

SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR : So far as the crash programme is concerned there was a provision of Rs. 50 crores for 1971-72. The amount released up to 31st March 1972 was Rs. 34 crores and the amount spent as per reports is Rs. 13.35 crores only. The schemes under the crash programme are minor irrigation, rural electrification, construction of roads, inland water transport and . . .

SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE : I did not ask for these things at all. I asked whether the Government's attention has been drawn to the observations of the Bhagawati Committee and what they are going to do to rectify the defects. That was my question.

SHRI R. K. KHADILKAR : That defect pointed out by the Bhagawati Committee is under examination of the Planning Commission Working Group. I have already said that.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Next question.

*441. [The questioners iSanashri K. C. Panda, M. K. ALhta and Dahyabhai V. Patel) were absent For answer, vide col. 24 infra].

SHRI KALYAN ROY : All suddenly disappeared.

MR. CHAIRMAN : What have you got to do?

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : All Swatantra Party Members, and they have disappeared.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You are wasting the Question Hour. Please sit down. Next Question.

SEVENTH FLEET IN THE BAY OF BENGAL

*442. SHRI S. KUMARAN :
SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : t SHRI
KALYAN ROY :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the ships of the U. S. Seventh Fleet had entered the Bay of Bengal during the recent Indo-Pak military conflict ;

(b) If so, what was the purpose of their entry into the Bay of Bengal ;

(c) how long they remained there ?

•fThe question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Bhupesh Gupta.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SARDAR SWARAN SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The U. S. Government has stated that the purpose of the entry of the task force of the Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal lay in the possible evacuation U.S. citizens from Dacca. Since the Government of India had given every facility for the evacuation of foreign nationals from Bangla Desh at that time, it is possible that the U.S. Government had other motives in mind. The Government of India considered this action of the U.S. Government as unfriendly and dangerous and expressed our concern and views to the U.S. Government.

(c) The task force remained in the Indian Ocean from December 15 to January 10.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, a very very diplomatic answer. Has the attention of the Government been drawn to the disclosures made by columnist Jack Anderson that the Task Force of the US Seventh Fleet was sent to the Bay of Bengal while preparations were going on even to sanction a nuclear war in order to help the Yahya Khan regime to suppress Bangla Desh liberation and also intimidate India ? May I know, Sir, whether, in view of the serious disclosures by Mr. Jack Anderson about the intentions of the movement of the US Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal, Government consider it almost a co-belligerent act on the side of Yahya Khan regime, and in view of that, what action Government have taken at the diplomatic and political level in regard to this matter as far as the American Government is concerned ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Thank you.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I have not finished my questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, no ; only one question. I would call you again for another question.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: There cannot be a necklace with only one stud.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I will call you again.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Of course you will do. So, let him say now about the Jack Anderson part of it.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: Sir, Government have seen the article written by Mr. Jack Anderson and I would like to inform the House that in his article on January 3 Mr. Anderson says that the American purpose was four-fold : (a) to compel India to divert both ships and planes to shadow the United States Task Force ; (b) to weaken India's blockade against "East Pakistan" ; (c) possibly to divert the Indian Aircraft Carrier VIKRANT from its military mission and (d) to force India to keep planes on advance alert, thus reducing their operations against Pakistani ground troops. He quoted portions of the Top Secret orders of the Task Force—"Mission : to form a contingency evacuation force capable of helicopter evacuation of civilians, of self-protection, and of conducting naval, air and surface operations as directed by higher authority in order to support US interests in the Indian Ocean area." These revelations were in mind when I said that the American motives appeared to be other than those which were ostensibly mentioned at that time. About action taken by us, statements were made by Government spokesmen, including Ministers, pinpointing the foolishness of the action ...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Foolishness ?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : ... and a deliberate action. I want to be a little moderate about it.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : You can be moderate and I have no objection, but do not use the word 'foolishness'. The American rulers are as intelligent as you are. Only they are knaves.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let him finish his reply.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : It is mischievous. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Kulkarni, I will not call you on this or any other question if you interrupt like this.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : The studied attitude on our part to ignore this, which apparently appeared to be a threat at that time, had a very powerful impact not only upon the Americans but throughout the world and the task force disappeared as quietly as it came with a bang.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : It stands to the everlasting credit of the the Bangla Desh liberation struggle and of ourselves and the nation that we made this task force turn tail. I agree. But the fact remains from what the hon. Minister has now stated that the Americans were almost on the brink of starting a war in our region and all the preparations were made. I do not know why there is no reference to the nuclear part of it which his Dssa published in America and not disputed by the Americans.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Kindly put your question.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : The question is coming. Everything has a process of evolution, even a question. Now, Sir, therefore, I say that this is not the way to treat it. In view of their presence here I should like to know what steps they are going to take to make the Indian Ocean a peace area, free from this kind of warlike operations. In this connection, may I know whether the Government have had any discussions with the Soviet authorities and whether there is any move to make this zone a peace zone, the Indian Ocean a peace zone, by preventing this kind of aggressive movement by the US Seventh Fleet ?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : As the House is no doubt aware, we are signatories to the Lusaka Declaration where a vast majority of the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean had expressed their determination to ensure that the Indian Ocean area remains an area of peace free from tensions and free from the presence of big power and super-powers rivalries. We are in touch with other countries. I would also like to add that during the last General Assembly session of the United Nations this matter was again discussed and there was a great measure of support in favour of steps being taken to ensure that the Indian Ocean remains an area of peace free from nuclear armaments or nuclear fleet. Whereas we are quite clear about the objective to be realised, we must also remember that a great deal will depend on the attitude of the super-powers . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Not superpowers, but American. The Soviet Union is helping you. I want a reply to the last part of my question.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : I will come to that. It will depend to a very great extent

