

- (iii) One Hundred Fifty-sixth Report on Action Taken by the Government on recommendations contained in the Committee's One Hundred Thirty-first report on the constraints in Industrial Development of North Eastern Region (Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises).

**MATTER RAISED WITH PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR**

**Re: Reported statement by Shri K. Natwar Singh (Minister of External Affairs) in Seoul on Nuclear Policy of the Government of India**

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):** Mr. Chairman, Sir, to benefit from the hon. Prime Minister's presence in the House, I want to seek certain vital clarifications covering country's, firstly, nuclear policy, and secondly, very important aspect of continuity of policy regarding national security. If I might submit, Sir, with due regard to the question of responsibility of the entire Cabinet in regard to statements made or not made and also the resultant uncertainty that is created about the foreign policy, I wish to draw the attention to certain reports that have appeared. Sir, I am ready to accept that simply based on the reports we cannot structure an opinion. Therefore, I sought further details of these reports. *The Indian Express* was carrying the report, and then I accessed the PTI. Thereafter I also accessed the report from Seoul because this report was attributed to the hon. the Minister of External Affairs, who among other things, has said that India's previous Government was responsible for the decision to enter the nuclear stand-off with Pakistan. This I cite, Sir, because this is given in quote. Thereafter, he directly or indirectly expresses a certain regret saying, "But regret would be futile". I am concerned because this portion of the statement of the hon. the Minister of External Affairs, of course, is questioning the established policy of the Government, not simply of the Government to which I had the honour to belong, but also of the present Government, and naturally it creates an uncertainty about where does the present Government stand on this vital aspect. May I submit also, Sir, that it falsifies the achievements of the country because the *Apsara*, experimental reactor established in 1956, and the entire nuclear programme of the country cannot be just one Government's programme. I have said so repeatedly in the House. Whatever be the nuclear achievement, the policy of the Government is really a continuity from the Nehru-Bhabha days' *Apsara* to the days of late

Mrs. Gandhi and all subsequent Prime Ministers including late Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Shri Narsimha Rao and others. Therefore, to suggest that it is the previous Government is regrettable. What he also does regrettably, is to take the contentions of our domestic politics to foreign shores and to give voice to the domestic politics. The Minister for External Affairs is entirely within his rights to find fault with the previous Government and to criticise us to his heart's content, which, I think, he is quite given to doing. But, if he were to do so on shores other than India, then, it is really breaking a tradition which successive generations of political leaders have followed. Also this suggestion, Sir, as he has done that the previous Government entered into a nuclear stand-off with neighbouring Pakistan, in fact belittles the totality of the country's nuclear programme. We have repeatedly said, I have said so in the House, that India's nuclear programme is not Pak-centric. It was never intended to be Pak-centric. It is not focussed on Pakistan and it is a much wider concern that has persuaded India in its quest for having a nuclear parity with the rest of the world. Therefore, to belittle India, India's achievements and to reduce it as stand-off, I think, is a great disservice to India. I am very glad that the hon. Prime Minister is here and, that is why, I have suggested and I would request the hon. Prime Minister to clarify because we cannot simply wait for the hon. the Minister of External Affairs to return and further clarify what he said. These are the reports that have appeared. I have tried to access the reports in every sense possible, whether in Seoul or PTI or Indian Express and it is also, Sir, that so far as country's security and nuclear policy goes, the Prime Minister's role is pre-eminent. It would, therefore, not be suffice for anybody to suggest that until the hon. Minister is back, we should wait and only then seek a clarification to end the uncertainty about security; also for Cabinet responsibility because the Prime Minister is Prime Minister and nobody else can be the Prime Minister and claim to make policy on behalf of the Prime Minister. At least, that is the theory on which we work. I would, therefore, urge the Prime Minister to immediately clarify all these various things that have arisen on account of the reports appearing and the direct statement, that I have quoted, made by the hon. the Minister of External Affairs.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): Sir, before the Prime Minister's response to this, since this is a very serious issue which has been brought

