

[Shri Pramothesh Mukherjee]

Sir, to prepare for the nuclear tests or to join the nuclear club does not add to the glory of the Indian tradition and culture. It is a complete departure from the principles of non-alignment, from the principle of nuclear disarmament. It is a complete departure. It is our opinion.

MR. SPEAKER : Please conclude.

SHRI PRAMOTHES MUKHERJEE : It is the opinion of many eminent persons that nuclear weapon alone cannot save the country from the crisis. What does the fall of the Soviet Russia indicate? That was a mighty State; that was a powerful nuclear weapon State. Why does it fall? why does it disintegrate in spite of having so many nuclear weapons in its arsenal? This disintegration of Soviet Russia indicates that the people of Russia have no sympathy for the nuclear policy of the Government of Russia. What is the chief component of the national security calculus? Can a man be secure with a revolver? A man goes to sleep with the revolver beneath the pillow. Does it indicate the best structure of that man? A man sleeping in the kingdom of fire arms with only a revolver beneath the pillow is not security given to him. It is my opinion and I express my opinion that the national security is impossible without the economic security of the people.

The money wasted for the nuclear tests or for the conduct of the nuclear tests can be invested, can be utilized for the restoration of the economic security of the country. Only the economic security can give the people and a nation absolute national security. So, the question of national security should be settled, should be resolved fast and only the question of national security will come.....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please wind up.

SHRI PRAMOTHES MUKHERJEE : Yes, Sir.

In 1974, in the month of May, under the leadership of the then Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi an experiment was successfully completed. That was a brilliant experiment that was done in the name of the defence of national sovereignty. But after one year, in 1975 on 25th June, Emergency was declared by Shrimati Gandhi at that time to save the country from internal problems. The experiment was a prelude to the declaration of Emergency. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister and the Government whether the nuclear tests in Pokhran are a prelude to the change of the system?

Today, there are many discussions taking place in the country for the changeover or the switchover of the parliamentary system to Presidential form of Government. Does it indicate that? It should not be a prelude. It is expected that it should not be a prelude. Be cautious please.

So, I will be concluding by saying that the national

security can be preserved only after the economic security is achieved. Thank you for the opportunity given to me.

[Translation]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the long discussion on nuclear tests conducted by India at Pokhran is about to conclude. I am grateful to the Hon'ble Members who took part in this debate. The House is unanimous in extending congratulations to the scientists, engineers, technicians and the Jawans of our Army for their significant contribution in conducting Pokhran tests.

There is also a consensus that if attempts are made to impose unreasonable restrictions on our economic sovereignty and if the inflow into our country of the aid coming from world organisations is stopped, then we will face the situation unitedly.

Naturally, the need for conducting nuclear tests at Pokhran has been questioned during the discussions here. I am reminded of 1974 when discussion was held on Pokhran-I. At that time I was present, Comrade Indrajit Gupta was also present. These were the two members who were present then also and are present today also in this House. The words uttered by me during the debate in the Parliament at the time of Pokhran-I tests in 1974 are no different from what I am saying today. The whole country had welcomed Indiraji's decision of granting permission for conducting the tests. Her decision was not a collective decision. She did not consult the opposition for conducting the tests but her decision was right and was in the interest of the country's security. Her decision was aimed at giving an opportunity to our scientists and, therefore, it was welcomed by all. I remember that Smt. Indira Gandhi did not make any speech in the discussion which was held at that time. On her behalf, on behalf of the Government another Minister had delivered a speech. The whole country was satisfied. Just now a hint has been given from our neighbour that in 1974 they were not ready and, therefore, they were silent, but now they are ready.

Some hon'ble Members have said that Pakistan conducted the tests in response to India's tests. Is a nuclear test possible within a short period of 16 days? People who are aware of the complexities of conducting nuclear tests are present here and they will testify that no country can make preparations for a nuclear test within a fortnight. This preparation has been going on for years together. Yesterday, we conducted nuclear test and today this news has come that Pakistan has conducted the test-flight of a long range missile. Our leaders are well aware of the time since when this preparation has been going on, and they have prepared the country for it. It was not so that I have decided in one day and test was conducted. Today I want to repeat what I had said earlier that behind this nuclear test there is 50 years of research and hard work by our scientists and Jawans of our Army who kept on working in the scorching heat, hot sand and temperature as high as

500 C and all this while they are motivated by the sentiments of defending our country and enhancing the prestige of our nation. I do not think that there is any difference of opinion over this issue in the House. It is the characteristic of this country that whenever we have to face a problem we forget all our differences. Ours is a democratic country--it is natural that people may have a difference of opinion--

