

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIISI (Hyderabad): I had given my name in the afternoon. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: So what? You please take your seat. I have decided not to call you. Will you please take your seat or not?

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded. You go on shouting. This is not the way to do it. Please take your seat.

...*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Then I will adjourn the House because of you. If I adjourn the House, you will not have the benefit of the Prime Minister's speech.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN: I am staging a walk out. ...*(Interruptions)*

18.31 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Kharabela Swain left the House.)

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAIISI: Sir, I also represent a political party. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You will be duly recognised. You are recognised. You need not bother. This is becoming a habit all round to question the Chair and throw challenges to the Chair. By doing this, you are not enhancing the prestige of either yourself or of this institution.

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH):

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I take this opportunity to thank all the hon. Members who have taken part in this debate on the outcome of my visit to the United States. I thank hon.

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in particular, for having done me the honour by participating in the debate. The level of the debate does credit to our House and I am very grateful that I have this opportunity to clarify some of the issues arising out of a statement that I made before this august House.

Sir, after I presented the Budget of 1991, this visit to the United States was in some way the most challenging task that I faced. But I was sustained by the powerful legacy of our freedom struggle by Pandit Nehru who made India the knowledge power that we are today; Shrimati Indira Gandhi who made us the nuclear power that we are today; and Shri Rajiv Gandhi who made us the IT power that we are today.

India stands tall today in the comity of nations. We are a country today with the second highest rate of growth in the world. The world marvels and respects us for being a democracy. People ask this question and marvel how a country a billion persons with such great diversities and with such great complexities, with all the religions of the world represented in its population yet manages to flourish as a functioning democracy. People also marvel that we have probably the second or the third largest Muslim population among our citizens and not one of them has been found to have joined the ranks of Al Qaeda and such other groups.

The world respects India for what we are. Therefore, it was for me a great privilege to represent India in talking to the various dignitaries right from President Bush downwards and, in my address to the Joint Session, of the US Congress.

Sir, issues have been raised about the basic orientation of our foreign policy. The foreign policy of our country, ever since we became an independent nation, has been designed to promote our enlightened national interest. That orientation has not changed. There is, of course, a strong civilizational influence which also guides our attitude to the world as we see it today, or the world that we would like to shape. That is as it should be. But as Panditji used to say, we live in a dynamic world; in a fast changing world. Therefore, our approach should reflect the flexibilities which are necessary in managing the complex polity in a dynamic world, but there can be no compromise on basic fundamentals.

*Not recorded.

Sir, I can assure you, in my visit I was cautious of this great responsibility that as the Prime Minister of this great country that I should not do, or say anything which anyway reflects adversely on ourselves.

Sir, two types of comments have been made on what we have done in this visit. There is one set of comments from our Left colleagues, whose comments I greatly value and respect, that we are continuing the same policies as those of the previous Government of getting closer and closer to the United States and that we are in danger of being submerged in that orbit under the influence of the United States. There is however, another stream coming from the benches opposite that somehow we have compromised India's strategic nuclear autonomy. So, I will deal with both these issues in some details.

The United States is a super power today. We want to move towards a multi-polar world. But how do you become part of a multi-polar world? I would like that a strong India should grow fast enough to become a powerful pole of the evolving global economy. So, it is no use merely saying that we want to get away from this uni-polar world. The practical strategies have to lay emphasis on building the economic strength and cohesion of our country. If India grows in the next ten years at the rate of eight to ten per cent per annum, then we will probably become the third or the fourth largest economy in the world and the world will respect us. Therefore, while we know where we want to go, our objective is a multi-polar world. Our objective is to work together with other like-minded countries to manage and promote equitable management of the global inter-dependence of nations, which cannot be avoided in this one world that we are living in today. That is not something that is going to happen overnight. Step by step we have to move in that direction and relations with the United States are of great importance in achieving that objective. Of course, in doing so, we must not compromise on our national honour, on our national interest. But engagement with the United States is essential in the world that we live in. This is not an alliance; this is not a military alliance. This is not an alliance against any other country.

