

(c) Government have repeatedly emphasized to other countries, including the US, that Pakistan's support to terrorist activities in India is continuing with the supply of arms, equipment, training and infiltration. This has also been stated by Indian representatives in international fora.

Visit of the Italian President to India

1311. SHRI K. M. KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Italian President visited India in the recent past;

(b) if so, the details in this regard, with the names of others who accompanied him;

(c) whether this visit was with some objectives;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether some issues of bilateral interest were discussed during this visit;

(f) whether India has been benefited by this visit; and

(g) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) and (b) The President of Italy, Mr. Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, paid a State visit to India from 9-12 February 1995. He was accompanied by foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli, Minister of State for Foreign Trade Mario D'Urso, senior officials and a high-level business delegation. President Scalfaro interacted with the President and met the Vice President, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Commerce Minister and the Minister of State for External Affairs

(c) and (d) This was the first ever Head of State level visit exchanged with Italy, and coincided with Italy's participation as "Partner Country" in the India Engineering Trade Fair (IETF) 1995 which was jointly inaugurated by the Presidents of India and Italy;

(e) to (g) The principal focus of discussions during the visit was on expansion of bilateral trade and economic relations. The Italian President underlined Italy's desire to strengthen relations with India in the political, economic, scientific and cultural fields. He also stressed the importance of closer cooperation between India and Italy to confront the challenge posed by fundamentalism and terrorism. During talks between the Italian Foreign Minister and the Minister of State for External Affairs, views were exchanged on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. The Italian side reiterated their interest in receiving an early visit by the Prime Minister, as well as an Indian cultural manifestation in Italy to coincide with a future high-level visit from India. The visit of the Italian President has imparted further impetus to the intensification of Indo-Italian relations in diverse fields.

Indian Proposal for Non-Discriminatory Nuclear Ban Treaty

1312. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is discriminatory and only favours USA, Russia, UK and France;

(b) whether Government propose to take up with the Committee on Disarmament to start negotiations for a non-discriminatory treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons; and

(c) if so, the details of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Government has consistently maintained that the NPT is a discriminatory Treaty which creates a permanent division between the nuclear weapons powers and all other countries.

(b) and (c) In 1988, India tabled the Action Plan for Ushering in a Nuclear Weapon Free and Non-Violent World Order in the Conference on Disarmament as document No. CD/859. However, progress has not been possible because of a lack of consensus on these proposals.

ISI Activities through Nepal

1313. DR. SANJAYA SINH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the activities of ISI which is operating from Nepal;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have taken up the matter with the Government of Nepal to check its activities and if so, when and what is the reaction the Government of Nepal in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) The Government of India are aware of the use of Nepalese territory for transit by terrorists, who are suspected of having links with Pakistan Intelligence agencies. This matter has also been raised with the appropriate authorities in Nepal. The Government of Nepal have assured Government of India that they will not permit the use of Nepal's territory for terrorist activities against India. The Government of India welcome this assurance and look forward to continued co-operation from the Nepalese authorities.

US Pressure for Signing of NPT

1314. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the US Administration has been insisting upon the Government of India to sign and accept the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty; if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a proposal has been recently made by Ms. Robin Raphel, asking India to sign a bilateral agreement with Pakistan in which both parties would undertake not to produce any nuclear fissile material outside the regime on international safeguards; if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether the Delhi Declaration discouraged such piecemeal and discriminatory treaties for their inability to contribute towards making the world nuclear weapons free; and

(d) how the current proposals of the US Administration are viewed in the light of the stands taken by subsequent regimes in India, so far, on nuclear non-proliferation issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) The US Administration has not insisted that India should sign the NPT. However, as a depositary State of the Treaty, the US regularly makes statements urging non-signatories to join the NPT. Government has consistently maintained that it is opposed to signing the NPT in its present form.

(b) Yes, Sir. Government has stated that there is no question of India unilaterally stopping the production of fissile material; Government is committed to the conclusion of a Convention on the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes which is multilaterally negotiated, universal, non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable.