

ed to the Prime Minister of Pakistan that their presence in Colombo for the SAARC Summit would enable them to hold bilateral discussions on all issues of mutual interest, and also to decide on how to proceed further with the dialogue process. In his reply of 23 June, 1998, the Prime Minister of Pakistan agreed with Prime Minister's suggestion to hold bilateral discussions during the SAARC Summit in Colombo.

Prime Minister's letter to his Pakistani counterpart

2509. SHRI GURUDAS DAS '

GUPTA:

SHRI N.R. DASARI:

DR. MOHAN BABU:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister had written to his counterpart in Pakistan, Shri Nawaz Sharif, making an offer for a dialogue on a whole array of bilateral issues, including Kashmir, and

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) Prime Minister wrote to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on 14 June, 1998 reiterating India's commitment to fostering a peaceful and friendly relationship, and developing a stable structure of cooperation between India and Pakistan. In his letter, Prime Minister also conveyed to the Prime Minister of Pakistan that their presence in Colombo for the SAARC Summit would enable them to hold bilateral discussions on all issues of mutual interest, and also to decide on how to proceed further with the dialogue process. In his reply of 23 June, 1998, the Prime Minister of Pakistan agreed with Prime Minister's suggestion to hold bilateral discussions during the SAARC Summit in Colombo.

False Propaganda against India by Pakistan

2510 SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present infrastructure available our Missions in the Islamic countries to counter the false propaganda of Pakistan and inform these countries of the role of ISI in spreading terrorism in India.

(b) whether the Govt. has any proposal to expand the activities of ICCR to bring the Islamic countries nearer to India and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Missions in Islamic countries are fully geared to counter all anti-India propaganda. The infrastructure includes publicity tools like video projectors, satellite dish antennas, audio equipment etc. Embassies are also supplied audiovisual and print material for dissemination. Books are provided for Embassy libraries and for presentation purposes. Internet and electronic means are employed to conduct publicity activities. The Heads of Missions personally supervise this effort and tailor their approaches to the local milieu. Opinion and decision makers from all walks of life are cultivated to promote and project India's perspectives and values. India's democratic, pluralistic and multi-ethnic ethos coupled with its long history of tolerance is underscored to reinforce a positive image of our country. The Ministry regularly keeps the Missions abreast with latest developments through Spokesman's Statements and Press Releases and they in turn keep the local media. Government officials and other target groups informed about India's policies and initiatives.

(b) The full range of ICCR's activities including exchanges of cultural troupes, visits by academics, scholars and other

distinguished personalities, organizing of seminars, and grant of scholarships to students from these countries are already in existence in Islamic countries. In addition the ICCR has Cultural Centres in Cairo (Egypt), Almaty (Kazakhstan), Tashkent (Uzbekistan) and Jakarta (Indonesia), and Chairs of Indian Studies in Ankara (Turkey) and Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan). The Council also publishes a Quarterly journal in Arabic entitled "Ta'afatue-Hind".

India's membership of Security Council

2511. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the French President during his recent visit to New Delhi on the Republic Day 1998, observed that India had the credentials for permanent membership of the UN Security Council; and

(b) if so, whether he had given any assurance of support to India, tacit direct or indirect to India's claim for such membership, if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) President Chirac during his visit to India in January 1998 had stated that it was India's "Vocation" and "aptitude" to become a permanent member of the Security Council. France has supported inclusion of developing countries in permanent member category of the UN Security Council.

Pakistan Government's response for Bilateral Talks

2512. SHRI RAJUBHAI A.

PARMAR:

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the Pakistan Government's response for bilateral talks between India

and Pakistan, as proposed by the Prime Minister,

(b) whether the Government have refused to start a dialogue without a mediator, and

(c) whether any talks with or without mediation have been held or are likely to be held; if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) The Prime Minister of Pakistan on 23 June, 1998 replied to the Prime Minister's letter of 14 June, 1998 and agreed with Prime Minister's view that they should hold bilateral discussions on all issues of concern during the SAARC Summit in Colombo.

(b) and (c) India remains committed to fostering a relationship of trust friendship and cooperation with Pakistan. Government believe that it is possible to do so only through direct bilateral dialogue. Pakistan, however, has constantly sought mediation in our bilateral relations. Government have made it clear that there is absolutely no question of any international or third party mediation of any kind whatsoever in India-Pakistan bilateral relations. This view has been made publicly known through official statements as well as interaction with all concerned at the political and diplomatic levels.

Prohibition on Indian scientists from visiting countries

2513. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that countries which have imposed sanctions on India propose to prohibit India scientists from visiting those countries; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?