**श्री नीतीश कुमारः** महोदय, हमने जितनी बातें बताई, सरकार उन पर गंभीरतापूर्वक विचार कर रही है । पश्चिमी बंगाल के वित्त मंत्री यहां आए थे और माननीय वित्त मंत्री जी से भी मिले थे । वहां पर हमारी बातें हुई थी । उस समय मुख्य मंत्री जी से जो बातें हुई थी, सारी बातों पर सरकार सक्रिय रुप से विचार कर रही है । जो भी प्रक्रिया है उससे गुजरकर ही निर्णय लेना होगा ।....(**व्यवधान**)...

**उपसभाध्यक्ष** (**श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक**) : आप बैठ जाइए । कृपया आसन ग्रहण करें । ढ़ाई बजे से प्राइवेट मैम्बर्स का समय चालू होता है । व्यवस्था यह है, लेकिन राजगोपाल जी कुछ कहना चाहते हैं ।

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Sir, I request that we should take up and complete the reply by the Minister of External Affairs on the debate regarding foreign affairs.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI RAMA SHANKAR KAUSHIK): And what about the introduction of Bills?

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: That can also be finished, but after this.

**उपसभाध्यक्ष** (**श्री रमा शंकर कौशिक**) : इन्ट्रोडेक्शन आफ बिल के लिए आप की सहमति है?

**कुछ माननीय सदस्य** :हां ।

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## GOVERNMENT MOTION

## INTERNATIONAL SITUATION (Contd.)

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity to reply to the discussion that we concluded yesterday, on the international situation. I must take this opportunity, Sir, to place my very sincere gratitude to all the hon. Members who participated and benefited me with their views. I am also, of course, very grateful to such hon. Members as have commended the work that the Ministry of External Affairs is doing; but, I remain equally, if not equally, only marginally less grateful to such Members as have found fault with us and suggested that we benefit by the views and advice that they had for us. Sir. you will appreciate that it will not be possible for me to take all the points that all the hon. Members had made. What I have done is to distil the common points that found echo in various hon. Members' participation in the debate, and from then, if there are any other additional points remaining, I will come to that.

Sir, a point that hon. Pranab Mukherjee, speaking for the principal Opposition Party, also CPM's Dr. Biplab Dasgupta, who is. unfortunately, not here today, made was that the policy of this Government is a departure from the past. Sir, I would like to assert that it is not so; because I said so in my very opening submissions to the House. Very befittingiy and quite appropriately and correctly, references were made to the great personalities of the past, principally, to late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of the country; and amongst the principal architects of India's foreign policy. It is only befitting that we said that. But it was not any hon. Members' point that a nostalgia for the past, or, about great personalities of those times, or, the policies then adopted and of the state of the world then existing, is a suitable approach to meet the challenge of contemporaneity, particularly, when the world of today is characterised by change, the sheer velocity of change, political, economic and technological. That is why, Sir, mindful of this strength of continuity and the strength of the great inheritance that successive Governments have received, I had said — and I have the indulgence of the House to repeat what I had then said — in my opening remarks, i had said -- that we appfoach this responsibility of addressing the challenge of the present, rooted in the strengths of the past, with a vision of the future, about the true destiny of India. For, mind you, Sir, attaining that destiny is the ultimate national interest.

Another point made by Shri Pranab Mukherjee and also by several other hon. Members was, whether there is any departure in India's West Asia policy; and this observation was focussed on the current situation in Palestine and Israel. I have no doubt in my mind that all hon. Members recognise and take note of the fact that this region is an area of multiple conflicts. It is not simply a question of Israel and Palestine; it is also a question of the ultimate settlement of the Israel-Syria question; Israel-Jordan or Israel-Lebanon, despite the withdrawal of Israel from there. We must also bear in mind that Iran and Iraq had had a long conflict.

I do not refer to Turkey here. or. other aspects; but, these are the integrals of the region, and, that is why, we, as a Government, are entirely mindful of the fact that the present Palestine-Israel situation is of great volatility, and it has a potential for enlargement of the conflict; that is why, repeatedly, we have made our position explicit and clear. These statements were issued on several days. But from the very earliest, after Camp David, when the first incident took place at Al-aksar, the Government was alert to the situation, and it immediately issued its viewpoint clearly and

