

SHRIDINESH SINGH (Pratapgarh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, before you ask the hon. Foreign Minister to make a statement, I should like to draw your attention to the statement made by the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs this morning. In regard to Panama question, he had said that the Government has taken note of the US action in Panama. The Government has already issued its reaction. Now, when the Parliament is in session, it is customary for the Government that any statement of this kind is to be made in Parliament first and not made outside. I should like to know whether that statement has been made outside and where it has been made and whether it is the same statement that the Minister is making here or it is a different one.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): The hon. Member has drawn my attention to this point. No statement has been made outside the House as yet. It is for the first time that the Government is making an authorised statement. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: He denies it and that is all.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs has said that Government has already issued its reaction. I thought we heard it. We have got the transcript now. The transcript says exactly what we heard in this House that the Government has already issued its reaction. If it has not issued its reaction, then has he misled the House or is he not aware of what the Government is doing? If he has issued it outside the House, it is a breach of privilege and if he has not issued it outside, it is misleading the House.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: In the morning when the Statement was being prepared I brought it to the notice of the House and I would state it now and with your permission, I submit.

17.05 hrs.

### STATEMENT BY MINISTER

**Re: U.S. Intervention in Panama**

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): Around 1130 hrs. Indian Standard Time on December 20, the US troops commenced military action in Panama. According to an official US Government spokesman, President Bush ordered the US military forces into Panama in order to "protect American lives, restore the democratic process, preserve the integrity of the Panama Canal treaties and apprehend General Manuel Antonio Noriega."

According to reports available until now, US military action in Panama is continuing and fighting has not as yet ended.

The Government of India has been deeply concerned at US armed intervention in Panama and deplores the action. We also regret that the action has led to loss innocent lives in Panama.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SANTOSH MOHANDEV (Tripura West): What is all this public speech? What is he talking? We have not got any copy. (*Interruptions*) How can you allow it, Sir? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): Mr. Chairman, I am on a point of order, Sir. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: After the Statement is over, copies will be distributed.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: As the House is aware, India is fully committed to uphold the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and non-use of force for settlement of disputes. India has always maintained that negotiation is the best way for arriving at peaceful settlement of dis-

putes and that applies equally to the situation in Panama and problems in Central America. Our position is also consistent with the United Nations Charter to which all members of the US have subscribed.

It is the hope of the Government of India that the US armed intervention will end soon and American forces will be withdrawn quickly.

I am sure the House will wish that in Panama it will be possible for the people to establish the democratic process.

The internal situation in Panama is confusing and we are in touch with our Ambassador.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM (Sivaganga): The Government is setting up a new practice, Sir.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): *Never... (Interruptions)*

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: When last reports were received from him, fighting was still going on in the streets near our Chancery. I am pleased to inform the House that all members of the Mission are safe. Our Mission has so far received no report of any loss of life as far as Indian nationals in Panama are concerned.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI (New Delhi): Sir. ...

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is not allowed here.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: I want to make a submission. I am aware that...

[*Translation*]

According to the convention no clarifications are allowed after the hon. Minister makes a statement. I am a junior Member in this House. But I have been a Member of the Upper House for many years and I feel that the convention followed there should be started in the Lower House also. This will be

a good beginning.

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: If all of you agree, let the Rules Committee decide all these matters.

[*Translation*]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: I suggest that the Rule Committee should consider this matter. When the hon. Minister makes a statement all hon. Members should be given an opportunity to seek clarifications on any point.

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Advaniji, your point is well taken. This can be placed before the Rules Committee where we decide. If you all accept, no objection.

We shall now resume the discussion on Vote of Confidence.

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17.08 hrs.

MOTION RE: CONFIDENCE IN THE  
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS—*CONTD.*

[*English*]

SHRIGOPAL RAO MAYEKAR (Panaji): Mr. Chairman, Sir, as solitary Member of the smallest State Goa and the smallest party, Maharashtra Gomantak party. I rise not to add any arguments in the debate, but only to express my sentiments on behalf of my people and the Party.

I have heard with rapt attention the speeches made by the senior Members belonging to various parties. I was very happy to note that the parties whose bona fides were doubted by the Opposition benches have in unequivocal terms expressed their full support to the Prime Minister and his party, especially because the political cynics generally create an atmosphere of, what