

**PARLIAMENT AND FOREIGN POLICY:  
INDIA-1980-1984**

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**1986**

TO MY DADDY

WHO INSPIRED ME

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
Centre for International Politics,  
Organization and Disarmament  
School of International Studies

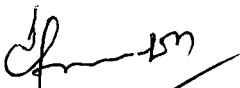
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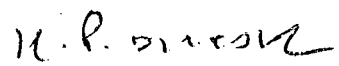
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CERTIFICATE

CERTIFIED that the Dissertation entitled "Parliament and Foreign Policy: India 1980-1984" submitted by Miss D. Santishree, in fulfilment of nine Credits out of the total requirements of twenty-four Credits for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) of this University, is her original work and may be placed before the Examiners for evaluation. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other Degree of this University or any other University.

  
PROFESSOR T.T. POULOSE  
Chairman

  
PROFESSOR K.P. MISRA  
Supervisor

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## PREFACE

The study on "Parliament and Foreign Policy: India 1980-1984" has been undertaken in the Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament for the partial fulfilment of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY of the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

\*The proposed thesis intends to discuss the role of Parliament in foreign policy, especially the period 1980-1984, which saw the return of the Congress party and Mrs. Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister after a three year Janata rule. This period saw tremendous activities at home and abroad. Several crisis situations developed which directly or indirectly affected India. This period is distinct for it was the Seventh Lok Sabha which saw the pivotal role of Mrs. Gandhi in foreign policy and ended with her assassination.\*

The present study is divided into two parts. The first part which consists of three chapters deals with a general and theoretical discussion of the subject. The first Chapter deals with the theoretical aspects. The second chapter/surveys the role played by parliament from 1952-80. This serves as a background

so as to help the period of study (1980-84) dealt with in the third chapter to put in a proper perspective. The second part analyses in detail the period of study 1980-84. Two crises areas are considered in detail. The fourth chapter deals with Afghanistan crises and the fifth chapter deals with the Sri Lankan ethnic crises. These raised heated discussion, controversy and difference of opinion among the Parliamentarians.

At the very outset, I must express my deep debt of gratitude to my Supervisor, Prof. K.P. Misra, for his keen interest and scholarly guidance. I gained from him the necessary perspective and direction of this study, for clarifying my ideas at every stage. His humane interest in my personal problems and without his unreserved cooperation, this dissertation would not have seen the light of the day.

My thanks are due in no small measure to Shri A.K. Damodaran for his valuable advice, to Prof. T.T. Poullose, Chairman of the Division for his constant encouragement, and Prof. M.L. Sondhi for his useful comments and observations. I am deeply indebted to my father and Niranjana who have remained a source of strength throughout.

My thanks are also due to the Library Staff of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Indian Council for World Affairs, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and Jawaharlal Nehru University for their unstinted cooperation and help in enabling me to collect the required material.

To Bala Showry and R. Kumaraswamy goes my special thanks for their help, tangible and intangible, at various stages of the present work. Finally, I am thankful to Raju for providing a presentable typescript.

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## Chapter One

### THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

#### PARLIAMENT AND FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy is the prerogative of the Executive branch of government. But the place of domestic interests and the pressure of domestic institutions cannot be ignored in the making of foreign policy or its implementation. These constraints, including a variety of strains and stresses, find expression in the Parliament. Parliament is an important domestic institution, whose members are directly or indirectly elected by the people, whose representatives they are. These members make laws which have to be implemented by the executive; laws on different aspects of national policy, of which foreign policy is an important aspect. Though the real planning of foreign policy is done by experts in the bureaucracy, that is, the Foreign Office, under the guidance of the Prime Minister and his cabinet. Parliament, though not concerned with its day-to-day administration, cannot be ignored on policy matters. The opinion of members has to be taken into considera-

tion. These members can influence public opinion, or they may be taking a stand on a foreign policy issue because of the pressure of public opinion. Parliament is a force to reckon with on all foreign policy matters in a modern state. It is all the more so in a democracy.

The concept of foreign policy was clearly enunciated in recent times by an American scholar, James N. Rosenau. Earlier to this, there have been "Devil Theories",<sup>1</sup> according to which, power-hungry individuals or a group of them determine the course of foreign policy. It is an easy way to single out an individual as the culprit in a complex situation rather than see it as the result of many factors which are capable of causing change. There are numerous theories that favour the view that a complex of factors influence trends in foreign policy. There is a view that the political system and public opinion play a vital role. In this connection, Rosenau feels that there is very little study and research on the

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1 James N. Rosenau, Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy, (New York, 1967), p.2.

subject of foreign policy that springs from domestic sources.<sup>2</sup> This situation has led to an undue emphasis on the external environment, non-human realities, and governmental decision-making process as the primary determinants of foreign policy. While agreeing with all this, Rosenau adds, "domestic factors may be of considerable significance even if they are not primary sources of foreign policy, and on some issues they may well be dominant".<sup>3</sup> Policy-makers all over the world have recognized the fact that domestic politics have an important place in the making of foreign policy.

Lack of research on domestic sources of foreign policy is also due to the fact that non-governmental sources of foreign policy are enormous, diverse and erratic, which makes their study difficult. It is against this background that the Parliament has been chosen for this study. Its influence on foreign policy and the resultant stresses and strains, are some of the vital domestic sources.

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2 Ibid., p.3.

3 Ibid., p.4.

As of now, political scientists are unable to come to an agreement on what is foreign policy. We have therefore a wide variety of definitions and descriptions of it available to us. Let us consider a few of them. Hugh Gibson defines foreign policy as a "well-rounded, comprehensive plan, based on knowledge and experience, for conducting the business of government with the rest of the world. It is aimed at promoting and protecting the interests and how far we can hope to go with the means at our disposal. Anything less than this falls short of being a national foreign policy".<sup>4</sup>

George Modelski defines foreign policy "as the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment".<sup>5</sup>

"Foreign policy is a system of human actions. It is based on human decisions. Foreign policy is of human relations, of social relations...foreign policy is a social process and a result of human actions..."<sup>6</sup>

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4 Hugh Gibson, The Road to Foreign Policy (New York, Doubleday, 1944), p.9.

5 George Modelski, A Theory of Foreign Policy (London, Pall Mall Press, 1962), pp.6-7.

6 Feliks Gross, Foreign Policy Analysis (New York, Philosophical, 1954).

F.S. Northedge defines foreign policy as the use of political influence in order to induce other states to exercise their law making power in a manner designed by the state concerned; it is an interaction between forces originating outside the country's borders and those working within them.<sup>7</sup>

Joseph Frankel observes that foreign policy "consists of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent relations between one state and others".<sup>8</sup>

Foreign policy is the sum total of the principles, interests and objectives which a state formulates in conducting its relations with other states.<sup>9</sup> The making of foreign policy does not suddenly spring from the minds of decision-makers. It is a product of the past experiences of a nation and the specific political beliefs and ideologies that have come to be

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- 7 F.S. Northedge, The Foreign Policy of the Powers (London: Faber, 1963, pp.9, 150).
- 8 Joseph Frankel, The Making of Foreign Policy (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.1.
- 9 A. Appadorai, Domestic Roots of India's Foreign Policy, 1947-72 (New Delhi, 1981), p.6.

accepted over the years. Collectively, such beliefs might be thought of as forming the national myth system of a state. It is not to suggest that they are hollow and pretentious; on the contrary, they are quite real for those who subscribe to them. As Robert M. MacIver has put it, "Every society is held together by a myth system, a complex of dominating thought forms that determines and sustains all its activities".<sup>10</sup>

Ideologies could be political or religious and can be differentiated from other parts of the belief system, that are derived from the cultural and historical experiences of a people, in that, they tend to be action-oriented and based on a logically-coherent set of symbols. These include the gospels of Marx and Engels, Hitler and Mussolini or the texts of the Bible and the Koran. They are often trans-national and are spread with a messianic zeal, either by persuasion, fear or by the use of force. Whether a state's belief system is influenced by ideology or tradition, it has its effect on foreign policy.

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10 Cited in Mostafa Rejai, Political Ideology: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives, ed., Decline of Ideology (Chicago, 1971), p.5.

These factors are to be kept in mind when theories of foreign policy are elaborated. Theory serves two main purposes: It aids observation and description, and it provides a scheme of analysis, within a value system. This brings in two methods, namely a descriptive frame of reference which may be defined as an organised system of ideas, composed of a limited number of abstract concepts whose purpose is to enable the student to select enough facts about a phenomenon, to describe it adequately. This is also known as the traditional method. E.H. Carr demarcates the line between two periods in its evolution. He notes that till 1914, the conduct of international relations was totally on traditional methods.<sup>11</sup> The conduct of foreign relations was the concern of persons professionally engaged in it. It was thought that foreign policy was regarded to be outside the scope of representative institutions and party politics. These were considered incompetent to have any control over the so-called "mysterious operations of the foreign offices".<sup>12</sup> After the First World War (1914-18), there was a marked change of attitude.

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11 See E.H. Carr, The Twenty Year Crisis (Oxford, 1982).

12 Ibid.

If war was too serious a matter to be left entirely to the generals, foreign policy was too intricate and important a subject to be handled exclusively by the professional diplomats. To do so, would be unsafe and undesirable. President Woodrow Wilson ushered in a new era in international diplomacy with his concept of "open covenants, openly arrived at". It appealed to the Western world so much that it gave rise to the campaign against secret treaties and encouraged the public to assert their right to know the contents of the treaties signed by their nation-states. According to Carr, this had virtually heralded the birth of a new science in international relations.<sup>13</sup>

Mention must be made here of the analytical or the scientific theory, which, by contrast, explains the phenomena thus described by facilitating the construction of generalizations, permitting explanation of events and simultaneous analysis of a body of independent phenomena. This theory-building and empirical testing have been a part of the scientific theory of international relations, popularised by the post Second World War American political scientists signifying the advent of the Behavioural Revolution.

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13 Ibid.



It stresses facts over values, and is expected to be value free. This was a reaction to the earlier approaches, where the diplomatic and the historical methods were used. Then came the realist view of international relations, led by Hans J. Morganthau and others, who were disillusioned with the idealistic view during the period of the two wars, when a utopia of ideas was painted. The Realists maintain that "power" is the chief factor in international relations and man is in search of power, playing his game to get the maximum benefit.