to the attention of the House by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, for whom I have the greatest regard, will the hon. Prime Minister also clarify certain other points, which actually arise out of the issue which he has articulated? Now, hon. Leader of the Opposition has maintained that the previous Government had really tried to consolidate the consensus that was there in the country on foreign policy issues, especially our nuclear policy. Now this House has been witness to furious debates on the question of nuclear policy in the aftermath of 12th of May, 1998, when the Government in which the hon. Leader of the Opposition was also a member, went for nuclear detonation in Pokhran. Subsequent to that, all Indian newspapers published a letter written by the then hon. Prime Minister, Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, to President George W. Bush that this is the response to our security....(Interruptions). Yes, I mean, Mr. Bill Clinton. We are so enamoured by George W. Bush that sometimes, we also get confused as if that was the past, present and future of the United States. Now, that letter specifically mentioned that the immediate provocation or inspiration for Pokhran II was our security concern over Pakistan and China, and, which, I believe also created a lot of diplomatic discomfort for the Indian Government at that point of time.

Subsequently, when we had debate on that issue in this House as well as the other House, I think there was a great divide across the Indian polity as to whether what was done by the Government of Atal Behari Vajpayeeji represented a national consensus. And, Sir, all of us, a large body of political parties in fact maintained that what was done by that Government at that point of time was a major break in the tradition of the foreign policy making of this country in the sense that there was no national consensus, and, it was contrary to the electoral commitment given by the NDA in its common election manifesto.

[MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

Therefore, Sir, I would say that the Prime Minister is supreme in terms of articulating the position of the Government, but we would also like to be clarified on the question whether really there was a continuity of national consensus in terms of foreign policy making, and, specially, the nuclear policy.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Basu, let the Prime Minister respond.

**SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:** And, whether the act of the previous Government did indeed represent a break in the tradition of national consensus.

**THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH):** Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has raised certain issues arising out of the reported statement of my colleague, the hon. Minister of External Affairs, Shri Natwar Singh in Seoul.

I too have seen newspaper coverings of the reported statements of the Minister of External Affairs, Shri Natwar Singh on India's nuclear weaponisation and related issues in Seoul.

Shri Natwar Singh is returning to Delhi tomorrow with whom I will check the authenticity of the report in the newspapers. It is, however, my assessment that the reported remarks of the Minister of External Affairs must have been in the context of questions from journalists to him on the subject. What he said was not a statement of policy, and, I would like to use this opportunity to state categorically that there is no uncertainty about our nuclear policies. India is a nuclear power, and, a responsible nuclear power.

And, without going into the history of issues, and, what was debated in both the Houses, I would like to say that our effort is to ensure that issues related to India's defence and strategic assets have to be decided upon on the basis of continuity and national consensus with due deliberation, and, these are issues which are best kept above partisan politics.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Further discussion on internal security situation in the country raised by Shri Arun Shourie.

**श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज (उत्तरांचल):** सभापति जी। ... (व्यवधान)... सभापति जी। ... (व्यवधान)... सभापति जी, मैं .. (व्यवधान).. आदरणीय प्रधान मंत्री जी यहाँ बैठे हैं। ... (व्यवधान)..

कुछ मूलभूत सदस्य: क्या हो गया? ... (व्यवधान)...

**श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज:** मैं बोलूंगी तो क्या हो गया? ... (व्यवधान)... आप खड़े होते हैं क्यों ऐसा कहने लगते हैं। ... (व्यवधान)... कोई बोलेगा, तभी तो पता चलेगा कि क्या हो गया? ... (व्यवधान)... खड़ा होना भी मुश्किल हो गया। ... (व्यवधान)... क्या इस सदन में कोई खड़ा भी नहीं हो सकता? मैंने अनुमति मांगी है। आप सुनेंगे, तो पता लगेगा कि क्या हो गया। ... (व्यवधान)...

