioning of the National Security Council has always been recommended and insisted upon by the BJP while it was in the Opposition. It has also been included in the National Agenda for Governance by this Government. Therefore, I expect that the recommendations of the Task Force cannot be spoken about here at this point of time, but part (d) of the question, "Whether the Government have since taken a decision to set up the proposed National Security Council", I think, could have been answered in a straight manner. I would expect that the Government would clarify. I am not talking of the composition, I am not talking of the recommendations. I would like to know from the Minister whether this Government is going to set up a National Security Council or not.

Secondly when will the Government place the recommendations of the Task Force on the Table of the House? And thirdly could he give us an idea when will this National Security Council become functional and start functioning effectively?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : In so far as the decision to set up a National Security Council is concerned, this was a commitment that in the National Agenda for Governance which our alliance had released before the Government was formed. We stand by that commitment and a National Security Council will be in position. But when it will come into position is a matter which will have to be decided after we have considered the Report of the Task Force and taken decisions on what exactly will be the form of that Council, who will constitute that Council and so on and so forth. These are matters which are under consideration.

MAJOR GENERAL BHUVAN CHANDRA KHANDURI, AVSM : By what time?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : We are agreed to have this Council in position as soon as possible.

SHRI P. UPENDRA : The idea of formation of the National Security Council is not of recent origin. It is not only in their National Agenda. It has been talked about for the last several years. But what exactly is holding up? What is the Task Force intended to recommend? Why is the formation of a National Security Council being delayed for the examination of the recommendations of the Task Force? There is no reason for that and the Minister of Defence always takes a line that whenever it is inconvenient, he will say that it is secret, confidential, and it cannot be revealed in national interest. And what is such a big thing that he cannot reveal? Everything concerning Defence is being shrouded in mystery. Even the Ninth Defence Plan of Defence has not been finalised so far. The Standing Committee on Defence had repeatedly been mentioning about this aspect of the National Security Council, and the Ninth Plan of the Ministry of Defence. When will you finalise these things? Please give us a specific deadline that by this time you will be able to form this Council.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : I did not say that the formation of the National Security Council was an original idea of the B.J.P. or of the alliance. There has been a National Security Council which was set up way back in 1990 by the then United Front Government. Unfortunately, that National Security Council did not become functional. Therefore, what I am trying to tell the House is that in so far as formation of the National Security Council is concerned and taking a decision in that regard is concerned, they are the matters which can be done only after we have studied the Report of the Task Force which had made recommendations not only about the formation of the Council, but on the structure, and a whole lot of other related issues. There is nothing very secret about these things. But till the Government has taken a view and till we have arrived at a conclusion, I believe, it is premature and it is not in anybody's interest to discuss the recommendations made by the Task Force.

As far as Budget, Plan and so on and so forth are concerned, I do not believe that they arise out of this question. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN : With reference to the reply given to 'e' and 'f' I would like to know whether it was stated on behalf of the Government that after Pokhran, we have now become a 'Nuclear Weapons State'. This is a status which is not for others to confer upon us. I would like to know whether the definition of nuclear

weapons State' implies that nuclear weapons will be inducted into the Army.

The reply which is being given today, is it because we are buckling under pressure from others or is it because as if we are refusing to see the security concern? This was stated by the Government in this House that because in the neighbouring countries nuclear weapons have been amassed so India needs to go nuclear. When we have said that we are a 'Nuclear Weapons State', then was it implied that nuclear weapons will be inducted into the Army, or was it because of the pressure which is coming from others that today this statement is being made by the hon. Minister of Defence?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : There is no question of buckling under any pressure from any source or from any quarter.

In so far as the hon. Member's point about inducting nuclear weapons in a particular Force is concerned, I do not believe that it is wise to make any statement in regard to this matter. *(Interruptions)*. Yes, being a 'Nuclear Weapons State' is one thing and which are the sectors in the Army or in the Navy or in the Air Force and so on and so forth is not the . . . *(Interruptions)*.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, we seek your protection. He makes statements outside this House. *(Interruptions)*.

MR. SPEAKER : No, please, Please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN : Sir, the reply has not come to my question. *(Interruptions)*. What is the definition of a 'Nuclear Weapons State'? Kindly protect my right. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : I have been a long admirer of Shri George Fernandes, as a great democrat who believes in public debate on public issues. Though he is keeping a strange company, I continued to be his admirer. But the doctrine of secrecy does not lie well in his mouth. I am not saying that the Government should take us into confidence in regard to its decisions. If a Committee has made . . . *(Interruptions)*.

AN HON. MEMBER : Sir, is it Question Hour or a debate?

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seats. I have allowed him.

(Interruptions)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN : Sir, will you ask the hon. Minister to define what a Nuclear Weapon State is? . . . *(Interruptions)*. I asked but he did not reply.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Jaipal Reddy, please put your Supplementary.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Sir, if the Expert Committee has made recommendations which are under the consideration of the Government, the recommendations can be made public because those recommendations need to be considered and discussed by the country. The decision in such a matter cannot be taken only by the Government. If you are going to make the Report known to us after the Government takes a decision, it will be improper. I, therefore, suggest to the Minister whether he will consider making the Report public.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Sir, the Report cannot be made public till it has been finally considered by the Government.

[Translation]

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question of National Security Council is also directly linked with our armed forces. The sitting officers and retired officers of the armed forces have since long been raising 2-3 issues regarding their pay and allowances, their status after their retirement and the way their position is being lowered continuously in the warrant of precedence. Whether the hon. Minister of Defence while constituting security council will take care of other issues also and such issues will also be brought within the preview of security council so that a solution to them could be found?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question has nothing to do with this issue.

[English]

Losses Suffered by Rourkela Steel Plant

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*524. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL :
SHRI JUAL ORAM :

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the total production of different types of products in Rourkela Steel Plant after its modernisation, year-wise;

(b) whether the Rourkela Steel Plant is running at losses due to increase in production cost;

(c) if so, the details thereof, alongwith the total loss suffered during each of the last three years; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to make it profitable?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK) : (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.