

I believe it will not extend beyond eight.
(Interruptions) Shri A.N. Singh Deo, now you just begin your speech but you take it up tomorrow. After that, we will begin with Kuwait.

SSS
SHRI A.N. SINGH DEO (Aska): Sir, after nearly 60 years, the electronic media, as we call it now, is going out of the control of the Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You may continue your speech tomorrow. We will now take up the next item.

SSS-604
16.26 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Statement made by the Minister of External Affairs re, his recent visit to Moscow, Washington, Amman, Baghdad & Kuwait in connection with the situation in the Gulf

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House will now take up further discussion on the statement made by the Minister of External Affairs in the House on 23rd August, 1990 regarding his visit to Moscow, Washington, Amman, Baghdad and Kuwait in connection with the situation in Gulf, raised by Shri Girdharilal Bhargava on the 24th August, 1990.

Shri A. Charles.

SSS-501
SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum): Sir, I share the deep concern of the entire nation on the unfortunate development in Kuwait and on the safety and welfare of over 1,72,000 Indians who live and work in Kuwait. We are thankful to the hon. Minister for his visit to that country and for his first-hand information he has been very kind enough to give us. In fact, about 1,72,000 Indians who live in

Kuwait are in deep agony. We are not able to get any information about their safety and welfare. Under the circumstances, the report, he has given, has, to a certain extent, thrown some light on what is happening in Kuwait. But on going through the report, I am very sorry to say that the statement has only increased our anxiety and our concern. I would draw the attention of the hon. Minister and this august House to some of the facts given on page 2.

16.28 hrs.

[DR. THAMBI DURAI in the Chair]

(Interruptions) It is stated that:

"There is naturally considerable anxiety about the future and a great deal of attention at present. However... while the law and order situation is not normal, there is no cause for grave anxiety."

This is a contradictory statement which we cannot understand. There is anxiety about the future. There is tension. The situation is not normal. There is looting. There is no food. Banks are not working and almost all shops are closed. The whole life is paralysed. But in spite of these facts, I am surprised that the statement is saying that "there is no cause for grave anxiety". There is cause for anxiety and grave anxiety to all those who are involved and their relatives who are here in this country. It has been stated in page 3 that the Embassy was doing excellent work. I would request you to kindly let this august House know as to what transpired there and what kind of work have they done from 2nd August on which Kuwait was occupied by Iraq till the day the hon. Minister reached Kuwait. It is true that some of the Indians and voluntary associations and a group of Indians have done some marvellous work. It is also true that the Embassy has also helped in feeding about 6000 people in different groups. I am sorry to say that

because of the limited staff, as stated in the report, they were not able to do that type of work on a war-footing. We would have been happy if the Government had acted immediately when this critical situation had arisen. The limited staff could have been strengthened. It is stated that from 24th August onwards, all Embassies will stand closed. But there is a report that most of the Embassies are still working. They were not closed. I saw a news item yesterday that they were not closed. I would like to have some information about our position there. The report clearly says that there is little option for the Missions located in Kuwait but to comply with this decision. I do not know whether the news item is correct or not. So, I would like to have a clarification on that as to whether any Embassy is continuing to work there and as to what exactly is our position under the circumstances. I would like to know the improvement in the last three days. There report says: "We had made arrangements for repatriation of Indian nationals on a regular basis and we would gradually step up the numbers who could be repatriated." I request the hon. Minister to let this House know as to how many are since to be repatriated and what type of work is going on there. It is also stated: "An Iraqi aircraft will be chartered from Basrah which is close to Kuwait." How many flights have been operated and how many people have been repatriated by these flights? It is also stated that there is one ship owned by a non-resident Indian, M.V. Safir, which has been in Kuwait since the crisis began and it was agreed that the ship will be released. I would like to know whether the ship has subsequently been released or not and if so, how many people have been rescued from that ship? I do not want to take much of the time of the House as more Members from Kerala would like to talk on this issue as more than one lakh are Keralites in Kuwait alone. And so, it is natural for everybody to show concern for them. I am really unhappy the way in which the Government have been attending to this crisis. The