unambiguously. I do not wish here to repeat the fact that I had, just before that, between Camp David and Al-aksar. just before Camp David actually, visited the Palestine National Authority and also Israel also. Sir, with some hesitation, I point out that it is, perhaps, a matter of coincidence that after a gap of more than forty years, I did happen to be the first Foreign Minister of India to visit Gaza. I did have an opportunity then to call on the current President of the Palestine National Authority, President Yasser Arafat. Indeed, Yasser Arafat, soon after Camp David, visited us in Delhi. So, I had an opportunity to meet the Prime Minister of Israel and my then counterpart in Israel! Shimon Peres, the Nobel laureate, and one of the architects of peace between the Arabs and Israelis, particularly, between Egypt and Israel, also visited us. We have not only issued statements, but we have consistently, and even now, whether it was the UNHRC or the UN General Assembly or the Sharm-el Sheikh meeting of the Arab League, which has taken place after a gap of some ten years, come out with explicit statements, in support of the Palestine cause, and, that is why, I seek the indulgence of the House to yet again, and very clearly, plaoe on record where the Government stands. Given the close relations that exist between India and the Arab world, the sympathy, concern and continued support with which we have viewed the Palestinian cause, the concern of hon. Members on the recent developments, is understandable. The situation following this grave escalation of tension, the consequent violence and the entire chain of provocation and armed action is a matter of grave concern to the Government of India. We believe that the (evels of violence unleashed upon the protesting Palestinians is disproportionate to the provacation. The casualties suffered, principally by the Palestinians, are tragic and a matter of very deep concern. The hopes that have been generated by the understanding reached at the summit at Sharm-el Sheikh in Egypt on October 17th have now turned out to be premature. The cycle of provocation met by violence and steadily escalating levels of military retaliation must end. This is possible only with an early restoration of a peaceful situation on the ground. Even as the Middle-East peace process now appears severely impaired, we remain committed, along with others in the international community, to seize upon even the tiniest aperture of opportunity. 'The need of the hour is for restraint', for statesmanship and for clear headedness and not to allow strong emotions to either dictate policy or events. In circumstances such as these, it would be most unwise to let the policy be led by the street. I take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to a Palestinian state with internationally recognised borders as

the legitimate right and aspirations of the Palestinian people. We stand by all the relevant UNSC resolutions on this issue, in particular UNSC resolutions 242 and 338. We have done so in the past; we will do so again. We urge all sides to desist from acts of provocation, use of indiscriminate force or encouragement to violence. Peace and normalcy must immediately be restored and the Middle-East Peace• Process not permitted to collapse irreversibly. We have in this regard also welcomed the moves initiated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and our Permanent Mission in New York is constantly in touch with him as indeed with embassies and other representatives of other countries,

So, the other point in this very context was about Iraq. We have been very clear and repeatedly emphasising both here in the Press as also in the UN General Assembly that we do not consider the bombings that had been going on for some time past on parts of Iraq as in any manner authorised by the United Nations. We have also repeatedly said that the sanctions imposed on Iraq are unjust, unwise and are detrimental to the large numbers of innocent Iraqi men, women and children. I would seek the indulgence of the hon. Members, with your permission, Sir, to also yet again make explicit India's position in this regard. India is vitally interested in the peace and prosperity of the Gulf region and has, therefore, supported all efforts to defuse the crisis relating to Iraq, India has repeatedly called for the lifting of the sanctions in tandem with Iraq's compliance with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. We have also sought an effective response from the international community to remove the sufferings of the Iraqi people. Towards these ends, India has called for a resumption of diplomatic efforts under the auspices of the United Nations. India is convinced that there is a need to develop fresh ideas to deal with the situation relating to Iraq, and to develop new mechanisms that would serve the purpose of the United Nations. India has consistently opposed armed action against Iraq as it is counterproductive and only serves to increase the sufferings of the Iraqi people. We reject the resort to unilateral armed action against Iraq. We also reject any attempt to effect any changes in Iraq's territorial integrity. We see these attempts as having unforeseen and destructive geo-political implications for the region. In order to promote the security and stability of the region, it would help if Iraq can be brought back into the mainstream of regional and international affairs. It is because of this consistent stand that we have taken and in recognition of that I might inform hon. Members that the Vice-President of Iraq, Taha Yasin Ramadan is due to visit Delhi next week. He is our honoured State

guest with whom we have very extensive agenda of bilateral dialogue, discussions and review of future developments.

On the question of non-proliferation and disarmament, I was benefited by the views of Hon. Pranab Mukherjee and also a number of other hon. Members. There were mainly three points that were raised by the hon. Members. One related to questioning the concept of minimum credible deterrent. The second point was about the further tests, if needed, and Pranab babu went on to say that if other countries are engaged in tests running into thousands, how could we assert, what we are asserting, simply on the basis of six or seven tests. The third point was about some discussions within the scientific community of India — possibly also abroad - about the data that has been released about the tests. Finally, about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. I cannot do Justice to this subject in its entirety, Mr. Vice-Chairman, because this is a subject by itself. No doubt, the Government will benefit, and I will personally benefit if we could have a fuller discussion on this very vital subject. Nevertheless, I am under an obligation to briefly respond to all these points. On the minimum credible deterrent, hon. Pranab Mukherjee, put across his viewpoint, which is a viewpoint which has been put across by somebody else also, that it is better not to have conducted tests because there existed a kind of ability and that was sufficient. I submit for the consideration of the House that that is a proposition or an advocacy of what I would call, concealed deterrence or possibly even technical deterrence, As against concealed deterrence or technical deterrent, the Government, after due and deliberate thought, took the decision to go in for a clear, credible, but a minimum deterrent. Minimum because, as I said in my opening remarks, that, in principle, culturally and civilizationally, India continues to belong to the world of disarmament and that is where, ultimately, it will have to go back. In the meantime, until the entire globe is rid of all its weapons of mass .destruction, we will have to continue to have a balance between the demands of real politic, the demands of national security and just and valid international concerns in regard to weapons of mass destruction. So far as the question of further tests is concerned, it is very simple. We have voluntarily put a moratorium on tests and we have also stated that we will not stand in the way of entry Into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, provided the international community arrived at a consensus in this regard, and provided, those that are covered under the relevant article of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, also adhere to it, without any additional pre-conditions or reservations. The

