

[26 August, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

(b) which are the other countries which has promised to back India on this issue; and

(c) whether Government have discussed this issue with USA, if so, what is the response of United States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes. During the recent visit of German Foreign Minister, Mr. Joschka Fischer, to India in July 2004, India and Germany agreed that they considered each other to be "natural candidates" for a permanent seat in an enlarged Security Council and would support each other in this endeavour.

(b) There is a growing momentum in support of India's candidature for permanent membership. 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 expressed in different forums and forms and it is therefore, difficult to give a definitive number on countries which have specifically supported India.

(c) The Government pursues India's candidature with various countries, including with the USA, on appropriate occasions. The USA has not taken a clear position on this issue.

#### **Meeting of Foreign Ministers of SAARC countries**

2444. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a meeting of Foreign Ministers of SAARC countries was held in Islamabad from July 18, 2004 onwards;

(b) whether any agenda for the ensuing SAARC Summit was decided upon in this meeting; and

(c) whether Pakistan underscored the need for inclusion of peace and security issues for the SAARC to emerge as a vibrant organization, if so, what was India's stand in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) The 25th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of SAARC was held in Islamabad on July 20-21, 2004.

(b) The next SAARC meeting at Dhaka in January, 2005 will monitor the implementation of the decisions arrived at in the Summit of January 2004 and the 25th Council of Ministers' Meeting in July, 2004.

(c) Issues of peace and security under SAARC were briefly raised by the delegation of Pakistan during the meeting. India's position is that as per Article X of SAARC Charter, bilateral and contentious issues should be excluded from the deliberations of SAARC.

#### **Bilateral talks with Pakistan**

2445. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any bilateral negotiation have taken place with Pakistan in the recent past at the Secretary and Ministerial levels;

(b) details of the issues discussed at the respective levels;

(c) whether in the past Pakistan was provided with a list of twenty fugitives hiding in that country with a request to extradite them in order to bring them to justice in India;

(d) was the issue of extradition of these fugitives included in the recent discussions/interactions with the Pakistani authorities;

(e) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) Bilateral discussions on a number of subjects have been held between India and Pakistan within the framework of the Composite Dialogue. President Musharraf's reassurance in the Joint Press Statement of January 6, 2004, not to permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner, allowed the process of the Composite Dialogue to be initiated in February 2004. The schedule of meetings that was agreed to during the Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan on 18 February 2004 has been maintained. During the meetings between the border security forces (March 24—27, 2004), and the drug control authorities (June 15-16, 2004) of the two countries, *inter alia*, discussed issues related to drug trafficking and smuggling of contraband, border management, illegal