

[Translation]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAJEE): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I regret that I was not present in the House while discussion on the Motion of Thanks on President's Address was going on. I had to go to Kuala Lumpur to attend the summit of the Non-Alignment Movement. But as far as possible I have tried to read the speeches of hon'ble Members. Over all, the discussion was good. In the beginning comments were made on one point that the Address was very lengthy. Shri Somnathji has said that it was not only lengthy but it had no depth also.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): It was lengthy and had no depth at all.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAJEE: Since when you have started finding depth in the President's Address?

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: This is the 'Vajpayee formula', not to answer any question.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAJEE: I do not agree to it. The address is good and it covers most of the subjects. It calls for the country to do hard labour so that our target for increasing growth rate can be achieved. I was having a look at the old Addresses delivered by former Presidents which were more lengthier than the present Address.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: But the translated version was not read.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAJEE: I was also among one of them who listening to those speeches. I do agree that all subjects should be covered but in brief so that the chairman of Rajya Sabha i.e., the Vice President does not face any difficulty. I will try to reply the issues one by one which have been raised here however it would not be possible for me to give reply to all the questions.

During the course of discussion, serious concern has been expressed on the drought hit areas of the country and this concern is natural. 14 States are affected by drought and there is acute scarcity of drinking water. There is no fodder for animals. At many places people are leaving their hearth and home in search of employment. But we should accept that we have been able to control the situation cropped up as a result of drought of such a magnitude. Prices have not gone up. Full efforts have been made to make grains available to the people through 'Antodya Yojna'. Now the Government have

resolved to extend benefits under 'Antodya Yojna' to 1.5 crore families out of approximately 6 crore families living below poverty line. Orders have been issued for enhancing allocation of foodgrains from 25 kgs per month to 35 kgs per month with effect from 1 April. Hon. Finance Minister has made an announcement to this effect in his speech.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH (VAISHALI): Why four and a half crore families have been left out.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAJEE: For me it is easy to say so. Sonia ji has raised an issue and I would like the House to ponder over that issue seriously. It is regarding those who are separated from their families and who do not get employment. And if they get employment they are not able to take it up so how can they earn their livelihood? When we talk of food security we should consider them also. I would like to discuss this matter with leaders of all the parties. We should find out some way out. Our godowns are full of foodgrains but still people die of hunger. It means the system is faulty somewhere but it is not only because of failure of system but the conditions are also such.

The issue of employment was raised at a large scale. Before that I would clarify one thing that the Government have made no discrimination in allocation of foodgrains to the States nor will it do so. It is a matter of honesty for me. We cannot discriminate on Political lines in providing relief to drought affected people. Neither the Government can adopt such policy nor it has adopted it in past as it would be inhumane to do so. We want every hungry person to get food but people level allegations against us.

Soniaji wrote a letter to me regarding Rajasthan which I had replied. I have some figures which I would like to place before the House. Rajasthan was allocated 29 lakh tonnes of foodgrains which is the maximum quantity allocated to any state and amounts to 44 percent of total allocation. But we have not obliged them in any way. The situation is such in Rajasthan. Perhaps Rajasthan is the worst hit state by drought. Therefore, I had toured Rajasthan before taking up relief measures. There I had announced a relief package of Rs. 50 crore. People asked me since the state is yet to be declared drought affected then why have you announced relief package? I said that situation seems to be serious and it may turn more serious in the days to come. Current relief package is almost three times more in comparison to package provided in 1987. No doubt, the drought is more serious this year. This allegation is baseless that the allocation of foodgrains has been delayed. The Government try to release second instalment only after first one is exhausted and second instalment is demanded. Demand for second consignment

