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Rajya Sabha Q&A on International Underground Nuclear Test Bans

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Summary:

Transcript of questions and answers between members of the Rayja Sabha and the Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, on the current international bans on underground nuclear tests and if India plans to renew its policy on underground nuclear tests.

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do not have the facts with me. He said that the question was answered here.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KALYAN ROY : They are with Mr. C. B. Gupta.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : I do not have the facts here besides what I have previously pointed out in reply to Members here. This question, so far as I can make out, deals with Ministers who are at present members of the Cabinet and about Mr. Bhanu Prakash Singh, I do not even know whether the hon. Member means him but if he does, Shri Singh is not in this category to-day.

SHRI JA RAMDAS DAULATRAM : May I say a word raising a point of order?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It is all right now. Let us proceed to the next question.

श्री राजनारायण : वह प्वाइंट ऑफ़ ऑर्डर रेज कर रहे हैं। क्या आप उनको मौका दीजिएगा ? बहुत भयानक प्वाइंट ऑफ़ ऑर्डर है।

श्री उपसभापति : आप तो बैठिए, आप क्यों बकालत करने हैं ?

श्री राजनारायण : नहीं, मुनिण, हमारा प्वाइंट ऑफ़ ऑर्डर। क्या अब आप यह प्रिक्टिस बना रहे हैं कि दूसरे क्वेश्चन पर जाने के बाद अगर रूलिंग पार्टी से साठ-गाठ करने वाले लोग फ़ोर्ड मवाल पूछें . . .

श्री उपसभापति : सवाल नहीं पूछा गया।

श्री राजनारायण : सवाल आ गया था, आपने आगे का सवाल पुकार लिया था। फिर, चूँकि वह कांग्रेस पार्टी की साठ-गाठ में, इलाही में है इसलिए वह उत्तर दे रहे हैं।

SHRI JAIRAMDAS DAULATRAM : May I say a word now?

SHRI M. M. DHARIA : I would like to raise a point of order, Sir.

SHRI JAIRAMDAS DAULATRAM : I do not know whether what I am saying is in order or not, but my feeling is that the procedure should be that where the answer to any question is that the information is being collected, no supplementary can arise, no supplementary should be allowed to arise. Because the information is being collected,

therefore no supplementary question can be properly answered.

श्री राजनारायण : हमारे सम्मानित व वृद्ध सदस्य ने अपना स्थान बना लिया फिर मैं राष्ट्रपति द्वारा नामिनेट होने के लिए।

SHRI M. M. DHARIA : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, let this House not forget what happened in the House. Mr. Roy raised one question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Why do you want to go back to it now?

SHRI M. M. DHARIA : Their were some aspersions against the Chair that only when we pressed the replies from the Treasury Benches are allowed. It is not correct. (Interruptions) Just a minute, Sir. Thereafter some points of order were raised. Afterwards, Mr. Chandrasekharan, who is not a member of the Ruling Congress Party, through you requested that the Prime Minister should be allowed to reply to the question earlier put. Only because of that, even though you had called for the next question, you allowed her to reply. So it is at the instance of Mr. Chandrasekharan, not on the instance of the ruling party, that the Prime Minister was allowed to reply.

†SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN : It is an insinuation.

श्री राजनारायण : चाहे वह चन्द्रशेखरन ही चाहे राजनारायण, आप किसी प्रश्न में पड़ गए और पड़ने के बाद वापस आ गए, यह ठीक नहीं है।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Next question.

UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR TEST

*353. SHRI N. G. GORAY† :
SHRI MULKA GOVINDA
REDDY :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether at the non-aligned summit conference at its recent discussion over the issue of underground nuclear tests, has virtually banned the underground nuclear tests; and

(b) if not, whether the Government of India have renewed its policy to plan nuclear tests?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri N. G. Goray.

THE MINISTER OF STATE (SHRI-MATI NANDINI SATPATHY) : (a) and (b) The text of the Declaration on Disarmament made at the Conference of Non-Aligned Heads of State/Government is laid on the Table of the House. (See below) That Declaration, *inter alia* recommended the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty and suggested various measures in the field of disarmament. However, it will be noted that the Declaration specifically recognised the contribution which the technology of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including peaceful nuclear explosions, can make to the economy of developing countries and expressed the opinion that the benefits of this technology should be available to all States without any discrimination.

The policy of the Government of India on the utilisation of atomic energy for peaceful purposes has been repeatedly stated in the House and needs no fresh review or reiteration.

DECLARATION ON DISARMAMENT

Conscious of the threat to mankind posed by the over spiralling arms race, especially in view of the existing large stockpiles of and impending new qualitative advance in the over more devastating nature of nuclear armaments, the Heads of State or Government reaffirm their conviction, expressed at the Belgrade and Cairo Summit Conference of Non-Aligned countries, that general and complete disarmament under effective international control is the most imperative and urgent need of the international community today.

The Conference welcomes the designation of the 1970's as the "Disarmament Decade". The participating countries are determined to spare no efforts with a view to ensuring the success of the Disarmament Decade. They will co-operate closely among themselves and with other like-minded countries to help in the drawing up of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. The conference is of the opinion that the following general order of priorities should be followed in drawing up this programme :

(i) Measures in the field of nuclear disarmament, such as a cut-off in the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes and its transfer to peaceful uses a stoppage of the production of nuclear weapons, a comprehensive test ban reduction and destruction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons;

(ii) Other measures of priority in the disarmament field; An agreement prohibiting the development, production and stockpiling of Chemical and Biological (Bacteriological) weapons and their elimination from the arsenals of all nations, etc.

(iii) Non-armanent or confidence-building measures, such as a convention on the non-use of nuclear weapons demilitarization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond an agreed limit, the establishment of nuclear free zones, etc.

The participating States feel that it may be useful to convene a World Disarmament Conference at an appropriate time open for participation to all States.

An essential confidence-building measure for ensuring progress in the field of disarmament is a firm commitment assumed through an international agreement binding and universal in character, not to resort to force and not to intervene in any manner whatsoever and under any circumstances in the internal affairs of other State.

The Conference is aware of the tremendous contribution which the technology of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy including peaceful nuclear explosions can make to the economy of the developing world. It is of the opinion that the benefits of this technology should be available to all States without any discrimination.

The Conference notes the conclusion of the Treaty on principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and other Celestial Bodies, and the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects launched into Outer Space. The participating countries declare that the Outer Space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. They deplore the fact that, despite, repeated directives of the U.N. General Assembly, the Convention on the liability for damage caused by objects launched into outer space has not been finalised so far, and calls upon all States, in particular the Space Powers, to co-operate in facilitating early agreement in this connection.

SHRI N. G. GORAY : Sir, I would like to know this. So far as our nuclear policy is concerned, the Government has declared its policy that they will not go in for nuclear weapons. But does it mean that, when the Government is ready to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, it includes

underground explosions as well as above ground?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : It could include underground explosions but, as I said in reply to a previous question, I think in this House, the technique is still being processed. The technique has been tried in advanced countries but they are still working on it. Therefore, the time is not ripe for it but we are trying to increase our knowledge in all these things.

SHRI N. G. GORAY : It may be that even in the advanced countries they have not yet completed the technique of underground blasts, but I think it is common knowledge that in both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. the technique has progressed very much. And so far as we are concerned, we have not yet made even a beginning. Is India trying to carry out its own experiments so far as underground nuclear energy is concerned and peaceful use of nuclear energy is concerned?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : No, Sir. We are trying to increase our knowledge in every way and the hon. Member, I am sure, is aware of that. There are many harmful aspects of such tests, even underground, and it is not easy to find a place where they can be held, where they may not pollute the water or the land around.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Mulka Govinda Reddy.

SHRI N. G. GORAY : Sir, one more small question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You have asked two questions.

SHRI N. G. GORAY : I asked one question and I put one supplementary.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : All right, you put a brief question.

SHRI N. G. GORAY : So far as the harmful effects of nuclear blasts are concerned I came across a news statement on behalf of some of the scientists in U.S.A. that the fear of pollution of the air is not as great as it was expected before. In the light of this new theory will the Government of India revise their own policy?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : This is a highly controversial matter. Some people may come out with that theory just like all manufacturers of pesticides, but the production has proved to be harmful; the producers resisting thus. When

the book 'Silent Spring' came out drawing the world's attention that these pesticides were killing many useful insects and birds and therefore harming agriculture, there was tremendous resistance from the manufacturers of pesticides. How we have discovered that much of it is true. But still the matter is highly controversial.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY : In view of the fact that the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. are going on making underground tests and in view of the fact that China and France have not signed the non-proliferation treaty I would like to know whether the Government of India would take up the production of nuclear energy so that at any given time it may be used for manufacturing atom bomb.

Secondly, I would like to know whether the Government of India is bringing pressure on the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. and other nuclear powers to destroy all the stockpiles that they have made now.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Sir, our policy with regard to the making of an atom bomb is well known to the House and to the hon. Members and also the reasons for that policy. It is not just a whim; it is a well thought out policy keeping in view the interest of the nation, the security aspect as well as other aspects which have to be considered. I think we have put forward our view very strongly. India has been one of the foremost in trying to get some agreement about total disarmament, which includes all nuclear weapons. But I do not know what the hon. Member means by 'putting pressure on Government'. They know our viewpoint. In all international forums where these matters are discussed we have expressed ourselves very strongly and consistently.