"Munde Munde matah bhinna"

I was just going through a statement made by Shri Rajiv Gandhi in 1985, perhaps someone has quoted his statement. Whatever Shri Rajiv Gandhi had stated on 11th October during the Press Conference in the Press Club, I would like to quote that :

[English]

"As I have said on a number of occasions, we have to consider our security and there is no question of allowing New Delhi or for that matter any other city in India to be lattered out. We will not allow that to happen. What is even more worrying about Pakistan's programme is that we are fairly sure that at least part of the finances of this programme have come from other countries. Now what we worry about is that the nuclear weapon when developed will also have to go to these countries. I did not say that we are going to wait on your decision, on your response. For Pakistan to explode their device I said, that we have to take certain measures to protect ourselves. There are a number of measures, apart from making a nuclear weapon ourselves."

[Translation]

This is his statement given during the Press Conference in 1985. The Government was concerned and aware of the activities across the border. The super powers, who have stockpiled nuclear weapons, were not ready to destroy all their weapons under a timebound programme. That is why a unanimous decision was taken that we should not sign the CTBT, once we felt that the super powers of the world wanted to impose a discriminatory treaty on the world. It was feared that we would be isolated.

At times, it becomes necessary to walk alone but our decision has to be correct and then it would not matter much if we walk in isolation. We kept our option open but it appeared from the reports that came in later that it would be necessary to take some action in this regard. The scientists were also consulted about the measures to be undertaken. We see the nuclear weapons as the weapons of destruction. They are useful only for the purpose of defence or self defence. Our opponents should realise that we possess the nuclear weapons so that they do not dare to attack us. Such a situation should be created and it will be created. We have been attacked thrice in these 50 years. Our country is the messenger of peace. It never attacked anybody's land; it never attacked any country,

rather it was subjected to attack. Infact we were dispossessed of our land. Now we are trying to get it back. We are holding negotiations and it is possible only through negotiations. However, the country having a population of hundred crore cannot be put into a situation wherein it has to depend on mercy of others for its defence.

We are peace loving people and we want friendship based on justice and a friendship encouraging the mutual interests. India is a vast country. It is strong and also prosperous as compared to the neighbouring countries, still we never tried to take any undue advantage of our position. After all, this was the essence of the Gujral doctrine but Shri Gujral should not shy away from admitting the fact that his doctrine did not succeed in case of Pakistan and Pakistan did not give it any chance. The infiltration of the terrorists inside our country continued and the border crisis also remained unresolved. The talks were on and at this occasion, I would like to reiterate the proposal that we are ready to hold further talks with Pakistan. Pakistan is our neighbouring country, hence we should sit down together to iron out our differences but Pakistan is not ready to go along with the consensus evolved at Dhaka or the subjects adopted for discussion in the Dhaka Resolution. The Prime Minister of Pakistan has repeated his proposal of being prepared for having talks with India. It is a good thing and the talks should be held.

I remember that once I had told a Pakistani leader that the history may change but the geography cannot be changed. Now can we alter this fact that we are neighbours. It is good if we maintain friendly relations but if the friendship is broken, we cannot simply change the neighbourhood as we are bound by this geographical fact of being neighbours. On this occasion also, I would like to tell the friends of Pakistan. Many people go to Pakistan and have friendly relations with the people of Pakistan. After coming back, they tell us that the insecurity of Pakistan stems from the apprehension that India has not accepted the separate existence of Pakistan, although there are no grounds for harbouring such a feeling. The country was divided and Pakistan was formed. Now they should be happy, satisfied and gain prosperity. They should let us live in peace and both of us should work together to root out poverty, unemployment, diseases illiteracy not only from this region but from the face of the world.

We also envisage a world free from nuclear weapons. Now why did India have to take such a decision? should we have ignored it yet again? Yesterday I told the journalists that I was not surprised at what had transpired. We knew that this was going to happen and we wanted to prevent it and that is why we took this step. However, it is being interpreted as if they conducted the tests only because we had conducted it. Does that mean that they were preparing for it all along?

We are facing danger from some other quarters also. That country sees us as its sole enemy and their nuclear tests are directed at us.

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391 Discussion under

[English]

India specific.

[Translation]

When our country conducts the nuclear tests and also raises its voice along with other nations with regard to the nuclear tests and also asks the super-powers to destroy their weapons, in case, all this cannot be done simultaneously, it should be done in a phased manner, then it is stated that sincere attempts are not being made. Casting doubts on our sincerity will not help. We want Pakistan to join us in making this demand. It has been stated repeatedly yesterday that the nuclear weapons are the weapons of destruction, so why collective measures are not taken to destroy the nuclear weapons? It is quite apparent from the widespread support lent by the third world countries in vocal and not so vocal terms for our nuclear tests that a substantial part of the world and majority of people want permanent peace. They want a peace which is not violated by nuclear weapons. We would like to play a role in it but we are also desirous of keeping our country safe. The safety of the country and infact the safety of the world as a whole are equally important for us.