crisis happened on the 2nd August and we took up the matter on the 9th August, the third day of Parliament in this Session. I am sorry to say that till then the Government had not come with any policy statement or any action. We finally asked on that day that the Prime Minister of this country should directly talk to the Head of Iraqi Government. The reply given by the hon. Minister was that, at that point of time the Prime Minister was not able to talk to the Head of Iraqi Nation because the moment the Prime Minister would talk, they will ask about our policy and we are not ready with our policy. I am constrained to believe that this Government has, to a certain extent, yielded to the pressures of the United States. The last sentence says that the Arab League and the Non-Aligned Movement have to play an important role in this regard. Government themselves have admitted that the no-aligned movement, NAM, has an important role in this, but what has the Government done? It is going to be a month; either you should have contacted NAM, or taken initiative or action through the NAM. It was India who has always been giving a great leadership to this movement. With the efforts of our first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, it was started with 25 countries, and it is now having a membership of 101 countries. It is really disappointing that this important non-aligned movement has not been used. It is only because of that that there was a vacuum in that area and American forces have come. It is still more disturbing that the Pakistan and Bangladesh have sent their forces. I would not say that India should send our forces, but it is rather unfortunate that the Prime Minister has categorically given a statement that we would not be sending our forces. It is very disappointing and disturbing that we are even now keeping silent. We do not know how in a few days things are going to develop. If a real war situation comes, how will we be able to evacuate our 1.72 lakh Indians, now stranded there. I humbly plead that no time should be lost.

*Statt by Min of Ext Affrs re
his visit to Moscow, Washington,*

*etc in connection with
situation in the Gulf*

[Sh A Charles]

NAM should be contacted and urgent steps taken through its good offices to see that these helpless people are brought back to India as early as possible

I would also request that at least once in two days, a statement may be made by the External Affairs Minister showing the progress made, how many Indians have been repatriated and how we are going to rescue our other brothers and sisters still stranded there

With these few words, I conclude

५५९ - ६०

SHRI M RAMANNA RAI (Kasargod)

Mr Chairman, Sir we are mainly concerned with the evacuation of Indians in Kuwait, that is about 1.72 lakh people. My apprehension is that if a shooting war starts in the Gulf area, we will have to evacuate about fifteen lakhs of Indian people. If a shooting war does not take place, there is no need to evacuate Indians from Kuwait also. But if a shooting war takes place, we shall have to evacuate 15 lakhs of Indians. I would like to know whether the Government is considering this or whether they have any plan regarding that aspect

We know, and the entire world knows, that India is one of the leading non-aligned countries. In the past, India has risen to the occasion many times and amicably settled many disputes throughout the world. But though twenty-five days have passed since Iraq occupied Kuwait on the 2nd August, Indian Government have not taken any steps and the Indian Government have failed to discharge its duty and responsibility as a non-aligned country. I would like to know whether even at this stage, the Indian Government is considering taking any steps to avoid war in the Gulf area

Our External Affairs Minister has al-

ready visited Soviet Union, USA and other countries. Probably, he has understood their thinking. I would like to know whether even at this stage our External Affairs Minister thinks that it is time to enter into the field, enter in his capacity as an External Affairs Minister of a great non-aligned country and mediate and take necessary steps to avert the war. Now, the main thing is that even after 25 days the shooting war has not taken place, and I feel that there is no possibility of it now. The question is whether the Government of India, as a Member of the Non-aligned movement, has discharged its responsibility. The apprehension is that if the Government of India takes some initiative in this regard, it may be successful. If that is so, should we not try to avert this war? The Government of India must decide about it. There is a famous saying in the Bhagwat Geeta. Shri Krishna told Arjuna

Karmanye vadika raste me phaleshu kadachana

That is very very important at this juncture. We have to take the initiative and avert the war. If that is done, the posterity will remember India for ever. They will remember that the Government of India and the External Affairs Minister interfered in proper time and averted the war. So my request even at this stage is that we have to discharge our duty and we must remember,

"Karmanye vadika raste ma phaleshu kadachane"

[Translation]

५६० - ६१

SHRI YUVRAJ (Katiyar) Mr Chairman

Sir, discussion on the statement made by the External Affairs Minister in the House is taking place today. In his statement he said that he had gone to Baghdad from here and returned enroute to Washington, Amman, Kuwait and Moscow. The question before us is that Iraq invaded Kuwait and annexed it

