

in the peace and prosperity of the Gulf region and has therefore consistently called for the resolution of the crisis relating to Iraq through political and diplomatic means under the auspices of the UN. India recognised the validity of the unanimous decision of the United Nations Security Council in its Resolution 1441 which provides for the disarmament of Iraq. Iraq has to faithfully comply with the provisions of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. The work of the inspectors in continuing in Iraq, and UNMOVIC and IAEA have submitted two reports to the Security Council on 27th January and 14th February 2003. The Security Council should decide on what further action needs to be taken. All concerned should fully cooperate in finding a peaceful resolution to the issue. India's position on the issue has been conveyed by our Permanent Representative to the U.N. during the open meetings of the Security Council on 17.10.2002 and 18.2.2003.

(b) During the recent visits of Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh and Myanmar to India, both the Ministers shared their concerns over the possibility of a conflict in the Gulf that could have an adverse impact on peace and development globally.

US evaluation of infiltration

1631. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US State Department spokesman on the eve of the Republic Day this year, sharing India's concern, had observed that cross border infiltration by Pak-backed militants in Jammu and Kashmir had increased, after a little drop and added that it should stop completely; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to apprise the US and the world about the Pakistan's double speak, regarding militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, in the context of Pak-President's promise to stop cross border terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Yes.

(b) Government's purposive international engagement has led to acknowledgement by the international community, including the United

States, that cross-border terrorism against India continues, despite assertions to the contrary by President Musharraf.

Indo-Nepal talks

1632. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indo-Nepal high level talks were held to establish better relations between both the countries;

(b) if so, the specific areas in which Indo-Nepal talks were held; and

(c) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Yes.

(b) and (c) In keeping with the close relationship between India and Nepal, several high-level interactions have been held and continue to take place between the two countries. The then Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba paid an official goodwill visit to India from March 20-25, 2002. His Majesty King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, King of Nepal, paid a State Visit to India from June 23-28, 2002. External Affairs Minister Shri Yashwant Sinha visited Nepal from August 19-24, 2000 to participate in the Meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers when he also held bilateral discussions.

At the official level consultations were held across a broad spectrum of areas through existing bilateral mechanisms between India and Nepal. Important bilateral meetings include the Home Secretary Level Talks (New Delhi, February 6-7, 2002), Joint Group of Experts on the Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project (Kathmandu, July 23-24, 2002), Inter-Governmental Committee on Trade, Transit and Cooperation to Control Unauthorized Trade (New Delhi, August 15-18, 2002) and the Joint Technical Level India-Nepal Boundary Committee (New Delhi, October 22-23, 2002).

The Chief of Army Staff General S. Padmanabhan visited Nepal from May 13-16, 2002 and his Nepalese counterpart Gen. Pyar Jung Thapa visited India from December 18-24, 2002.

In addition, Governments of India and Nepal have also been holding bilateral discussions on several other issues at the level of senior officials.