on the action taken by them jointly to reach some agreement not to induct their naval units in the Indian Ocean except for the legitimate purpose of visiting certain ports. But if once the rivalry starts, then I am afraid that the Indian Ocean, in course of time, may face the same situation as the Mediterranean Sea faces today.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Sir, my point has not been answered. I had mentioned about the Soviet Union. That point we are reading. The Soviet Union is cooperating with you in ensuring this objective. Therefore you should not use the words 'super powers' which will be misunderstood. That point should be answered. Otherwise, the impression will be as if these powers are being equated. The Soviet Union is clearly against this and it is cooperating with India.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please sit down. You have made your point. Do you wish to add anything ?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : I would like to add only one thing that the general attitude of the American spokesmen as also the West European spokesmen has been that these powers, namely the Americans and the West European nations, are also increasing their naval presence in the Indian Ocean because they allege that the Soviet Union also is increasing its naval presence in the Indian Ocean. But I would like to set the record straight. Whereas the Americans and the British and, to a certain extent, the French also have regular naval bases in this region, the USSR, according to our information, does not have any naval base in this region.

SHRI KALYAN ROY : May I know whether the Minister is aware that the Seventh Fleet did escort some of the Pakistani ships to escape, which ultimately found shelter in Malaysian and other ports and whether in spite of the protest of the Government of India against sending the Seventh Fleet, the US Government is developing a special fleet only for the Indian Ocean in order to create mischief in future ?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : Sir, we have no information that the Seventh Fleet escorted any Pakistani naval ships or other ships to places of safety. We have no such information. We have also no information if the US Navy

has constituted a special Indian Ocean Naval Force. But we do know that the Americans have got naval facilities in Bahrain in the Gulf region, and they are also, along with the British, building a naval base at Diego Garcia. They continue to say that it is only a communication centre but all these communication facilities are described as such and they end up with regular naval bases. This is the experience that the world has in other parts of the globe. And it should also be remembered that the British have got some naval facilities in Gan. This is the actual picture as it obtains today.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA : In the meeting of the National Security Council, which decided to send the Seventh Fleet to the Indian Ocean was present also Mr. Richard Helms, Chief of the CIA. Is the Government of India aware of any possible information which the CIA agents in India might have sent to their CIA headquarters in America ? And is the Government also aware that the CIA activities in India are financed by PL-480 funds ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : This question does not arise. The first question is all right.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA : It is on the same lines, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, no.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : We have no information that the CIA operating in India sent any special information which might be relevant to the movement of the Seventh Fleet.