After that Kuwait, America and its allies jointly imposed an embargo on Iraq. The U.S. Navy is on an alert there and from the situation as it prevails there, it seems that the economic power is prevailing on the military power. India has always occupied a prominent position amongst the non-aligned nations of the world and I frankly admit that we have not been able to register our protest on the basis of our moral values against the invasion with the intensity desired of us because Iraq is a friendly country of ours. On the other hand, the example of Japan is before us, the country that imports 99 per cent of its oil requirements while we import only 40 per cent of our petroleum need and the major contribution therein coming from Iraq. The question facing us today is that approximately 1,75,000 people of the Indian origin have been stranded there. Nearly 15 lakh foreigners and stranded in the Gulf countries and their condition is so bad, as just now one of our hon. Members said here that people are without any food or water there and great difficulties are being faced in the supply of both. America deployed its armies for the liberation of Kuwait, once a sovereign state, and the Security Council also gave its approval to lay siege of Iraq. Therefore, the greatest question facing us today is that all our people stranded in the Gulf countries, as I said that 1,75,000 people of Indian origin are stranded there, lakhs of labourers and technicians go there, are all in a very bad condition. Our Embassy was there in Kuwait but that has been closed down now and it seems that the situation has turned grave now. Fortunately certain signs of a compromise are visible in the series of negotiations being held at international level.

Sir, I would like to say that the process of evacuation of the Indian nationals stranded there is very slow. Again I want to know as to what steps are being taken in the direction of making up of our lapses and deficiencies in the arrangements made for the repatriation and whether we will be able to evacuate our

distressed people through the sea route after deploying big passenger ships.

India is a neutral country but I would like to say that the modern warfare is not something which can be fought with the help of missiles, automatic weapons and rifles alone. Every country possesses atomic weapons today and that is why today Iraq is in dilemma since a siege has been laid all around it. We can not likewise support the U.S. armed action as well but we would certainly like Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait and also wish that America and its allies stop their army operations and call back their forces so that constructive negotiations between the hostile states do not get impeded. Despite all that, it becomes obligatory upon us to facilitate the evacuation of foreign nationals from Kuwait—be they British, Americans or our Indian brethren. There is dearth of every commodity there, so cannot we help those people out by sending humanitarian aid in the shape of necessities of life? This aid can be air-lifted to Kuwait just within 4-6 hours, and foodgrains stored there. I would like to know from the hon. Minister the arrangements being made by Government to help our stranded brethren there? We are anxious not first because our people are stranded there but because they are in great distress. The purchasing power of our Indian brethren is the lowest among all the development countries. Indians have the lowest purchasing power. Indians sold their cars for just 100 dollars. They sold everything they had. They are facing starvation today and they are facing death. I would, therefore, like to know whether the Government is making arrangements for the deployment of ships so as to bring the stranded Indians back home. Secondly, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether we have failed in our policy of non-alignment, the policy of mediation and in leaving an impression of our role on world politics. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I raise these questions. We favour neither the army operations of America and other

[Sh Yuvraj]

European countries in the Gulf nor occupation of Kuwait by Iraq displaying its intransigence. Since we cherish service of humanity our Minister of External Affairs while giving reply to our questions will enlighten us about the endeavours being made to mitigate the distresses of the people and in evacuating them from there because we are as anxious for them as they are for themselves.

With these words, I conclude

[English] 5.3.67

SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM (Salem) Mr Chairman Sir, when originally the situation in Kuwait and the problem that the Indians who are there in Kuwait facing arose, strong suggestions were made from both the supporting parties as well as the Opposition, that the Minister himself or if possible a Special Envoy or the Foreign Secretary should go across to Baghdad and discuss with the Iraqi counterparts and if possible find a method by which we could bring our Indians back and look into their problems and interests. Initially of course, though the reaction was a little negative or not so positive, the fact that the Minister has responded, and visited Baghdad and Kuwait as well as Amman, one cannot but thank him for having taken our suggestion seriously. However one expected a little more in the form of real development from the visits of the hon Minister for External Affairs as well as the hon Minister for Civil Aviation, Mr Arif Mohammad.