Realism made scholars realise that international relations is not just aspiration but something more serious, for which a critical and analytical study of the subject was necessary.

The scientific approach brought in its wake a lot of new thought. Suffice it mention Easton's classic model of the political system with its inputs and outputs and the feedback that goes again into the making of the inputs.

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14 David Easton, "An Approach to the Analysis of Political System", World Politics, 9, 3 (April 1957), pp.383-99.

The scientific approach brought in its wake a lot of new thought. Suffice it to mention Easton's classic model of the political system with its inputs and outputs and the feedback that goes again into the making of the inputs.<sup>14</sup> Gabriel Almond had identified these input functions as interest articulation, interest aggregation and political communication. The output functions were rule-making, rule-application and rule-adjudication.<sup>15</sup> Hence in a model political system, the inputs would be interest groups, political parties and mass media; the outputs would be legislature, the executive, and the judiciary.

It is worth recalling here that facts could not clarify all doubts. It was felt that man and his institutions and his relations with other people in other states are never constant and predictable and his values do not have an effect on his work. Absolute objectivity is something that is doubtful of achievement. This realisation brought in the Post-Behavioural Revolution, where scholars of international relations felt that both values and facts are equally important.

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14 See David Easton, "An Approach to the Analysis of Political System", World Politics, 9, 3 (April 1957), pp.383-99.

15 Gabriel Almond & G. Bingham Powell Jr., "Comparative Politics: A Development Approach" (Boston, 1966), pp.27-29.

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With this framework in mind, there can be two basic approaches to foreign policy. One is the Ideological Approach, according to which the policies of states, as against the rest of the world, are merely expressions of prevailing political, social and religious beliefs. This approach can be seen along psychological lines. Foreign policy is considered a function of a political system in action, or the preferences and convictions of political leaders who carry out its programmes. This is true of most of the Third World leaders, more so where there are charismatic leaders at the helm of affairs. The other is the analytical approach, according to which a foreign policy rests on many determinants, including the state's historical tradition, geographical location, national interest and purpose and security needs.

Rosenau describes the traditional approach and even Morgenthau's realist approach as "pre-theory".<sup>16</sup> He has contributed a lot to theorizing on foreign policy. He

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16 J.N. Rosenau, ed., International Politics and Foreign Policy (New York, The Free Press, 1961), p.3.

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says that any student must concentrate on both actions and inter-actions of the actors, which comprise the international system. He stresses two foci in the study of foreign policy. To lose this distinction would be tantamount to interchanging of the terms, 'international relations', and 'foreign policy'. Hence these two foci are vital to any study of foreign policy.

The first approach lays emphasis on the actions of nation-states and their foreign policy emanates from these actions and it is considered as a condition of the international system, while studying foreign policy. To put it in his own words, the first approach is interested "...in discerning regularities in the behaviour of actors in the common goals which are sought, in the means and processes through which the goal-seeking behaviour is sustained, and in the societal sources of goals and means selected".<sup>17</sup> The second approach spotlights the whole of the system and not a part of it as in the first. This is viewed as a condition of the

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17 Ibid.

international system at a given moment, where the national behaviour conforms to that of the attributes of the international system. To quote Rosenau himself, "...they are mainly concerned with the patterns which recur in the interaction of the states, in the balances under varying circumstances, in the formation of coalitions and other factors, which precipitate changes in the international system, and in the development of supranational institutions which regulate one or another aspect of the international system".<sup>18</sup> Rosenau feels that it is the blend of these two foci that can yield insights and provide findings helpful to research. These two foci are also called idiographic and nomothetic methods of research.

In this century, when democracy has become the magic word of civilisation, foreign policy has to adapt itself to this change. The means, methods or techniques, may have changed, but the interests and objectives have been more or less the same. There may be certain interests that are more important and have to be defended at all costs; others have to be defended under certain circumstances and still others are desirable but can not

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18 Ibid.

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be so defended. It is the task of foreign policy, in the first instance, to determine its own hierarchy of interests in the principles or practice of other nations' foreign policies. This includes the interests of states and their power to pursue their claims, which, are ofcourse immutable for any given historical period, only in the sense that they set broad limits within which the domestic political contest over external policies must be waged.

Technology, especially that of nuclear weapons, has drastically changed the concept of war and peace. The distinction between soldier and civilian has been obliterated. The battlefield is everywhere; in village huts, a busy market, a chicken farm, a playground or an embassy compound. Technology is valuefree; its enemy is unspecified. Today, cruelty has extended to maiming and killing of innocent people.