from Rajasthan was received even before exhausting the first consignment. Second instalment was released before the first instalment exhausted. Foodgrains component under Food for work programme has not been reduced, only some figures were made available. There is a provision of providing 5 kg. foodgrains per day under 'Sampurna Rojgar Yojana'. But it has been increased to 8 Kgs per day in severely affected areas whereas elsewhere it is 6 kgs. Perhaps, this difference may have created some misunderstanding. The criteria adopted for this purpose is same as envisaged by the State Government in their special package. Since we have plenty of foodgrains so I do not think it is befitting for the Government to make any sort of discrimination in allocation of foodgrains. Moreover, this type of criticism lowers the dignity of the nation. Whereas, in fact, Antodya Yojana is most comprehensive food security programme in the world.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Soniaji had raised the issue of food security whereby a question was raised which was placed before the House by me. The House will have to find out an answer to that. In south, there are certain 'mutths' where anybody can have food which are not run by the Government. These are run by the society round the clock. It is their tradition which they are carrying out. We cannot wipe out hunger completely unless there is awakening in our society that we should feel more concerned about our neighbour than ourselves.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (PANDHARPUR): Please make law.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: The foodgrains to be provided to one fourth of the families, living below poverty line would be at the rate of Rs. 2 kg. for wheat and Rs. 3 for rice. I would not like to repeat the same question that as to what about those who have no money to buy foodgrains even at the rate of Rs. 2 per kg. wheat and Rs. 3 kg for rice? Efforts have been made at large scale by the Union Government and the State Governments as well.

A remarkable job has been done at many places under 'Food for work' programme. I would like to make a mention of Andhra Pradesh not because they are our ally. This alliance is not merely of BJP. But Soniaji says, it is 'BJP led Government.'

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: It is right.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: All right, but they want to break the alliance by defaming the other parties in such a manner. It is not as simple as has been said. BJP led Government is an alliance Government which is performing well and it is going to complete its term. ...*(Interruptions)* I think as far as foodgrains are concerned.

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (MIRYALGUDA): Sir, I would like to submit, with all the emphasis at my command, that his impression about the work done in Andhra Pradesh is absolutely incorrect and unfounded.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): You please go and see the works that have been executed in the State of Andhra Pradesh. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Yerranna, I have not permitted you to speak.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU: The Chief Ministers of even Congress ruled States had sent teams to the State of Andhra Pradesh to see the works done. It has come in the newspaper also.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. You had your turn.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my friend has different views about Andhra Pradesh. But I am not surprised over it. His silence over this issue would have gone against him. Under "Sampurna Gramin Rozgar Yojana", foodgrains to the tune of Rs. 8000 crore have been distributed free of cost to the states for Food for Work Programme. Besides, financial assistance of Rs. 5000 crore has also been provided. The Government are tackling the situation created by drought and suggestions are invited in this regard. It is also the responsibility of representatives of people to make 'Antodya Yojana' a success. If Members of Parliament tour their constituencies and monitor implementation of this scheme, I think it would be greatly beneficial.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the health of economy of the nation has been reflected in the Budget and Economic Survey. There are certain good aspects which cannot be overlooked. It is a matter of concern that the growth rate has come down but the Government are determined to achieve 8 per cent growth rate. The continuous drought of last two years has affected agriculture sector which has an overall impact on national income. However, there are some positive signs also. Our foreign exchange reserve has surged to 75 billion dollars. As per economy Magazine of 1st March it is more than that of America, Russia, France and Germany. This year it has increased by 25 billion dollars which is equal to our total foreign exchange reserve during 1998. Since, the situation has improved on this front we are repaying the loan before time. It also indicates

that the situation in the country is suitable for investment. The foreign investors as well as International Capital Organisations have also accepted this fact. ...*(Interruptions)* When it is said that investors would hesitate in investing in India as our relations with Pakistan are tense, I may state that the Government has not so far come across such a situation.

