

[श्री जैल सिंह]

कॉलिंग एग्जिक्शन मोशन था उसके साथ इनका कोई सम्बन्ध ही नहीं था इसलिए मैं इनकी बात का कोई जवाब नहीं दूंगा। जो बातें मुझे कहनी थी वह मैंने कह दी हैं। (व्यवधान)

SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR:

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am going to conduct the proceedings to the best of my ability. Kindly resume your seat.

SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR:

MR. CHAIRMAN: All these remarks will not go on record—against the Chair.

(Interruptions)*

15.15 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE
LEGISLATION
SECOND REPORT

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA (Pali): I beg to present the Second Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation.

15.16 hrs.

STATEMENT RE IRAN-IRAQ
CONFLICT

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the House is aware that for the past few years strains have been evident in the relations between countries in West Asia. This has caused us much anxiety and it has been India's endeavour to prevent any destabilisation of the entire region. Since Parliament

rose in August, a further unfortunate development has taken place in the form of an open armed conflict between Iran and Iraq.

The continuing war between Iran and Iraq, two countries with whom India has close and long-standing ties, is a matter of deep concern and distress to India. From the very beginning of the war, India has made it clear that it has not taken and will not take sides and has expressed its anguish at the loss of life and property being suffered by both sides. India has consistently held that disputes between countries should be settled bilaterally and by peaceful means without recourse to war. We have also expressed our deep concern that prolongation or escalation of the present conflict could have grave implications on both regional and global peace and security.

Sir, when the first news of the beginning of the war came on 22nd September, 1980 I was in New York for the UN General Assembly which had already been in session since 16th September, 1980. I immediately held consultations with several other Foreign Ministers, including those of countries that are currently members of the Security Council. The general feeling of concern voiced in these consultations resulted in the Security Council meeting on 28th September, 1980. The resolution adopted by the Council, however, did not succeed in securing a cease fire. I also took the earliest opportunity of meeting the Secretary-General of the United Nations with whom my discussions centred around the manner in which the UN could act in resolving the conflict.

I also met the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Gromyko, and the U.S. Secretary of State Mr. Muskie. I was assured that both the U.S. and the USSR would remain neutral in the Iran-Iraq conflict. These decisions

naturally helped in preventing the conflict from the danger of escalation and possible enlargement.

Since the resolution of the Security Council could not bring about a cease fire, the logical step was to find a solution which included a cease fire coupled with a process of negotiation to resolve the causes of the conflict. This, I regret to say has eluded the international community so far. The initiative of the Islamic Conference did not yield any result, as also the appeals of the Secretary-General of the U.N.

Meanwhile, Special Envoys of both Iran and Iraq visited India on 28-9-1980 and 8-10-1980 respectively to explain to our Prime Minister the points of view of their respective Governments. In response, we counselled restraint and brought to their attention the dangers of possible intervention and interference by outside powers and the effect that this would have on the independence and non-aligned position of both the countries. Our Prime Minister's Special Envoys have also been to both Baghdad and Tehran in order to better understand the points of view of the two sides.

At the UN General Assembly on 3rd October, 1980, I had stated that the continuing conflict between the two countries would "only weaken the solidarity of the non-aligned and developing countries". It was our belief that Iran and Iraq being themselves non-aligned countries, would perhaps be more willing to accept a group of non-aligned countries to help towards a resolution of the present conflict. However, it was obvious that no initiative could succeed unless properly timed.

Subsequently, a suggestion was made, at the instance of Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, that the Coordinating Bureau of Non-aligned Countries should meet in New York on 21st October, 1980 to consider the possibility of a Non-aligned initiative

The Bureau, meeting at the level of Ambassadors, decided that a Committee of Goodwill be set up to offer its good offices towards that end. Subsequently, after consultations held with all concerned, including Iran and Iraq, a seven-member Committee was constituted at the level of Ambassadors—The members being Algeria, Cuba, India, Pakistan, PLO, Yugoslavia and Zambia. It was also decided that a meeting be held at Belgrade where the Committee would constitute itself at Ministerial level and deliberate on further details regarding its functioning: the Bureau also recommended that the Committee should visit Baghdad and Tehran.

On the morning of 30th October, I received an invitation from the Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia to a meeting to be convened at Belgrade on 2nd and 3rd November, 1980. The Next day, only hours before I was due to leave for Belgrade, we received news that Iraq had objected to the inclusion of Algeria on the Committee, stating that it had reservations, in principle, to the inclusion of any Arab member, except PLO as a special case. It was also reported that Iraq had suggested a few other countries out of whom a seventh member could be selected, acceptable to Iran. However, on learning personally from the Yugoslav Foreign Minister that this last-minute development could be sorted out, and that all the other Foreign Ministers would be present at the meeting, I left for Belgrade.