Taking the present world situation into consideration, it is totally impossible for war to be an objective of foreign policy. For this would mean a total war, a nuclear war. According to Holsti, three fundamental orientations can be identified, while examining the structure of power and influence and the

actions of political units in a diverse international system. "These are (1) isolation, (2) non-alignment and (3) coalition-making and alliance construction." He further adds to speak of how these were practised among the Chou rulers of ancient China.<sup>19</sup> Even in the Indian tradition, Kautilya, the clever and shrewd minister of Chandragupta Maurya, has a high place for them. In his celebrated book, the 'Arthashastra', he refers "to these fundamental orientations as means of increasing power, gaining security, or conducting successful policies of imperialism".<sup>20</sup>

Societal conditions and beliefs have their effect on foreign policy. They limit the range of foreign policy options. They also provide continuity and enhance national unity. They are used as devices for rationalizing and justifying positions taken, besides being utilized for propaganda purposes. They also serve as a means for rationalizing foreign policy choices

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19 K.J. Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis (New Delhi: Prentice Hall, 1979), p.109.

20 Ibid., p.109.

that are often made on the basis of interpretations of national security interests but are sold to the public on the basis of certain shared values. Like the Soviet decision-makers who are quick to note that their policy was guided by Marxist principles and the leaders of the United States who rationalise in terms of "protecting the free world" or "making the world safe for democracy".

After the societal conditions and beliefs are studied, the political structure has to be examined. National myths and societal conditions obviously shape the foreign policy goals and the general view of the world, held by the foreign policy elites of each state, but for goals to be achieved, decisions need to be made on foreign policy choices. The way decisions are taken and actors are chosen to participate in the decisions have an important impact on the content of the choices made. The role of the institutional arrangements and domestic actors on the conduct and content of foreign policy is important.

While talking about institutional arrangements, one should distinguish between democratic and authoritarian structures. Appadorai endorses this, when he



says that "The internal political structure of a country has an important impact upon that country's approach to international affairs..." He adds, "A despotic government has greater power, through censorship and the promulgation of regulations, to prevent the expression of undesirable opinions, that a free government does. Indeed, the distinguishing mark of a free government is the very freedom allowed to a citizen to express his opinion on public policy, domestic or foreign. There are, besides, established institutions such as an elected parliament, political parties and a free press for the expression of opinion".<sup>21</sup>

\* Many scholars have been critical of the democratic process in foreign policy making and implementation. To quote a few, the French historian, of American Democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville, argued that the management of foreign affairs requires knowledge, secrecy, judgement, planning and perseverance, qualities in which autocratic systems are superior to democratic ones.<sup>22</sup> Walter

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21 A. Appadorai, n.9, pp.12-13.

22 Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, vol.I (New York, 1955), pp.234-235.

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Lippman has criticised democratic foreign policy - making on the ground that the mass are generally un-informed about foreign policy and will always opt for taking the easy way out of situations that demand more assertive action.<sup>23</sup> Raymond Aron was also critical of democratic decision-making because of the danger of "conservative paralysis" and a corresponding inability to deal with pressing problems.<sup>24</sup>

In terms of effectiveness and efficiency, there are reasons to support the primacy of authoritarian regimes, for such governments ought to be able to make decisions more rapidly as they are not responsive to a mass public and usually involves a small number of elites who need to be consulted or who are at least considered in the decision-making process. Moreover, less intra-organisational bargaining is required, since opposition in the legislature, if any, is small, and opposition from within the bureaucracy can be bypassed and crushed. This ensures an apparent

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23 Walter Lippmann, The Public Philosophy (New York, 1955), pp.23-24.

24 Raymond Aron, Peace & War: A Theory of International Relations (New York, 1966), p.67.

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domestic compliance with their decisions, and they could, perhaps, be more consistent in their foreign policy. But this stifles an innovative foreign policy because of the subordinates' pervasive fear of genuinely objecting to the accepted line of policy. But "democracies less often enjoy the brilliant success that bold acts secretly prepared and ruthlessly executed may bring. With the ground of action more thoroughly prepared and the content of policy more widely debated, they may suffer fewer resounding failures."<sup>25</sup>

Decision-making structures could be differentiated on the basis of varying degrees of centralisation, like federal and unitary structures. Pressures for provincial participation in foreign affairs will, perhaps, be greatest in the federal systems in which ethnicity makes a critical difference. Federalism increases opportunities for manipulation of the internal affairs of the federal state.

†Whatever be the form of government authoritarian or democratic, federal or unitary, in the decision-making process, the executive branch of the government and within it, the top decision-maker -- the President

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25 Kenneth Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics* (Boston, 1967), p.311.

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or the Prime Minister or the Chancellor or the Martial Law Administrator, have assumed the pivotal role in the making of foreign policy. The exalted and powerful position of the executive is more marked in authoritarian regimes, where the parliamentary body, if it exists at all, is reduced to the position of rubber-stamping decisions emanating from the executive rulers. Even in more democratic politics, a number of factors have intruded to provide the executive, and within it its chief executive officer, with increased power in the development and execution of foreign policy.

To say that this is all that goes into the making of foreign policy is stating the obvious. Foreign policy is the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment. Within it, as George Easton has put it, are two functions in the political system. They are the inputs flowing into it and the outputs it produces. It is a continuous process, with the results of the outputs, good and bad, fed back into the political system as inputs.<sup>26</sup> The foremost task of foreign policy

analysis must be to throw light on the ways in which the inputs flow into the system of the decision-making process and what is the output and how this attempts to change and does succeed in changing the behaviour of other states.

