

14.37 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO USSR

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJ DESAI): Mr. Speaker Sir, as the House is aware, I visited the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Soviet leaders extended on their behalf by His Excellency the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, Mr. Brezhnev. I left India on October 21 and returned on the morning of October 27. During my stay in the Soviet Union, I also visited the Black Sea town of Sochi and the capital of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic Kiev. The Minister of External Affairs, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee accompanied me on this visit. Throughout this visit, wherever we went we were received with warmth and courtesy which exceeded the protocol requirements.

During our stay in Moscow, we had two plenary discussions with the Soviet leaders led by General Secretary Mr. Brezhnev. I also had several informal talks with the Soviet leadership. The exchange of views covered our bilateral relations and dealt on various important international questions. Though, by their very nature, such conversations must be treated as confidential, I have no hesitation in sharing with the House that our discussions were characterised by utmost frankness and cordiality. They revealed mutual appreciation of each other's points of views and a common determination to preserve and strengthen our cooperation and friendship based on mutual respect and equality to serve the enlightened interests of both countries.

For me, this was not my first visit to the Soviet Union. I had visited Moscow and some other cities in the So-

viet Union in 1960. Going after 17 years, as I did, I was impressed by the economic and social progress in the places I visited.

When the Janata Government came to power, there were many who believed that Indo-Soviet relations would suffer as a consequence of the change of Government in India. This was not our expectation: the visit has vindicated our faith that notwithstanding differences in our social and political system and approaches on some issues our relationship has in no way suffered. On the contrary, on the principle of promoting beneficial bilateral relations, I believe, there are possibilities of healthy development in the cooperation between the two countries in the future. As the Declaration signed by President Brezhnev and myself acknowledges, Indo-Soviet relations have stood the test of time. It is a relationship which need in no way be feared by any nation as it is anchored in the principles of peaceful co-existence which have universal applicability.

I particularly welcomed this visit as it gave me the opportunity for establishing personal contacts with the Soviet leaders and I have no doubt this could be of great advantage in preserving our relations and correcting misunderstandings which may ever arise amongst us.

Indo-Soviet cooperation has a continuing momentum over many fields: the processes have never been allowed to slacken. During my visit no new technical or economic questions arose because we felt that these could best be discussed at the level of experts. The Declaration, however, mentions that delegations of experts from Soviet Union are likely to visit India in the near future to explore ways and means of further strengthening technical, economic and scientific cooperation between the two countries and thereafter the proposals could be processed through the Indo-Soviet Joint Commission. As the

House is aware, there is an Indo-Soviet Joint Commission for Technical, Economic and Scientific cooperation. The level of this Commission has been recently raised. The Minister of External Affairs will be the Indian Co-Chairman of this Commission and the Soviet Deputy Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Arkhipov will be the Soviet Co-Chairman. The Joint Commission will hold its next session sometime early next year in New Delhi.

I have invited President Brezhnev and Chairman Kosygin to visit India. They have accepted this invitation. Dates for these visits will be decided later.

In conclusion, I would like to state that this visit confirms the essential continuity of India's relationship with the Soviet Union which in turn reinforces our commitment to the principles of co-existence, non-alignment and friendship in promoting international stability. The visit has in fact given a dimension of stability and strength to Indo-Soviet relationship. The results have been welcomed in our country and in the USSR and I would think the maturity with which it has been reaffirmed will make it an important factor in promoting detente and widening the search for international peace. Both countries have also acknowledged that the relationship does not in any way come in the way of development of relationship with other countries which are motivated by similar objectives of promoting peace and the strengthening of understanding between nations. In brief, the Indo-Soviet relations, as I said in Moscow, can now be looked upon as a model for any two countries to emulate.

*Text of the Joint Declaration issued at the conclusion of Prime Minister Shri Morarji Desai's visit to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics from 21 October—26 October, 1977.*

"The Republic of India and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics"

Affirming their conviction that the fruitful development of relations between the two countries has vindicated that states with diverse social and economic systems can successfully cooperate to mutual benefit when guided by the principles of peaceful co-existence,

Recognising the importance not only of maintaining but further strengthening friendship and mutual beneficial and many-sided cooperation between the two countries in the spirit of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation of 1971.

Reiterating their confidence that their continued cooperation, based on equality and mutual respect, makes a significant contribution to the promotion of peace and understanding among all nations of the world, and in no way impedes the development of their relations with third countries which are motivated by the same objectives.

Believing that commitment in international cooperation between sovereign nations is essential for international peace and stability,

Welcoming the trends towards the relaxation of international tension and the increasing participation of newly independent countries in the consolidation of peace and international cooperation,

Reiterating their determination to co-operate in efforts for the elimination of all manifestations of imperialism, colonialism and racialism,

Declare their solemn resolve to strengthen further their friendship

and co-operation which reflect the interests of the two peoples and serve the cause of international harmony and understanding.