There are a few points on which I would like to seek specific clarifications. Firstly, while the Minister in his statement has said that the House would like to express its appreciation of the efforts that have been made by the hon Minister for Civil Aviation for his success, I would like to know what is

the position of the oil stock, to the knowledge of the External Affairs Minister. Is it 3 weeks or 4 weeks as we hear today? (Interruptions) Can I ask the Minister of External Affairs to hear what the Members in this House say? (Interruptions)

I was trying to draw the attention of the Minister of External Affairs, and to say that I would like to know whether he has personal knowledge, or at least knowledge from official circles, as to what is the amount of oil stock we have available in our country, in terms of number of weeks, and what is the amount of oil stock that we have, in reserve, in terms of number of weeks of supply, and also whether we have been able at least to tie up the depletion of the import account on oil that is likely to take place due to the present situation in the Gulf, in terms of quantity. I would like to know what does reasonable price mean. Has it been tied up, or is it going to be somewhere near the spot prices, because the spot price has risen to a level which is almost unreachable, if one looks at our foreign exchange position.

I would also like to know specifically in connection with this, whether there is any financial help coming forth to us from the developed countries who have really imposed these economic sanctions, in any special form. I am not referring to the IMF loan, I am referring to really more soft loans which could be given bilaterally, by these developed countries, to help us get over the crisis.

I notice that in paragraph 14 of his statement he has mentioned about it, but in his usual vague and referencing manner, made a statement without committing anything, has touched the topic and moved on. I would also take this opportunity to inform the hon Minister for External Affairs that his visit has been to the best of information that we received, welcomed by Indians in Kuwait. But nearly 20,000 families, I under-

stand, have moved over to Baghdad with the hope that from there, they would be able to move out and come to India from Amman. But they have a problem today, because of the sudden blockade of the land route, and no availability of shelter, shortage of food, and no toilet facilities; and above all due to shortage of money, they are unable to manage in Baghdad. This has caused a minor crisis to which, I think, the Minister would pay some attention and look into it.

I also understand that the data with regard to the number of Indians who have lost their lives is not really correct.

The figure is large. I wonder if the Minister would be kind enough to correct the figure.

AN HON. MEMBER: What is your correct figure?

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM: I have been told that the figure is nine. My sources cannot be as reliable as that of the hon. Minister's. My sources are almost the same because we had heard him on the air when the wireless transmission was taking place at that particular period of time.

The most important factor is with regard to shortage of essential commodities, looting and theft. The Minister said that there was no grave cause for anxiety; but it is not so. Let us not forget that. All the money that had been deposited in the banks has become almost a nullity. It is your private possession, which is in your possession, actually, physically. Whenever it is taken away either by burglary or looting or by theft, this would affect you in a very grave manner. I understand that over 2000 Indian homes have been involved either in some theft or looting or burglary. It is relevant to find out what is going to happen to the amount that has been deposited by Indian nationals especially NRIs in the Kuwaiti Bank? Is that

money going to be wiped off or would the government do something about it in terms of negotiations with the Iraqi Government to try to recover it.

Lastly, though not the least, I would like specifically to know how many trips have been made by the so-called Iraqi Aircraft which are chartered from Basra to Amman from where the Air India planes were to pick up the Indian nationals? Now that seems to be the only route at the moment, because the land route seems to have been closed down. We would like to know what is the exact programme with regard to this? Quite a lot of time has passed since the statement has been made. We would like to know specifically whether a programme has been drawn up for evacuation of those Indians who wish to return to India. In general, I think, it is important for the Minister of External Affairs to realise that, all over India, irrespective of caste, creed or language that we speak, all of us are disturbed by the situation, because almost every part of India is represented in Kuwait. There is almost a mini India available if one looks at the number of Indian nationals who are working in Kuwait. What is going to be our relationship with regard to every problem that every Indian is facing over there? You have suggested that you might consider taking of shipment of food over there. But the US sanction includes food. They say, even food cannot be taken. Today, with the United Nations giving support to the US using what could be called the minimum force, what is the situation with regard to taking food, which is a fundamental shortage; whether it is in Baghdad or Kuwait, in the whole of Iraq and Kuwait together? What is our approach with regard to the economic sanction being imposed, of course, now after the UN has approved it? Are we going to condemn it or are we going to join with it or are we going to take another line? What is our approach with regard to the whole situation? It is almost hitting a Tinder Box ready to be set off. Are we going to keep

silent? Are we going to play a mediatory role? Are we going to ensure that this Gulf crisis does not become a Third World War? One is very clear that many Arab countries have started backing and supporting Saddam Hussein's point of view essentially because of his Israeli angle where he said, why does the Israel not give up the occupied territory in return for the demand for giving up Kuwait?

