

14.36 hrs.

RESOLUTION RE: ESTABLISHMENT OF VARIOUS DEFENCE COUNCILS—contd.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The House will now proceed with the further discussion of the following Resolution moved by Shri Uma Charan Patnaik on the 8th April, 1960:—

“This House is of opinion that Army, Navy, Air Force and Production Councils be established together with an over-all Defence Council to co-ordinate and control their activities.”

Out of an hour and a half allotted for the discussion of the resolution, 39 minutes have already taken up.

Is any hon. Member on his legs? I understand there is none.

An hon. Member: Mr. Patnaik is not here.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: That does not matter. Shri D. C. Sharma.

Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur): Sir, I appreciate very much the pains taken by Shri Patnaik so far as thinking on our Defence matters is concerned. He is one of the few Members of this House who, to a great extent, are thinking on this subject, a subject of great importance to my country and also to other countries of the world. But difficulty is this, that defence, the art and science of defence, is undergoing a transformation every minute. So far as defence matters go, we are not here today very well adjusted. So far as the defence organisation goes, things are rapidly changing. So far as defence production goes, things are undergoing revolutionary changes. So far as strategy goes, the less I say about it the better. I must say that the strategy of the Second World War is now a thing of the past. The production which was necessitated by that war is not now needed. To think of the reorganisation of the defence

forces now in terms of what obtained in U.K. some years ago or in some other country some years ago is, I would submit very respectfully, a piece of outmoded thinking; it is a piece of obsolete thinking.

When I was a teacher in a college, I used to find that most of the teachers used to talk about the things at Oxford and Cambridge which had become outmoded there twenty years ago. I remember one writer, one critic, about whom we felt very great enthusiasm. But when I happened to talk about him to a gentleman who had come from Oxford and I thought I was giving him some piece of information which was very useful, he said to me “This was a man who was a vital figure in Oxford twenty years ago, but now he has been put on the shelf there; other people have taken the place and his theories have become outmoded”.

Similarly, these Defence Councils might have worked very well in U.K. at one time. They might have worked wonderfully, for aught I know. Lord Ismay might have spoken very highly about them. But nobody talks about them now.

But even if they were very good things for U.K., I would submit very respectfully that my country has got to evolve a defence pattern which is going to be its own. We may learn a few things from here and there. But we cannot copy things from other countries. In the first place, other countries have many more resources in terms of money, material, thinking on strategy and actual experience of fighting than we have. What is our experience of fighting? Of course, we have had some experience of fighting in Kashmir, and a very valuable experience, but this experience cannot compare very favourably with the experience of the U.K. which fought the first and second world wars.

So far as defence industries go, I know we are doing very well, but what are our defence industries compared to the defence industries of a country like the Soviet Union or the U.K.? So, India has got to fulfil its destiny in the field of defence all along the line in its own way. It cannot copy things from others.

In the U.K. they have three Defence Ministers, controlling the three services, by whatever special names they are called, but here in our country we have only one Defence Minister, and I think it is very good because it makes for unity of thought, unity of purpose, unity of direction, in matters of defence. Therefore, if they have three Ministers, we have only one.

Shri M. B. Thakore (Patan): And two Deputy Ministers and one Parliamentary Secretary.

Shri D. C. Sharma: I have all respect for the two Deputy Ministers, and I have affection for the Parliamentary Secretary, but I am not talking in terms of Deputy Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries at this time, I am talking in terms of Ministers, full-fledged Ministers of Cabinet rank.

These councils were created there so that inter-service rivalries could be minimised, so that there could be meetings between one group and another, so that some kind of co-ordination could be introduced into the defence pattern. I do not think that is our problem at this time. Our problem is not the same as the problem of U.K., U.S.A., or to other countries. It is because in the first place, we have the Defence Committee of the Cabinet. At the meetings of that committee, the three Chiefs of Staff are also invited sometimes. I am speaking subject to correction. Since nobody has contradicted me, I think what I have said is correct. Then there is the Defence Committee of the Minister where all these three

Chiefs are represented. There is also the Defence Production Committee. So, I submit that so far as organisational matters are concerned, they are being looked after very properly by these different committees.

