

[3rd August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

Consensus on CTBT

* 163. CHAUDHARY CHUNNILAL:
SHRI PREM CHANP GUPTA;

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government plan to discuss the CTBT in the monsoon session of Parliament in order to get a consensus and decide to sign CTBT,

(b) whether this is inspite of the fact that the US Senate have themselves rejected the Treaty;

(c) whether it is a fact that China has also not ratified the Treaty; and

(d) if so, what are the reasons for Government to undertake this exercise?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) A number of steps to develop a broad national consensus on the CTBT have been undertaken, including through statements and discussions in Parliamentary Committees, as well as meetings with representatives of political parties. The Government intends to pursue this approach during the current session.

(b) Government's approach is not based on the *US* Senate's decision, but on considerations of national security and national interest alone. Notwithstanding the Senate rejection, the *US* Government has reiterated its commitment to a moratorium on nuclear explosive testing and to the ratification of the treaty.

(c) Yes Sir. However, China has reiterated that there has been no change in its commitment to ratify the treaty.

(d) Government's approach is guided solely by considerations of India's national interests. The priority of the country's national security concerns having been addressed, the Government believes that it is also necessary to convey reassurance to the international community. By observing the moratorium, we meet the basic obligation of the CTBT. 155 countries are, as at present, signatories to the CTBT, including many who have supported and continue

The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Prem Chand Gupta.

to support India's disarmament initiatives, as well as those with whom India has strategic dialogues.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, India has agreed to sign the CTBT whereas the originator, that is the USA, ..(*Interruptions*)... Yes. They plan to discuss. Another important nuclear country, that is, China, has not signed it. The US Senate has rejected it. They have not signed it either. China has reiterated its commitment of military cooperation to Pakistan and has assured every sort of technical help to Pakistan. In view of this, Mr. Chairman, I would like to know how our interest is being protected. A national consensus is not there on this issue. The Government, in its reply to part (d) of the question, has said that the Government's approach is guided by considerations of India's national interests. I would like to know from the Minister how they think that India's interest is being protected.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I must correct the misimpression of the hon. Member. Firstly, India has not signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. There seems to be a mis-impression in the hon. Member's mind. Secondly, as the reply itself explicitly states, the People's Republic of China has signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Thirdly, the US has signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It is the further step that neither China nor the US have taken though Russia, France and the UK and 155 other countries have taken. Let that misimpression be first cleared from the hon. Member's mind.

So far as preserving the national interest is concerned, the very fact that in 1998 this Government undertook to carry out the necessary tests—and in the May of 1998 did so—was the first step to demonstrate India's nuclear capability to be able to weaponise them, and thereafter, to enunciate programmes of Minimum Nuclear Deterrent, etc. It is through these various means that the Government are endeavouring to subserve our national interests.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Second supplementary. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: According to recent newspaper reports,... (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.