These inputs are affected by factors like the international environment, history and tradition of the country, geo-political position of the state, the question of 'national interest', which means keeping the territorial integrity and maintaining a "stable peace",<sup>27</sup> which assures peace and security to all the people. The inputs are identified as public opinion, pressure groups, interest groups, bureaucracy, political parties, legislature, judiciary, mass media, etc., all of which are domestic constraints that go to make a nation's foreign policy. Parliament, which is the legislature in India plays a role, for its members are directly elected by the people and represent popular feeling and public opinion in Parliament. These members are responsible to the people of their constituency and to those of India as well.

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27 See Kenneth Boulding, Stable Peace (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1978).

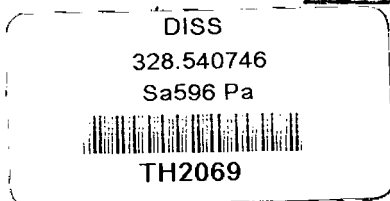
Here it would be appropriate to recall the words of the great British parliamentarian and political philosopher, Edmund Burke, who, while addressing his voters, idealised the role of a legislator, the Members of Parliament, when he said, "Parliament is not a Congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole, where, not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good resulting from the general reason of the whole". He further adds, "...it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents, their wishes ought to have great weight with him, their opinion, high respect; their business, unremitting attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to theirs; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgement, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man or to any

set of men living...Your representative owes to you, not his industry only, but his judgement; and he betrays instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion".<sup>28</sup> Burke stressed the independence of a legislator and parliament as an institution. In the parliament, members of the majority party form the government and the leader of the party becomes the Head of the Government. Along with the ministers of the cabinet, who are chosen from among the members of parliament, they collectively form the executive branch of the government with the President as the Head of the State. Considerable planning and debate goes into the making of the foreign policy. Thus Parliament has been but one of the competing but vital domestic influences in the making of foreign policy.

Parliaments usually consist of two Houses. They are bi-cameral in nature. Prominent among such are the American Senate and the House of Representatives, the British House of Lords and the House of Commons, and nearer home ours, the Council of State (Upper House), called the Rajya Sabha, and the House of the People (Lower House), called the Lok Sabha.

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28 Edmund Burke, *Burke's Speeches & Letters on American Affairs* (London, 1919), pp.72-73.



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In April 1967, Mr. John Freeman, the then British High Commissioner in India, while delivering the Shastri Memorial Lecture, on the topic of 'Parliamentary Reform' at the Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, New Delhi, said: "Parliament is first to inspire the climate of informed public opinion on which a sound democracy must be based; secondly, to enable the elected representatives of the people to keep a check on the operations of the Executive; thirdly, to enable grievances to be aired and wrongs to be redressed; fourthly, and given the existence of the first three requirements: it is to provide the Executive with an instrument of legislation and as a source of power which is manifestly with the consent of the people".<sup>29</sup> These, he felt, were the essential functions of Parliament.

It is pertinent to recall what John Stuart Mill had to say on the functions of Parliament. He said, over a century ago: "Instead of the function of governing for which they (the members) are not suited, their

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29 Cited in A.G. Noorani, India's Constitution and Politics (Bombay, 1970), pp.60-64.



proper office is to watch and control government, to throw the light of publicity on their acts, to compel full exposition and justification on all that is questionable, and if they abuse their trust, to expel them".<sup>30</sup> The Parliament is the watchdog on behalf of the people, which role conflicts with the government's necessity to get legislation passed without much difficulty.

Nevertheless, several factors combine to aid the continuity of policy in the parliamentary system. The first of them is the existence of highly disciplined political parties. As long as the Prime Minister enjoys a parliamentary majority, he or she can count on the continued support for executive policies and need not adjust them for want of funding or the refusal to ratify and support those policies. Second is the fact that a parliamentary system tends to ensure a greater bureaucratic continuity. The trend in most states is one of ever increasing power of the executive at the expense of the legislative branch of government and other groups as well. Both the Legislature i.e. the Parliament and the Executive along with the Bureau-

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30 Cited in N.N. Mallaya, Indian Parliament (New Delhi, 1970).

cracy have to be careful that they do not overrun the public opinion. But there is a general feeling that the mass of the public are generally ill-informed and are uninterested in foreign policy matters, and are therefore, easily manipulable. But any efforts so to manipulate, may backfire. The fact that the democratic decision-makers have felt constrained by public opinion from time to time cannot be doubted. But there has been a tendency to believe that one's own state is constrained more than another state. As international decisions come increasingly to be perceived as affecting domestic well-being, one can expect an intensified effort on the part of the public to become more involved in foreign policy making.

\* Foreign policy today has become more complex than before and has to respond to domestic pressures as well as to international tensions. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru told the Constituent Assembly: "External affairs will follow internal affairs".<sup>31</sup> All national leaders realise this, as the influence of

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31 India, Constituent Assembly, Legislative Debates, vol.3, col.1767.

domestic factors on the course of a nation's foreign policy. This imposes varying degrees of constraints upon its options and behaviour. In a parliamentary democracy, these constraints are many. Though individually, they may not be of great effect, collectively, they could prove powerful enough to change the course of foreign policy. Parliament is a political institution, where a strong move by a large group of legislators, could cause tremors for the government.

