

Efforts to get permanent seat in Security Council

961. SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA:

SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what efforts India is making to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council;

(b) whether South Africa has extended its support to India;

(c) if so, which are the other countries that are supporting and which are the countries that are opposing India becoming a permanent member of the Security Council; and

(d) what is the US stand on this matter and whether US has offered any conditional support to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (d) The issue of the reform and the restructuring of the UN Security Council and the question concerning new permanent members has been under discussion at the United Nations for several years. There are several complex issues involved and no decision has been reached in this regard. India believes that the reform and restructuring exercise is important and that by any objective criteria, India's claim for permanent membership is based on strong credentials. Seen in this broad framework, there is a growing momentum in support of India's candidature for permanent membership. The Government pursues India's candidature in all its high-level bilateral interactions and in relevant forums. Several countries — permanent members as well as others — have openly expressed support for India's candidature either in the UN or in the context of bilateral exchanges. Such support is exercised in different forums and forms and it is therefore difficult to give a definitive number on countries which have specifically supported India, or anticipate any specific time-frame for reform or expansion of the UN Security Council. South Africa has expressed its support for India. The US has not taken a clear position.

Talks with Iran and Pakistan with regard to Indo-Iran gas pipeline

962. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to initiate talks with Iran