

Propaganda against friendly third countries by Foreign Diplomatic Mission in India

453. SHRI ABDUL REHMAN
SHEIKH; SHRI
RAMESHWAR SINGH:

SHRI SURESH SHAMRAO
KALMADI:

SHRI ARVIND GANESH
KULKARNI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government are aware of the violation of accepted diplomatic conventions by some of the foreign diplomatic missions in India by indulging in propaganda against friendly third countries in Delhi; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and what action is being taken or proposed to be taken by Government to stop such propaganda?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) There have been instances in the recent past when it has seemed to us that publicity material is released, or sought to be released, by some foreign diplomatic missions in contravention of our guidelines on this subject. There have also been instances where the Cultural Centres of foreign countries have indulged in political propaganda incompatible with the strictly cultural functions for which they have been allowed to be set up. We have invariably taken this up with the foreign diplomatic missions concerned and tried to secure their cooperation in the matter.

All foreign diplomatic missions in India are required in their functioning to conform to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations concluded in 1961. The Vienna Convention stipulate^e that the function of foreign

diplomatic missions essentially lies in "promoting" friendly relations between the sending and receiving State. The Ministry of External Affairs had circulated guidelines, on 10 November 1964, to all diplomatic missions located in India, to *inter-alia* desist from the dissemination of any information or the distribution of publicity material by whatever media, as is designed; to or may have the effect of creating ill-feeling against a third country, with which India has friendly relations."

These guidelines were again brought to the attention of diplomatic missions located in India on 31 January 1968 and most recently on 19 March 1981. On 20 November, 1981 a circular Note Verbale was issued* to all foreign diplomatic missions in India regarding the insertion of advertisements in News-papers whose contents are in contravention of the requirements that the Government of India are unable to permit dissemination or distribution of any publicity material through whatever media which is designed to or may have the effect of creating ill-will against a third country with which India has friendly relations.

We have also urged newspapers and other print media to refrain from accepting or publishing material issued as advertisements which contravene our guidelines. The Press Council has the power, and has taken cognizance of complaints regarding the contravention by newspapers of these guidelines.

The Government of India are vigilant in this regard and will take whatever pre-emptive or corrective action as is required to ensure that publicity material distributed by any foreign diplomatic mission in India does not have the effect of creating ill-feeling against a third country with which India has friendly relations-