In the course of a comprehensive exchange of views held in an atmosphere of friendship, cordiality and mutual understanding, the two sides reviewed the broad spectrum of Indo-Soviet relations and examined major international problems.

The Soviet leaders informed the Prime Minister of India about successes achieved in the development of the USSR national economy in the implementation of the decisions of the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the adoption of the new Constitution of the USSR which heralds a historic landmark in the development of Soviet society, the creative enthusiasm with which the Soviet people approach the 60th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution which laid the beginning of an era of liberation of mankind from all forms of national and social oppression.

The Prime Minister of India conveyed his congratulations to the Soviet leaders and through them to the Soviet people on the forthcoming 60th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the new Constitution of the USSR which reflected the achievements of the Soviet people in socio-economic development and in science, education and culture.

The Prime Minister of India informed the Soviet leaders about the recent developments in India leading to the formation of the new Government on the mandate of the Indian people and its political, social and economic programmes.

The Soviet leaders felicitated the Prime Minister and through him the people of India on their achievements in the years of independent development and welcomed the contribution of the Republic of India to the common struggle of the peoples against

imperialism, for peace, national independence and social progress.

The two sides noted the great importance of the development of personal contacts at the higher level and expressed the common belief that periodic consultations and exchange of views on development of bilateral relations and on topical international problems at various levels serve a useful purpose.

The two sides noted that Indo-Soviet friendship has stood the test of time, it is not subject to transient considerations and serves as an important factor of peace and stability in Asia and in the world.

Both sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of the relations of traditional friendship and co-operation between India and the USSR in the spirit of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation of August, 1971, which reliably serves the interests of India and the Soviet Union. They noted that these relations are based on their common interest of the struggle for peace and international cooperation, on the principles of equality and mutual respect, strict observance of sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

As economic, technical and scientific advance continues, new and more effective forms of cooperation are being developed between the two countries. As a result of measures taken by both States, significant progress has been achieved in the expansion of Indo-Soviet trade, the total volume of which has quadrupled in the last decade.

The two sides noted with satisfaction the development of cooperation in the fields of culture, arts, literature, education, health, tourism, sports, which contributes to the deepening and enrichment of Indo-Soviet relations.

India and the Soviet Union express their firm intention to develop fur-

ther and strengthen many-sided co-operation in different fields.

India and the Soviet Union agreed that a long-term programme of mutually beneficial economic cooperation in the development of important sectors of the Indian economy and bilateral trade exchanges should be worked out in 1978. Teams of experts of Indian and Soviet organisations will be formed to study and define prospects of collaboration in such sectors as ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, petroleum, coal, agriculture, irrigation, etc., as well as cooperation in assisting the economic development of third countries. The two sides will shortly identify the prospects of co-operation in the construction of an alumina plant in India on a compensation basis.

The two sides noted with satisfaction the progress of work being done under the auspices of the Indo-Soviet Joint Commission of Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation and expressed their confidence that it would enlarge the scope of such cooperation through the long-term programme referred to earlier.

The two sides noted that there was a broad identity of views of India and the USSR during their discussion on major international problems. The two sides expressed their determination to continue active efforts to strengthen peace and international security, to eliminate hot-beds of tension and the threat of war, and reiterated their respect for the legitimate right of the peoples to independent development.

India and the Soviet Union noted with satisfaction that the trends towards detente and cooperation have, in recent years, become more pronounced and underlined the need for further extending this process to all areas of the world.

India and the Soviet Union viewed the task of stopping the arms race, averting nuclear war and achieving disarmament as the most acute and

pressing task in the present day international relations.

They are in favour of the early conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty as well as other international agreements on the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction and on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons.

The two sides reaffirm their determination to facilitate the achievement of general and completed disarmament including nuclear disarmament, under effective international control. They believe that the forthcoming special session of the U.N. General Assembly would consider in a comprehensive manner questions of general and complete disarmament and also express the hope for the early convening of a World Disarmament Conference.

In the belief that all states must renounce the threat or use of force, India and the Soviet Union came out in favour of the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations.

The two sides recognised that there has been a significant relaxation of tensions in Europe and progress achieved in the development of relations and cooperation between the states of Eastern and Western Europe. In this connection, they expressed the hope that the process will be intensified and lead to military detente in Europe.

The two sides recognised that mutually beneficial cooperation among Asian States must be developed and extended in order to consolidate peace and stability in the region. To this end relations between states should be based on such universally accepted principles as renunciation of the use of force or threat of force, respect for each other's sovereignty and inviolability of frontiers, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, cooperation in economic and other fields on the basis of full equality, mutual benefit and the right of each people to choose their own political and

social systems. Acceptance of these principles in inter-state relations would contribute to the transformation of Asia into a continent of durable peace and to the strengthening of peace in the whole world.