Soon after my arrival in Belgrade, we received news that Iran was not in a position to accept that above mentioned proposal and insisted on Algeria being included.

The Belgrade meeting, owing to this unforeseen development, started under a cloud. As a result, we had to devote the major portion of our time to discussing the technicality of whether the six Ministers present were within their rights in constituting themselves as the Goodwill Committee. Consequently, the Foreign Minister could not pro-

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ceeded to the stage of discussing substantive issues. It was ultimately decided to issue an Appeal to the Governments of Iran and Iraq, in the name of the six Ministers, in the following terms:

"The Ministers are prepared, if agreed to by both Iran and Iraq, to constitute themselves as a Goodwill Committee, and function as such, or to enlarge its membership as may be acceptable to both Iran and Iraq, so as to constitute the goodwill committee. The Ministers, therefore, appealed to the Governments of Iran and Iraq in the spirit of non-aligned solidarity, to consider these alternatives and signify their agreement in order to enable the constitution and functioning of the goodwill committee.

"The Ministers are prepared to exert, in accordance with the policy and principles of non-alignment, as defined in the declarations of their heads of State and Government, utmost efforts with a view to contributing towards the commencement of a peaceful process to find a just and honourable solution to this conflict between two non-aligned countries. To this end, the Ministers are ready to visit Tehran and Baghdad on the invitation of the respective Governments or to take any other step conducive to this purpose.

"The Ministers would like to express their full respect to the Governments of Iran and Iraq."

The Balgrade meeting had to be concluded at that point. The initiative was based on the conviction that an attempt should be made to find a solution to this conflict within the non-aligned movement. In our view, the effort was worth making. The initiative is being continued and efforts are being made in order to enable the Goodwill Committee to be constituted and to undertake its intended mission. The Ministers decided to meet

again in New Delhi at the opportune time.

The Government of India is fully aware of the difficulties and complexities of the situation and the need for the emergence of circumstances more conducive to the success of the peace mission. We, however, continue to believe that we must not relent in our efforts in meeting this serious threat to regional stability and world peace.

On my way back from Europe, I stopped over briefly at Beirut to meet Chairman Yasser Arafat. I had the opportunity of benefiting from his personal assessment of the conflict and of the various mediatory efforts made so far. Chairman Arafat continued to hold the view that the non-aligned initiative had a better chance of helping to find a solution. He assured me that his effort would continue in spite of the setbacks and that he would constantly keep India informed of further developments.

Since my return, the Secretary General of the United Nations has appointed the distinguished former Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Olof Palme as his special representative to go to both Iran and Iraq and try to help towards a resolution of the conflict. I can only wish him well in his endeavour.

As Members are aware, there are a large number of Indians working in Iraq and Iran in various capacities—doctors, engineers, teachers, skilled and unskilled labour etc. Their safety has been our major concern. We have taken all possible steps including arranging their repatriation to India where necessary. As a result of the Iranian bombing of Basra on 23rd September, there were some Indian casualties. As the conflict intensified, demands for the repatriation of foreigners of many nationalities mounted. Large groups of foreign nationals converged mainly on the Iran/Kuwait border from 23rd September onward. Many of these including Indian nationals, were stranded there without food and shelter or entry

and travel arrangements in the absence of Kuwaiti entry/transit visas. With inadequate facilities at the border checkpost and the local officials unprepared for a crisis of this dimension, all foreigners crossing the border, including our nationals, initially faced hardship at this checkpost is the desert.

I transited through Kuwait on 11th October while returning from New York after participating in the UN General Assembly session, in order to be able to obtain a first hand account of the arrangements being made to provide succour to our nationals and to facilitate their return to India. My enquiries show that after the handicaps of the first day or two, which were reported in the Indian Press, all possible arrangements were made by our Embassy in Kuwait to facilitate the reception and smooth transit of our nationals through Kuwait. A team of officials has been working practically round the clock at the checkpost on the Kuwait-Iraq border assisting in arranging transit visas for the evacuees, supplying travel documents on the spot to those who had left them behind, arranging their shelter, medical attention and food during their stay in Kuwait, and planning their flight schedules for their return to India. I am glad to say that in extending hospitality to the Indian evacuees, the help of the local Indian community and enterprises based in Kuwait which was sought for our Embassy, was readily extended. Some of our correspondents, not to mention the Arab and the international press, had occasion to pay a visit to the checkposts and see for themselves the arrangements made there. The manner in which this exodus from Iraq has been tackled by our Mission personnel has received very favourable mention in the press. I may mention that the help of our personnel was also availed of by nationals of other countries and it was readily forthcoming. We

have received letters from some nationals of other countries thanking our personnel for the help rendered to them.

