

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARA-MANGALAM: I would like to make it clear that this is one of the important issues that will be discussed in the all party meeting where electoral reforms will be discussed.

Visit of the PLO Chief

*422. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRA-KANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the PLO Chief Mr. Yasser Arafat paid an official visit to New Delhi in January this year;

(b) if so, what specific issues relating to peace in West Asia were discussed with him; and

(c) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The ongoing West Asian peace process was among the topics discussed during the visit. India's continued commitment to the Palestinian cause and keenness to contribute effectively to promoting Palestinian interests in the peace process were reiterated. President Arafat expressed appreciation for India's consistent support and stressed the importance of Indo-PLO relations. He favoured Indian participation in the multilateral phase of the West Asian peace talks in view of its close and friendly relations with all Arab countries.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRA-KANT BHANDARE: Sir, India has been the leader in championing many causes, anti-apartheid, the occupied Palestinian territory, to usher in peace in this globe. With the end of the cold war, the world has entered into a new phase, and we find that the Palestinian problem is now sought to be solved through negotiations. India has to play an effective role, and I don't think it can play an effective role unless it has a minimum of confidence of both the parties. Mr. Arafat has been a very great friend of our country. There is no question, therefore, of letting down the cause or the friendship. May I, therefore, ask of the hon. Minister whether he is prepared to give us a definite assurance that at no cost will we dilute our stand towards the Palestinian problem so far as the rights of the PLO are concerned?

†[] Transliteration in Arabic Script.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Sir, I suppose what the hon. Member would like me to reiterate here in this House is that the cause of the Palestinian people who we have been committed now for decades, continues to be dear to us and that our commitment is absolute and total to that cause. Surely it is.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRA-KANT BHANDARE: The second supplementary is this. Will this task not be now facilitated by the fact that we have given recognition to Israel and established diplomatic relations between us and Israel with the tacit approval of Mr. Arafat himself?

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Yes, Sir, it will be facilitated.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Well, Sir,

मौलाना अबुदुल्ला खान आज़मी: चेयरमैन साहब, मैं सरकार से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि वैस्ट एशिया के मामले के हल के लिए क्या सरकार ने किसी इस्राइली डेलीगेशन से हाल ही में दिल्ली में कोई बात की है? अगर हां, तो उसकी तफसील क्या है और क्या सरकार ने इस्राइली डेलीगेशन को यह यकीन दिलाया है कि वह इस्राइल के फायदे की बात करेगी, अगर हिन्दुस्तान को इस मामले के हल के लिए बातचीत में शामिल किया जाए? अगर हां, तो उसकी क्या वजुहत है? क्या यह भी सही है कि मौजूदा सरकार ने मुल्क के अन्दर और मुल्क के बाहर माइनेरिटी दुश्मन और अरब दुश्मन ताकतों के साथ सौठ-गोठ शुरू कर दी है? अगर कर दी है तो इसकी तफसील क्या है और इसकी वजुहत क्या है?

मौलانا अबुदुल्ला खान आज़मी: چیرمین صاحب میں سرکار سے یہ جاننا چاہوں گا کہ ویسٹ ایشیا کے مسئلے کے حل کے لئے کیا سرکار نے کسی اسرائیلی ڈیلیگیشن سے حال ہی میں دلی میں کوئی بات کی ہے۔ اگر ہاں تو اسکی تفصیل کیا ہے اور کیا سرکار نے اسرائیلی ڈیلیگیشن کو یہ یقین دلایا ہے کہ وہ اسرائیل کے فائدے کی بات کریں گی۔ اگر ہندوستان کو اس مسئلے کے حل کے لئے بات چیت میں شامل کیا جائے۔ اگر ہاں تو اسکی کیا وجوہات ہیں۔ کیا یہ بھی صحیح ہے کہ موجودہ سرکار نے ملک کے اندر اور ملک کے باہر مائنارٹی دشمن عہدب دشمن طاقتوں کے ساتھ سائٹل گانچ شروع کر دی ہے۔ اگر کر دی ہے تو اسکی تفصیل کیا ہے اور اسکی وجوہات کیا ہیں۔

obviously, the sort of insinuation, observation the hon. Member has made is totally devoid of any connection with truth. We are, as I have said earlier, committed to the Palestinian cause as we

have ever been, and we shall continue to be.

Number two, Sir, we believe, as we believed always, that a solution, a fair and just solution, of the Palestinian problem is really the key to peace and to security in West Asia, and within these parameters we shall do all efforts, as the parties may require us to do, to help in peace, in stability in that region which is close to us as well as in fair and just settlement of the problem for the people of Palestine.

मौलाना अबुलदुल्ला खान आज़मी: इस सवाल का यह जवाब नहीं है। सर, मैंने यह टिप्पणी इसलिये की है कि हमारे डिफेंस मिनिस्टर का पिछले दिनों यह बयान आया था कि हम इजराइल की मदद लेकर हिंदुस्तान के उग्रवाद का खत्म करेंगे। हिंदुस्तान के उग्रवाद को खत्म करने के लिये इजराइल ने अपने जिन इलाकों से उग्रवाद और दहशत पसंदी को खत्म किया है, उसकी हम मदद लेंगे। मैंने उस वक़्त भी यह पूछा था और आज भी यह जानना चाहूँगा कि इजराइल किसको दहशत पसंद कहता है—यासर अरफ़त को। और यासर अरफ़त और मसलाये फिलिस्तिन की हिमायत हिंदुस्तान करता है।

