

Port Facilities for U.S.A. in Sri Lanka

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*363. SHRI R. L. BHATIA:

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the United States of America is urgently looking for rest and recreation facilities for its Western Indian Ocean forces in the littoral States, which U.S. has decided to maintain as a form of its permanent presence in the Indian Ocean;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that Sri Lanka and possibly Maldives, which have been given offers of substantial industrial investment by the United States, have expressed their willingness to grant recreation-rest facilities for the United States troops in Diago Garcia and elsewhere; and

(c) if so, Government of India's reaction to this move?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) There are indications that the United States is seeking to obtain such facilities for its naval units in the Indian ocean.

(b) There have been speculative news reports on the subject. However, in a statement made in the Sri Lanka Parliament on November 26, the Sri-Lankan Foreign Minister stated that there has been no change in Sri Lanka's foreign policy on this question. He added that in the past they had allowed port facilities to the naval vessels of the USA and USSR and they would continue to do so provided the countries using the facilities were not engaged in war and the vessels do not carry nuclear weapons. The Sri Lanka Government have categorically denied press reports that they have offered a naval base to the USA. In respect of Maldives also, we have no information to the effect that they have

(c) The question of Government any exclusive facilities to the US.

(c) The question of Government of India's reaction specifically on this issue does not arise at present. As regards the general question of the expansion of US naval activities India has consistently opposed Great Power military presence in the Indian Ocean as it introduces new tensions and conflicts in our neighbourhood and constitutes a threat to peace and stability. Our strong opposition to the increasing Great Power naval presence has been conveyed both in bilateral talks as well as the UN and other international fora. India is working with other non-aligned littoral and hinterland States to preserve the concept contained in the UN Resolution of 1971 which envisages the elimination of Great Power military presence from the Indian Ocean.

SHRI R. L. BHATIA: Sir, my question is different. The hon. Minister is telling us that Sri-Lanka has categorically denied the press report that they have offered a naval base to USA. My question is not with regard to the naval base being offered by Sri Lanka or Maldivian Islands. My question is that in the Indian ocean, the U.S.A. has deployed 12000 people in Diago Garcia. As a task force, there are 37 warships of the U.S.A. moving about in Indian Ocean. Now, for the troops which are stationed in Diago Garcia, for their recreation when they go home, they will have some facilities in these areas and they will enjoy the benefits. I would like the hon. Minister to clarify this point first and then I will put my second question.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: The information which we got from Sri Lanka has been placed before the House. In regard to the rest and recreation facilities, the statement made by the Sri-Lankan Foreign

Minister appears to deny any such thing. But denial does not appear to be categorical. If the hon. Member wants, we can make further enquiries and that is why I said that our reaction specifically on this question does not arise at the moment.

SHRI R. L. BHATIA: My question is that the U.S.A. has a very big arsenal of nuclear weapons and other things in Diago Garcia and we in India are feeling very much concerned about it. Now they are asking for further facilities from other littoral countries in this regard. May I know from the hon. Minister if he has made any protest to the U.S.A. with regard to their ever-increasing naval presence and ever-increasing troops in Indian Ocean?

SHRN P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: This question I have already replied.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA: May I know from the hon. Minister that in the face of ex-Prime Minister, Shri Morarji Desai's statement for encouraging the U.S.A. and China to give more armoury heads to Pakistan, whether our Government is giving priority to scrutinise the existence of naval base in Indian Ocean?

MR. SPEAKER: This question does not arise out of this.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: The Minister said in his reply that the question of taking up the matter or reacting does not arise at present. The Government is taking the matter very casually. When the rest and recreation facilities are being extended to American troops, we should draw a lesson on what the American troops have done to Thailand. It would be a cultural invasion of Sri Lanka which will have an impact on India. I would like to know, whether the Government

would take up this issue, the demoralisation or the lowering of moral that would take place in Sri Lanka and its impact in India.

SHRN P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: Before anything happens to India, we would have to see what happens to Sri Lanka and in that respect since I am not very clear about these particular facilities referred to in the question, I said, there is no point in making any specific reference or any reaction at the moment. The statement of the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka appears, as I said, to deny this, but we will have to go further into this.