So far as our strategy is concerned, no committee can give guidance on the subject. So far as production goes, we have the Defence Production Committee which is representative of the three services. So, I submit that the system recommended is not something which is needed in the country.

It has been said that this is something which the Estimates Committee has recommended. I have all respect for the Estimates Committee, and I have no end of respect for the Members of the Estimates Committee, but, after all, what the Estimates Committee has said is only a suggestion. The Estimates Committee has not given a directive. It is a fruitful idea given to us by the Estimates Committee, and after looking at that idea in the context of our needs and of our defence aspirations, I would say that it is not necessary to have anything of this kind in our country.

I therefore say that our defence set-up so far as organisational matters go should remain as it is, and there should be a direct link between our three Chiefs and the Defence Minister, and between the Defence Minister and the Defence Committee. At the same time, there should be a direct link between our defence production and our Defence Minister. I think for the time being this is something that is working well, and we should not try to introduce anything new into this.

The Minister of Defence (Shri Krishna Menon): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, I am sure the House is much beholden to the hon. Mover of this resolution whose presence we, unfortunately, do not have here today, for drawing its attention to the question of the defence control by Parliament—that is what it really boils down to—

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but I would like to assure you Mr. Deputy-Speaker and the House that while this topic turns up as more or less a hardy annual, Government has not treated it as though it is a matter of no consequence, more so because it provides an opportunity to explain to the House how the defence organisation works and to what extent nomenclatures reflect the content of organisations.

The arguments that have been adduced in favour of this are largely British experience, and the merit of the thing itself has not been before us as a proposition. So far as British experience goes, the three arms of the defence services came in to being in different chronological order. In British Governments, the Secretaries of State as they were called took precedence over other Ministers. There were originally five Secretaries of State, to which afterwards were added on two others. At that time the most important Minister in the defence field was what was called the Secretary of State for War, whom we do not have here. Later I believe came the Board of Admiralty, or many be before that. It is a Board consisting of the Sea Lords, presided over by the First Sea Lord. Later came the Secretary of State for Air and Air Comd., a few years before the war, or perhaps immediately before the outbreak of the war. These gentlemen, the Secretaries of State, were full members of the Cabinet, and they occupied that place. Though even now they are called Secretaries of State, they are Ministers outside the Cabinet. They are junior Ministers in that sense, although I do not want to make any observation about another Government that is functioning, except for the purpose of understanding this matter.

Then emerged the Minister of Defence who gradually, during the war, became fully responsible. First it was Mr. Winston Churchill presiding as Prime Minister, and later on

the Minister of Defence became the co-ordinating authority and now increasingly he is the Minister for the whole field of defence, production many being largely assigned to what was the Ministry of Supply, which within the last twelve months has changed, and has gone back to the defence field for the most part.

We are told that British experience or the experience of other countries is not to be thrown away. I yield to no one in my respect for the experience of other lands over the years or centuries as the case may be, but it should not be forgotten that there is a whole world and our own experiments drawn from. It is only in the U.K. and Australia that there is this system of council governments.

Apart from that, on merits, the reasons given for this change are these. First of all, if there are these councils, the access to the Minister of Chiefs of Staff would not be an individual approach, but the approach of the Chief and P.S.Os. That is one argument. Though it is not put that way, that is the basic argument in this matter. The second is that the Minister of Defence would not try to engage himself in too much detail which may either be out of compassion for the poor Defence Minister, or it may be the feeling that he ought to be more democratised or controlled or committed or something of that character.

Since the debate does not seem to have excited very much of interest today, I shall just deal with the essential parts of this problem, and I shall try and tell the House what the position in our country is and to what extent control is exercised on a better basis than the proposals envisage.