مولانا عبید اللہ خان اعظمی: اس سوال کا یہ جواب نہیں ہے۔ سر میں نے یہ ٹیپنی اس لئے کی ہے کہ ہمارے ڈیفینس منسٹر صاحب کا پچھلے دنوں بیان آیا تھا کہ ہم اسرائیل کی مدد کر کے ہندوستان میں اگرواد کا خاتمہ کریں گے۔ ہندوستان کے اگرواد کو ختم کرنے کے لئے اسرائیل اپنے جن علاقوں سے اگرواد اور دہشت پسندی کو فتنہ لیا ہے۔ اس کی ہم مدد کریں گے۔ میں نے اس وقت بھی یہ سوچا تھا اور آج بھی یہ جاننا چاہتا ہوں کہ اسرائیل کس کو دہشت پسند کہتا ہے۔ یا سر عرفات کو۔ اور یا سر عرفات اور مسئلہ فلسطین کی حمایت ہندوستان کرتا ہے۔

श्री सभापति: पहला सवाल आपका यह कि ऐसा हुआ है क्या?

Has your Defence Minister talked with the Israel people to take their help in doing away with terrorism? That is all.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have checked up this matter and there have been no talks with Israel to combat terrorism or countering insurgency.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, our relations with PLO

and Mr. Yasser Arafat depended on our attitude towards Israel. Two things have happened recently. One is, we did not have had relations with Israel till recently. The other is recognition of the Security Council resolution and rescinding earlier resolution putting Zionism at par with apartheid. Zionism was put at par with apartheid and accordingly we were opposed to Zionism. That is why we were opposed to the Israel policy. Now, Government of India is no more committed to that. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, what led the Government in supporting the resolution of the Security Council, rescinding the earlier resolution in respect of Zionism? What is the nature of diplomatic relations with Israel? What made the Government to decide in haste to have diplomatic relations with Israel? May I know from the Minister whether it will affect our attitude and policy towards PLO and their struggle for homeland?

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this hon. House is well aware that there has been a radical change in the world situation with the end of the cold war and the end of confrontation between the superpowers. Many of the regional conflicts have been solved and are at process of being solved. Regional conflicts in Southern Africa, part of Africa, regional conflicts in Latin America, regional conflicts in South East Asia and Eastern part of Asia have been solved after the attitude of confrontation between superpowers has given place to an attitude of cooperation. Now, Sir, this attitude of cooperation hardly anywhere has been as visible as when the two superpowers, United States and the erstwhile Soviet Union sponsored Middle East peace conference. This is the first unique opportunity for peace in that area for a solution to the Palestinian question. Everybody believes that they must be supported in their effort. It is in this context that we have established diplomatic relations with Israel because it will help our involvement, our own help in finding a solution to the problem. I would like to add here during the recent visit of President Arafat, one of the things he did was he expressed a feeling that we must get involved in the peace process. What we have done in establishing relations with Israel is that in our view, it will help in our contribution towards the peace process.

So far as the resolution on Zionism is

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Sir, though the PLO is a very friendly party and organisation and as the House

*/\ Transliteration in Arabic Script.

knows, we recognise the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the people of Palestine, in spite of that I would like to say that we do not consult and we do not decide our foreign policy in consultation with any foreign organisation or Government, however friendly. We decide our foreign policy on our own perceptions and on understanding of our own interest. I would like to say also that the statement attributed to the Chairman, Mr. Arafat, as quoted by the hon. Member, has not come to my notice at all. What has come to my notice. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI G.G.SWELL:*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. I have not permitted you. Whatever Mr. G.G. Swell says, will not go on record.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Now, as per the report which I have got, Mr. Arafat said, "this is a matter within the sovereignty of India and I have no comments to offer."

Indian citizens in foreign jails

*423. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:† SHRI RAM NARESH YADAV: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of Indian citizens are in different jails in foreign countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the number of Indians who have been imprisoned abroad for visa violations and on criminal charges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, if it is a Starred Question and if there is no reply, then the significance of the Starred Question is lost. You will appreciate this, Sir, because ten days' notice has been given and if the information is not collected in ten days with modern communication system, then what do I ask unless he tells me the position of my

*Not recorded.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Santosh Bagrodia.

first question; Anyhow, do you want to protect me on this, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What can I do?

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: I want your reaction on this.

Normally, the External Affairs Ministry is expected to know if there are Indian citizens in jails in any foreign country.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: May I submit, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Sir, we have not got ten days' notice and this is a problem that happens. (*Interruptions*.) There are more than 100 countries. There are more things to it which I will submit when he completes his question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He says, I must protect him. I told him, how can I protect him? How can I protect him if the Minister does not answer? Normally, a person expects that the Government of India, the External Affairs Ministry, should know where Indian citizens in foreign countries are jailed. If you do not have that information, I cannot help.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: I will clarify the position as soon as he completes the supplementary.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Why don't you clarify first? Then I will ask my supplementary.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: The position is as follows. There is no way in which we can have complete information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Give him whatever information you have got.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: We can give him tentative information. Definitely, whatever information I have, I will give him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not to the House? (*Interruptions*.)

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Sir, what the Member wants is the total number of Indians who have been imprisoned abroad for visa violation or on criminal charges. To get the specific charges whether they are visa violations or other violations, it would take an enormous amount of time and we cannot get them. Secondly, there is no way in which we can get the information because, under Article 36(b) of the Vienna Convention, the receiving Government or the Government of the country in which the person is imprisoned will not give information to the Mission unless the man who is jailed or imprisoned requests that the Mission be