

RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, *the 30th March*, 1961/*the 9th Chaitra*, 1883 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,
MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

PURCHASE OF TRANSPORT PLANES FROM U.S.S.R.

1. SHRI SUDHIR GHOSH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a number of transport planes under an agreement with the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;

(b) if so, whether Russian pilots have come to India to fly these planes; and

(c) whether Indian pilots have been trained to fly these planes?

THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU): (a) Yes Sir; a number of transport aircraft have been purchased from Russia for the Border Roads Development Board.

(b) and (c) I.A.F. personnel have been sent to Russia for training in operation and maintenance of these aircraft since they are of a new type with which our personnel were unfamiliar. Our crew are expected to take over independent charge of the aircraft after they have gained sufficient operational experience in the airfields where they are likely to be employed. Some Russian pilots and technicians have been engaged to assist our crew in the operation of these aircraft under arranged programmes for a limited period until our personnel can take over.

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SHRI SUDHIR GHOSH: Is it a fact that pending the training of Indian pilots to fly this new type of plane, pilots of Russian nationality have been permitted to fly these planes in some of the strategic areas such as Ladakh and on the India-China frontier areas? Have they been permitted to do so?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: So far as I know, the Russian pilots do not fly planes there, but a few of them are there with the Indian pilots. The technical word, I believe, is to screen our crew, that is, to help them to deal with the new type of aircraft they are using. But the actual flying is done by our pilots.

DR. H. N. KUNZRU: How is it that Russian pilots are allowed to go to our strategic areas?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: Because we have taken these planes and we want to use them to our advantage and we want our pilots to get used to them. Therefore, for sometime,—it may be a question of—I forget now—but not a long time,—it is necessary for them jointly to be present in these aircraft and they are flying over some of the higher altitude places.

DR. H. N. KUNZRU: If the purpose was to have Indian pilots trained in the use of these planes, was it not possible to prove them with full loads by flying them over some other non-strategic areas?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: Whether it is possible or not, I do not know, but this is a matter in which one does not want to take any risks and one wants a person completely knowing the aircraft for the first few visits to be there to see. Anyhow, we are taking adequate precautions in this matter and I do not think there is any risk of any—shall I say—secret information leaking out.

DR. H. N. KUNZRU: Are Members of Parliament allowed to go to these strategic areas, for instance, Ladakh?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: Well, I do not think they are prohibited from going. But if individuals go, the real difficulty is not their not being allowed, but of aircraft being found, particularly for that purpose, that is to say, the transport difficulty. It is because of these transport difficulties that we have got these new aircraft to carry loads, etc. There is no objection to their going, but if they want fresh aircraft, new aircraft for that purpose, it comes in the way of our transport problems.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know, Sir, whether, if Members of Parliament were as much skilful in flight, they would be disallowed to go there?

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: I understand that there is good need for such transport planes for our border area. I would like to know whether the Government fully considered this matter before allowing non-Indians—maybe Russians or whoever they may be—to fly these transport planes in our strategic areas or whether the Defence Ministry without consulting the Government took this decision on their own to send non-Indians to the border areas. That is an important point that I would like to know from the Prime Minister.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: The hon. Member's question answers itself, if I may say so. Obviously every single aspect of this matter was very carefully considered by the Government because it is a big transaction and more particularly the question of training our pilots. They are flying over heights which may be anything up to 25,000 feet. It is a matter which requires very considerable experience of that particular type of aircraft and we did not wish to risk doing this without taking advantage of those who are experienced in it. Even those persons are not particularly experienced in a particular place, maybe one cannot have the experi-

ence elsewhere. Therefore, we took all these matters into consideration and for a period of, I think probably, about three weeks or so, we engaged them. I think they are supposed to go back by the third week of Apr

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA: One point. What I feel is, with due respect to the Prime Minister, that he has not answered my question. He has evaded it. What I particularly wanted to know was this—whether this point to send the Russian pilots to the strategic areas was cleared up with the Government as a whole, before sending these foreign nationals to the strategic areas. That is the point. And I do not want his answer whether they should be trained or not. I agree that they should be trained at high altitudes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Prime Minister said that the Government was fully consulted in the matter. Is it not so?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: Yes, Sir. The Government functions in this matter through the Defence Committee of the Cabinet and, of course, the Prime Minister also, to some extent, represents the Government occasionally in urgent matters.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Recently in one of his speeches at Chandigarh the Defence Minister stated that the fact that Russia was giving us transport planes showed that their sympathies were with us in our dispute with China. I would like to know whether this speech has come to the notice of the Prime Minister and whether the Government agrees with these views.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: I have not seen any report of the speech. So, I cannot say. The hon. Member was asking about sympathy—I did not quite hear it—sympathy of what?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: The Defence Minister recently, only ten days ago, made a speech at Chandi-

garh before he left for the U.N.O. in which he said that the fact that Russia was giving us all these transport planes showed that their sympathies were with us as against China in our dispute. I would like to know whether the speech has come to the notice of the Prime Minister and whether the Government agrees with those views.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: That is a matter of inference from facts. It is open to any hon. Member to draw a certain inference from facts known on the subject, including this particular fact.

DR. H. N. KUNZRU: Is it a fact that the Russian maps with regard to the areas claimed by China are of the same kind as the Chinese maps?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: I believe that they are largely—they are not completely—so. Those maps were published many years ago. Recently, some months ago, we have drawn their attention to this. They said that they were looking into the matter, of course, maps are not issued very frequently. We have drawn their attention and when the next occasion comes no doubt they might deal with them.

SHRI A. D. MANI: I should like to ask whether in view of the special disqualification from which Russia suffers in regard to the Indo-China border dispute, Government would give an assurance to the House that in future they would not allow foreign personnel to fly over areas where even Members of Parliament cannot go without previous permission.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: How can I give any assurance? Government will do what it thinks best for the security of India. That is the only assurance I can give. He has just said about Members of Parliament. They are not prohibited from j

going there as Members of Parliament, but the difficulty of transporting them often comes up. If individuals are interested to go there, I have no doubt they can go there.

DR. H. N. KUNZRU: I want to ask whether these planes are guarded at Palam by Russians.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: I know they are not kept at Palam at all.

DR. H. N. KUNZRU: Whenever they are at Palam, are they guarded by Russians?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: I am informed by my colleague that they are guarded by the Indian Air Force personnel.

STATEMENT MADE BY THE PRESIDENT,
INDIAN PEACE COUNCIL

f SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: t J SHRI NAWAB
SINGH CHAU.²—\ HAN:
(SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the newspaper report published in the Delhi Edition of the *Times of India*, dated the 26th March, 1961, of a Press conference in which Pandit Sunder Lal, President of the Indian Peace Council, stated that the Chinese aggression on India's north-em borders was not being discussed at the World Peace Council Conference because of an understanding between him and the Prime Minister; and

(b) if so, what is the actual position in this regard and whether there was any such understanding?

fThe question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri B. K. P. Sinha.