This matter came up before government soon after Independence, because before Independence, we had no difficulties in this matter, as the Indian Army which was the largest

part of our Defence Forces functioned largely under the War Office, and the Commander-in-Chief who was also the Defence Minister was the second member of Government. So, these problems did not arise.

Soon after Independence, we took counsel; Government took counsel at that time, of the experienced men. I do not think there is any harm in saying that Lord Ismay, who had a very long experience of the British war system, and I believe, was Chief of the Imperial General Staff, advised us on this matter, and the present system was set up.

Having said that, I think it is worth the while to institute some comparison, not phrase by phrase, not point by point, with the British system as it obtains. In Britain, there is the Defence Minister at the top; then, there are these councils so-called, the Board of Admiralty, the Army Council and the Air Council. They are today all under the Defence Minister. The Defence Minister can preside over them, if he wants to; the Chiefs of Staff come to the meetings, and there is now a Chief of the Chiefs of Staff also presides over them normally. On the other side, there is another organisation, which the House has probably heard of already, namely what is called the Board. It is that Board whose functions are in reality more important. That board is more or less identical with the Defence Minister's committees here. It is that board which really operates the whole system of defence organisation and maintains contact with the Minister who is responsible to Parliament.

Over here, when Lord Ismay made these proposals, at our request we accepted them. It has worked well for all these years, to our great satisfaction. And it is not static; it moves on according to the necessities of functions.

At present, what happens here is this. Taking it from the top, there

is the Defence Committee of the Cabinet presided over by the Prime Minister, in which are the more important service organisations like the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Communications, Minister of Railways, Minister of Industries, and I forget who else, and the Minister of Defence, and all those Ministers who may have a great deal to do with council of defence problems specially in times of emergency, that is to say, the senior Ministers, but Ministers of Government, or I should not say senior Ministers, of Government, or I should not say senior Ministers, but Ministers of Government whose functions are regarded as important for the purpose by the Prime Minister. That is the Defence Committee of the Cabinet, which, in fact, functions for the Cabinet.

So, any matter which should be referred to the Cabinet goes to the Defence Committee of the Cabinet. It is entirely open to the Prime Minister whether he wants to inform or obtain the approval of the full Cabinet, because the former is really the replica of the latter. That is the higher form of control which is exercised on the whole of defence policy, defence organisation, and defence administration, and both the Prime Minister, and the Defence Minister and other Members are all part of one Government and they are responsible to this House and to Parliament.

Secondly, from that level you come to the next one, which has been given the name—I did not give it, but it was started as—such the Defence Minister's committee. Now, there is the Defence Minister's Committee (General), which is presided over by the Defence Minister, and at which are present the Deputy Ministers, the Defence Secretary, the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Production, and nowadays, the Chief of the Defence Science Organisation, and the Financial Adviser. In our system, the presence of the Financial Adviser is very important because nothing can

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be done unless there is financial concurrence at every stage. That is a large Defence Committee. But, in practice, this Defence Minister's committee is attended by any member of the Services or of the Defence Ministry, who is required for functional purposes. Usually, they are large meetings, because the other people, maybe the adjutant-general or maybe the quarter-master-general or maybe the Chief of General Staff on the Army side or maybe, the Engineer-in-chief, whoever is required is present, and usually, there are a certain number of officers present at this. That is the general committee.

In addition to that are three committees, representing the Army, the Air Force and the Navy. In these committees, only the Service Chiefs representing these Services attend; all the others are just the same.

Shri D. C. Sharma was referring to the Defence Minister's Production Committee, which assumes more and more importance as the days have gone by, where all the Service Chiefs are present as users, the producers are present, the manufacturers, that is, the Controller-General of Defence Production, the Secretary who looks after Defence Production, and so on. This committee has functioned extremely well.

Then, there is also the Defence Minister's committee for Research and Development, in which the principal officers concerned is the Chairman of the Defence Science Organisation.