aspect of further test, if required, by India or any country for that matter, is an inherent right and that right has not been foreclosed and neither of course, has it been foregone. On the question of the scientific community having different viewpoints on this subject, I submit to hon. Pranab babu and such other hon. Members who had taken note of the discussions that must take place in an open and free society, like India, that such scientific disputation about the validity of scientific data released, is common not simply in India, but in all the countries where scientific experimentation of this kind, relating not simply to nuclear technology, but other high technologies of a high endeavour, is a matter that is frequently experienced.

Not simply here, but also In other parts of the world. Therefore, my submission to the hon. Members Is that the only criterion and the only yardstick that can be applied is to uphold the credibility and advice of whatever the scientific communities in the country tender as their official and authoritative advice to the Government. If we deviate from that path, then we would, in fact, be robbing our own principal instruments of their strength. Hon. Pranab babu also mentioned that if, for the May, 1998 tests,wider consultation had taken place, then, perhaps, there would have been greater consensus in this regard. I am not attempting to score debating points, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, but the fact remains that one of the signal characteristics of the May 1998 tests was that the international community-- indeed those who take pride in their ability to conduct twenty-four hours surveillance all over the world,-- was completely taken by surprise. That was principally because of the very high security standards that were maintained at that time. I do not wish to repeat, Sir, that even the 1974 peaceful nuclear explosion, which was conducted under the leadership of the late Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, was not preceded by any large scale consultation. We do not find fault with that. We do not find fault with that because the very nature of what is sought to be attempted issuch that it is not possible to have a wider consultation. Sir, the other point, which a number of hon. Members have either covered or did not cover, relates to India's relations with the rest of the world. I wish to cover it before I come to either the Peoples' Republic of China, or, our immediate neighbour. On Indo-US relations, I believe, almost every Member said something or the other. Some of them commended our endeavours; others found fault with it and some Members even cautioned us as to what we should not do. I would like to point out -- not as any exercise inexaggerating — what has been achieved *by* us, but certainly, as an objective assessment of an objective reality, hon. Members would do well

to reflect on the situation that prevailed soon after the May, 1998 test was conducted. That is the only reason. Hon. Dr. Karan Singh said, 'we cannot consider the starting point as May, 1998.' Of course, not. But as far as my accountability, my responsibility, for the conduct of international relation of the country goes, I have to have a' starting point. And as I am entrusted with this responsibility, only for that purpose, I used May 1998 as the starting point. I would request hon. Members to take their minds back to the kind of hue and cry the alarmist talk .that erupted suddenly after May 1998.

India was then addressed in prescriprive tones. 'India - do this, that or the other', and you have to do it.

Some good friends of mine of long-standing had advised me in public that I had dug a hole and buried myself there; therefore, I should now find my way out of it. A campaign was led against India; sanctions were imposed. Why do I ask you to reflect on that reality? And why do I, thereafter, urge you to examine objectively the reality of today, which I will cover very briefly. In the context of the United States, 1 do believe that the turnaround that has been achieved between May, 1998 and now, is a significant achievement. It is in national interest, and it has been achieved not under pressure, because the items of pressure that were listed are in everyone's knowledge. Please, therefore, take those items of pressure and examine those items of pressure as against the reality of today. I do not mind when you say, "Do hot act under pressure", because that is a useful caution. But when, thereafter, some friends say that you are acting under pressure, then they are not fair. I think, principally, you are not being fair to yourself, because if you were to make such a statement, you rob your own position of its strength and legitimacy. Hon. Pranab Babu went to the extent of saying -- if I hear right and if the record informs me correctly — that the recent talks which we have had with the leadership of Myanmar are also under the pressure of a third country. It is an astonishing statement, and I urge him to please reflect. I would urge the hon. Members that India is the only country with which the United States of America has signed a vision statement. Why did it sign a vision statement? Because it was a proposal that we gave. We said, what we require in a relationship between India and the United States is predictability, stability and continuity. Details will always be there. They can always be found. But if we can create an architecture, a structure that imparts to this relationship, credibility, stability, confidence and continuity, then we would

**3.00 P.M.**

be leaving behind something -- irrespective of which Government comes to power in Washington, irrespective of what happens in the democratic polity of India -- that would impart the continuity. Why? Because our belief is not on one aspect of unipolarity or multi-polarity, etc. There are and there will emerge alternative spheres, and in that emergence of alternative spheres. India has and will have, it is its destiny, to play a role as a sphere in itself. That is why, it is necessary for India to have an equilibrium with the pre-eminent power on earth today. It is this rationale that has persuaded us in our pursuit and in everything else that we do.

