

(b) and (c) The meeting reviewed ongoing defence relations and initiatives within the framework of evolving relations between India and the US. Views were also exchanged on the global and regional security situation, including the situation in Iraq. The US also provided a briefing on the US Ballistic Missile Defence Programme.

Fire at Amlanagar AFS in M.P.

2253. SHRI DATTAMEGHE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether huge quantity of ammunition was destroyed and some IAF personnel were injured in a major fire that broke out at an Amlanagar Air Force Station in Madhya Pradesh on the 10th July, 2004;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the loss suffered as a result of this fire;

(c) the causes of the breaking out of fire, and

(d) the remedial measures taken to check recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Considerable quantity of ammunition was destroyed in the major fire that broke out on 10th July, 2004 at the Indian Air Force Station, Amla in Madhya Pradesh. No IAF personnel were injured.

A Court of Inquiry is in progress to inquire into the reasons of fire and to assess the exact loss caused by the fire. Remedial measures as per the recommendations of the Court of Inquiry will be taken to avoid recurrence of such incidents.

Criteria for selection of defence personnel

2254. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that the selection of number of personnel for Defence forces from different States is made according to the population of the respective State;

(b) if so, whether the ratio of the selection of Defence Personnel from the States that brought down population has gone down; and

(c) if so, whether Government will freeze the ratio as prevailed before?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Recruitment of 'All India All Class' vacancies in the Army is carried out strictly as per the Recrutable Male Population (RMP) based on the decadal Census Reports. At present, the RMP is being calculated on the basis of the 2001 Census Report. The recruitment in the Navy and the Air Force, however, is carried out on 'All India Merit' basis, and there is no State-wise quota on population basis. The ratio of the selection in the Army is based on the prevalent Census Report and the annual quota of vacancies allotted to the States on the basis of RMP is neither increased nor reduced nor transferred to other States.

Retirement benefits to Ex-Servicemen of British Indian Army

2255. SHRI VEER SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state.

(a) whether representations have been received from ex-servicemen who served British Indian Army between 1941 to 1946 or their spouses to consider them for grant of Pension/Family-Pension and other retirement benefits;

(b) if so, the details of ex-servicemen who have been considered for grant of such benefits;

(c) the individuals whose representations were received and the requests were not acceded to alongwith specific reasons therefor; and

(d) whether such ex-servicemen who were discharged from Service on the ground of reduction in the strength of Indian Army have been given any kind of benefit at all?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) during the World War-II, a large number of Indians were recruited in the then British Indian Army for a short period ranging from 2 to 6 years. At the end of the World War II, these personnel were discharged. They are not eligible for pension as they have not put in minimum length of qualifying service. Such personnel were given payment of service gratuity