Though we are a nuclear state, we are a responsible nation too and the entire world accepts this fact. No country has questioned our intentions. Rather, doubts have been raised on the intention of neighbouring nation. But if anyone says that it is not good then we did not create tension. If America is unable to put pressure on Pakistan it is America's weakness. If assurances given to us by Pakistan could not be fulfilled then we will bear this fact in mind while framing our foreign policy in future. But it is not good to not believe anyone. We have always tried to avert war. However, when things reached a climax and there was an attack on our Parliament, it was felt that the nation would retaliate. Then tremendous international pressure was put on Pakistan at that time. We were also given assurances. There after anti-terrorism statement started emanating from Pakistan and it seemed that Pakistan will rein in terrorists and would stop cross-border terrorism. But utterly confusing picture emerged from there. Sometimes it looked as terrorists activities have decreased but at the same time we also witnessed spurt in terrorist activities. However, we were always on guard.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY (BERHAMPUR, WEST BENGAL): But no decisive war was fought.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I would reply to it also. I had said that if there is a war it would be a decisive one. Since our purpose was served without war, there was no need for it.

We defeated our enemies at diplomatic levels. We got world wide support. Though it was not enough but there were some good signs also and keeping that all in view we have taken decisions for the future. We would act according to the changes in the situations.

I would also like to make it clear that the issue of terrorism was widely discussed during NAM conference. It is a topic of discussion in our country also. People ask us is it not fair to resort to terrorism if injustice is being done to you. But, we say that terrorism is a bad thing in itself so resorting to it for any cause will demean that cause.

I would like to quote extract from the speech of Dr. Mahathir:

[English]

"Truly the world is in a terrible mess, a state that is worse than during the East West confrontation, the Cold War. All the great hopes following the end of the Cold War have vanished. And with the terrorists and the anti-terrorists fumbling blindly in their fight against each other, normalcy will not return for quite a long time.

Surely, at some stage, we must ask ourselves why this is happening to the world. Why is there terrorism? Is it true that the Muslims are born terrorists? How do we explain the pogroms, the inquisitions and the holocaust which characterise Christian Europe for almost 2000 years?

The Christians too were terrorised, not by Muslims but by fellow Christians who condemned them as heretics.

So, it Cannot be that Muslims are the sole cause of all these problems. If they are not, then is it a clash of civilisation, a clash of the Muslim civilisation against the Judea Christian civilisation that is responsible?

Frankly, I do not think so. I think it is because of a revival of the old European trait of wanting to dominate the world. And the expression of this trait invariably involves injustice and oppression of people of other ethnic origins and colours."

[Translation]

The countries that assembled in Kuala Lumpur were quite concerned about the problem of terrorism. Their presence in large numbers and their efforts to solve the burning problems give strength to the fear that a unipolar world is going to take shape due to world war. Serious efforts are on for creation of a multi-polar world. I think terrorism is a challenge in this regard. A resolution on Iraq was also passed whereby it was hoped that Iraq will implement all provisions of the resolution. Then only the embargo and sanctions imposed on it would be lifted. I ask every foreign dignitary visiting our country as to whether there would be war. No one says, 'No'. We have prepared ourselves to face the outbreak of war in Gulf as our interests are linked to the situations prevailing in Gulf. About 40 lakh Indians are working there. I would like this issue to be taken up separately. I would like that it is taken up separately and I would be very happy if you wish to discuss about NAM.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if permitted, I would like to lay the copy of my speech delivered on the Table of the House. I am laying a copy of my speech delivered at NAM Conference. I am also laying a copy of resolution passed there alongwith it. I had a discussion with my colleagues before I left for Kuala Lumpur

but need for a formal meeting was not felt. These are very delicate issues which are a litmus test for our diplomacy. Entire nation and the House will have to stand united and come forward to face the present crisis prevailing the world over. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): The Prime Minister gave an information. After the interaction, you are convinced that there is a possible attempt to attack Iraq that the Indian people should be ready for any eventuality. The life of forty lakhs of Indians is at stake in the Gulf. Where do we stand if such a situation arises? Of course, we all stand together; there is no problem. But where do you stand? Where does the Government stand today?

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: The Government have made its stand clear and if the need arises again I may call them all for consultation. But I do not think we have divergent views in this regard. Only the difference is how to express them. Now it is said that present situation does not call for non-alignment. I was a supporter of the policy of non-alignment even when I was in opposition. No doubt, now the world order is changing and the cold war has come to an end. Now Militarily the world is not divided into two groups and all other countries will have to come together to ponder over seriously the sovereignty of a country under threat.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Recently, one of the leading newspapers in USA, in its editorial said that there are two sides. One is the USA and the other is world opinion. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Chatterjee, I am going to take up amendments.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: These are the two sides, one is the USA and the other is world opinion.