17.00 hrs.

And, this has attracted quite a number of people the world over and there are many Indians who mildly seem to be supporting this line. I would like to know what the Government of India's clear stand is now. Initially, you may have felt that this was a very delicate situation, but you cannot take that stand now. Now that the UNO has taken a stand and the U.N. Secretary-General has come out clearly about this, are we going to take a policy decision and clearly enunciate our policy, or are we going to evade it, or is it our policy to evade the issue? Even if that is so, let us know, let the people of India know what is likely to be the future role of India, the role that India will play in the Gulf crisis.

I would only request the Minister of External Affairs that in such matters of delicate international issues too much delay causes more confusion and makes us look weak in the international arena.

Time is running out and the need of the hour is India show itself as a strong, clearly dedicated non-aligned country.

567-71

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): Sir, I should be brief and confine myself to seeking certain clarifications on the statement made by the hon. Minister on the last occasion, the 23rd August.

If you look into the long statement made you would find that in paragraph 19, as a matter of fact the contents, the approach or the position of the Government of India with regard to the unfolding situation in the Gulf countries, there are certain position enunciated. As for example, one positions is, now, after the onset of the crisis, we expressed our regret that the differences between Iraq and Kuwait could not be settled peacefully and stated our well-known position against the use of force in any form. That means we expressed our resentment or we made our position clear that in the matter of a dispute between Iraq and Kuwait force should not be applied and on that account we have also protested against the action of Iraq.

Again, it has been said that we are opposed to the unilateral action by any power on the basis of the situation which was prevailing prior to August 23. I think that the hon. Minister would be kind enough to explain or rather describe the changes in the situation after August 23rd.

From this statement, as I have mentioned earlier, certain questions arise.

Firstly, that today there is no question of unilateral action by the United States of America. The Security Council has also approved, or rather authorised, the Powers to use force and the U.S. presence in the Gulf area is very much considerable. And I think that it is assuming alarming proportions. What is the attitude of the Government towards the role which has already been played by the United States of America, or which is likely to be? So far as the United States of America is concerned, we are very much well-acquainted with their position. It is known that the British imperialists have left and now it is the United States of America which is trying to get hold of or rather to set its foot there for their global interests. All these days it was not possible for the United States of America to set their foot there very

firmly because there was consistent opposition from the Arab world and there was also opposition from the non-aligned Movement. The situation is advantageous for them today because Arab countries are also divided amongst themselves. The United States of America also tried to divide the Arab world. Therefore, taking advantage of this situation, they are trying to be present in the area and use the area for their global intents. Therefore, I want to know from the hon. Minister the attitude of the Government of India towards the new situation which has developed because of increased presence of the United States of America after the authorisation by the Security Council for use of force. This is my first point, which I want to be clarified.

Secondly, the Iraq has ordered for the pull out of all embassies in Kuwait. The United States of America has refused to do so. Other western countries also have refused to do so. The reason for their refusal, it appears to me, is that the United States administration does not rather want to demonstrate that they have accepted the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq. That is the position which they want to demonstrate graphically. Our position is also something of that nature. We have condemned the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq. We have pulled out our mission. How can we explain to them? Does it not mean that by pull out of our embassies from Kuwait, we have also accepted the position of the Iraq Government? On the other hand, we say that Iraq has committed wrong by invasion, by annexation. Now it requires to be explained by the hon. Minister.