A number of hon. Members have said, what about the concrete results. My request is, please only go through the lists of all the things that have been done between March and September. I do not want to quote all those details here, because it takes the time of the House. I hardly need to point out about Indo-Russia relations. Hon. Members, it is very seldom that we have a situation in which a successful visit by our Head of Government, hon. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Washington, is followed so soon thereafter by a visit by President Putin of Russia, and that visit was to sign a document, which I believe, is a document of great significance. It is signed after we had a vision statement with the United States of America. What has been signed between India and the Russia during President Putin's visit is a document of strategic partnership.

Don't think that these are small achievements of Indian diplomacy. Had these been achieved within a period of six weeks, they could have possibly been cited as a coincidence of time. I wish to take this opportunity here again to repeat what I have done earlier. Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, in the management of the post-May. 1998 situation. I wish to place on record my very high appreciation and commendation of the great integrity, dedication to duty and work that every officer of the Ministry of External Affairs displayed in this regard. It is a matter of great pride for me that I had the honour and distinction of leading such an outstandingly fine team of officers and others, which enabled India to achieve this, which no individual endeavour could have achieved. Indeed, all the officers of the Ministry of External Affairs have contributed not simply to the Indo-US relations but to the Indo-Russian relations also.

Hon. Dr. Karan Singh spoke of the Indo-European Union relations. I am sure it has come to his knowledge. The first ever Indo-EU summit took place this year. It was at the invitation of the leadership of the European Union. The first ever summit took place in Lisbon. We, in the Ministry of External Affairs, did work towards it. It is the same European Union that, following the May, 1998 tests, had said what it had said. Thereafter, in 1999, the first summit takes place. That itself carries a message. The summit was attended by many other achievements, and they are following.

The European Union is the second largest area of importance to us. We greatly value it as a Union, not simply as a Union but also each of the constituents of the Union bilaterally. This reflects in the relationship and the content of that relationship, whether it is India and the UK, India and France, India and Germany, India and Spain and India and Italy etc. The visits that have taken place and from them the visits that have followed to us are all indicative of the management of the situation and the transformation that has taken place even in the Indo-EU relations.

About Indo-Japan relationship, need I point out to hon. Members that now we have visits to Japan? The Prime Minister of Japan was here. When he came here, an announcement was made, "Japan considers its relationship with India as a global partnership." These are not sentences that have been used in a fit of amnesia. We have worked towards it. We recognise and we fully respect Japanese sentiments in regard to weapons of mass destruction. I have said so publicly. I have said ft in Japan. I wish to take this opportunity to say it here that Japan is the only country against which, and the Japanese are the only people against whom weapons of mass destruction have been used the only time ever in war in anger against the civilian population. Therefore, the sentiments of Japan in regard to weapons of mass destruction are a matter to which we give the highest importance. We respect their views in this regard. While recognising their views, we cannot abandon the totality of our national interests too. It is this balancing of Japanese sentiments and concerns and India's security concerns that has been achieved. It is because of that that the Japanese Prime Minister, when he came here, spoke of Japan's relations with India as a global partnership.

I do not wish to take the time talking about the details of management of the relationship between India and Australia and India and African countries. Sir. I will need more time to do justice to the subject.

We had for the first time President Obasanjo as our respected guest. The relationship with Nigeria is one of the building blocks of the totality of India's relationship with the whole of the African continent, Including our relationship with South Africa, now in its new role as the current Chairman of the Non-Alignment Movement.

May I share with the hon. Members that between the opening of Parliament and 22nd December when the Parliament rises, we have as many as 16 visits from abroad? These visits are by themselves an index of what is taking place and where India stands in the eyes of the international community. As far as Africa goes, it is in this period itself, before December is out, we win have three Ministers, two Foreign Ministers and one Trade Minister of the three most important East African countries; Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, here, jointly, together, to sign important documents with India. Mr. Vice-Chairman, why do I say this? I say this only to point out that the Ministry of External Affairs and its officers have with great diligence worked towards re-establishing India's position after May, 1998, when it was questioned. We have most successfully been able to do so is now evidenced, not because i say so, but because of what is taking place on the ground.