Though Parliament is not concerned with the day-to-day making and execution of foreign policy, for the essence of foreign policy is negotiation rather than legislation, and parliamentary scrutiny of negotiation is less detailed than that of legislation. Foreign policy needs compromise but Parliament, as an institution representing the domestic factor, can well express popular feelings, public interest, and the pressure of ethnic groups with no holds barred. Foreign policy issues have an element of remoteness which makes an intelligent debate on the matter difficult. But the Minister of External Affairs and the Prime Minister are expected to enlighten the MPs on all issues, to place documents and correspondence on the

table of both Houses of Parliament. The treaties have to be ratified by the House. This brings forth a debate and the Parliamentarians who disagree with the accepted policy, often, are heard, their views recorded and the debate disseminated widely throughout the country. This was clear with regard to Indian foreign policy during and after the Chinese invasion of 1962.

Debate is, sometimes, restrained due to consensus, or party loyalty or the need of secrecy in the name of national security.<sup>32</sup> The last of which has been one of the favourite ploys of the executive to escape criticism. But in a world where there is an explosion of information, when facts and details, leak out through the mass media, especially the Press, this could set off an intensive debate and force the government to come out with statements and place the facts and details on the table of both the Houses of Parliament.

It is said about Britain, whose Parliament, as the Mother of Parliaments, and whose institutions we have borrowed in India with a few modifications, that

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32 See Max Beloff, Foreign Policy and the Democratic Process (Baltimore), 1960.

"all policy, including international policy, must be decided by, or at least secure the active approval of, the majority in Parliament, and of the majority of the country represented in Parliament".<sup>33</sup>

The influence can vary with regard to the different states, the stages of political development, and the crisis involved. But one thing is certain, and that is, that in India's foreign policy the incorporation of public opinion, and beliefs in policy, is very necessary.

With this in mind, Richard Falk enunciated six criteria for examining the foreign policy in a democracy. They are:

1. A desirable foreign policy -- approved means are used in the pursuit of approved ends, with the bases of approval made explicit.
2. An effective foreign policy -- means used are successful in accomplishing ends sought.
3. A popular foreign policy -- the main positions enjoy high levels of public support;

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33 Appadorai, n.9, p.13.

4. A legitimate foreign policy -- both the means and the ends of foreign policy are in accord with the constitution, including constraints embodied in international law;
5. A populist foreign policy -- the means and ends of foreign policy reflect public participation, influence filtering up as well as down;
6. An equitable foreign policy -- domestic commitment in terms of cost, burdens and sacrifices resulting from a given foreign policy are distributed fairly, i.e., in accordance with democratic theory.<sup>34</sup>

Falk tries ultimately to argue that a foreign policy is decided on what is the national interest of the nation. But the present study is undertaken to see whether Parliament in India, especially the Seventh Lok Sabha (1980-84), had played a role in foreign policy. If so, what was that role?

This study is historical and analytical; Mrs. Indira Gandhi came back to power in 1980 after a three-year interlude of the Janata Government. The study stops with the end of the fifteenth session of the Seventh Lok Sabha, which was dissolved shortly

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34 Richard A. Falk, in "Who Pays For Foreign Policy? A Debate on Consensus: Foreign Policy" (Spring, 1975), p.93.

after the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi on 31 October 1984. This period saw several events relating to foreign policy, like the hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in New Delhi, and a retreat to Goa. This period saw the election of India as the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, and also the holding of the Seventh conference in New Delhi.

The events that occurred in the region of the Indian sub-continent, like the Soviet intervention of Afghanistan, the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka, the aid and training being given to the terrorists in Pakistan along the border state of Punjab, the foreigners' problem in Assam, and the question of fencing along the Indo-Bangladesh border are worth mentioning and other problems, brought about debates and discussions in Parliament and there was considerable difference of opinion among the MPs, especially on Sri Lanka and to a lesser extent on Afghanistan.

This thesis seeks to study the following questions:

1. Whether there is a dominance of the executive branch of government, especially the predominance of the Prime Minister, over all branches of government. In theory, the separation of power exists. Does it in fact?
2. Has Parliament taken the initiative to force government to make a statement on policy or vice-versa?
3. What is the effect of Parliamentary discussion on foreign policy?
4. What are the subjects that interest parliamentarians in foreign policy matters? And why?
5. Party loyalty dampens open discussion and restrains or inhibits the ruling party members from criticising the official line. Opposition parties are divided, except for a few stalwarts; and their opinion, is seldom considered in a democracy based on rule by majority. What is the role of parties? Has the opposition played its role?



6. On sensitive issues of foreign policy, has public opinion moulded parliamentary debate or have MPs moulded public opinion?

Primarily, this study focusses attention on Parliament's influence on the formulation and articulation of foreign policy. The period has been limited in time to the VII Series of the Lok Sabha and the corresponding period of the Rajya Sabha, which restricts it to the years 1980-84. This period also saw the end of the Primeministership of Mrs. Gandhi, in her second regime and her last. So this study would also consider her role as a parliamentarian.