The hon. Minister had been to the Soviet Union and had discussion with his counterpart. The Soviet Union is very much interested in this situation as it is developing. But as I see today in the press that the Soviet Union has not agreed to join the blockade or military action. As far as India is concerned, what is the actual position? Are we going to

accept the use of force, support the use of force in the matter of enforcing this sanction? Or should we oppose it? The statement of the 23rd August does not make any mention about it. Therefore, it is also necessary for us to know the actual attitude of the Government of India regarding this authorisation by the Security Council for use of force. The Soviet Union and our Government have common views, common perceptions on many issues. I want to know whether our hon. Minister had exchanged our views. Can he assure the House that there was common approach, common perception on this issue both by the USSR and India? And if not, what are the differences of perception with regard to the developing situation in the Gulf areas today? As he has hinted that dispute between Iraq and Kuwait is an internal affair of the Arab world—has been hinted at—Now, if that position is still being held by the Government of India, why does not the Government of India condemn the position of the United States of America. Why are they interfering in the internal affairs of the Arab world? In this case the role of India becomes very very important as the leading member of the NAM. The hon. Minister has mentioned something about it. But, I want to know what actual initiative has so far been taken by the Government of India as the leading NAM country to bring about a solution to the problem. The hon. Minister might be knowing that there have been some ethos, some initiative made by Algeria and some other countries and think more initiatives are likely to be taken by other countries also in Arab world. Why India is lagging behind? Why are you not taking a political initiative as a leading Member of the NAM. Of course, it was told earlier that situation is very delicate. It is very difficult to take a formal position as the situation was still developing. But after 23 August and today is the 27 August, the situation has taken a shape.

SHRISONTOSH MOHANDEV (Tripura West): After the U.N. Resolution

*Statt. by Min. of Ext. Affrs. re.**etc. in connection with
situation in the Gulf**his visit to Moscow, Washington,*

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): After the U.N. Resolution and the authorisation by the Security Council. Therefore, we cannot afford to take more time. Government of India should take a firm position with regard to the role taken by the United States of America, with regard to the role taken by the USSR and the role we should take as a leading NAM member and also take certain initiatives in collaboration with the Arab League and other countries which have already taken initiative in this matter. As regards evacuation question.

I think the situation has eased a little because Jordan has opened its border, Iraq has also opened its border and there is no much difficulty to facilitate the evacuation of those who are willing to come back to the country. But the question is what actual material arrangements are being made by the Government of India. I would be very much glad to know if Government of India. I would be very much glad to know if Government gives us the details of the arrangements the flights that they have been able to announce, what relief measures they have been able to announce, etc.etc.

Now, the question of Red Cross. He has mentioned about the shortage of food, medicine etc. I think it is international practice the Red Cross can take up the responsibility of providing power supply and all these kinds of materials, visit those who are affected, etc. Whether the Government of India has contacted Red Cross of India and taken such other steps which can help them to intervene in the matter particularly in matters of supply of food and medicine to those who have been very seriously affected.

[Translation]

571-74
PROF. PREM KUMAR DHUMAL

(Hamirpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, about eight to nine thousand people, particularly ex-serv-

iceman from Himachal Pradesh who were proficient in technical jobs are stranded in Kuwait and Iraq. My friends from other States have established contact on telephone with the stranded people from their respective states. In my state there is no facility of direct telephone to contact these stranded people.

I thank the Minister of External Affairs for taking personal interest in understanding their problems and for visiting that place in person. Today the action of America has received U.N. sanction in a way or in other words its action has been approved. Now it has two aspects. It has appeared in the newspapers that the Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs has said in a statement that America has violated the U.N. Charter. On the other hand, U.N.O. has approved the action of United States in sending its troops to Saudi Arabia. I want the Minister of External Affairs to make a statement on this contradiction and clarify whether we are condemning this action of America. U.N.O. is approving this action and in this situation if war breaks out, then what role are we going to play as the leaders of Non-Aligned Movement and in the event of a war, do the Government have any contingency plan to bring the stranded Indian back? The only way was that the stranded Indians in Kuwait and Iraq could be brought to Iran first and then brought to India from there. I would like to know from the Minister of External Affairs whether contact has been established with Iran, or Iran has agreed to the proposal that the Indians stranded in Iraq could be brought to Iran and thereafter they could be brought of India.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, other colleagues who spoke before me posed certain questions and the contradictory statements given by our Ministers have created suspicion many a times. Mr. Kumaramangalam has asked the Minister of External Affairs whether he has any definite information regarding the stock of oil, for how many weeks will it last and to

what extent will our friendly countries stand by us? In the event of deterioration of situation in Kuwait, which are the nations who would give us oil and other financial assistance so that the existing situation of oil in our country does not deteriorate further.