Since our Government came into office, we have entered into strategic partnership with Russia. We have very close relations with Russia. Recently, our Chairperson, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi visited Russia. She was received with utmost warmth by President Putin himself. A few months back, I was in Europe. We signed

a strategic partnership agreement with the European Union. A few weeks ago, the Prime Minister of Japan came here and I venture to think that we have broken fresh ground in our relations with Japan during that visit.

Then we have had the privilege of welcoming the Prime Minister of China. After a great deal of efforts, we have broken new ground in promoting closer relations with that great neighbour of ours in the North. We have successfully concluded the agreement on the basic fundamental principles which should guide the solution of the complicated border problem between India and China. Therefore, I wish to dispel this illusion and I do say so with respect because it is an illusion. We are not part of any military alliance and we are not ganging up against any other country, least of all against China. And I am being absolutely truthful. In my public discussions and in the Press Conferences that is addressed, in my meetings with US dignitaries, I made it quite clear that we are engaged and we want to remain engaged with China, our great neighbour. Our economic relations are greatly expanding and I see new horizons in our economic relations with that great country and it is our wish and desire to work together to strengthen the forces of peace and prosperity in Asia and Europe. Therefore, I wish to dispel this opinion which may exist that what we have done with the United States is at the cost of China or any other country.

What we are seeking is that we need an international environment which is supportive of our development efforts. India's principal concern is to get rid of chronic poverty, ignorance and diseases which still afflict millions and millions of our population. Great things have been done since Indian became independent but that journey to get rid of poverty is still unfinished and we will make all efforts domestically to reach that goal. In the world that we live in, no nation today can prosper independently. I recall what Pandit Nehru himself said and that was a prophetic vision. In 1947, he said that in this world that we live in, peace, prosperity and perhaps disasters are also indivisible. So, in this interdependent world that we live in, we need a supportive environment. And right or wrong, the United States influences that international environment. Therefore, I do not think that there is anything wrong for us to seek close cordial relations with the US while doing nothing which will affect India's dignity and honour as a sovereign independent country. So, I submit to you that I have faithfully carried out that responsibility.

[Dr. Manmohan Singh]

As regards various issues that have been discussed, I will come to them subsequently. But the main issue coming from the main Opposition Party has been on whether we compromised, in any way, on our strategic autonomy in the management of our nuclear weapon programme.

Before I deal with that, I should like to mention that before going to the United States I had the honour of meeting Leaders of the Opposition, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Shri L.K. Advani and Shri Jaswant Singh. I had the privilege of explaining to them what I would seek to achieve. I also briefed our colleagues of the Left parties. I gave them a broad indication of what was at stake. I was not sure of the outcome, so I could not state all the things that subsequently are reflected in the Joint Statement. What was my concern. My objective was, other than to widen our development options, to acquire for India larger space to achieve our national goals and to do specifically two things. Firstly, never to compromise our autonomy in the management of India's nuclear programme, the strategic programme. Secondly, I had to recognise, as the Minister of Atomic Energy, that India's nuclear power programme had lagged behind. When I was a civil servant, I was a member of the Atomic Energy Commission, way back in the seventies. At that time, the Atomic Energy Commission had set for us a target of 10,000 megawatts of generating capacity. Today we are in 2005. Our capacity is less than 3,000 megawatts. We have run into some problems. I pay compliments to our nuclear scientists. They have performed admirably under very difficult conditions of this nuclear apartheid with which we have had to live for 35 years. But energy security is the key to India's emergence as a strong and powerful nation in the years to come. We have problems. Coal is plentiful. But greater use of coal can result in environmental hazards, like CO₂ emissions, though clean coal technology can help manage the situation.

We are dependent on hydrocarbon imports for meeting seventy per cent of our requirements. That is too large a dependence. Therefore, in our quest for energy security, we must widen the options that are open to us and nuclear energy is one such option. There, I was being faithful to the vision of Panditji. You look at the Resolution which was adopted by the Government of India when the Atomic Energy Commission was set up. The Atomic Energy Programme of India was brought into being with an eye to create new avenues for us to generate power. That programme has got into difficulties.

This is no fault of our scientists. They have done exceedingly well under very difficult conditions. But we have to recognise the realities. Therefore, I felt that if we have to find ways and means to create new avenues for us to generate power. That programme has got into difficulties. This is no fault of our scientists. They have done exceedingly well under very difficult conditions. But we have to recognise the realities. Therefore, I felt that if we have to find ways and means to create an environment in which this nuclear apartheid, all these restrictive regimes which have been erected in the last 35 years, which have blocked our capacity to leap frog in the race for social and economic development through the use of high technology, if somehow we could get rid of these restrictive regimes, then we would have widened development option in the area of energy security that India badly needs if it is to realise its economic and social destiny. Therefore, before going to the US, I said to myself that on the one hand we should do nothing to surrender our strategic autonomy in the management of our strategic assets. On the other hand, we should find an honourable way to persuade the United States and other interlocutors to lift this nuclear blockade which has restricted our options during the last 35 years.

Sir, I say in all sincerity that we have succeeded in the objective. There is nothing in the Joint Statement which conveys the impression, or which should convey the impression, to anyone that we have in any way compromised our autonomy, our sovereign will-power, in managing our nuclear assets. That subject was never discussed. My concern in Washington was to impress upon the United States that if the United States genuinely felt that it had a change of heart with regard to India, then it must do something to lift these 35 years of restrictions which have hampered our quest for a faster access to nuclear energy.

I am glad to say that we have succeeded in achieving that objective. But, a question has been raised—and Shri Atalji raised this question. He said: "You are going to separate the civilian and the nuclear components of our Atomic Energy programme. Did you consult the scientists? Is this feasible?" I say, in all sincerity, that this is a question which has engaged my personal attention for quite some time. I am not a nuclear scientist but I had the advice of our nuclear establishment, and the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission was a part of my delegation. I hope I am not revealing a secret. I think, when the final draft came to me from the US side, I

made it quite clear to them that I will not sign on any document which did not have the support of the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. It held up our negotiations for about 12-15 hours. But ultimately, we succeeded. We had a draft which had the full approval of the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. Therefore, there should be no doubt whatsoever in anybody's mind that the nuclear establishment of our country, of which we are very proud, that was not fully on board.

After coming back, I talked to a large number of other nuclear scientists and other scientists and I am convinced that what we have done is in the best interest of our country. This separation that we have committed—and, let me say, all our commitments are reciprocal commitments. We will not do anything unless the United States' side honours its commitment—what are those commitments? Those are the profound commitments which the US has committed, in the words of their own President, to give India the benefit of full civilian nuclear cooperation with all the benefits that other nuclear powers enjoy. Therefore, if that statement is translated into concrete realities, I think, that will mean a new era for the growth of civilian nuclear energy sector in our country. My own vision is that in the next 15-20 years we should add about 30,000-40,000 megawatts of nuclear capacities. I have a vision that will open up new vistas of opportunity in the field of high technology. Today, we have only a few hi-tech firms like Bharat Heavy Electricals, Larsen and Toubro. If we have a large nuclear power programme and auxiliarisation, around that, it will grow a very large number of hi-tech firms which would enable us to leapfrog in the race for social and economic development. Separation is feasible. There should be no doubt about it that our Atomic Energy establishment agrees with that.

Furthermore, I would also like to say that this separation is not imposed. This separation will be decided voluntarily, solely on the basis of our own judgement. Nobody can, from outside, say: "Well, this is civilian, this is nuclear." That determination will be made by the people of India, by our Government, by our Atomic Energy Establishment. ...(*Interruptions*)

Also, it will be a phased identification. I know these things cannot be done in one go. If we are to separate the civilian and the military components of our programme, it will take time. And that is why we have ensured that this would be a purely voluntary decision, secondly it will

be a phased programme, it will be so phased—and, you have my assurance, Sir, it will be so phased—that our strategic programme is fully safeguarded. Therefore, there should be no doubt whatsoever that we have done anything which compromises our strategic autonomy in the management of India's strategic nuclear assets.

