

(c) what is the reaction of Government with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASDNDHRA RAJE): (a) Yes Sir. There were media reports that, in order to dissuade Pakistan from conducting nuclear tests, US would after military and economic assistance to Pakistan currently restricted under the domestic laws namely, the Pressler Amendment. A draft bill to repeal the Pressler Amendment was introduced in the US Senate.

(b) and (c) Does not arise. Pakistan has since conducted nuclear tests. The draft bill has been withdrawn. US has announced sanctions against Pakistan additional to those contained in Pressler Amendment.

Entry into seas and air space

1737. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether as reported in the States man of February 11, 1998, USA has challenged the alleged "excessive claim" of India and 20 other countries about entry into the seas and air space; and

(b) if so, what precise claim about entry into the seas and air space have been made by India and what is the response of the US and other world powers thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) and (b) The news item in the Statesman of February 11, 1998 refers to the Annual Report of the US Department of Defence to the US President and Congress. At Appendix-1 captioned "Freedom of Navigation", the Report states that for 18 years the US Freedom of Navigation Programme has ensured that "excessive coastal State claims" going beyond the limits permitted under the UN Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS), over the

world's oceans and air space are repeatedly challenged by the United States by diplomatic protests and "operational assertions". In the financial year 1997 (Oct'96-Sept'97), the US targeted 21 countries, including India, where it carried out such "operational assertions". In the case of India, the alleged excessive claim relates to the requirement of "prior permission for warship to enter the territorial sea".

Under Section 4 of the Indian Maritime Zones Act, 1976, the entry/ passage of foreign warships and submarines through the territorial waters of India may take place after giving prior notice to the Government of India. The requirement of prior notice in case of warships is fully in consonance with the relevant provisions of UNCLOS relating to the definition of innocent passage as also the right of coastal States to enact laws and regulations with regard to the entry of warships. The requirement of prior notice neither denies nor impairs the right of innocent passage of warships through the territorial waters of India.

Functioning of Indian Council of World Affairs

1738. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the distinguished role played by the Indian Council of World Affairs in providing input to foreign policy making in the country;

(b) if so, if the Government are also aware of the present pitiable condition of the organisation in terms of absence of democratic functioning, norms for the employees' service condition and emoluments, condition of the library, etc.; and

(c) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken to correct the situation?