

# RAJYA SABHA

*Wednesday, the 20th April, 2005/30 Chaitra, 1927 (Saka)*

The House met at eleven of the clock,

MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### Concern over Sale of F-16 Aircrafts by US to Pakistan

\*381.SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ :†

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is concerned over the offer of America to give F-16 aircrafts to Pakistan;

(b) if so, whether India has expressed its concern to the American Government;

(c) what is the impact on the capability of the Indian Air Force *vis-a-vis* Pakistan Air Force;

(d) the number of F-16 aircrafts in the fleet of Indian Air Force;

(e) whether US has offered F-16, F-18 and other military aid to India; and

(f) if so, the details and Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) (a) and (b) The Government of India have been informed by the United States(US) Administration about their intention to seek Congressional approval for the supply of F-16 aircraft to Pakistan. India has expressed its disappointment and concern to the United States on the proposed sales.

(c) The supply will enhance the capability of the Pakistan Air Force, and would have to be adequately factored into our operational plans and modernization programme.

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Sushma Swaraj.

(d) The Indian Air Force does not have F-16 aircraft in its inventory.

(e) The US has cleared the US manufacturers of F-16 and F-18 aircraft to respond to an Indian Request for Proposal (RFP) for Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft for the Indian Air Force when it is issued. The US has also offered to meet India's needs in other areas of advanced defence technologies, and enter into production arrangements for defence-related equipment with Indian defence industries.

(f) All relevant factors are kept in mind while arriving at any decision regarding modernization.

**श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज :** सभापति जी, अन्य कई मसलों की तरह इस मामले पर भी सरकार की तरफ से भिन्न-भिन्न वक्तव्य आते रहे हैं। पहले रक्षा मंत्री जी की तरफ से छपा कि भारत ने अमेरिका के सामने इस पर आपत्ति जतायी है। फिर प्रधान मंत्री की ओर से कहा गया कि भारत को अमेरिका ने एफ-16 विमान देने की पेशकश की है, उसका हम स्वागत करते हैं और फिर सरकार के समर्थन दलों की तरफ से बयान आया। भारत को अमेरिका से एफ-16 विमान नहीं लेने चाहिए। इसी के मद्देनजर मैंने यह पूछा था ताकि रक्षा मंत्री की तरफ से अधिकृत रूप से एक बार सरकार संसद में अपनी स्थिति स्पष्ट कर दे। लेकिन आज रक्षा मंत्री जी ने यह जो विस्तृत लिखित रूप में दिया है, उसमें न आपत्ति शब्द है, न स्वागत शब्द है। उसमें दो नए शब्द उभरकर आए हैं। उन्होंने कहा है कि इन बिक्रियों पर भारत ने अमेरिका से निराशा और चिंता जतायी है। सभापति जी, ये दोनो शब्द महत्वपूर्ण हैं। सभापति जी, निराशा असफलता में से उपजती है और चिंता असुरक्षा में से उपजती है। आपत्ति तो बाद में की जाती है। अगर कोई घटना घट जाती है तो आप आपत्ति करते हैं, विरोध करते हैं। सभापति जी, मैं माननीय रक्षा मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहूंगी कि इन दो शब्दों का आपने जो इस्तेमाल किया है, उसमें निराशा आपको किस चीज से हुई? क्या अमेरिका से आपकी कोई अपेक्षा थी? क्या आप उनसे कोई बातचीत कर रहे हैं? क्या ये विमान वे उनको न दें, इस तरह की आपको उनसे कोई अपेक्षा थी और वह अपेक्षा पूरी नहीं हुई, इसलिए आपको निराशा हुई? क्या सरकार मानती है कि यह diplomatic failure है? जहां तक चिंता का सवाल है, चिंता असुरक्षा की भावना से उनजती है। जब सामने वाले से आप कमजोर पड़ते हैं तब आप चिंता व्यक्त करते हैं। तो यह चिंता किस लिए है और निराशा किस लिए है, इस बारे में माननीय मंत्री जी बताएं?