Atal ji also asked this question about the negotiation of Fissile Material Production Cut-off Treaty. In this case, I should like to point out that we have taken on no more additional commitments than the commitments that were taken on board by the previous Government. And, what is our commitment? We have said that we would work with the USA in the negotiations of a multilateral agreement. This is not a bilateral deal between India and the United States. This is a deal which will be negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Several years have passed when these matters have been discussed. There is no agreement in sight. It will take quite some time and in any case if the stage comes to take a decision, we will never be a party to any discriminatory treatment. Therefore, if what other nuclear weapon powers say are their rights, we would insist on the same rights. So, by merely agreeing to work with the United States in negotiating a multilateral treaty, we have not surrendered, in any way, the effectiveness of our strategic asset programme.

Sir, I should also like to assure this House that the three cycles, the fuel cycles that we have been working out are: one, Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors; two, the Fast Breeder Programme and, three, Thorium-based Reactors. We will not allow our research programme to suffer in any way in the process of separation of the civilian and the nuclear programme. So, our research scientists should have the fullest confidence that India's research potential in this vital area of national knowledge promotion will not suffer in any way. That is the commitment that I give on behalf of the Government of India.

Atal ji asked that we have not been given the status of a nuclear weapon State. Shri Fernandes also asked that question. It is true. Because, in the international parlance, the Nuclear Weapon States are the ones which are identified in the NPT Treaty. We are not a party to that Treaty. Let us face it. That Treaty cannot be changed overnight. What we have done with United States is that we have virtually got all the benefits that go with being a Nuclear Weapon State without having the *de jure* status of a Nuclear Weapon State.

[Dr. Manmohan Singh]

19.00 hrs.

I think that is something which is of comfort to us. So, the fact that we are not recognised *de jure* as a Nuclear Weapon State, this was not on my agenda also because I knew that much that international treaties cannot be re-written overnight. But we have now the commitment of the United States that not only will it dismantle its own restrictive regimes but that it will use its influence with its allies and friends to dismantle these restrictive regimes, which have in the past hampered the growth of India's civilian nuclear programme. I was very clear in my mind that there may be uncertainties in the US Congress. Although the President was gracious enough to say that he will use all his influence to ensure that the Congress legislates as we want but there are uncertainties. I cannot predict what the Congress will do. Therefore, I insisted that it is not enough that the United States should commit itself to get its own domestic legislation modified but that it must use its influence with other countries, its allies and supporters to do the same. Even if the Congress of the United States does not pass, well we have, I think, the commitment of the US Government and that itself means something.

We have been wanting more Uranium for our nuclear plants. We have gone to other countries and everybody says, 'yes', they sympathise with us but that we must get the Americans on board. Now that the Americans on board, I think the fuel question for our reactors would be a thing of the past. I very much hope so. So, what we have got through this Joint Statement is something tangible. Atalji also asked this question. We have not been recognised as a nuclear weapon state. We have been merely recognised as a nuclear power with advanced nuclear technologies but there are other countries like Brazil and others. Will we get a treatment like Brazil? I think, if you read the Statement carefully, we have got enough better treatment. We have, I think, an explicit commitment from the United States that India should get the benefits of civilian cooperation as advanced country like the United States enjoys. So, I think, that itself should provide an effective answer to the extent of opportunities and possibilities that are now on the horizons.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that I have tackled both sets of comments, one coming from our colleagues from the Left and the other coming mainly from the main Opposition. There were some questions raised with regard