The role of the political parties, the opposition, public opinion and the mass media, especially the press, are the aids of communication and information to Members of Parliament. Was Parliament able to reflect effectively the views of the public?

This work is based on the major premise that domestic sources of foreign policy are not less crucial to its content and conduct than are the international situations towards which it is directed.

## Chapter Two

### ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN FOREIGN POLICY OF INDIA, 1952-1980

Parliament has not merely survived, but endured as a political institution in India. There have been ups and downs, in the course of its history; it has gone through them all and yet survived. It faced the possibility of becoming a static and ineffective institution during the 'emergency' but soon was restored to its power and authority, with the people overwhelmingly voting for democracy reassuring their faith in the parliamentary system of government.

As parliament represents the voice of the citizens, it has had a role in foreign policy. The government has to consult parliament implicitly or explicitly for its major policies,<sup>1</sup> and parliament, in turn, has to cultivate moderation with expertise, knowledge with objectivity and integrity with independence. That is why Northedge rightly compares popular control of foreign policy "to gliding

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1 A. Appadorai, Domestic Roots of India's Foreign Policy, 1947-72, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), p.64.

rather than power-driven flight; to sailing as opposed to managing a steamship; to gardening, in which luck and chances of favourable weather play their part as distinct from the process of manufacturing an article, which extends in direct line from drawing board to retail shop".<sup>2</sup> It is agreed that in India no group has been able to play a very dominant role in foreign policy, like the army in Pakistan and the mullahs in Iran. All the same, it cannot be denied that India has to contend with several competing domestic forces, which played their marginal role.<sup>3</sup> But the influence of these forces could vary with issues concerned and the role of the interest groups in parliament and outside.

Theoretically, according to the constitution of India, the Parliament is a pivotal institution in our political system. The Parliament consists of two Houses, the Upper House (Rajya Sabha) and the Lower

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2 F.S. Northedge, The Foreign Policy of the Powers (London, 1968), p.9.

3 K.P. Mishra, Foreign Policy and its Planning (New Delhi Asia Publishing House, 1970), p.7.

House (Lok Sabha). The Rajya Sabha is a continuous House and the Members are indirectly elected. The Lok Sabha has a 5 year term and the Members are elected directly by the people. Its freedom of election is protected by an autonomous body, the Election Commission.<sup>4</sup> Parliament has 3 types of powers. They are: Legislative, Financial Control and Deliberative.<sup>5</sup>

The seventh schedule in List I has given Parliament absolute power to legislate on eighteen items. (The numbers of the items are from 10 to 21, 25, 37, 41, 57 and 83). The Constitution further says that for those provisions that do not find mention in the State or Concurrent List,<sup>6</sup> Parliament could use its legislative powers. This describes the broad and general power of Parliament's control over foreign policy. The law made by Parliament is applicable to any part or the whole of the territory of India.<sup>7</sup>

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4 See R. Mohan Krishnapuram, Sovereignty of Parliament in India (New Delhi, 1985).

5 Appadorai, n.1, p.65.

6 Article 248, see M.P. Jain, The Constitution of India (Bombay, 1980).

7 Article 253, Ibid.

Parliament has no power to start or end a war or conclude peace.

The financial control could be used by parliament in the shape of its refusal to sanction funds, which can compel a government to resign. This could be an effective way of showing its dissatisfaction with the government's policy. But, in reality, party loyalty and the overwhelming majority of a single party, have encouraged the government not to fear the parliament about exercising this right. In 1969, the government was strongly criticised for the Rabat Conference debacle, over which the opposition led by A.B. Vajpayee and J.B. Kripalani effectively exposed the government, nearly taking it almost to the brink, on an issue on which it could not defend itself. But when it came to the voting, the government won hands down, 306 votes to 140,<sup>8</sup> thanks to the whip issued by the ruling party, all in the name of party discipline.

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8 As cited in Shashi Tharoor, Reasons of State: Political Development and India's Foreign Policy Under Indira Gandhi, 1966-77 (New Delhi, 1982) p.279. He felt that despite the oratorical skills of the opposition, the debates were unable to make a tangible impact, because they usually followed rather than preceded governmental policy actions and because when it came to vote, the opposition were hopelessly outnumbered.

It was an exercise in the counting of hands and heads. In the cryptic words of Vajpayee, "they have the majority and we have the arguments".<sup>9</sup>

The deliberative functions are covered by the routine procedure which includes several devices to bring pressure on the government. For instance, there is the "Question Hour" with which both the Houses begin the day. This is followed by the "Zero Hour" where further questions could be asked. "Starred" questions demand a verbal (or oral) answer and 'unstarred' and 'short-notice' questions require written replies, which are submitted earlier, so as to give sufficient time for the ministry concerned to formulate a reply".<sup>10</sup>

Rule 55 could be used to give an advance notice of at least 3 days on an urgent issue that needs "half-an-hour's discussion" of the subject. Rule 56 relates to adjournment of the House on an issue of urgent public importance. This rule was resorted to during the

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9 India, Lok Sabha Debates, vol.33, 7 December, 1973, Cols.237.