A special cell was set up in the Ministry of External Affairs to co-ordinate all arrangements connected with the repatriation. Seventeen Air India flights, over and above the normal schedule, were operated to airlift the evacuees through Amman and Kuwait. Special teams of 3 officials each were rushed to Kuwait and Amman to assist our missions there. Our Embassy in Baghdad and our Consulate General in Basra were also strengthened despite the prevailing war situation there. Indian Embassy officials have been present at the border checkposts on the Iraqi-Kuwait and Iraq-Jordan borders whenever evacuees have passed through, to facilitate their entry and transit to the airports. Missions were also authorised to arrange for issue of Air India tickets on credit to Indian companies wishing to repatriate their employees and lacking immediate liquidity as well as to repatriate any destitute Indians lacking means to buy air tickets. Full cooperation was extended by Governments of neighbouring countries like Jordan, Syria, Turkey, USSR, Pakistan and Kuwait for the transit of our nationals through their territories. The Central Board of Excise and Customs was requested to extend necessary facilities to the returning Indians for the import of personal baggage. A special officer was also designated to handle all queries relating to the welfare of Indian nationals caught in the war zone.

In Iran, our nationals seeking repatriation were able to do so without much difficulty through neighbouring countries like Turkey, USSR and Pakistan.

A number of Indian ships are also stranded at Khorramshahr and Basra on account of the war. There has been some damage to these but fortunately the crew of all these vessels

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have been repatriated with the exception of three Indians, one belonging to an Indian ship and two to a Panamanian vessel, who are reported missing.

The total number of India casualties so far has been 15 killed and 25 injured.

To sum up, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I wish to assure the Members that the Government of India has actively, but quietly, attempted to do whatever was possible to restore peace between our two valued friends and to protect and help our nationals, wherever required. We will continue to offer our good offices in whatever way that both the countries or the international community may require of us. We are prepared to play this role because we believe this conflict to be one of the most unfortunate developments that have taken place in recent times.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sir, I would also like to add in this connection that even after the evacuation of a large number of Indian nationals from these two countries, the number those who are left behind and those who are stuck to their jobs and those who are bravely facing all the circumstances there and still are refusing to leave the country runs into thousands. This is a matter for special appreciation.

श्री रामनगोता मिश्र (सलेमपुर) : सभापति महोदय, मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि अभी मंत्री महोदय ने जो वक्तव्य दिया है.....

सभापति महोदय : आपको मैं नियम पढ़ कर सुनाता हूँ । नियम 372 इस प्रकार है :

“Rule 372: A statement may be made by a Minister on a matter of public importance with the consent of the Speaker but no question shall

be asked at the time the statement is made.”

इसलिए कृपा कर अभी आप अपना प्रश्न ना पूछें ।

15.31 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
EIGHTH REPORT

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH): Sir, I beg to move the following:—

“That this House do agree with the Eighth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 17th November, 1980.”

15.32 hrs.

[SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE in the Chair]

श्री राम विलास पासवान (हाजीपुर) : सभापति महोदय, मैं चाहता हूँ कि इसमें यह और सम्मिलित कर दिया जाए । यह जो छठी पंचवर्षीय योजना का प्रारूप है, फाइव डायर प्लान है, इसको इसमें कहीं नहीं रखा गया है । यह सदन सर्वोपरि है, इसलिए सदन में उस पर भी विचार हो ।

दूसरा है कि प्रधान मंत्री जी ने अखबारों के जरिए पूरे देश में एक कन्फ्यूजन क्रिएट कर दिया है कि इस देश में जो वर्तमान लोकतांत्रिक ढांचा है, उसमें परिवर्तन किया जा सकता है या नहीं । इस पर बहस चलाई जाए । वैसे आम चीज पर तो हमारे देश में बहस चलती ही रहती है, लेकिन प्रधान मंत्री द्वारा मेनिपुलेट करना कि देश में इस प्रकार की चर्चा हो, मैं समझता हूँ कि यह गम्भीर बात है और इस पर भी सदन में चर्चा होनी चाहिए और प्रधान मंत्री को सदन के सामने स्थिति स्पष्ट