Sir, throughout the world, including the USA, huge public protests are being made. The definite policy of the other countries, like France, Germany and Russia is very well known. They are all opposing these threats to Iraq and the preparations for going to war. What is our stand on this? Do you not hail those protests which are being made all over the world?

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am

aware of the views of Somnath ji and his party. But he goes too far, we are not ready for that.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: No, we have to go into this.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We look for a middle path to get a way out. This is an old policy. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: How can it be maintaining *status quo*? ...*(Interruptions)* You must say it in a fortnight manner. You should express our views and concerns. In this situation, you cannot simply sit quiet and maintain *status quo*. The voice of one billion people is there.

[Translation]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (HOOGLY): There is no middle path in it. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: You can hold discussion. No, this is not the question. I am ready to discuss it. If we have to call all those people back who have gone to foreign countries, we will make arrangements for it. I would like to assure you that we will not put them in any problem. A lot of discussion has taken place in this regard. Not only in the context of Hon. President's address but also during the questions and i.e. about the situation of employment. How much job opportunities have been created and how many people have got employment. When on that day I submitted that as per my knowledge and calculation, about, 70 lakh people have got jobs then this was challenged. I am ready to hold discussion on it. Employment does not mean government jobs and this number of 70 lakh, if you want I can tell you item-wise that in which field and where people have got employment. This includes Government schemes as well as non-Governmental schemes.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: But you had said about providing 1 crore employment opportunities every year. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Ramdasji, please take you seat.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Nine lakh 60 thousand opportunities have been created in the field of construction, 20.30 lakh in trade and hotel industry and 7.5 lakh in the field of transport and communications. Though, there is some decline but even then our date confirms that approximately 80 lakh, more than 70 lakh employment opportunities have been created, but I believe. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI (AMETHI): Hon. Speaker, Sir, when we raised the question of *Berozgari*, that is, unemployment or under-employment, we were referring to the promise made by the Prime Minister, by the NDA, by the BJP coalition. Before they actually formed the Government, they promised during the elections that they would give one crore jobs per year. That was what we said on that day. It means that you should have given at least three-and-a-half crore jobs. You should have been able to give jobs to that extent. ...*(Interruptions)* If you have to fulfil your promise, you should have given three-and-a-crore jobs. That was our point made on that day.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when it was said that we will try to give employment to 1 crore people that did not mean that the Government would call 1 crore people and offer them jobs. Have you taken it like this?

[English]

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI: What does it mean? That is the promise made to the people. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Listen to the Prime Minister. When your leader has put a question, let the Prime Minister reply.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It was said in the context of accelerated economic development and that too in such a way that it generates job opportunities. We want that people should get job and it is an independent process. Again I have received same data which confirms my statement.

[English]

"The net job creation in 2002-2003 is accordingly nearly 84 lakh."

17.00 hrs.

Similarly, last year, nearly 9 lakh jobs were created and the year before that, more than 75 lakh jobs were created.

[Translation]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: How do you get these data? ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I do not understand that when Government says that people are getting jobs and you

contradict it, what is the politics behind this? ...*(Interruptions)* What kind of scientific view is this? You cannot challenge the Government data. ...*(Interruptions)* even then I do not think that it is satisfactory. If you say that 1 crore is not enough because much more people than that are unemployed then we are prepared to discuss it with you. We will try to find a way out. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRAKASH YASHWANT AMBEDKAR (AKOLA): This figure has not decreased, on the contrary it is static. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I remember that the question of employment has been raised in this House time and again. What should be the per capita income but everybody will accept the fact that the number of people living below poverty line has decreased. These are Government data. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRAKASH YASHWANT AMBEDKAR: Ministry of Labour is not prepared to accept that. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Poverty is increasing in the country. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise one more issue, which is about the statement of leader of Opposition.