आचार्य भगवान देव : मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि हिंद-महासागर के अंदर अमरीका के बढ़ते हुए कदमों को देखते हुए, अभी जब मैं संसदीय राजभाषा के दौरे पर मारीसस गया तो वहां देखा कि वहां पर अमरीका, चीन और ब्रिटिश की तरफ से कुछ गतिविधियां, भारत के विरुद्ध और वहां पर कब्जा करने सम्बन्धी चल रही हैं।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : किसके ऊपर कब्जा ?

आचार्य भगवान देव : मारीसस के ऊपर प्रभाव डालकर वहां पर अपना कब्जा जमाना चाहते हैं।

रेल मंत्रालय तथा संसदीय कार्य विभाग में उप-मंत्री (श्री मल्लिकार्जुन) : मारीसस तो अभी दिएगो-गार्शिया को वापिस मांग रहा है।

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: President Brezhnev addressed to us yesterday and he agreed with India that Indian Ocean should be made a zone of peace. What exactly does it mean? Does it mean that all the bases would be demolished?

MR. SPEAKER: It is self-explanatory, zone of peace means zone of peace.

Next question.

New Lines in Bihar and West Bengal

*364. **SHRI KAMLA MISHRA MADHUKAR:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the new areas where survey for setting new railway lines in the States of Bihar and West Bengal have been undertaken during the last one year;

(b) whether these Governments have sent in their respective demands and proposals for opening new railway lines in certain areas where lack of proper communication is preventing developmental activities; and

(c) if so, the facts thereof and the steps being taken to bring such areas under the railway network?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) Lines recently surveyed.

(i) Ranchi Road-Hazaribagh Town-Koderma-Giridih (194 kms.) (Bihar) Estimated cost Rs. 55.26 crores.

(ii) Budge Budge-Namkhana (104.1 kms.) (West Bengal) Estimated cost Rs. 15.76 crores.

Surveys in Progress.

(i) Mandarhill-Baidyanathdham (55 kms.) (Bihar)

(ii) Arrah-Sasaram (105 kms.) (Bihar).

(iii) Final location cum traffic survey between Dehri-on-Sone and Pipradih via Amjhore and Banjara (66 kms.) (Bihar).

(iv) Reconnaissance Engineering-cum-Traffic Survey for BG line between Gaya and Rajgir (43 kms.) (Bihar).

(v) Preliminary Engineering-cum-Traffic survey for rail link between Barwadih-Karonji (154 kms.) (Partly in Bihar and partly in Madhya Pradesh).

(vi) Kharagpur-Digha (West Bengal).

(b) Proposals received from State Governments of Bihar and West Bengal.

(i) New line from Ranchi Road to Giridih via Koderma.

(ii) New GB link from Budge Budge to Namkhana and between Lakshmikantapur and Kulpi.

(c) Survey reports of Ranchi Road-Giridih and Budge Budge-Namkhana including Lakshmikantapur-Kulpi new rail links have been received recently and are under active consideration. A decision will be taken after evaluation of the survey reports.

श्री कमला मिश्र मधुकर : अध्यक्ष जी, मंत्री महोदय का जो बयान है वह बहुत ही गोल-मटोल है। जैसा कि उत्तर में बताया गया है कि—“रांची-गिरीडोह और दजबज-नीमखाना जिसमें लक्ष्मीकांतपुर-कुलपी नई रेलवे लाइन शामिल हैं, की सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्ट हाल ही में प्राप्त हुई है और इन पर सक्रीय रूप से विचार किया जा रहा है। सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्टों का मूल्यांकन हो जाने के बाद ही इस सम्बन्ध में कोई विनिश्चय किया जा सकेगा।” मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि यह विचार कब तक होगा और कब तक इसको कार्यरूप दिया जाएगा। इसके लिए क्या आपने कोई टाइम लिमिट बनाई है कि कब तक कार्यवाही करेंगे और इस ओर आप क्या कदम बढ़ा रहे हैं ?