to the role of agriculture. Let me say, Sir, I was very conscious. In fact, the first thing that is said to my officials before going to Washington is, 'Is there anything that we can do jointly with the United States to promote food security and agricultural security in our country?' It then occurred to me that agricultural research, the state of agricultural universities, the state of extension work in our country is not up to the mark. Dhindsa Saheb referred to the Punjab agriculture. I was at one time associated with the founding of the Punjab Agricultural University when Sardar Pratap Singh Khairon was the Chief Minister. I know, for example, the role that was played by Indo-US cooperation in giving rise to first grade agricultural university whether Pantnagar or Ludhiana. But one has to recognise that in many of these universities, their research work has reached a flat. Therefore, through the knowledge initiative in agriculture we have, I think, opened up a new era of research cooperation which I hope will lead us to the frontiers of human knowledge in all sciences which have a bearing on our agricultural prosperity.

There is nothing in this Joint Statement which says that we will open up our borders to an unlimited flow of American goods. Those issues will be dealt with separately in the WTO. Those issues were not discussed in my discussions with President Bush. This is something which the Chairperson reminds are everyday. Our first commitment is to India's farmers—small and marginal farmers—who need a food security. Preserving the livelihood strategies of our farmers is our utmost concern, and we will do nothing which compromises the livelihood security of India's farmers.

Sir, questions were raised about the membership of the Security Council. It is certainly true that the United States has a different viewpoint. They are not supporting our Resolution. This was known to us before I went. I did raise this matter with the President and also raised this matter in my Address to the Joint Session of the Congress, and I was very surprised with the amount of applause I got from the Congressmen and the Members of the Senate on that particular point. I do not want to divulge what the President told me but I have not given up the hope that when ultimately some concrete action is taken, India's claims will not be ignored. In this Joint Statement, you have a statement attributed to the President himself that the international system must adapt itself to the use of India's growing power. So, I think, we are not there right now and it is wrong on my part to

claim that we have the US' support but I think when the time comes, I have reasons to believe India's claim can no longer be ignored.

The other thing that was raised was the question of the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline. Sir, on this point, I have been quite clear. On my onward journey when I was going to Washington, I was asked this question by our correspondents and I had explicitly stated that this is a matter for us, Pakistan and Iran period; the United States has no role in it. I can assure you that nowhere in my discussion this question cropped up nor did I give any promise to anyone in the United States that we will not work to make this project a reality. I did say when the *Washington Post* Editorial Board interviewed me, they asked me this question: "You are on the one hand wanting nuclear power, you are also asking for this gas pipeline, why did you need both these things?" And I said: "There is uncertainty about this gas pipeline. We are still in a preliminary stage." But I did say: "We need that gas desperately." The House has my assurance that our Government is committed to make the gas pipeline a reality. But it would be wrong on my part to convey the impression that we are there. There are problems; we will have to look at the feasibility; we will have to look at the financing of these things. We will make sincere efforts to resolve those issues. At the National Press Club, I did say that we have civilizational links with Iran, and I said: "We have the second largest Shia Muslim community in our country." and that we can claim to be a bridge in reconciling these various differences that have arisen between Iran and other country. I did not act as a representative of a supplicant State. I was not there to sell India. I stood by what our national policies are, as approved by this august House, and believe, Sir, that, by and large, I have carried out the mandate that was given to me.

Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to seek a clarification from the hon. Prime Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: It is entirely for the Prime Minister to respond. I cannot compel him.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Sir, while participating in the debate I had mentioned some other points. I am not going into them now. I had asked about the Indo-US bilateral democracy initiative. On that point, the nation

needs some clarification and the hon. Prime Minister may clarify that.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Sir, I am very grateful to Dr. Rupchand Pal for having raised that point because this matter has figured in the Press and I am very glad that I have this opportunity to clarify the position.