But we should be heard. We should achieve such a position that others listen to us attentively. We do not want to create a situation in which we might hurt our own interests.

Shri Deve Gowdaji is not present here
.....*(Interruptions)*

AN HON'BLE MEMBER : He is present. He is sitting in the back seat.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I am having a look at the 1996 manifesto of Janata Dal. Perhaps the Janata Dal which I am referring to is the one to which Gowdaji is related.

[English]

* We will formally give a pledge of first non-use of nuclear capability against Pakistan.*

[Translation]

We are ready to give this guarantee that we will not first use nuclear capability against Pakistan but later on if there is a need, then we will use that. But for that, first we have to develop our nuclear capability.

This also lends support to the argument that all political parties have a unanimous opinion on this issue. When this was to be done? After whatever happened yesterday, there is no need to give any reply. Who had taken this decision and who should take decision? It is for you to ponder over it. When some of my senior colleagues say that they were not aware of this, then this does not mean that I have no trust upon them. Therefore, to talk of

unanimous decision or consultation is not proper. At that time when nuclear test had to be conducted, it was not possible to have consultations. Very limited people know about it. As Advanji said yesterday, everything got leaked here, the entire report of the commission was published, but nobody could smell it. In foreign countries this issue has been a subject of debate. It is also an indication of nation's determination.

It shows that if we want or the situation so demands and there is a challenge before our country, then the people of this country are ready to make bigger sacrifices and can take all precautions. This is an achievement. This should be duly acknowledged.

I felt hurt when an allegation was levelled that this was done for achieving political self-interests. I had said this earlier and today I would like to repeat that. I was in the opposition for 40 years and as a member of opposition my role has always been appreciated and it has been said that I had not worked for party's interest but I worked for country's interest. Now that I am holding the office of the Prime Minister or have been chosen to hold this prestigious office, shall I allow pettiness, selfishness and the party interests to come in my way? I can never stoop to such a level.

May god save me from committing such a sin. Some decisions may be wrong. There can be two opinions regarding the time of a decision to be taken or not to be taken, but sincerity cannot be doubted. Why nuclear test was conducted in 1974, we did not ask that, people of the country did not ask that because it was a right step. Anyone can take right step. Indiraji could have taken right step. Our friends from the Congress had honoured Smt. Indiraji at the time of formation of Bangladesh, at the time of their liberation. At that time we also honoured her. Entire country honoured her. After that decision was taken to conduct elections. We did not criticize this. We have not blamed anyone. We said that Indiraji did a good work. My exact words were that an epoch making step has been taken. If we lose the elections, it is all right, the elections are lost at times and won at other times.

20.00 hrs.

Similarly the governments may come and governments may go. But the country should be united, should attain prosperity with pride and should be able to protect its precious freedom. However, this is not the responsibility of a single party or government alone. In the beginning of my speech at Pokhran I had said that neither I nor my party take credit for this. Whatever was done, was done, in the country's interest. I was surprised when this question was raised that we had not worked according to our national agenda. Concern is being expressed about our national agenda. We are pleased to know that there are several people who are keeping an eye on our national agenda. They have joined two parts of national agenda and have misinterpreted it. They will say that it is printed like this.

But I will say that it has not been printed correctly. In that there are three issues--Combat effectiveness of Armed Forces.

[English]

"The state of preparedness, morale and combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces shall receive early attention and appropriate remedial action."

[Translation]

In the next sentence, it has been stated that-

[English]

"we will establish a National Security Council."

[Translation]

and its detail has been given. In the end it has been stated, in fact, it should have been given in a separate para to make the reading easier. However, but there should not be any difficulty in understanding the meaning.

[English]

"Towards that end, we will re-evaluate the nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons."

[Translation]

It does not mean that first of all armed forces will be strengthened, security council will be set up and after doing all this exercise if the situation demands to do it tomorrow, and even then we respond in the negative with an argument that our armed forces are not weaponed and security council has not been formed. Nobody can ascribed such a meaning but attempts are being made to do so. Injustice has been done to us. I do not know whether such a discussion, consultation and meetings of scientists were ever held with the opposition on such as occasion. We fought the Bangladesh war, we were also involved in war with China and conducted nuclear tests in Pokharan. But that was not any obligation on anyone. But I regret that our scientist Dr. Chidambaram failed to convince our politician, Shri Chidambaram.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, many other questions were raised during the discussion which lasted for a long duration. I am not going into the details of all these points. We have taken some decisions which have already been mentioned in brief.

