

RAO INDERJIT SINGH: Sir, there are two pillars to this. One is cooperative federalism. Through cooperative federalism, the NITI Aayog has tried to ensure that States do not come to the NITI Aayog asking for funds. This was the procedure that was used while the Planning Commission was in vogue. It was, I think, somewhat embarrassing for States to come and ask for funds with a begging bowl. Therefore, this Government decided that it would replace Planning Commission with NITI Aayog which, primarily, now is a think-tank. So, we try and do cooperative federalism. This is one pillar. Second is that we do competitive federalism as well and make States compete with each other so that they vie for a better position. I think it ensures that there would be stronger States and, therefore, a stronger nation.

India-China Dialogue on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

*277. SHRIMATI SHANTA CHHETRI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and China have exchanged views on issues of mutual interest related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control; and

(b) if so, the details of agreements/MoUs exchanged in the 6th India-China Dialogue on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The Annual India-China Bilateral Dialogue on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation was held in New Delhi on 3.06.2019. This was the sixth round of Dialogue during which the two sides exchanged views on a variety of issues of mutual interest, including nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, multilateral export control regimes, Biological Weapons Convention, Chemical Weapons Convention, other Conventions and Outer Space.

Since the purpose of the Dialogue was to exchange views on the above mentioned issues, no Agreements/MoUs were planned to be considered during the Dialogue.

SHRIMATI SHANTA CHHETRI: Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister: Are the Governments of both countries going to limit the stockpile of nuclear weapons? If so, the details thereof; and if not, the reasons therefor.

DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR: Sir, this issue is being discussed in the Conference on Disarmament. Any agreement that India will accede to will have to be non-discriminatory and concerning all the countries with nuclear weapons.

SHRIMATI SHANTA CHHETRI: Sir, my second supplementary is: Has the Government initiated any steps to enhance relations between the Armies of two countries on regional and global strategic issues? If so, the details thereof; if not, the reasons therefor.

DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR: Sir, we have a number of dialogues with China. The Prime Minister engages the President of China at an informal summit. I have a dialogue with my counterpart which takes place every year. At the military level, hon. Member would be happy to note that we have a very, very detailed engagement. We do discuss both military and strategic issues. In fact, in Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Dialogue, about which the question was raised, we did discuss issues like Iran, JCPOA issue, issues like the INF treaty, etc. So, there is a very healthy and a very candid discussion on a range of subjects.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, through you, I would like to ask this from the hon. Minister. He has enumerated four or five very important topics which took place during the discussion on the 3rd of June. But he knows better than many of us that there are other contentious issues between the two countries. We are all familiar with the views of the present Foreign Minister when he was Ambassador to China and subsequently, as Foreign Secretary. His personal views helped the Government of the day enormously in sorting out many contentious issues. Has he changed his point of view after becoming a Minister?

DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR: Sir, through you, I would reply to the hon. Member that as a Minister or as a diplomat, you follow the policy of the Government of the day. As far as our policy towards China is concerned, honestly, I see more consistency than difference. I think it is India's endeavour to engage China. They are our largest neighbour. Between us, our ability to get along will define the Asian century. So, I have always believed, both as a Diplomat and today as the External Affairs Minister, that India-China relations are critical for both countries. Therefore, I can give the hon. Member my assurance in that regard.

श्री राकेश सिन्हा: माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि चीन ने हिमालय के प्रति जो दृष्टि अपनाई है और ब्रह्मपुत्र नदी के बारे में चीन की जो दृष्टि रही है, क्या उस पर हमने कोई ठोस कार्रवाई की है? चूंकि इसके दूरगामी परिणाम निकलेंगे और चीन ये सारी गतिविधियां डिप्लोमैटिक रूप से 'हा' कहते हुए भी 'ना' करता है, जिस तरह से तिब्बत के साथ हुआ, कहीं ऐसा न हो कि ब्रह्मपुत्र और हिमालय के साथ वैसा ही हो।

DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR: Sir, I would respond to the hon. Member, through you. We have a mechanism called Expert Level Mechanism which looks at trans-national river water issues. Two rivers are dealt with by them - Brahmaputra and Satluj. So, we do engage China on river water issues, specifically, on Brahmaputra. China has constructed dams on the Brahmaputra which they describe as run-of-the-river dams. We monitor these dams very, very carefully. We have suggested to the Chinese side that the data that they give us should not only relate to the flood season but to the dry season as well. So, on the entire issue regarding rivers and, specifically, the Brahmaputra, we are in very, very close touch.

Demand for reduction of levies and fees

*278. SHRI KANAKAMEDALA RAVINDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether telecom industry is demanding various measures including reduction of levies and fees, including license fee, Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) and universal service levy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has agreed to accede to the request made by telecom industries;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD):

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Industry bodies such as Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and a Telecom Service Provider (TSP) have represented to the Department of Telecom (DoT) *inter alia* raising the following issues:—

- To declare a 2/3-year moratorium on spectrum payments to the Government with interest rates in line with State Bank of India (SBI) rates;
- To review license fee and Spectrum Usages Charges (SUC), rationalize Universal Service Obligation (USO) levy;