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** Sir, the hon. Member is experienced administration and she has also heard this type of phrases while refer to relations with other countries. We are disappointed and, at the same time, we express our concern. 'Disappointment' because we wanted

have composite dialogue with Pakistan. Composite dialogue with Pakistan is going on. Confidence-Building measures are going on and in that context if suddenly a decision is taken to arm Pakistan with such weapons which are used for a full-fledged war, it is disappointing. Apart from the Prime Minister expressing disappointment and concern, when the Defence Secretary visited India, I had a talk with him and when I was told that these weapons are given to encourage Pakistan to fight against terrorists, I respectfully and firmly pointed out that these types of weapons are not used to fight against terrorists.

These types of weapons are required to manage a full-fledged operation, a full-fledged war. Therefore, if, despite knowing India's concern, they have done, I do feel there are reasons to feel this disappointment. Of course, we will have 'concern', whenever it is done to match. Defence preparedness is done not in isolation, defence preparedness is always in the context of the capacity of potential adversary, naturally, we will have to spend more; we will have to divert a little bit of our resources. And resources are always a constraint for a developing country. Keeping in view that defence gets top priority, and—the Opposition leader will agree with me having the experiences of being both the Finance Minister and the Defence Minister, this, naturally, will always be a concern to the person concerned. Therefore, I think that neither is it a diplomatic failure nor should the hon. Member be too concerned with these two phrases.

**श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज :** सभापति जी, मेरा दूसरा पूरक प्रश्न मंत्री जी के मौखिक उत्तर में से ही निकलता है कि एक तरफ भारत और पाकिस्तान के बीच में यह शांति वार्ता चल रही है और शांति के प्रयास बहुत जोरदार ढंग से चल रहे हैं, समझौते हो रहे हैं, संयुक्त वक्तव्य दिए जा रहे हैं। तो क्या उनको यह नहीं लगता कि इस तरह की अमेरिकी पेशकश, जो भारत या पाकिस्तान को दी जा रही है, वह इस महाद्वीप में हथियार की दौड़ को बढ़ावा देगी, आर्म्स रेस को बढ़ावा देगी?

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** I myself had stated at one point of time that it might trigger. I am not saying that it will trigger, but it may trigger an unintended arms race, which all of us, both India and Pakistan, should try to avoid.

**SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:** Mr. Chairman, Sir, the American offer of F-16 or F-18 has nothing to do with the security of either India or Pakistan. Basically, it is to save the Lockheed Martin Corporation, which is part of the Texas State to which the President belongs, from going bankrupt by

2008. President Bush (Senior) did the same thing by offering 150 F-16 to Taiwan. Such a small country never needed that! President Bush (Junior) is now repeating the same thing. With this background, and in the light of what Sushmaji has just said, when the buses are crossing, when the trains are planned, when the cricket matches are being played, when the artists are going to have excellent relations between India and Pakistan, under such circumstances, will the Government of India initiate a dialogue with Pakistan and will both of us jointly say to the Americans 'No; thank you'?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, as mentioned in my reply, when it will be considered necessary, a Request for Proposal will be made. Now, what has happened is, the U.S. Administration has permitted the U.S. manufacturing companies to respond to a Request for Proposal. As and when the situation arises, when we float the Request for Proposal, and when they respond, then we will look into it whether we should or should not go in for it. The second one .....

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: I am sorry, Sir, he has not answered my question.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: The second one is not a question; it is a suggestion. You do not want to seek any clarification from me!

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: You can respond even to a suggestion.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: The hon. Member's suggestion has been noted, but I cannot respond in either way!

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Thank you, Sir. It will go to the Assurances Committee in due course.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: But, I said, I cannot respond in either way!