[English]

"The Government is using terrorism as a pretext to polarise our society."

[Translation]

This sentence is very unfortunate. ...*(Interruptions)* One has many choices for politics. At last the people will give their verdict. Just like they did in Himachal and before that in Gujarat. ...*(Interruptions)* who is talking about division of the country. Where conspiracy is being hatched for the disintegration of the country, who is doing this. ...*(Interruptions)* this is wrong. You exaggerate the facts that is why it appears that there is a severe crisis. The Government is capable of facing any situation because, it has the support of people. The country will never leave its secular nature. Now Soniaji have objection over it that secularism was mentioned in a single sentence. Whether a sentence is not enough? When the constitution was framed for first time secular word was not used for once in it. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: It was not needed at that time. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Yes it was not needed, therefore, whatever we are doing or saying in that also it is not needed. It is not correct that we should shout the slogans of secularism, organise morcha and gather everybody, break our supporting parties and divide our own country. ...*(Interruptions)* We should not bring the issue of terrorism in it because it will malign our position in world scenario. The world community will say that you do not have the problem of terrorism in your country it is your mutual tussle which is given the colour of terrorism. Do we really want this to happen. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have supported them on all issues relating to terrorism, except POTA which is being misused now and everybody admits that.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Somnath Chatterjee, he is not yielding. Please take your seat.

[Translation]

SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA (AMBALA): Mr. Speaker, Sir, please ask them to stop the running commentary. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have stopped that.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think I have touched many issues and I would like this vote of thanks to the President's Address to be passed unanimously.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The Prime Minister's Statement is taken as laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Re: Visit to Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) for 13th NAM Summit - 24-25 February, 2003

* THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): I led the Indian delegation to the 13th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Kuala Lumpur on February 24 & 25.

* Laid on the Table of the House along with his Statement made at the XIII NAM Summit and the declarations made at the summit. [Placed in the Library. See No. L.T. 7068/2003]

The specific theme of the summit was 'the continuing revitalization of NAM'. It is widely felt that NAM has to rediscover its relevance in the face of a changing international environment. India believes that NAM's salience has always been that it provides room for independent judgment and autonomous action in international affairs. If this was necessary in a bi-polar world, it has become even more necessary in a uni-polar world. For NAM to be relevant, it has to focus on the current realities and contemporary challenges.

My statement at the Summit outlined our thinking and approach. A copy of that statement is also being placed on the Table of the House.

We suggested that NAM should focus on key issues of common concern to its member states—issues that unite, rather than divide the 116 countries. NAM should not get embroiled in bilateral issues between member states.

In all our interactions, we also stressed that NAM should adopt a positive and forward looking agenda with emphasis on multilateralism; combating terrorism, reform of the UN system, North-South engagement and South-South cooperation. It should promote the fundamental values of democracy, human rights and multiculturalism. The Movement has to adopt an objective and pragmatic position on global issues. We should position NAM as a major pole in a multi-polar world.

International terrorism was one of the most hotly debated issues at the Summit. NAM includes countries which are accused of international terrorism, as well as those which are victims of it. There were, therefore, attempts to blur the focus of the international debate on terrorism by raising diversionary issues such as the definition of terrorism, its differentiation from freedom struggles and the relevance of its root causes. As a victim of terrorism, we stressed that NAM must take an unequivocal line, avoiding double standards and not offering excuses for terrorism by investigating its justifications. It was a difficult debate, but I am happy to state that we were able to ensure that our viewpoint on this subject was adequately reflected in the NAM Communique.

Our ideas are largely reflected in the Kuala Lumpur Declaration issued at the end of the Summit. The Declaration is abundantly clear on the principles that NAM should focus on global issues, avoid divisive debates, reject moves for intra-NAM conflict resolution, strengthen existing mechanisms (rather than create new ones) and effectively address contemporary challenges. We can derive some satisfaction from the fact that we were able to play a major and constructive role in the eventual outcome of the Summit.