A new development has taken place offer the statement made by Shri Saddam Hussein that he is prepared for negotiated settlement. Now when the statement has come, I would again like to know about our contribution in that direction as leaders of Non-Aligned Movement. Will India take any such initiative under your leadership so that assistance could be provided for the negotiated settlement for which Saddam Hussein is ready? The silence that we maintained in the past suited us, our Minister of External Affairs was the only Asian leader who got the opportunity to visit Kuwait and meet Saddam Hussein. Today the situation is changing at such a rapid speed that even a war can break out any moment and the non-aligned countries can play a major role in averting such a situation. Therefore, will the Minister of External Affairs take steps in this direction and instead of evacuating lakhs of people from that region it will be ideal to contribute constructive cooperation in that area and present such a leadership under which the possibilities of a war could be averted and the fears and apprehensions in the minds of the people are removed. To what extent can we extend our cooperation in the prevailing conditions?

The issue of sending food stuff was raised and in that regard my suggestion was that it would have been good if medicines were also sent along with food stuff because shortage of food stuff has also been reported from that region.

Although the work done by our Embassy people was commendable yet some hon. Members raised their voice on behalf of the people who came from that area. Their

complaint was that when they went to the Embassy to meet people, they were asked to sit outside, they were not given permission to go inside and were not given a hearing. There can be two reasons for this. We have been told that when the hon. Minister visit that area the staff members of the entire Embassy were after him and the grievances of the people were not heard any they did not make any effort in the direction of sorting out their problems. The second reason could be that there is shortage of staff in the Embassy. Many hon. Members laid emphasis on the fact that the staff strength of the Embassy should be increased. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any move to increase the staff strength there, so that the problems of the people could be solved. With these words I once again thank the Minister of External Affairs for having taken keen interest in the welfare of our people who are stranded there. It is not merely a question of saving Indians, it is also a question of averting a war. In that too, he should come forward and make some contribution. India which has emerged as a leader of the Non-Aligned countries should play its role.

[English] 524-78

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister for External Affairs visited Kuwait and Iraq. That is good. I would like to know from the hon. Minister and the Government of India—my colleagues also express about it—why India acted very late. Many hon. Members have already spoken that India is a leading member in Non-Aligned Movement. Sir, in July, the President, Saddam Hussein threatened Kuwait. At that time, India should have shown its magnanimity and courage to interfere in this affair because Iraq is a friendly nation to India. Kuwait also is a friendly nation. Both are the members of the Non-Aligned Movement. When this problem has arisen, it is the duty of India to go a step

[Sh. Ramesh Chennithala]

forward and try to solve the problem. Earlier also, we had shown this kind of attitude.

I would like to know from the Minister why we are showing reluctance to interfere in this matter, because it is directly connected with the Indian national who are staying there. Not only that. It is connect with the peace in the world. At that time, the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister should have gone and met the President Saddam Hussein and talked to him as also other concerned people and it would have been good. A negotiated settlement should have been made at that time itself. But till 2nd August, we were reluctant in this matter. Now, of course, all these things have come to this situation. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether our Government is going to take initiative in this matter or not. Shri Chitta Basu and other hon. Members have already mentioned about the initiative to be taken by the Government. India is a leading member of the Non-Aligned Movement. Now the situation is aggravating day by day. Somebody pointed out that this may be converted into world war. So, it is our duty, as a leading member of the non-Aligned Movement to take immediate steps to bring peace in the Gulf region. I would like to know what are the step which our Government propose to take to settle these issues to bring back harmony in this region.

Sir, evacuation process is not yet over. Of course there is a slight improvement. Our people who are working there are still facing difficulties.

