

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)*

16.12 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

UN Security Council Resolution

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members are aware of the Resolution adopted on 6th June, 1998, by the United Nations Security Council. I would like to take the House into confidence on our position on this matter.

We regret that the Security Council as acted in a manner in which it has and produced a Resolution which is completely unhelpful in respect of the objectives it seeks to address. The Resolution contains a number of references to nuclear non-proliferation. As I had mentioned in my earlier statement in the House, we are a responsible and committed member of the international community. The Resolution urges us not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosions. For India, such an urging is redundant because we have already instituted a voluntary moratorium. We have also indicated our willingness to explore ways and means of converting this undertaking into a *de jure* obligation. Further, we have made clear our readiness to engage in multilateral negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We cannot, however, be expected to commit ourselves in advance of these negotiations, to unilaterally restrain production of fissile materials. In keeping with our commitment to non-proliferation, we maintain the strictest controls over exports of nuclear materials and technologies. Our record in this regard has been impeccable and better than that of some countries who are parties to the NPT or members of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group or even Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council.

However, the call made in the Resolution that we should stop our nuclear programme or missile programmes is unacceptable. Decisions in this regard will be taken by the Government on the basis of our assessments and national security requirements, in a reasonable and responsible manner. This right, which we claim for ourselves is not something new; it is the right of every sovereign country, and a right that every Government in this country has strongly upheld for the last 50 years.

A glaring lacuna in the Resolution is the total absence of a recognition that the non-proliferation issue is not a

regional issue but has to be dealt with in a non-discriminatory global context. We find it unfortunate that the UN Security Council Resolution does not reflect on the judgement of the highest international judicial body—the International Court of Justice, which has questioned the legitimacy of nuclear weapons and called for urgent negotiations for their elimination. In the paper on the evolution of India's Nuclear Policy laid on the Table of this House, we have reiterated our commitment to nuclear disarmament. Let me categorically state that unlike other nuclear weapon States who have sought to retain their exclusive hold over their nuclear arsenals, India has no such ambition. Government is committed to initiatives that can open negotiations for a global convention for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. The attempt to project the recent tests by India as a threat to peace and security is totally misguided and grossly out of focus. Such a portrayal of our policy ignores the positive steps announced by Government to which I have already referred, both in the global disarmament framework and the regional context. Our tests were necessary because of the failure of a flawed non-proliferation regime, and, therefore, we categorically reject the notion that these have adversely affected either regional or global security.

Government have indicated willingness to engage in a meaningful dialogue with key interlocutors on the whole range of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Last week, Special Envoy, Shri Brajesh Mishra visited Paris and London in this regard. He had meetings at the senior most levels in the two capitals. Dialogues with other countries are also planned. These dialogues have to be seen as part of a process, a process that will lead to a better understanding of India's position.

Hon. Members are aware that India has always desired a peaceful, friendly and mutually beneficial relationship with Pakistan based on confidence and respect for each other's concerns. I have already said on the floor of both the Houses, and, I would like to reiterate that a secure and prosperous Pakistan is in India's interest. Our vision of our bilateral relationship is not confined to a resolution of outstanding issues, but is also directed to the future by seeking to building a stable structure of cooperation, which will benefit the people of both countries. As I wrote recently to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, we must not remain mired in the past, prisoners of old contentions. And, I say to him today, let us put the past behind us, let us think of the welfare of our children and grandchildren.

We have remained committed to a path of direct bilateral dialogue with Pakistan. This reflects the nation's conviction and confidence that it is only through direct discussions in a sustained and constructive manner that

*Not recorded.

we can move ahead in our bilateral relationship. I would again like to reiterate our desire for the earliest resumption of the official talks with Pakistan. The subjects for discussions including peace and security, (along with confidence building measures) Jammu and Kashmir, economic and commercial cooperation and cross-border terrorism have been identified. Our proposals for the modalities of these talks have been with Pakistan since January this year. We await their response. We have also made it clear once again that there is no place for outside involvement to any nature whatsoever in our dialogue process with Pakistan.

Hon. Members have expressed strong reservations against attempts to internationalise the Kashmir issue. There is simply no question of India ever agreeing to such internationalisation. The UN Security Council has chosen to mention Kashmir in its Resolution. This is unacceptable and does not change the reality that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. I would also like to draw the attention of the hon. Members to the terms in which Kashmir finds mention in the Resolution. The UN Security Council has recognised that bilateral dialogue has to be the basis of India-Pakistan relations and mutually acceptable solutions have to be found for outstanding issues including Kashmir. This is in keeping with our position. Thank you.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Prime Minister, would you like to respond to the submission made by Shri P.C. Chacko?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : The latest information from Eritrea is that a cease-fire has been ordered and it is being implemented. In the meantime, I have asked the Government to make arrangements for all those who want to come back in safety and the arrangements will be made as soon as possible.