Sir, Dr. Karan Singh, my good friend, Dr. Biplab Dasgupta, Pranab babu and others referred to the Peoples' Republic of China. Dr Dasgupta has put it in a certain angle. Dr. Karan Singh referred to the movement on the border question. Pranab babu commended the economic advancement and progress that the Peoples Republic of China has demonstrated. We do commend that. I would have been happier if Pranab babu had commended the economic progress that India has made. We are. not too far behind them. But I take note of what he has said.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, I wish to take this opportunity to make a very important announcement in regard to the development in India's relations with the Peoples' Republic of China. I had earlier thought I would make this announcement through a suo motu statement in the House. But when a discussion on international affairs was taken up, I thought this is the correct opportunity. Therefore, with your permission, I wish to read out, what I do believe, a very significant development that has taken place in regard to India's relations with the Peoples' Republic of China. I say so in the context of one more development. We have had for the first time in our relations with the Peoples' Republic of China the first ever security

dialogue. We had this dialogue at the Invitation of the PRC. This dialogue took place in Beijing; and this would be followed by other rounds.

I do not wish to take the hon. Members' memory back to the time when India was being questioned and tested on the bleak heights of Kargil — I had gone to Beijing -- what Peoples' Republic of China had done in regard to that conflict. It is not that these things have happened accidently. We have worked towards it.The Ministry has Worked towards it. The Government has worked towards it. That is why, Sir, with your permission, I wish to share with the House some recent developments of importance in our relations with China. I would be failing in my duty and task, if I do not. at this moment, recall late Shri Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in December, 1988, During that visit it was agreed to create a favourable climate and condition for a fair and reasonable settlement of the boundary question, while seeking a mutually acceptable solution to this question. As a consequence, the Joint Working Group on the boundary question was established. This Joint Working Group has. up till now, had 12 meetings. The last one was held in April, in Delhi. Subsequently, there have been two. This was followed up when the then Prime Minister, Shri Narasimha Rao, visited China in I993. Then, an agreement was signed on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control on the India-China border.

Following the 1993 agreement. India and China agreed to establish, and the India-China Expert Group of Diplomatic and Military Officials was established. The latest meeting of this Group, the eighth, was held on the 13th and 14th November, 2000, this month, in Beijing. I do also wish to state, so that it is placed in a proper perspective that when the President of Peoples Republic of China. His Excellency, Jiang Zewin, visited India in November, 1996. the second land mark agreement was then signed, which was on confidence-building measures in the military field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China border areas. Now, I would like to clarify here, Mr.Vice-Chairman, that the 1993 agreement specifies that references to the Line of Actual Control do not prejudice the respective positions of either country on the boundary question. The 1996 agreement makes it clear that steps being taken in accordance with the agreement are without prejudice to their respective positions on the alignment of the Line of Actual Control as well as on the boundary question. I wish to share with the hon. Members that the India-China border has been largely peaceful. But, from time to time, on account of

differences in perceptions of the Line of Actual Control, situations have arisen on the ground that could have been avoided had the agreement on the LAC clarification been completed. Therefore. I had. as the Minister of Externa! Affairs, on 5th May this year, written to my distinguished counterpart, the Foreign Minister of China, Mr. Tang Jiaxuan, proposing that the agreeed process of clarification and confirmation of the Line of Actual Control be expedited. I concretely, therefore, also proposed to him that both sides should seek to complete the entire exercise in a time-bound manner, if possible by the end of the year 2001. I wish, therefore, to take the opportunity to inform hon. Members of the progress made on the- LAC clarifications at the eighth meeting in Beijing this month of the Expert Group. The Indian delegation to the Expert Group was composed of representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Army Headquarters, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police and the Survey of India. At this meeting, as agreed in the meeting of the JWG-XII, both sides showed to each other and exchanged maps of the Line of Actual Control as perceived by them respectively in the middle sector of the India-China boundary. I wish to emphasise, time ever that this majeor step has been taken forward. We now have delineated maps on an agreed scale from both sides and the maps exchanged in the middle sector which, in itself, will demonstrate how we have to proceed in the eastern and western sectors in the days ahead. I also wish to clarify that this middle sector covers a distance of about 545 kilometres starling at Gaya peak in Himachal Pradesh and ending at the tri-junction between India, the People's Republic of China and Nepal in Uttaranchal. The maps exchanged were in accordance with the earlier agreed to parameters. The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere. The next step will now be to compare the two maps of the LAC in the middle sector with a view to identify differences in the respective perceptions of the LAC.

After this process of clarifying the LAC in the middle sector has been completed, in the next stage,-! have already shared it with the hon. Members-- a similar exercise on the LAC will be carried on in the western and the eastern sectors of the India-China boundary, Following my visit to China in June 1999, the Government has set in force. I believe, a new dynamic India-China relations. The successful visit of the President of our country in May 2000 underscrored this. We are looking forward to further high level exchanges between the two countries, and I wish to share with the House that the Government of Jndia is committed to the improvement

and development of relations with China, based on Panchsheel and the principle of mutual sensitivity, with each other's concern. I found it necessary to share this, in some detail because of the importance of the subject and also of the comments that some hon. Members have made.