**श्री सभापति:** आप बोलिये।

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज: सभापति जी, मैं बहुत विनम्रता से यह निवेदन करना चाहती हूँ, क्योंकि प्रधानमंत्री जी यहां पर मौजूद हैं। आज नेता विपक्ष ने दूसरा प्रश्न उठाया, इसलिए वे स्वयं इस बात को नहीं उठा रहे हैं। आज से करीब पांच दिन पहले उन्होंने एक और प्रश्न इसी सदन में कलेक्टिव रीसपॉन्सिबिलिटी का उठाया था। पीठ से आदेश हुआ था और संसदीय कार्य मंत्री ने कहा था कि वे इस निर्देश का पालन करेंगे। अब क्योंकि प्रधानमंत्री जी उपस्थित हैं, इसलिए आज उस विषय का भी निराकरण हो जाये, तो अच्छा रहेगा।

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Sir, I have been asked by the Leader of the Opposition in the House and also by some hon. Members of the House to take the House into confidence on the issue of two of my Cabinet colleagues, Shri Lalu Prasad and Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, having made allegations abruptly against each other. Subsequently, Sir, both the Ministers have made statements in Parliament denying that they have made any allegations against each other. ...*(Interruptions)*.

श्री सभापति: बैठिए ...बैठिए... (व्यवधान)... बैठिए... प्लीज़ बैठिए, please, keep silence. ...*(Interruptions)* ... क्या कर रहे हैं आप? ...*(व्यवधान)*...

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: In the light of the clarifications given by the two Ministers, the matter may be treated as settled, and there is no need of any further clarification.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Further discussion on the internal security situation.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD (Bihar): Sir, ...*(Interruptions)*\*

MR. CHAIRMAN: It will not go on record. ...*(Interruptions)*. Please, sit down. Please, sit down, Mr. Ravi Shankar ...*(Interruptions)*. Shri Pilania. ...*(Interruptions)*. Shri Pilania ...*(Interruptions)*

श्री राम देव भंडारी: ...*(व्यवधान)*... \*

श्री सभापति: अब आप बैठ जाइए। ...*(व्यवधान)*... अब आप बैठ जाइए प्लीज़। It will not go on record. ...*(Interruptions)*. Please, sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*. Further discussion on internal security. ...*(Interruptions)*. भंडारी जी, प्लीज़ बैठ जाइए। ...*(व्यवधान)*... भंडारी जी, बैठ जाइए। यह नहीं होगा। मैंने उनको भी allow नहीं किया और आपको भी नहीं करूंगा। अब इंटरनल सिक्योरिटी पर श्री पिलानिया बोलेंगे।

DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA (Rajasthan): Your honour, it is a privilege ...*(Interruptions)*.

\*Not recorded.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is the last speaker. Now, the Minister will reply after his speech.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Kerala): Sir, yesterday, I have been called to speak...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you are there. ...*(Interruptions)*.

SHRI M.P. ABDUSSAMAD SAMADANI (Kerala): Sir, what about other parties? We are waiting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That I will see later on. First, Mr. Vayalar Ravi is there.

SHRI M.P. ABDUSSAMAD SAMADANI: Sir, Members from so many parties are there. ...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, sit down. Let him speak. Tell me after that. Please, take your seat. ...*(Interruptions)*. Please, take your seat.

SHRI M.P. ABDUSSAMAD SAMADANI: Will we get a chance to speak? Sir, it is a very important subject.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I know it is an important issue.

SHRI M.P. ABDUSSAMAD SAMADANI: Why are we denied, Sir?

श्री सभापति: तो आप बैठिए। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRI M.P. ABDUSSAMAD SAMADANI: Why are we denied, Sir?

श्री सभापति: अभी कहाँ है? अभी तो ये बोलेंगे, उसके बाद आपका नंबर है।

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### SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION

#### Internal Security situation in the country—Contd.

DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA (Rajasthan): Sir, I have the privilege, as has been permitted by your honour, to put forward the scenario pertaining to the internal security of this great nation. During the last 2-3 days, there have been very illuminating speeches on this issue in this august House. And, I trust that two unanimous points have emerged out of that. One is that a national concern is there regarding internal security. The internal security matter is not a partisan issue, it is not an issue pertaining to any