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAUHAN (Karad) : I am on a Point of Order, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : It is already getting 4.30 p.m. now. We have to complete the discussion on the Railway Budget. Please do not raise any Points of Order or clarifications.

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN : I am on a Point of Order under Rule 372. Two important statements have been made by the Government; one by the Industry Minister and the other by the Prime Minister.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
AND THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI MADAN LAL

KHURANA) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to state that as the House will sit till late in the night, arrangements for the dinner have been made.

[English]

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN : Two important statements have been made. The normal practice is to issue a supplementary agenda so that our Leaders could be here to listen to the Ministers. But no such supplementary agenda has been issued before these statements. Please clarify this point.

MR. SPEAKER : I have given them permission to make the statements.

[Translation]

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA : Arrangement for the dinner has been made here for the Hon'ble Members and Press People. ...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Breakfast, everything.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (Mahbubnagar) : The Prime Minister wanted to make a point on the Maruti deal. He was stopped midway. Why does he not complete the statement? He pledged the support of his Government to the Maruti deal.

[Translation]

You have left midway, we are not satisfied with it.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Now further discussion on the Railway Budget. Shri Krishnadas to speak.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS (Palakkad) : Can I start?

MR. SPEAKER : Please start. Otherwise I will call another Member. ...(Interruptions)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Let the Prime Minister speak.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, with your permission, may I take a few minutes of the House? Our friend Shri Reddy has raised the matter regarding Maruti and Suzuki ...(Interruptions)

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria) : He has not raised it. It is you who raised the matter by issuing a statement.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : We are ready to have a discussion on the matter raised by the Hon'ble Minister through the statement. There should be an open debate on it. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MOHAN SINGH : There should be transparency in discussion.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Mohan Singh, it is not good.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : We should be thanked if we satisfy the opposition in this regard.

[English]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : But you should be ready to...

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Prime Minister has already clarified your doubts.

16.23 hrs.

MOTION RE : CONSIDERATION OF
STATUS PAPER ON RAILWAYS,
RAILWAY BUDGET 1998-99 —
GENERAL DISCUSSION
AND
DEMANDS FOR EXCESS GRANTS —
RAILWAYS 1995-96, Contd.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Before the commencement of further discussion on the Railway Budget, I have to make a small observation to the hon. Members. You would kindly recall that this morning I had urged that we should complete the discussion on the Railway Budget today. A large number of Members are yet to make their statements. So, each Member taking the floor may cooperate and be brief and to the point. If need be, the sitting may have to go even beyond 9 p.m. today.

Now Shri N.N. Krishnadas to speak.

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS (Palakkad) : I thank you for giving me this opportunity to participate in the discussion. Though both the Ministers are good friends of mine, I have only one option to oppose the Budget proposals.

Let me come to the perspectives of the Budget. I am sorry to say that the Budget lacks vision and direction. It has merely followed the pattern of imposing additional burden on the people without getting any priority for Indian Railways.

I am thankful to the hon. Minister for bringing out a Status Paper on the eve of the Budget. But he has not followed any of its indications in his maiden Budget.

We consider the Railways as an important vehicle for the development of the country, which of course is the symbol of national unity. There are vast areas which are left out from the map of development. The inequality in the matter of development could be rectified if the Railways expanded its network to the backward areas as well. Unfortunately, the Budget also does not approach this serious issue.

The very important points have already been covered by hon. Members who have spoken earlier. So, I will not take much time. Let me now come to my home State, Kerala. The only State which has been constantly neglected by the Railways is the State of Kerala. Kerala has not seen any major development in the area of Railways after Independence. The people are forced to content with the few lines laid during the British period.

16.26 hrs.

[SHRI KHAGAPATI PRADHANI in the Chair]

The steep hike in the Railway fare is totally unjustified. The hon. Minister has deftly managed to raise even the ordinary Second Class and Sleeper Class fares without showing the net effect in black and white. For example, the hon. Minister claims that he has inflicted a hike of only Rs. 45 on a passenger traveling by Sleeper Class from Delhi to Kerala. This is far from the reality. He has increased the Super-Fast Supplementary Charge by Rs. 25 and the Computer Reservation Charge by Rs. 5. If we take into account this hike, the total hike would be somewhere around 20 per cent whereas the hon. Minister claims it to be only 7 per cent.

I will not come back to the problems faced by my State. There has been a consistent demand for more trains from my State. As we all know, Keralites are one community which travels a lot. Lakhs of Malayalees are working outside Kerala but the Railways have provided only a meagre facility for them to reach their home State. Kerala wholeheartedly supported the Konkan Railway. It gave Rs. 48 crore for its construction. But as a result of the Konkan line, we have suffered losses rather than gained anything.

A super-fast train, Mangala Express, which was connecting Kerala with Delhi will not benefit Kerala now as it is being diverted through Konkan. Till the hon. Minister presented his Budget speech, it was terminated at Mangalore. We are very much thankful to the hon. Minister that after the Budget presentation the hon.