

rehabilitation there, the following measures were taken by Government:

- (i) special counters were set up in select Passport Offices in India to enable expeditious issue of passports to those who had returned on Emergency Certificates;
- (ii) the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi and Consulate General in Dubai maintained close and continuous contact with the local authorities to ensure that the returnees did not have any restrictions placed on their re-entry into the UAE; and
- (iii) the mandatory requirement of attestation of employment visas by the Indian Embassy/Consulate in the UAE was suspended by the Ministry of Labour.

Impact of nuclear tests on relations with neighbouring countries

2490. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the nuclear tests conducted by India recently will have any impact on Indo-Pak talks;
- (b) if so, whether the relations between the neighbouring countries have been affected at large;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps Government have taken to strengthen relations with the neighbouring countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMAN VASUNDHARA RAJE):

(a) India desires to establish peaceful and friendly ties under stable structure of cooperation with Pakistan. This has been reiterated in Prime Minister's letter dated 14 June, 1998 to the Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. In his response, the Pakistan Prime Minister has indicated his willingness to discuss all issues of mutual concern with our Prime Minister during the forthcoming SAARC

Sumit in Colombo. Government will continue to pursue its endeavours to engage in a substantive dialogue with Pakistan to resolve all outstanding issues.

(b) and (c) The continuation of a process of dialogue with neighbouring countries, as indicated by the recent visits to India by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, the President of Maldives and the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka, demonstrates that India's nuclear tests have not adversely affected our relations with neighbouring countries, with the exception of Pakistan. Some of these countries have expressed understanding of the rationale underlying India's decision to conduct the nuclear tests.

(d) Government has taken several steps to strengthen and promote closer cooperation and consultations with neighbouring countries in a variety of fields. Government has also announced a series of initiatives aimed at addressing concerns in the wake of our nuclear tests.

US Foreign policy regarding China and India

2491. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item published in the Hindustan Times, dated 18th June, 1998 captioned "Congressman Frank Pallone against linking N-tests with Kashmir-U.S. Policy comes up for criticism in both Houses of U.S. Congress";

(b) whether Senator Connie Mack also criticised the Clinton administration's policy as "irrationality of the U.S. rewarding an authoritarian China even as it sanctions democratic India"; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction to U.S. foreign policy which favours China over India as alleged by Senator Mack?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE):

(a) Yes, Sir.