Sir, it is certainly true that there is a great support and respect for India not only in the United States, but elsewhere in the world because we are a functional democracy; wherever I went, whether to the Congress, to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to the House of Representatives International Relations Committee people applauded the fact that we are a functional democracy with all our complexities, with all our diversities. What is it that we have agreed? We have agreed that the United States and India would, in their respective spheres, help those countries which want that help. There is no imposition, there is no question of our, for example, being forced to be a partner in any act of aggression against any other country and there is no question that we will ever entertain even that sort of thought. But we have the ITEC programme of our own. Sir, our Election Commission is respected all over the world. If some countries want our help in managing our help in managing their elections, in voter registration, in setting up an audit office in which we have great expertise, we would be providing that. The only commitment that we have is that we would be making a small contribution of \$10 million to the UN Democracy Fund to be administered by the United Nations and not by any other mechanism.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to ask a question to the Prime Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: It is entirely for the hon. Prime Minister to respond.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: Sir, when the hon. Prime Minister was speaking, he mentioned about uranium supply to our nuclear power reactors in the country. As you know, we have got large deposits of uranium in the State of Meghalaya and in the State of Jharkhand. So, we could come up with our own reserves and develop them. What steps is the Government taking in this direction so that we can become self-sufficient in uranium and we can build our nuclear power reactors as we have already got the technology for that.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Sir, we are doing all we can to exploit the resources that we have. There are some difficulties, I do not want to go into these difficulties. But I entirely agree with the hon. Member that we should do all that we can to exploit our resources. Only yesterday I said to my Minister of State that, for example, in Jharkhand there are some problems and we are not exploiting those resources. So, you have my assurance that whether it is in Meghalaya, whether it in Andhra Pradesh or in Jharkhand, wherever we have uranium resources, we are actively engaged in seeing that these resources can be exploited to the maximum.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR (Barrackpore): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the emphasis in the Joint Statement is on the availability of U-37 for our atomic reactors. But given the hegemonistic attitude and the thrust of the American policy, what do they get from us in reciprocation as it has been stated that it is a reciprocal thing? Is it a change of heart or is it has been thrust of the American policy, what do they get from us in reciprocation as it has been stated that it is a reciprocal thing? Is it a change of heart or is it just a goodwill mission and the Joint Statement emerged out of that?

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Sir, all I can say is that I have not done anything which is not reflected in this Joint Statement. There is no secret tag, there is no secret understanding. I have truthfully stated at great length of whatever was agreed. So now I do not want to be accused of being a reader of what is in people's mind. But, I think, the United States Government recognises that it is in their interest that a country of one billion people, a functional democracy, should grow. We can be and we will be a factor for peace, progress and stability not only in Asia, but in the rest of the world.

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI (Garhwal): Sir, I have only two clarifications. One is, and if I understood him correctly, he said that even if the US Congress does not accept what is being stated, the US Government will still be on board. Is my understanding correct?

Secondly, I have made a comment on this issue in my speech also and he has again stated that the building of present India, strong India starts from 1947 and ends up in 1991. Has nothing happened between 1991 and 2004?

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Again Sir, that is not the presumption, which I would like him to carry. I think, as

a country, our effort has been to manage change with continuity. So, I am not saying that everything that has happened today is because of what I have done or what our Government has done. But who can deny the contributions of Panditji, Indiraji, Rajivji? I also say that there were some good things done in the NDA regime also. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: No please. It is not fair. He has spoken for 40 minutes.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: He has very exhaustively dealt with the issue and has spoken for 40 minutes. Please take your seats now.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, are you interested in raising the urgent matters which are to be taken up at the end of the day?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: All right. Shri Lonappan Nambadan please.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Mention your matter Shri Nambadan. Do you remember what is your subject?

SHRI LONAPPAN NAMBADAN (Mukundapuram): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to bring to the notice of the House a matter regarding atrocities against minority communities, especially members belonging to the Christian community who service rural areas in India. They have been facing lots of dangerous assaults and criminal intimidation to their life and properties.

19.19 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

I would cite a number of instances to show that these anti-social elements have attacked and killed the Priests and Nuns, who belong to the Christian community, across the country. In Orissa, recently one Priest was murdered after being beaten and tortured. Again, in Orissa, another Priest was stabbed to death at his home.