श्री नागेश्वर प्रसाद शाही : श्रीमन्, इस सन्दर्भ में संयुक्त राज्य अमरीका, चीन और पाकिस्तान ने आपस में कुछ गुप्त सन्धियों की है और चीन और अमरीका अब भी पाकिस्तान को शस्त्रों से सज्जित कर रहे हैं और इन तीनों राष्ट्रों के भारत के प्रति वर्तमान रुख को देखते हुए तथा यह ध्यान में रखते हुए कि कोई देश अपनी सामरिक तैयारी दूसरे देश पर हमला करने की गरज से ही नहीं बल्कि दूसरे देश द्वारा अपने ऊपर हमला होने से रोकने के लिए भी करता है क्या भारत सरकार अपने देश की नेवी को न्यू क्लियर वेपन्स से सुसज्जित करने की बात सोचेगी

सरदार स्वर्ण सिंह : जी नहीं ।

SHRI C. D. PANDE : As the hon'ble Minister is aware that the Seventh Fleet came on the 15th December and disappeared on the 10th of January, may I know whether it is the information of the Minister that the Seventh Fleet lingered in the Indian Ocean even till the end of March and it is still 700 miles south of Ceylon which is a portion of the Indian Ocean ? If it is not there, where is it located now ?

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : Sir, I have already given the information that I had. I cannot say that there are no American Naval ships . .

SHRI C. D. PANDE : Seventh Fleet.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : The movement of the Seventh Fleet including the date of departure has already been given by me.

SHRI C. D. PANDE : It has not left the Indian Ocean. It is still in the Bay of Bengal which is part of the Indian Ocean.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Next question.

*443. [The questioner (Shri Bab'ibhai M. Chinai) was absent. For answer, vide cols. 24-25 infra]

NIXON'S NEW VIETNAM PEACE PROPOSALS

*444. SHRI S.G. SARDESAI : SHRI S. KUMARAN : SHRI G. GOPINATHAN NAIR : SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : f

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether Government have studied President Nixon's new Vietnam peace proposals; and
- (b) if so, what are Government's reactions thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH) :

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government of India have always welcomed every effort, in public or in secret, between the parties concerned to narrow their

■fThe question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Bhupesh Gupta.

differences with a view to seeking a peaceful political settlement of the Vietnam question. President Nixon's 8-point proposal marked a slight advance over his earlier 5-point proposal. However, the Government of India regrets that despite the positive response given by the PRG in the form of their two elaborations made on February 2, 1972, at Paris, the United States virtually negated their own peace proposal by intensive bombing raids on Vietnam and by unilaterally abandoning the Paris Peace Talks.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Sir, now much water has flown down the bridge since that time. May I know whether the Government has considered from the point of view of what it should do to the recent escalation of war by the Americans in Vietnam, the heavy and unprecedented bombing not only from the air but also from the ships of the North Vietnamese territory and movement of troops and so on in order as if to start the war all over again contrary to what Nixon has been saying all this time ? Is the hon'ble Minister aware that this is being done after the policy of so-called Vietnamisation, the war policy, had failed and that now they want a military solution, if possible. Sir, in view of that I should like to know whether his attention has been drawn to the report appearing in the Statesman today that they are contemplating using nuclear weapons in order to carry on their aggressive action in Vietnam. I should also like to know..

MR. CHAIRMAN : I will ask you to put another question.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : All right.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH : Sir, as I had occasion briefly to mention in the House yesterday, when my esteemed colleague raised this matter, we are totally opposed to the bombing raid undertaken by the Americans. And I said in clear and unmistakable terms that the pursuit of this policy is definitely a negative factor in the situation. I would also like to add that we are strongly in favour of maintaining the sovereignty, neutrality, independence and territorial integrity of the Indo-China State.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: And we believe that there can be no military solution to the problem and the solution can be only by a negotiated settlement. We will, therefore, continue to raise our voice against escalation