In reviewing the situation in South Asia, the two sides welcomed the success achieved in solving problems and differences through bilateral negotiations between the countries of the region. They recognised that this has led to significant improvement in the climate of good neighbourliness in the sub-continent of the process of beneficial cooperation would release the resources and talents of the peoples in the area for constructive development which in turn would make a useful contribution towards peace and stability in the region and help in the promotion of international peace.

Both sides warmly welcomed the admission of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the membership of the United Nations.

The two sides reiterated their support for a just political settlement in West Asia, based on the withdrawal of Israel forces from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967, on the satisfaction of the just demands of the Arab people of Palestine including their legitimate and inalienable right to establish their own state, and on ensuring the right of all states of West Asia to independent existence and development. To achieve these aims they are firmly in favour of the earliest resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference with the participation of all parties concerned including representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

The two sides expressed concern over the continuing conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia and hoped for an early cessation and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

India and the Soviet Union condemned resolutely the minority racist

regimes in the Republic of South Africa and Zimbabwe and the illegal occupation of Namibia by the South African Regime. They fully endorsed the demand for the unconditional and immediate transfer of power to representatives of the majority in Zimbabwe, for the granting of independence to the people of Namibia and for an immediate end to the policy of apartheid and racism in the Republic of South Africa.

India and the Soviet Union are convinced of the increasingly significant contribution made by the non-aligned movement to the common struggle for the strengthening of universal peace and security of nations, against imperialism and aggression, for the elimination of the vestiges of colonialism, racial discrimination and the policy of apartheid, in defence of independence and freedom of all peoples and also for the establishment of the new international economic order on the basis of respect for national sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit.

During the exchange of views on the situation in the Indian Ocean, the two sides expressed their support for the desire of the peoples of the area to make the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace. They called for the elimination of all existing foreign military bases from the Indian Ocean and the prohibition of new ones.

The two sides reaffirm their resolve to work for the further strengthening of the United Nations and of its effectiveness in maintaining universal peace and security of nations and in promoting international cooperation on the basis of the strict observance of the principles and purposes of the U.N. Charter.

The two sides exchanged views on the questions relating to the Law of the Sea and reiterated their intention to

facilitate the achievement of agreement on a new convention of the Law of the Sea which would be on the whole acceptable to all States.

The Soviet leaders and people warmly welcomed the visit of the Prime Minister of India to the USSR. The two sides are convinced that this

MORARJI DESAI,

PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA.

26th October, 1977

14.43 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. SAMACHAR NEWS AGENCY

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): Honourable Members will recall my statement in the House on April 7, 1977, on the circumstances leading to the formation of SAMACHAR with the merger of the four news agencies that had functioned till then. I had also indicated that in view of wide spread criticism that had been made against this set-up and the commitment of this Government to ensuring freedom of the press, I was setting up a Committee of Experts to examine and report on the future of "SAMACHAR".

This Committee, as Members are aware, was constituted on 19th April, 1977 under the chairmanship of Shri Kuldeep Nayar with eleven other members. The Report of the Committee was submitted on 13th August, 1977 and was released soon thereafter so that Government could have the benefit of the reactions of the press and the public in general in formulating their approach to the recommendations that have been made. On August, 31, '77 following the release of the Report, the SAMACHAR Managing Committee had adopted a resolution assuring

visit and the fruitful exchange of opinions held between the leaders of India and the Soviet Union proved to be a further testimony to the desire of both countries to continue to strengthen and develop Indo-Soviet friendship and many-sided cooperation, to broaden mutual understanding and trust between them.

L. I. BREZHNEV,

GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPSU, PRESIDENT OF THE PRESIDIDIUM OF THE SUPREME SOVIET OF THE USSR.

Government of their co-operation in implementing whatever decisions Government took on the future set-up of news agencies.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Back to the Private owners?

SHRI L. K. ADVANI: Government have considered the question of the future set-up of news agencies in the country in all its aspects. In doing so, they have taken into account recommendations made by the Experts Committee on news agencies as also the public reaction to its recommendations. Government have also taken note of the fact that the former Government had not only actively assisted the formation of SAMACHAR but had also guided the Managing Committee of SAMACHAR in their policy decisions. SAMACHAR was, thus, in this sense a product and the symbol of the Emergency and, indeed, an aberration arising out of the Emergency. Government have, therefore, come to the conclusion that at the moment Government's role in the matter should be limited simply to the setting right of this aberration. News agencies forced to merge under pressure and against their will during the Emergency should be allowed to function independently as they were earlier. It would then be open to them if they so desire to co-operate or come together in order to ensure that they are able to play more