SHRI R. T. PARTHASARATHY : Sir, it is a fact that India has made great advance in nuclear science and technology along with six other nations of the world. We know something of the progress both with reference to the peaceful uses of atomic energy and manufacture of atomic weapons of the six other countries which have made such advance but with reference to India in particular though the Prime Minister has repeatedly assured the House that the Government of India was thinking only of peaceful uses of atomic energy still this House is not only confused but we also feel agitated at times. May I therefore respectfully ask the Government and the Prime Minister whether she would be prepared to place a white paper not only on the peaceful uses of atomic energy but also on the manufacture of atomic weapons

by and large meeting all the demands of the various sections in the House? May I know whether she would be prepared to place a white paper on the Table of the House and if so when?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Sir, we have been placing reports of the work done and recently have placed a report of the ten-year plan for future development of atomic energy. I do not know what else the hon. Member would like to have in such a White Paper I think the House and the country is well aware of the work that is being done and that is proposed to be done here.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : May I know from the Government whether it is not a fact that this declaration of disarmament says so many things? Is it not a fact that it poses a threat more from those countries which are big powers and which are highly armed than the under-developed countries? The danger from nuclear weapons is more from the big powers. Secondly, while replying to a question in this House she had said : "The military dangers from the nuclear weapons made by China and others are also kept in view, in the military preparedness of our country." May I know from the Prime Minister as to how does she interpret her statement that we are militarily prepared to face the nuclear danger from China? Thirdly, as regards the Ten Year Programme, which the Prime Minister just now referred to, may I know what has happened to that? My information is that it is still lying bogged down in the files of the Planning Commission and the bureaucrats are opposing the sanction of money. May I know what has happened to the whole thing?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : The hon. Member is one of our experts on science and the uses of atomic energy. He is perfectly correct in saying that it is the bigger, advanced nations which pose a danger with their nuclear weapons and they should give a lead in this matter and that is also our view. That is why we did not sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, because we felt that it was creating another division between those who have nuclear weapons and those who have not and it was not stopping the stockpiling of nuclear weapons. With regard to the Ten Year Plan, the matter is still under consideration, but surely when you look so far ahead there is bound to be some disagreement on it. I can assure the hon. Member that we are doing everything to try and expedite it. The disagreement is not merely within the Planning Commission, but sometimes, as you know, even among the scientists themselves there is disagreement about

what should be the priorities, what should be done first and so on.

DR. BHAI MAHAVIR : I am no expert like Mr. Krishan Kant, to whom the Prime Minister has been kind enough to give a testimonial.

श्री राजनारायण : कृष्णकांत को पत्रातिग में ले लीजिए।

DR. BHAI MAHAVIR : I do not claim any such distinction.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please put your question.

DR. BHAI MAHAVIR : What I want to know is this. When the Prime Minister says that the technique involved in underground nuclear explosions is at an early stage and it requires to be developed, does she believe or does she hope that we will be able to get on to the stage of a developed technique just at one jump? Will we have not to pass through the state where the technique has to be developed? And when the Prime Minister says that our decision about nuclear bombs is not the result of any whim—that is as it should be—I would like to be clarified by her as to whether it is not a fact that the late Prime Minister Shastri had declared that India would not make the bomb yet. Now, the word 'yet' is the important word. I want to draw her attention to the fact that he had meant that it was open to make one...

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : You must respect the words of Mr. Shastri.

DR. BHAI MAHAVIR : Have a little patience.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please put your question.

DR. BHAI MAHAVIR : If that decision of the late Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, is known to the Prime Minister, now I would like her to tell us when that was reversed; if so, whether she would be able to reiterate that what we have decided about nuclear bombs is only under the present circumstances but tomorrow circumstances may arise when we may go in for nuclear bombs also.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Dr. Bhai Mahavir is one of our experts. (*Interruptions*) Mr. Deputy Chairman, it is not a question of paying compliments. These

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are some of the people who have consistently taken an interest in this matter. This is the point which I am trying to highlight.

SHRI A. P. CHATTERJEE : Does it mean that he is an expert?

(Interruption)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : No interruptions, please.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : I think the hon. Member knows that the members of our Atomic Energy Commission hold a very high position in international organisations also. May I please deal with Dr. Mahavir or shall I deal with all other questions? *(Interruptions)* He is an expert on other matters, not on this particular matter. May I go on to reply to Dr. Mahavir's question?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Yes, please.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Two questions have been asked. One is whether we must go by stages or whether we can make the last experiment first. There is a phrase which is known as leap-frogging. That is, those countries which are in the developing stage do take advantage of the experiments and the knowledge of the advanced countries and they can skip various stages. You cannot always skip all stages but you can skip some stages. We should certainly take advantage of the work and sometimes the mistakes which have been made by some of these other countries. The second question was with regard to what the hon. Member thinks Shastriji said. I do not have his exact words. So far as I remember he did not use the word 'yet' but I want to make it clear that Shastriji did not reverse any decision, nor have I reversed anything which he said. I have always said that the policy is under constant review. I think this is what Shastriji had in mind when he made the statement.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : This is a very important matter. I would like to pose a few questions to the hon. Prime Minister.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : One question.