Sir, I wish to go on to the neighbourhood. Some comments were made that we are not doing enough for SAARC. This will be, in my view, a misconception. Simply because the SAARC summit has been postponed, is no reason for us to think that the SAARC activity, as such, has come to a stand still. At the official level, at Joint Secretary level, at technical level, a number of items which already exist on the SAARC agenda, are already being activated, and SAARC meetings are taking place. They are taking place at the technical level and at the official levels, and that is why I do appeal to the hon. Members to recognise that the best way for SAARC to move forward is to move forward as an economic unity. That is the principal rationale of it. If we introduce into SAARC deliberations any variety of the political element, particularly of any bilateral contentions, then we will irreparably damage the SAARC, and it is with that view, with that aspect in mind that the SAARC summit has only been postponed. We are constantly in touch with all SAARC countries, with 'our entire neighbourhoods; and here I wish to very briefly share with the hon. Members that notwithstanding the fact that SAARC summit is not taking place, and also because some hon. Members, even though they did not participate, particularly, the hon. Member, Shri Maharaj, asked me to elaborate on aspects of insurgency, cooperation from neighbours and our neighbouring countries, yes, we have initiated a movement of enhanced dialogue and cooperation and economic activities with Myanmar. We are mindful of the size of Indo-Myanmar border, the Importance of Indo-Myanmar border, the aspects of cooperation between India and Myanmar on economic issues as also jointly addressing ourselves to challenges like insurgency that move from this side to that side; these are areas that are of national concern, and we have received a great degree of cooperation in this regard from Myanmar, and that is why we are persisting with that. As hon. Members know, we have also contributed to the construction of a road which I will have the honour to inaugurate, joining Kaleba and Tamor, and when that takes place, we will, for the first time, be having "many more land routes for trade available between Myanmar and India. We are also simultaneously working for the Asian Highway which should be connecting Myanmar. Mizoram, Tripura via Bangladesh and to port outlets. These are major areas of infrastructural development. When, therefore, hon. Members

suggest that sub-regional groupings are being ignored, it is an unfair observation because the amount of activity that is being generated in BIMSTEC, including a meeting of the BIMSTEC taking place here and the emphasis on infrastructure, is, I believe, commendable.

I do not wish to refer here to the Indian Ocean Rim Countries' Association, which is another Association of our neighbourhood, and in which, again, the emphasis is on enhancement of trade and development.

I do wish to take this opportunity to refer to a new initiative that the Ministry has taken and the new initiative is Mekong-Ganga Cooperation. I am grateful to such hon. Members as have commended this initiative.

This initiative and the aims and objectives of this new grouping, the very name and terminology that the entire group has unanimously volunteered to adopt as Mekong-Ganga Cooperation has a resonance that I do not have to define. I do commend this group which is of India, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Camboda. it is a grouping that had its first meeting in Laos recently, and I had the honour to be present at the inaugural meeting. Dr. Karan Singh spoke on the rote that culture plays in diplomacy. It is mindful of *the* role that culture plays in diplomacy that the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation has come up. This is a grouping of countries, that can have some of the least developed countries. We will cooperate in culture, we will cooperate m tourism, we will cooperate in science and technology, we will cooperate in education, we will cooperate in human resource development and we will cooperate in infrastructural development. It is ironic that in this region, in India, leave atone road communication, even for Air Force communication, there is no simple way to go about, and circuitous routes are necessary. These are all areas that we are addressing, and I do believe that the new initiative of this Government in having this Mekong-Ganga Cooperation is a development that has is great potential.

I do wish to take this opportunity, Sir, to briefly refer to the developments in Sri Lanka and to restate India's position. India remains committed to the territorial and constitutional integrity of Sri Lanka as also to meeting the aspirations of all the people of Sri Lanka. It is very sad for me, Sir, when hon. Members suggest that this Government or many constituents of the Government are unmindful of the sufferings of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. I would commend you to please examine the statement that was issued by the President of Sri Lanka who said, "Any kind of racialism is unacceptable to me." And it was because we are in constant touch with Sri Lanka, we are mindful of what our responsibilities

are and it is because of that that the relations with Sri Lanka are as never before, We have, after all, a free trade agreement with Sri Lanka. We are entirely mindful. Our support to the territorial and constitutional integrity of Sri Lanka has no military component to it, and shall not have a military component. That is very clear from tee very beginning. Any doubts in this regard may please be set at rest because I am saying this on the floor of the House,

Sir, on the question of Pakistan, hon, Pranabda, Dr, Karan Singh and a number of other Members of the Congress Party were all advocating that the Government resume the dialogue process with Pakistan, That is one part of it. The other is the combined .advocacy of resumption of the dialogue process with Pakistan with a simultaneous suggestion that this has a relevance to what is happening in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. I will address both the aspects of (this question." Sir, I have no difficulty in saying that as initiator of the dialogue process, India remains committed to the goal of lasting peace and amity with Pakistan.