These bodies are not advisory nor have they extreme authority because, after all, the responsibility of Government is in the Minister, that is to say, the Minister is responsible to Parliament; he could not come here and say that the Defence Minister's committee voted this way or that way; he may persuade them, or they may persuade him. Anyway, I do not know what my predecessor Shri Tyagi had found, but I have found no occasion when somehow or other there

could not be any agreement on all matters. These are not committees where votes are taken any more than in the Cabinet. Anyway, these committees process matters. They help in the execution as the functional bodies.

The point has been made that there is no statutory existence. If you mean that there is no statutory existence in the sense that it is not provided in any of the legislation passed, there may be some degree of truth in it. But if the Council of Ministers has a statutory existence, and the charge that is given to them has some statutory meanings, then the arrangements set up under that also have statutory meaning.

So, these committees really take the place of the Board in England. The British system as such does not obtain even in the other Dominions or other Commonwealth countries, much less in other places. The American system is very much like ours in some respects, though I do not want to go into greater details about it.

We have developed this to a considerable extent ourselves. I would like to add at this stage that the trend of development in the United Kingdom has been more in the way we have been working rather than in the way they have been working in the past, that is to say, modern developments are more in this direction, especially with the expansion of the services and the intensity of the factors that are brought to bear upon them.

Therefore, there is nothing in these suggestions, which has been made, which we have not considered. We have considered these things time after time, and they have not been found useful, whether they came from the Estimates Committee or from anywhere else.

There is no desire on the part of Government to say that what has been must be. In fact, changes have

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taken place in the last ten years; changes have taken place during the last two years, during the last three years or one year or whatever it may be, according to the necessities.

The main point is the responsibility of Government to Parliament. So long as Government is responsible to Parliament, these functional organisations cannot be criticised, suggestions can be made about them in the light of experience which might come to the knowledge of Members or any lapses or any prospects of better functioning that Members may see by their own knowledge or their own experience.

I yield to none in my regard for Shri U. C. Patnaik for the persistence with which he has put forward this idea and also for the occasion that he has given to Parliament to discuss these matters which are somewhat different from the other matters we are nowadays discussing in connection with Defence.

So, I am glad to have this opportunity of talking about this. I want to assure the House that the Defence Organisation and its functional bodies are satisfactory in character. They provide for team spirit. They do not take away from the responsibility of the Service Chief and Chief officers.

The idea that the access to the Defence Minister should be not only of the Chiefs of Staff but that of the PSO's can only be a matter of normal adjustment depending on how things work out, because, after all, the Chiefs are Chiefs of the Services, and in the kind of hier-archial structure, discipline has to be maintained. But I have found no difficulty in their access to me or my access to them. In a democratic Government, especially in a parliamentary system of government, it is largely a matter of how things work out. And the working out, in my experience and in the experience of my predecessors, has

been satisfactory. It enables development; it is flexible in its way, and as I said, in essence, it is what obtains in U.K. also.

Government wish to oppose this resolution.

15 hrs.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There was an amendment to this Resolution moved by Shri Shree Narayan Das. He is also absent. So, I shall have to put the amendment first and then the Resolution. (*Interruptions*).

Because the amendment has been moved I have to put it to the House. That cannot be withdrawn when the Member is absent.

I will put the amendment. The question is:

For the original Resolution, substitute—

“This House is of opinion that a Committee be appointed to consider the necessity, desirability and feasibility of establishing Army, Navy, Air Force and Production Councils together with an overall Defence Council to co-ordinate their activities.”

The motion was negatived.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Now the question is:

“This House is of opinion that Army, Navy, Air Force and Production Councils be established together with an overall Defence Council to co-ordinate and control their activities.”

The motion was negatived.

RESOLUTION RE: WITHDRAWAL OF KASHMIR CASE FROM U.N.O.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Now, we take up the next Resolution. Shri Tariq.

Shri A. M. Tariq (Jammu and Kashmir): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, I beg to move:

“This House is of opinion that on account of the failure of the