SHRI MUKHA GOVINDA REDDY : At one time he was connected with atomic energy.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : All right. One question. The Prime Minister has gone on record that so far as the manufacturing of the devices for blasts are concerned the stage is not very much reached, not in an advanced stage. I would like to know whether any decision has been taken by the Government of India in respect of manufacturing such devices. My information, Sir, is that no decision is taken. If there is no decision taken and if the whole thing is left to the pleasure and sweet will of the Atomic Energy Commission without direction from the Government of India, I do not know whether they will be in a position to have this kind of activity to develop this area. Sir, my information is that the Atomic Energy Commission does not have...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Put your question.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : It is a very important matter. I do not normally put questions.

The Atomic Energy Commission does not have or does not seem to have the necessary technology; nor does it have the wherewithal or the material. It means so many things. It means heavy water, it means fuel element, it means electronics; it means so many things. So, my information is that they do not have the material nor the wherewithal nor the necessary technology to fabricate a device for blast purposes.

Secondly, Sir, she said—I agree with her—that we have not been able to find out the areas for blast purposes, for explosions. It is true, no attempt has been made so far either by the Atomic Energy Commission...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Come to the question, please.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : I am asking the question. Why are you saying like that?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You are giving more of information.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : I wanted to know. I may be correct, I may be incorrect. I may not be correct at all.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : Old habits die hard.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : I would like to know whether any effort has been made to investigate the areas in India for such blast purposes, for instance, the Himalayas, the Rajasthan desert, etc.

These are the suggestions made in the past, I think. Has any effort been made in that direction? My contention is that the Government of India has not got any plan or programme to manufacture the device. And our friends are talking of atom bombs. We have not gone to that stage at all. Let us confine ourselves to seeing whether we have got the necessary technology for fabricating these devices and if we have the necessary technology, whether we have got the wherewithal to fabricate these devices. I would like the Prime Minister to give us a categorical answer whether we are really advanced to do this, to fulfil this task, and then let us talk of the bombs and the rest of it when we are satisfied that we have the capacity and the wherewithal to manufacture these devices.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : I have never said that we had all the technology or all the material needed, for such testing. I have consistently said that we are trying to increase our knowledge and also the technology as well as the material that is needed. But we are exploring all these matters.

Sir, he suggested that there has been no specific study to look out for an area. But the hon. Member mentioned the Himalayas. Now, it does seem very far away. But let us not forget that many of our resources, some of our rivers, are from there. And this has got to be kept in mind also.

Mr. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Next question. Mr. Lokanath Misra.

SHRI GODEY MURAHARI : Sir, I wanted to ask a question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I have called him. We have taken 20 minutes on this.

SHRI GODEY MURAHARI : I would like to know why you have not called me. I have been standing from the very beginning, even when Shri Goray had put the question. I do not understand this.

श्री राजनारायण : हम लोगो के साथ ज्यादाती होती है।

श्री उपसभापति : सबसे ज्यादा समय आपको मिलना है।

SHRI GODEY MURAHARI : I would like to protest because I seldom ask questions. And when I want to ask, you do not allow me. What is it?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You asked one question, asked on a point of order.

SHRI GODEY MURAHARI : All right. Then either I should stand up on a point of order or shout like others or I do not get an opportunity. That can also be done, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I would like to give you a chance if there is time.

SHRI GODEY MURAHARI : I had only one question which I wanted to ask, a very important question. नेक्स्ट क्वेश्चन से हमे क्या मतलब है ?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Yes.

SHRI GODEY MURAHARI : I do not want to ask any question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Misra.

RAYON TEXTILE DEAL WITH CANADIAN IMPORTERS

*354. SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : †
SHRI M. K. MOHTA : †

Will the Minister of FOREIGN TRADE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Trading Corporation entered into a deal with some Canadian importers giving them exclusive rights for certain varieties of rayon textiles without getting an assurance in regard to the minimum quantity to be lifted within specified period giving them indiscriminate credit facilities;

(b) whether it is also a fact that in spite of the liberal terms offered to them the import of rayon textiles by the Canadian importers have been showing considerable slackness;

(c) whether it is also a fact that if the Indian exporters are permitted to sell rayon textiles to other Canadian buyers, higher prices could be fetched as compared to the prices offered to the S.T.C.;

(d) if so, the considerations which weighed with Government for entering into such a deal with the Canadian importers; and

(e) the extent of imports made by the Canadian importers during the last 2 years and the reasons for slackness in the imports?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Lokanath Misra.