We have no enmity towards the people of Pakistan. We desire not one inch of their territory. We have no designs on their sovereignty or their sovereign functioning. As initiator of the dialogue process, need I remind that it was India, after all that Initiated a kind of dialogue in 1948? We initiated a dialogue in Tashkent in 1966, after the 1965 operations. We initiated a dialogue in 1972 at Shimla. The Prime Minister's milestone bus journey to Lahore in 1999 was also part of that dialogue process. As t said, we have taken the initiatives and we remain committed. We bear no ill-will for the people of Pakistan. The Government that Pakistan chooses for itself is the prerogative of Pakistan and it is the concern of the people of Pakistan. The nature or the shape of the Government there is not a factor which exercises, its influence on us. There is only one thought that I leave with you. Dialogue requires that a suitable environment be present for a dialogue. I don't wish to remind the hon. Members about the comprehensive dialogue process that we have with Pakistan, the eight points that they enumerate and the document that I exchanged with my counterpart, in Colombo. We are really committed to that comprehensive dialogue. But we need a suitable environment. मैं माननीय सदस्यों से कहना चाहूंगा कि बनिहाल की हत्याएं और बातचीत अपने आप में पर्यायवाची शब्द नहीं है ।Yes; let us have a dialogue, but in an environment that is free of violence or tension, cross-border terrorism or killing of innocents. Please don't link dialogue with Pakistan by granting to Pakistan a kind of veto on cessation of

violence. I find it oWfcutt to accept, Mr. Vice-Chairman, the proposition that violence is a tool or an instrument that can be used as a negotiating tactic or, as a pre-dialogue negotiating tactic. I find it difficult to accept violence as a pre-dialogue negotiating tactic. The day, the minute, I accept violence as a negotiating tactic for asking me to come to dialogue, I am conferring upon whoever I have dialogue with, a kind of crippling veto on the entire endeavour that we are trying to make. But there is no enmity towards the people of Pakistan. We are committed to restoring lasting amity and peace in the region. I appeal to Pakistan to come to terms with its history and its geography.

Sir, on UN Security Council membership, Dr. Karan Singh and a number of other Members advocated that we should not seek openly the membership of It. Some others said, "You have not done enough about it*. Some others said, 'What is the good of people coming here and saying that they support us on the question of UN Security Council seat? Nothing is happening". I wish to share with the hon. Members that the recent Millennium Summit was characterised by three principal aspects. One of them, which was unanimously accepted in the Summit Resolution or document, was that a reform of the United Nations was necessary.

The reform of the United Nations is inseparable from an expansion of the UN Security Council in both the categories, permanent as also non-permanent membership. The second was about UN finances and the third was about the UN peacekeeping. I did share earlier in response to a question in the other House the progress in the open-ended Working Group of the United Nations that was addressing itself to this question. This is an agenda item on the question of equitable representation and increasing membership of the UN Security Council and related matters. The debate did take place recently. I wish to share with the hon. Members that in this debate open support was voiced to only three countries; that these three countries must receive the permanent membership of the expanded UN Security Council. Only three countries received this open support, not from all the 108 participants but from some participants. Only three countries were citied as meriting the permanent membership of the UN Security Council in the open debate that had taken place recently, on 16th and 17th November. The three countries are Japan, Germany and India. This is a matter of some satisfaction to the Ministry of External Affairs. I do trust that the hon. Members .would not either scoff at it or belittle the'fact that in this debate, in which so many nations participated, only three countries had

been identified as meriting the permanent membership of the UN Security Council. It does represent a significant movement forward in UN, India's just aspirations in that body. Dr. Karan Singh is right. We are after all one billion human beings. No international body that ignores the primacy of one billion human beings can possibly have any relevance. That plus our economic and all the other factors combined together has resulted in this situation, I do believe that it is something that we, at least, in the Ministry of External Affairs and the Government are not dissatisfied with. I wish to refer to three other points which were raised *by...(Interruptions).* I will complete very shortly.

AN HON. MEMBER: I will be missing my flight.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: I am very sorry. I will be mindful. I wish to refer to three additional points. कल माननीय संजय निरुपम जी ने जो माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी ने कहा था, उसको एक रुप मे लिया और मुझे उनकी ओर से हिदायत मिली है कि मैं वह सदेंश माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी तक जरुर पहुंचाऊं । जैसे मेरा कर्त्तव्य बनता है, मैंने वह किया प्रधानमंत्री जी तक पहुंचाया । मैं आपको यह स्पष्ट कर देना चाहता हूं कि यह आवश्यक नहीं है कि आपके हर विचार से हम सहमत हों । यह भी आवश्यक नहीं है कि आप हमारे हर विचार से सहमत हों । पर हम सब एक ही यज्ञ में साथ लगे हैं और उस यज्ञ में आपका और मेरा जो राजधर्म है, वह समान धर्म है, इसमें कोई भ्रान्ति नहीं है । मैं आपको स्पष्ट कर देना चाहूंगा ।

