

RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 1st March, 1974/the 10th Phal-
gutta 1895 (Saka).

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr.
Chairman in the chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*208 [The questioners [Sarvashri K. C. Panda, Lokanath Misra, K. P. Singh Deo and M. A. Mohita] were absent. For answer vide aols. 31-32 infra.]

Strength of Pakistani Armed Forces

*209. SHRIMATI SUSHILA SHANKAR
ADIVAREKAR:

SHRI M. S. ABDUL KHADER: SHRI
G. R. PATIL:

SHRIMATI RATHNABAI SREENI-
VASA RAO:

SHRIMATI SUMITRA G. KUL-
KARNI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has raised the strength of her Armed Forces to a level obtaining before the Indo-Pak War in 1971; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI J. B. PATNAIK): (a) and (b) It is known that Pakistan has substantially augmented her military strength after the December 1971 war. All related developments in Pakistan are taken into consideration while reviewing our defence plans.

SHRIMATI RATHNABAI SREENIVASA RAO: The recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan is to be welcomed but in view of the rapprochement between the two countries there is a fear that pro-Pakistani and anti-Indian elements in

Bangladesh may gain in strength and become a force to be reckoned with and as a consequence tensions may be created between India and Bangladesh. I want to know from the hon. Minister what the reaction of the Government is to this possibility, whether steps are being taken to prevent such a possibility and if so what are the steps.

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: Rapprochement between Pakistan and Bangladesh would not in any way affect our relationship with Bangladesh. We have got very cordial relationship with Bangladesh and our relationship would grow closer from year to year. So in no way would the closer relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh affect our relations with Bangladesh.

SHRI V. B. RAJU: Sir, apart from the numerical strength of the armed forces, what is the assessment of the sophistication of the military organisation, weaponry, tactics and also weapons production? It is reported that a new base for weapon production is being organised on the side of Pakistan with the new wealth of the neighbouring countries and European technical know-how. Has an overall assessment been made and will the Minister be in a position to throw some light on that point?

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: We are keeping abreast of all the developments taking place in Pakistan and we shall be taking this into consideration in our defence preparedness.

SHRI NABIN CHANDRA BURAGOHAIN: Sir, in view of the fact that some of the Arab States are making arrangements to have more bombers and fighters from France and U. K. and in view of the fact that they badly need training facilities for their pilots, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the Government will take any initiative for providing such training facilities to their pilots?

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: There is no question of our supplying them pilots unless we are requested to supply pilots to them. We have to take into consideration this factor also that Pakistani pilots are training the defence personnel in those Arab countries.

The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Rathnabai Sreenivasa Rao.

श्री ओडुम प्रकाश त्यागी : मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या सरकार का ध्यान इस बात की ओर आकर्षित हुआ है कि ईरान में अमेरिका से बहुत बड़ी तादाद में अस्त्र-शस्त्र आ रहे हैं और ईरान ने यह भी क्लीयरली बोला है कि हम पाकिस्तान के साथ हैं और अगर इसकी किसी भी टैरिटरी पर हमला हुआ तो हम उसकी मदद करेंगे और अभी जो इस्लामिक समिति काफ़ेस हुई है उसमें लीबिया गवर्नमेंट के प्रधान ने यह खुले तौर पर कहा है कि हम पाकिस्तान के एनिमी के विरुद्ध पाकिस्तान की सहायता करेंगे। इस स्थिति में भारत सरकार ने ईरान सरकार और लीबिया सरकार से कोई प्रोटेस्ट किया है कि आपने इस प्रकार का एटीट्यूड क्यों लिया और अगर किया है तो उसका क्या उत्तर मिला है।

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: Our relations with Iran are very friendly and only recently we have entered into an economic agreement with Iran. So there is no question of protesting to Iran against what they have said with regard to Pakistan.

श्री ओडुम प्रकाश त्यागी : मैंने ईरान की बात ही नहीं कही, मैंने लीबिया के बारे में भी पूछा, लीबिया ने क्लियरली कहा है।

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: We have taken note of the remarks of the Libyan representative.

श्री ओडुम प्रकाश त्यागी : अध्यक्ष महोदय, आप ने तो सिर्फ नोट किया है, क्या उस को प्रोटेस्ट करने की जरूरत नहीं है।

SHRI J. B. PATNAIK: There is no question of protesting. If Libya has said that she would help Pakistan against its enemy, we are not the enemy of Pakistan.

SHRI JOACHIM ALVA: Is it a fact that Pakistan's para-military troops have reached the number of 300,600? Is it also a fact that from 10 squadrons in 1965 they have been increased to 22 squadrons? Further they have got one or two squadrons of Mirage III. The number of Pakistan's prisoners-of-war is 73,994 held in

iiii.v camps, If released this would increase the Pakistan battle of war by four more infantry divisions. This is a formidable force. Plus the help from Iran and the Arab States, it will become a formidable force. Have you made a serious computation and serious calculation of Pakistan's strength at present, in view of these figures?