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Sir, I am really pleasantly surprised by this development where I think our view is getting endorsement from a very wide section of the House, and it is a very welcome development. Sir, the hon. Prime Minister is going to make a statement on the talks that he had with President Musharraf later on in the day. I think the basic question which arises out of the whole sequence of developments about F-16, F-18 and so on and so forth, is whether the Government envisages that these have very prominent potentials in terms of derailing the process of negotiations between India and Pakistan.

If it is so, what would be the position of the Government to really evade that kind of an eventuality?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, I would not like to sit on value judgement, whether this particular sale is going to overweight the overall relationship between these two countries. After all, we should not forget that since the inception, since the days of CEATO, in the early fifties, Pakistan has been receiving sophisticated weapons from the USA, and with that situation we lived for the last 57 years. Even today, right now, they are having thirty-two F-16 aircraft in their inventory. But what I can say is that there are very positive developments, which have been endorsed by all political parties. During the visit of President Musharraf there had been certain very positive developments and if both sides try to develop and begin to accelerate the peace process, without being scared by the threats from those who do not want peace, it would be possible for us to improve the relationship further.

DR. FAROOQ ABDULLAH: Sir, first of all, I would like to congratulate the Government for the meeting that they had with the President of Pakistan. While confidence building measures are a major factor in the present day discussions, America plays a major role and none of you agreed to state that their previous suggestion was to divide Kashmir into five different regions. This is one.

Secondly, is it not right to call the people who belong to the main parties and to our part of India to the meetings before you meet the President of Pakistan so that we could also put our views about the things? What would you like to say about this?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, I think, so far as consultation is concerned, some sort of informal consultation always takes place before important visits take place. Frankly speaking, this is not related to the question which we are discussing. It is more related to the consultation process and building up of consensus among political parties. Good suggestions are always welcome and we can explore these possibilities further in the future.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Sir, my question is whether, based on the evidences and experiences of ours—it is quite perpetual and traditional in nature—the USA is pampering the non-democratic countries by way of supplying arms and by way of giving them some advantages in different places only to suit their purpose, particularly, the purpose of the multinational corporations of the USA. I would like to know whether India is going to reconsider the question of joint military exercises with the US forces.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, we are already having some joint exercises. Visits take place; participation in the Air Force Exercises takes place; participation in the Naval Exercises takes place. So, there is nothing new in it. It is taking place not only with the USA but also with a large number of countries. So far as the foreign policy of every country is concerned, where the USA is no exception, the foreign policy of every country is basically to promote its own interest, not the interest of the others. There is nothing new in it.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Sir, the US Defence Secretary was in Pakistan two days ago, before President Musharraf came to India. He is, according to Press reports, reported to have said that not only the supply of F-16 but also other new defence needs of Pakistan in terms of arms and equipment will be met by the US. Now, Pakistan has been demanding military parity with India and indications to this effect were given by President Musharraf when he was recently in India.

My question to the Defence Minister is: Does India accept this demand for military parity of Pakistan? If not, what steps are we envisaging to keep ahead of Pakistan in defence preparedness?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as the question of parity is concerned, it is not possible because the objective conditions are not the same. We have vast length of our borders. Our borders are comparatively much larger; our coastal lines are much larger than that of Pakistan. Therefore, it is simply not possible that there can be some sort of parity. Somebody may express his desire, but every country prepares itself to protect its own border in the context of its own threat perception, own perception, of security. It is not dependent on others. Therefore, whatever we consider necessary to protect our territory, to be ready with any eventuality, we should continue to do so.

#### **Grant for Swajaidhara Scheme**

\*382. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that grants are sanctioned to various projects under the 'Swajaidhara' scheme for drinking water supply;

(b) if so, the details including the number of projects submitted, approved and grant allotted and utilized under the scheme during the last three years, year-wise, State-wise and category-wise;

(c) whether any proposal submitted from Malappuram district of Kerala for drinking water supply under the scheme which is pending before the competent authority as on today;