

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) to (c) Government is aware of reports about displacement of families including from the minority communities of Pakistan during ongoing military operation against the extremists in Pakistan's North Waziristan Agency.

Based on reports of persecution of minority communities in Pakistan, Government has taken up the matter with the Government of Pakistan. In response the Government of Pakistan has stated that it was fully cognizant and looked after the welfare of all its citizens, particularly the minority community.

Revisiting of Nuclear Liability Bill

1716. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has entered into/signed an additional Protocol with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Nuclear Safeguards, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether Government proposes to revisit the Nuclear Liability Bill for enhanced cooperation in civil Nuclear Energy with partner countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) Yes. India has decided to ratify an Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the Application of Safeguards to Civilian Nuclear Facilities. The Additional Protocol was signed between the Government of India and the IAEA on 15 May 2009. As per the procedure for ratification, India would be depositing the instrument of ratification with the IAEA shortly. The India-specific Safeguards Agreement signed with the IAEA on 2nd February 2009 is already in force.

(b) Currently there is no proposal to revisit the Nuclear Liability Bill for enhanced cooperation in civil Nuclear Energy with partner countries.

Continuation of Nuclear Weapon Free and Non-Violent World Order

1717. SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government continues to endorse the Action Plan for a Nuclear Weapons Free and Non-Violent World Order presented by former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to the UN on 09 June 1988 and the Working Paper on Global Nuclear Disarmament circulated by India at UNGA in 2006;

(b) whether Government has accepted the recommendations made in the Report of the Informal Group on the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan submitted in 2011; and

(c) if so, the further steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) Government continues to support the goal of nuclear disarmament in a time-bound, universal, non-discriminatory, phased and verifiable manner in line with the spirit and substance of the 1988 Action Plan and the Working Paper on Nuclear Disarmament circulated in 2006. This goal can be achieved by a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and nondiscriminatory.

(b) and (c) The Report of the Informal Group on the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan submitted in 2011 was examined by the Government. Most of the Group's recommendations were found to be consistent with existing government policies, in particular the Report's conclusion that there is no contradiction between India as a nuclear weapon state and its support for global nuclear disarmament. Pursuant to this Report, two public outreach events, including recently in April 2014 an International Conference on 'A Nuclear Weapon-Free World: From Conception to Reality', were held with Government support. No further steps are planned in this regard.

Hiring of consultants for business promotion

1718. SHRIMATI WANSUK SYIEM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether with the privatization/outsourcing trend catching up, Government would consider hiring private sector executives/independent consultants/professionals for business promotion under the Indian Foreign Service on short time assignments;

(b) whether India would also consider engaging firms for lobbying its interests/causes with overseas countries like US, European Union etc; and

(c) the other measures Government would consider to engage eminent Indian citizens in the realm of art, literature and education in its diplomatic efforts overseas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GENERAL (RETD.) V. K. SINGH]: (a) Government works in collaboration with private sector and Chambers of Commerce to promote trade and foreign investment. Private consultants and professionals are engaged on contract basis as and when required.

(b) India utilizes the services of professional agencies such as Public Relations