Now, in the statement it has been mentioned that 6000 people have taken food in a common kitchen. I think there is a shortage of food. One of my friends from Kerala also mentioned about sending food from our country to these people. Our aircrafts could not take food. We can send food

packets to the people there. I would like to know from the Minister whether transit camps can be arranged urgently. I think if we are able to arrange transit camps it will highly helpful to those people who wanted to go over and stay in the camps.

Thirdly, more aircrafts should be provided. Of course, there is shortage of aircrafts in the country. We can ask our friendly nations to provide us aircrafts so that they can be used for bringing these people from the Gulf countries. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is prepared to ask our friendly countries to give aircrafts on temporary basis so that those people could be brought to our country.

Then, Sir, there is shortage of medicines also. This was reported in the press. What are the arrangements made for giving them medicines and other essential items. Then, Sir, necessary immediate arrangements should be made to solve the financial difficulties faced by those people coming from the Gulf countries. Now, the people who had gone there are coming back without changing the currency of those countries into Indian currency.

17.25 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

That is the biggest problem which they are facing. We are talking to a number of people who are coming from Kuwait and they are telling us about their difficulties. They are in utter financial crisis and financial difficulties. Then, arrangements must be made for the study of their children. The children of the families which are coming from Kuwait have studied there and no they have no Transfer Certificate. So, proper arrangements must be done for the children to continue their studies and Transfer Certificate must not be made compulsory so that they are able to study in the Indian schools

577 *Disc. under Rule 193 BHADRA 5, 1912 (SAKA)*
Statt. by Min. of Ext. Affrs. re. his visit to
Moscow, Washington, Amman, Baghdad etc.
in connection with situation in the Gulf

Half-an-hour Disc. 578
Transfer of CPWD
Officer

here. Then, direct flight must be operated from Basrah, the nearest airport to Kuwait, to Trivandrum, Bombay and Delhi so that more people can be evacuated from there. In the statement, the Minister has mentioned that there is no need to worry. If there is no cause for anxiety and worry then, why thousands of people are coming out from there? So, the problem is very serious and we have to look in that angle. Then, rehabilitation is the most important thing. Thousands of people are coming from there. The effect of this would be very great on our economy. We have to think about that also. When we faced a severe drought, the previous Government could mobilise an amount of Rs. 4,000 crores to meet that crisis. This is also a national crisis and so their rehabilitation is the real problem for us. I urge upon the Government to take necessary steps to see that these people are rehabilitated. The Government of Kerala has submitted a proposal for Rs. 750 crores for their rehabilitation. But in the changed circumstances, it is not adequate. So, I request the hon. Minister to take necessary steps for their rehabilitation. Of course, this is not directly concerned with the External Affairs Minister. But the Government must think about that and make proper arrangements for their rehabilitation. Finally, the people of Indian origin are there not only in Kuwait, but they are there in Saudi Arabia and in other Gulf countries. They are in fear and especially from Saudi Arabia, we are getting a lot of messages that they are facing a lot of problems because of the army control. The people in the entire Gulf area and their families in India are in panic. I think the Minister must explain about the entire Gulf situation so that our people are able to assess the situation and the anxiety can be got rid of. I would like to know the initiative taken by the Government not only in regard to Kuwait but also in regard to other parts of the Gulf area. I am once again requesting the hon. Minister of External Affairs to take the initiative as the leading member of the Non-aligned Movement, to come forward and try our level best

to solve the problems in the Gulf area and bring back peace and harmony in the area.

17.30 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

Transfer of CPWD Officer

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now we will take up half-an-hour discussion to be initiated by Shri Kusuma Krishna Murthy. After the half-an-hour discussion, we will take up this discussion under rule 193.

SHRI KUSUMA KRISHNA MURTHY (Amalapuram): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, this matter relates to Starred Question No. 28, dated 8th August, 1990 replied by the Minister of Urban Development.

[Translation]

PROF. MAHADEO SHIVANKAR (Chimur): I may also please be given an opportunity to speak because the question was originally asked by me, but it has come in his name in the ballot.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We do not do it here.

SHRI KUSUMA KRISHNA MURTHY: This question was asked not by our member it but it was mentioned in the name of two hon. Member it but it was mentioned in the name of two hon. Members. Many Members must have given notice and most of them must have realised out of their own experience that the working system of the Central Public Works Department has come to a stage where it becomes very very difficult for