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: We have indicated in the main answer that we have taken all these factors into account while determining our own strategy and our own level of forces and I can assure the hon. Member that none of these items which the hon. Member has mentioned has escaped our notice. In addition to these, we have also taken into account many other factors which are not really known to all.

SHRI N. G. GORAY: Instead of giving piecemeal replies, will it not be possible for the Ministry of Defence to come out with a White Paper dealing with all these aspects of the Pakistani war preparedness, so that all these aspects will be covered and Members of Parliament and the country at large will know what, in your estimate, is the change which has taken place in the offensive power of Pakistan and now we propose to meet it. For instance, we were told that in Pakistan a sophisticated armament factory was being set up in collaboration with France. The other things you have covered just now. I would like to know how far these plans are put into operation and how far it changes the proportion of our strength compared to the strength of Pakistan. Then, taking advantage of the Islamic Summit in Lahore, Colonel Gadaffi has unburdened himself and he said some very venomous things about the so-called enemies of Pakistan and called Pakistan as the bastion of Islamic culture in the east. I would like to know whether, taking into consideration our relations with Libya, the External Affairs Minister will do something to know what exactly Col. Gadaffi said and at whom was this criticism directed.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: We are watching the situation very closely and we do not think that this is an appropriate time to issue a White Paper

on the situation. About Col. Gadaffi's statement made in Pakistan, it is not very unusual for friends of Pakistan to talk in the way (Col. Gadaffi has done. Therefore, as I said earlier, all these people who are professing their friendship for Pakistan and these matters we are taking into consideration while we plan our own defences and our own future defence set-up.

श्री ना० कृ० शेजवलकर : क्या मंत्री जी यह बताएंगे कि यह जो सेनाओं की संख्या बढ़ी है उसके साथ आर्म्स की जो सप्लाई बढ़ी है, कितनी बढ़ी है और किन-किन देशों ने उनको सप्लाई किए हैं ?

श्री विद्याचरण शुक्ल : अध्यक्ष जी, इसका जवाब कई बार दिया जा चुका है फिर भी मैं दुबारा बता देता हूँ। इनको जो हथियार मिले हैं वे कुछ चीन से मिले हैं, पश्चिमी एशिया और कुछ और देशों से मिले हैं, फ्रांस से भी मिले हैं। इनमें से कई जगहों से उन्होंने खरीदे हैं और कई जगह से उन्हें मुफ्त मिले हैं। दूसरे, कितनी उन्होंने संख्या बढ़ाई है और क्या हम को इस बारे में जानकारी है, मैं इसको यहाँ नहीं बता सकता।

DR. V. A. SEYID MUHAMMAD: Will the hon. Minister be pleased to state whether the agreement between Pakistan and France to set up an aircraft production factory in Pakistan will affect the air superiority which India has at present and, if so, to what extent?

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: Sir, it has been clarified recently that at present there is no proposal for Pakistan to build an aircraft factory as such; what they are intending to do is to manufacture some components there. But, as I said earlier, we are closely watching the situation, and I can assure the hon. Members that we shall not let our defence or our readiness for defence become in any way inferior to what it should be.

SHRIMATI SUMITRA G. KULKARNI: Formerly, before the Indo-Pak War 1971, Pakistan used to have about 10 infantry divisions and two armoured divi-

sions on the western front and 3 divisions on eastern front in Bangla Desh, i.e., totally 15+ divisions. Now they have got 16 divisions. What are we doing to keep up with this increase? And most of their cantonments are absolutely on the Indo-Pakistan border, with the result that their striking ability and efficiency are much superior to ours because our cantonments are spread out into the interior parts of India like Bangalore, Secundcrabad, Bareilly, Ranchi and such places. Will the Government consider opening cantonments on the Pak-Indo border, near to it, so that our efficiency is better and our preparedness is better. With the 16 divisions that they have got, the prisoners-of-war who are returning there, they are re-employed in the paramilitary and military establishments there. What steps are we taking in this respect?

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: First of all, the Pakistani forces do not have as many armoured divisions as the hon. Member has said. And we have said in the main answer that they have substantially increased their military strength since the war in December, 1971. As far as the striking capability is concerned, it is not true that their striking capability is much greater than ours. Our striking capability is there and we have deployed our forces in such a way that they are mostly used for the defence of our country because our operation is not of offence but of defence all the time. None the less, we take the factor into account which the hon. Member has mentioned that in case of any surprise attack we should be able to mobilise our forces within the shortest time possible. This has also been taken into consideration while planning our cantonments and the deployment of troops.

SHRIMATI SUMITRA G. KULKARNI: There are not 16 armoured divisions, they are mixed divisions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have put your question and the answer has come. And that should end this.

*99. [The questioner (Shri Sanda Narayanappa was absent. For Answer vide col. 32 Infra.]