**श्री सतीश प्रधान** (**महाराष्ट्र**) : धन्यवाद ।

**श्री जसवंत सिंह** : मैंने कल भी स्पष्ट किया था । जो परिभाषा आपने माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी के वक्तव्य पर दी, वह उनकी इच्छा से कहीं परे है । प्रधानमंत्री जी शायद आपके विचारों से सहमत न हों और हम विचारों से सहमत नहीं होते हुए भी आपके विचारों को सदैव हमारे विचारों मे रख कर के ही नीति करेंगे । इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं हैं ।We do not agree with many Members of this assembly. But every Member, every political grouping is identified by a distinctive ideology and it adheres to that ideology, as it has the right to adhere to that ideology, Therefore, while discharging my responsibility, I certainly do not approach this task by belittling the ideology of another, even if I might find it difficult to agree with it, and it is only with that intention पुनः आपको स्पष्ट कर देना चाहता हूं कि जहां तक भारत की सुरक्षा का प्रश्न है उसमें कभी किसी किस्म की कमी नहीं आने दी जाएगी, वैचारिक या अन्य रूप में और न कभी किसी अन्य रूप में । जो हमारा लक्ष्य है आतंकवाद को वहां से जड़ से उठाने का उसमें भी कोई कमी नहीं आएगी ।

**श्री सतीश प्रधान** : हम आपके आभारी हैं । यही यह विषय समाप्त हो गया ।

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, I do also wish to take this opportunity of addressing Dr. L.M. Singhvi, who kindly commended the

action of the Ministry of External Affairs and suggested that an international institute should be established. We are really in agreement with that proposition and we have already taken some steps in this direction. It is my hope and expectation that I will be able to come forward in greater detail, in this very Session, about this matter. I do wish to refer to the Professorship in Indian History and Culture that has been established at Oxford. Dr. Karan Singh found fault with it. The Professorship has been established with the consent of Parliament. The Supplementary Demands for Grants contained the Demand pertaining to this very Scholarship. When I discussed it with my distinguished colleague, the Finance Minister, he, in his wisdom, thought that it would be best that we brought forth this matter before Parliament, and he brought it in the Supplementary Demands for Grants in the last Session. It would have been good if Dr. Karan Singh had benefited the Government with his advice, in the last Session itself, when we came to this House and when the House gave its approval, that we should simply not be establishing a Professorship, but we should also expand it to a Centre. Then, certainly, I would have taken the opportunity of appealing to the Finance Minister that a distinguished Member of the Opposition is saying, "A Professorship by itself is not enough; expand it to a Centre", and I would have also then asked for more money. I say this only because I believe that the establishment of "Chairs of Professorship must subsequently expand to Centres as a path In the continuity of India's diplomatic effort. Diplomatic effort has to. reach out to the rest of the global community technologically, and we do reach out technologically even with small island countries and African countries. We have seen how technological co-operation with Laos In the field of irrigation has almost revolutionised rice production in that country. So, in technology, we are doing so. In culture, we are doing so. And we fell that learning in different Seats about India or about Indian history and culture should be not simply at Oxford, but it should be subsequently in other Universities as well. The other aspect of India is an aspect of diplomacy and India must persist with it. That is the only persuasion that I have.

Sir, I come to the end. You have been very kind and the House has been very patient. I do wish to repeat that if any objective analysis of the conduct of foreign policy under the Government led by Shri Vajpayee from 1998 onwards is undertaken one characteristic that certainly stands apart is that jt does not give In to any kind of pressure, be It political, economic or otherwise. Therefore, for the hon. Members tn either caution

us or to suggest that we are either acting or liable to act under pressure is really to fly against the reality of objectively assessing the present situation.

Sir, the Government, the Ministry and I personally are committed to, and shall always be committed to, giving primacy to national prestige, national honour and national interest. We are, Mr. Vice-Chairman, -- and I say this with all humility; and the Government addresses itself to this responsibility and task in exactly that same passion of humility and great responsibility - an ancient civilisation. We are a young nation in this incarnation. We have to demonstrate the ability to catch global change by the forelock, to be an instrument, not simply of managing things, but of influencing it. Thus, our vision as India must endeavour to reshape the reality. That, I believe, is India's destiny, and permit me, Mr. Vice-Chairman, to repeat that attaining that destined goal — it is my belief --is, without doubt, our ultimate national interest.

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## GOVERNMENT BILLS

### THE CHIT FUNDS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2000

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): Sir. move for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Chit Funds Act, 1982.

*The question was put and the motion was adopted.*

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA; Sir, I introduce the Bill.

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### THE JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION LAWS (REPEAL) BILL, 2000

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL); Sir, I move for leave to introduce a Bill to repeal the Civil Courts Amins Act, 1856 and certain other enactments.

*The question was put and the motion was adopted.*

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Sir. I introduce the Bill.

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