

(b) if so, whether both the countries have discussed the issue and any final strategy formulated to face the situation; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) to (c) The problem of illegal trafficking of women and children has been discussed between the Governments of India and Bangladesh. Both countries have agreed to cooperate to curb the trafficking in women and children and have underlined the need to take appropriate measures by involving the civil administration and the local police. The matter was also discussed with Bangladesh and other SAARC member countries at the IX SAARC Summit at Male when it was decided to examine the feasibility of establishing a Regional Convention on Combating the Crime of Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.

Expenditure incurred on lobbying by Indian Embassies

207. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Embassy in USA spent \$442,000 on lobbying in US, from July—December, 1996, as reported in the Indian Express of 25th April, 1998;

(b) if so, the percentage of this expenditure in relation to total expenditure of US Embassy during this period;

(c) whether incurring this huge expenditure on lobbying gives commensurate results in political and economic terms and whether any study has been made of the relative advantages of this activity; and

(d) whether the total expenditure spent on this account in all the Indian Missions abroad during 1996-97 and its percentage vis-a-vis our total expenditure on Indian Missions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) Embassy of India, Washington has incurred an expenditure of US \$ 316,250 over seven months (15.05.1996 to 14.12.96) for engaging services of a lobbying firm.

(b) In relation to the total budget of Embassy of India, Washington, this expenditure is 10.51%.

(c) Yes, Sir. Diplomatic Missions based in Washington regularly utilise services of lobbying firms which is an accepted form of conducting business in the United States. The requirement of lobbying support for Embassy of India, Washington was established after a careful review of means available to advance many areas of our interests. The lobbying firms work closely with the Embassy and supplement the efforts of its officers.

(d) The Embassy in Washington is the only India Mission which uses the services of a lobbying firm.

जम्मू और कश्मीर में उच्च स्तरीय समिति भेजा जाना

208. श्री बरजिन्दर सिंह:

श्री बलबन्त सिंह राम्वालिया:

क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सरकार ने अभी हाल ही में जम्मू और कश्मीर में एक उच्च स्तरीय समिति भेजी है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो ऐसी उच्च स्तरीय समिति भेजे जाने की क्या आवश्यकता थी;

(ग) क्या सरकार को उच्च समिति का कोई प्रतिवेदन प्राप्त हुआ है; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो प्रतिवेदन में क्या-क्या सिफारिशें हैं और सरकार द्वारा उन पर अब तक की गई कार्यवाही का ब्यौरा क्या है?

गृह मंत्री (श्री लाल कृष्ण आडवाणी): (क) से (घ) जम्मू और कश्मीर में उपद्रव का मुकाबला करने के लिए एक विशिष्ट कार्य योजना तैयार करने के लिए हाल ही में एक विशेष (उच्च स्तरीय) ग्रुप का गठन किया गया है। अपनी संस्तुत कार्य योजना को अन्तिम