

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Sir, the Standing Committee is also looking into those aspects because the issue is ownership-- whom does the data belong to. When the ownership issue is settled, how do we licence it? Then, another issue is what should be the kind of fees that should be charged? What should be the extent of data that should be made available in the public domain? There are some security issues -- what kind of data should be withheld? All these issues have to be looked at. We are looking at them. We will do it very quickly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

Prime Minister's America visit

*28. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of countries whose Heads of State/Government had discussions with the Indian Prime Minister on matters of mutual interest in September last during his visit to the USA for addressing the General Assembly of the United Nations, and

(b) outcome of the discussions in each case and to what extent these parleys are expected to help to improve the cause and peace, harmony and tranquility in the world?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

During his visit to New York for the 59th UN General Assembly, the Prime Minister held discussions with the Heads of Governments of USA, South Africa, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Prime Minister also met the Heads of Governments of Japan and Brazil in the frame work of a meeting of a Group of Four countries who agreed to work together and support each other for Permanent Membership of the UN Security Council.

Major issues on the international agenda, on the agenda of the United Nations and important bilateral issues were covered in these meetings. The meeting with President Bush of USA encompassed many subjects,

the most important being the common commitment to combating terrorism, WMD proliferation and related global threats. Bilateral issues and the direction for further development of the Indo-US strategic partnership were also discussed. In the meeting with President M'beki of South Africa, the issue of UN reforms, the visit of our President to South Africa and aspects of bilateral relations were discussed. In the meeting with President Musharraf of Pakistan, it was agreed that further dialogue was the only way forward to find a solution to the outstanding issues between the two countries. With President Karzai of Afghanistan, Prime Minister underlined our support to the Presidential elections and to Afghanistan's development and reconstruction.

All these discussions were helpful in creating a better understanding between India and the countries concerned and promoting the cause of world peace.

SHRI LALIT SURI: Sir, I congratulate the hon. Prime Minister for his very successful trip to the United Nations. As you know, for the last many years the enlarging of the United Nations' Security Council has been hanging in the balance. The proposal is on. It is not very clear which one will be tier one and which one will be tier two. If India does get a permanent membership without the Veto Power, what stand will India take on that?

SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH: Sir, the Higher Level Panel set up by the Secretary-General of the Security Council is to give its report tomorrow. Only after that it will be debated as to what extent the Security Council should be expanded; and, what members are to be nominated to the Security Council. Once that happens, the debates will take charge. India's position is that if you are to become a member of the Security Council you must have the right to veto.

SHRI LALIT SURI: Sir, my second supplementary is, to what extent India, during the discussion with other countries at the United Nations, was able to ensure early normalisation of the situation in Iraq? And, to what extent, if any, India would be able to assist in the conduct of elections to usher in democracy in that country?

SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH: Sir, the theme in the United Nations was on various issues, like, Iraq, Afghanistan, what's happening in the Middle East, conflicts in Africa, and the reforms in the United Nations. The hon. Prime Minister went there to talk to leaders on the matter and to try and ensure that India's voice is heard on these matters, and that a decision is taken on global challenges in a multilateral manner. And, in that sense, I think, the Prime Minister's visit to the United Nations was the most beneficial. He was able to put across the Indian point of view, and was able to make dents in the thinking of the leaders that there should be a multilateral approach to the challenges that face the world.

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Sir, the issue of reforms in the UN and also the expansion of the UN Security Council is being discussed for the last few years. As the hon. Minister has said, the Special Panel that has been set up by the Secretary-General is expected to give its report by tomorrow. But some excerpts of the report have already been leaked in advance and have been published in newspapers, both in America and in India, making it clear that the Security Council will be expanded and two countries from Asia, two from Africa and two from Europe may be included. But they will be given a second-class membership, that is, they will not have the right to veto. I would like to know from the Government, if that is the case, will India, along with the other three group 4 countries, that is, Japan, Germany and Brazil, reject the proposal categorically?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): Sir, when the Special Panel was set up by the Secretary-General I was in New York at the time of the Prime Minister's visit there. I met the members of the Panel, who were present in New York at the time. If there are views by any criteria, India's claim for a permanent seat in the United Nations' Security Council is accepted. Now Brazil, India, Germany and Japan are working together. Some excerpts of the report, which will be made available to the member-States by the Secretary-General by the middle of this month, have appeared in the newspapers. I think these are purely speculative. Our position is quite clear that if we are to get into the Security Council, we are not going to get there and not have a veto. Let us examine the details of the report. When the report comes, we will keep the House informed.

DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Sir, I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister for the stand that if you are going into the Security Council, you

will not get in there without a veto. But it is widely known that the United States of America has been opposed to a large expansion of the Security Council. I would like to know whether, during the Prime Minister's visit to the United States, this matter came up specially in the bilateral talks between India and the US; and, whether the USA's attitude in this regard has, now become more cooperative than it was before.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Sir, this matter did not come up specifically in the Prime Minister's meeting with the President of the United States. But the United States knows India's views in this regard. There was a meeting of the Heads of the Governments and Heads of the States. Brazil, India, Japan and the Vice-Chancellor of Germany were working together for this. Our views have been known. We have also expressed in the Joint Statement, which was issued after the meeting of the four Heads of the Governments, that we would like Africa also to be represented, if they expand the Security Council. I agree with the hon. Member that the revision of the Charter and expansion of the Security Council are not going to be easy. Next year is the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. This matter has to be resolved before that. It was hoped that it would be resolved at the 50th anniversary in 1995. But it did not happen. We are not alone. There are many other countries that are working for it. But there are certain groups, medium powers, who are not in favour of.... Certain countries are coming in. I will not name those countries. It is a very vastly complicated issue. The revision of the Charter has taken place only once when the Security Council was enlarged. Its non-permanent members' strength was increased in 1963. We will make all efforts that we can. But it will be extremely a complicated issue. And, it will have very wide ramifications for the organizations.

SHRI BIMAL JALAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. External Affairs Minister has said that by any criteria India has a right to be in the Security Council. And, I think, all the political commentators internally and internationally have endorsed that point of view, that is, on objective criteria India has to have a place. He has also rightly pointed out that it is an extremely complicated issue. The progress on this issue has been extremely slow and is likely to continue to be slow. But the issue, which I would like the Government to consider and give some thought to is that at the moment, India has a revolving membership without a veto. Will not

india's case for a veto be stronger if it has a permanent membership inside the Security Council and pushes for an equality of treatment? That is the issue. I am sure that the External Affairs Minister would know that is the art of the possible. Otherwise we are playing United States' game. If you reject the report of the Committee, which the United States very well want you to, then what is the next step? You will continue to be revolving. Once in a while you will get into the Security Council and keep on pleading. So, why not become a permanent member under protest. Sir, this is an important issue and that is why I have taken a minute. I would like Government to reconsider this. Thank you.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Sir, I have great respect for the hon. Member. Let us wait for the report, which would be sent to the Member States by the Secretary-General. And, then, after we have studied it, we will take our decision. But let me make it clear that...(Interruptions)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: प्रधानमंत्री जी कुछ तो बोल दें।

श्री सभापति: आप पूछेंगे तो बोलेंगे।

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: This issue is very much before the Government. We are all applying our minds to it. There are various suggestions being made. I personally don't want to look at it as a personal matter. But there are serious ramifications for the proposal made by the hon. Member that we get into the Security Council without a veto. I don't think it will be acceptable to this country.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Dissolution of Advisory Committees

†29. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to dissolve the Advisory Committees constituted in the Planning Commission that consist of foreign as well as other experts;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.