[English]

We are disappointed that U.S. has displayed a lack of application of India's legitimate security concerns. I wish to reiterate Government's commitment to engage with all principal interlocutors in a responsible dialogue. We remain ready to discuss and explain our position.

Since 11th May, the Government have taken certain initiatives, which I am going to enlist here.

1. We are already observing a voluntary moratorium and are ready to consider and discuss converting it into a *de jure* commitment.
2. We have volunteered to engage in negotiations on AFMCT.
3. India will undertake stringent controls on nuclear and missile-related technologies as well as those relating to other weapons of mass destruction.

We had already announced and reiterate our offer to discuss a 'No - First -Use' agreement with Pakistan and also with other countries bilaterally or in a multilateral forum.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the policy of the Government is to maintain friendly relations with China. China is our neighbouring country. Both the countries are in Asia and are big nations. It is required that both the countries maintain friendship according to the principles of Panchsheel. There is some tension on the border issue. However, there is peace on the border these days. We want to solve the border issue through negotiations. Discussions continue but these should progress speedily to find out a satisfactory solution. The way China helps Pakistan, is a matter of concern. This help could be used against us. It is required that China should take note of our concerns. Both India and China should work together with mutual co-operation which is in the interest of both the countries, Asia and the world as a whole. An attempt has been made to create some misunderstanding on the question of some statements. Once distorted version of statements appears in the media, it is difficult to get the correct version find a place in the print media and then the spicy material find place in the headlines. Our policy is of friendship, development and to maintain peace in this Asian region. Besides, preparing for own security, our aim is to remain friendly with all countries. I am confident that those who are our critics today, will have a change in their attitude tomorrow. We have conducted a test, we did not create a war hysteria in our country. When the test was conducted the atmosphere in the country was normal. I myself visited Pokharan and remained there for several hours. There was no radioactivity there. A news appeared that cases of nose bleeding have been reported. But from whose nose and how much blood came out of it, nobody is there to answer such questions.

However this news item was published very prominently especially in the foreign countries. The soldiers are living there in those conditions.

There is no danger of radio-activity. There is also no question of getting political mileage out of it. We wish to make a progress by formulating policies on the basis of consensus evolved with the cooperation of all the members.

[Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee]

I see it as my primary duty to effectively discharge the responsibility placed on my shoulders and everything else is secondary to that. It is not the issue concerning a person, a family, a group, a community or religion. This country is multi-religious one.

I was surprised to hear yesterday a very provocative speech delivered by the Prime Minister of our neighbouring country while addressing the nation on T.V. He was provoking his people. He did not think of crores of people living in the neighbouring country. Crore of people who are followers of Islam are citizens of India and they are enjoying equal rights. An attempt was made to create a hysteria. Whenever a minor incident occurs and is taken up by the media for a debate and from the feedback, one comes to know that this is not correct and that line of thinking is dropped. However, such an occasion will never arise when I will feel like provoking the people of the country by addressing them through television and if at all, such a day comes, I would like to assure you that I will quit the very same day. I have got this opportunity to serve the nation and I wish to utilise this time properly for serving my nation and I am desirous of getting co-operation from all the quarters in this endeavour.

Some members had quoted from my speech delivered at the time when Pokharan-I tests were conducted. I had stated therein that the scientists and the soldiers had done their job and now it was upto the politicians to do their bit. By politicians, I do not mean only politicians but all the people. What is required is that all of us should discharge our responsibilities.

[English]

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (Baramati) : The Prime Minister of Pakistan has made a suggestion that Pakistan is ready to discuss No-War-Pact with India. What is your thinking? Are you ready to discuss with other political parties also to take some definitive view on this?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : This is not a new offer. But whenever talks were held, we reached the conclusion that they want No-War-Pact but only after the solution of the Kashmir problem, according to their wishes. But if a new offer has been made, we are prepared to probe it.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : The suggestion has been made only yesterday.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH (Bharatpur) : May I respectfully ask the Prime Minister as to how does your letter to President Clinton find a place in 'The New York Times'? Who drafted the absurd letter!

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, such questions are being asked which I cannot answer.

20.14 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

First Report

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA) : Sir, I beg to present the first Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

MR. SPEAKER : The House now stands adjourned to meet on Monday at 11 00 a m.

20.15 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, June 1, 1998/Jyayatha 11, 1920 (Saka)