10 India, Lok Sabha, Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the House of the People (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1957), Rules 37-58, Parallel Rules are followed by the Rajya Sabha.

debate on the Rabat Conference.<sup>11</sup> Rule 184 provides for a member to table motions for discussion on a statement laid on the table of the House or a policy or an event which has occurred recently. Rule 193 is used when a member wants an adjournment motion and a no-confidence motion, which is the ultimate parliamentary weapon to dismiss the government. It also provides for short-duration discussions on subjects to which the House feels that the government has not given sufficient attention. In a fifteen year period (1952-1966), only 75 discussions came up. As for "Call Attention Motions", 735 of them were admitted in 1966,<sup>12</sup> which provides eloquent evidence of parliament's interest in an international and a foreign policy issues.<sup>13</sup>

Rule 342 is used for consideration of specific issues to focus attention on a critical survey of alternatives for a certain policy. Rule 372 is made use of by Ministers to make statements in the House

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11 See India, Lok Sabha Debates, vol.33, 7 December 1973, col.237.

12 H.S. Fartyal, Role of the Opposition in the Indian Parliament (Allahabad: Chaitanya, 1977), pp.93-97.

13 Dinesh Singh, "The Indian Parliament and Foreign Policy", Parliamentarian, no.51 (July, 1970), p.160.

to keep it informed about matters of international importance or to state the government's policy.

Otherwise, the Houses can scrutinize foreign policy during the motion of thanks after the Presidential address at the beginning of a session or during the budget session every year when demands for grants for the Ministry of External Affairs are discussed.

In addition to this, there is a Consultative Committee attached to the Ministry of External Affairs which was set up in 1954 at the suggestion of an independent member.<sup>14</sup> At first, they were called the Informal Consultative Committees which were unwieldy, with 57 members - 32 from the Lok Sabha and 25 from the Rajya Sabha. In June 1969, the word 'informal' was dropped and the Consultative Committee was made more compact with 32 members - 20 from the Lok Sabha, nine from the Rajya Sabha, apart from the Minister for External Affairs (Chairman), the Deputy Minister in the Ministry and the Government's Deputy whip in charge

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14 Lanka Sundaram, "Role of an Independent Member", in, A.B. Lal, ed., The Indian Parliament (Allahabad: Chaitanya, 1956), p.67.



of Consultative Committees (ex-officio member).<sup>15</sup>

The members are roughly in proportion to the strength of the different parties in Parliament (See Table 2.1 to know the party position in the six Lok Sabhas, 1952-1979). The Committee is expected to meet twice in a session. No minutes of its meetings are circulated. Its status is based on convention and not on law. Its suggestions and advice are only recommendatory to the government. Even if there is unanimity, it is not obligatory on the part of the government to accept its suggestions. As its proceedings are secret,<sup>16</sup> it is hoped that the Minister for External Affairs does have a free exchange on matters of foreign policy which is put behind a 'veil of secrecy' in parliament conveniently in the name of national interest and security.

Parliament can ratify a treaty or pass a legislation for its implementation. On the question of diplomatic recognition or the appointment of representatives abroad, it is the exclusive right of the executive

15 K.P. Misra, n.3, p.36.

16 Ibid., p.37.

17 Cited in A.G. Noorani, "Parliament and India's Foreign Policy", Indian Express, 15 May 1965.

that prevails. Parliament can discuss the issues and persuade the government. By this means, it could vitally affect the broad orientation of foreign policy or even its specific aspects. It plays a consultative role. Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri made this point, when he said: "I want to make it absolutely clear that to run the government is our responsibility and we are going to discharge it. We do take broad guidance from this Honourable House on matters of policy. But we cannot be given executive directions everyday. It would be an impossible situation and I cannot accept it".<sup>17</sup>

India is a "majoritarian" democracy, let it be remembered. A truly representative legislative body did not exist, which was directly elected by the people till 1952. There was the Provisional Parliament in 1950, which was the Constituent Assembly, with some changes in its membership. It was not directly chosen by the people and did not have an effective opposition. It was not until 1952, that parliamentary elections were held in India. The party which won a larger

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17 Cited in A.G. Noorani, "Parliament and India's Foreign Policy", Indian Express, 15 May 1965.

number of seats than its rivals in the general elections, would form the government. In a multi-party system like this in India, with a monolithic party like the Indian National Congress, which as a movement had fought and won the independence, became a political party, ruled the country for most of its 39 years. Given the present electoral system, a marginal advantage of votes may give a majority of seats in the Lok Sabha to one party. Elections are held every 5 years and the government normally holds office for the same period.

In a parliamentary democracy like India, thus fusion of executive with its party in parliament produces a situation, "in which he who wills the end, thereby wills the means".<sup>18</sup> This assures the government of parliamentary support to most or all of its policies, because of the discipline of the party members and loyalty to the leader. Democracy works in this system, when after every 5 years the elector has a choice among the multiplicity of parties, whose leaders are known

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18 Cited in Kenneth Waltz, Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics (Boston, Little Brown, 1967), p.301.

and programmes advertised widely. He, the elector, would use his right to vote, to punish or reward the parties. This way, certain degree of accountability is preserved in the political system.

India's foreign policy was formulated even before independence.<sup>19</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, was the architect of her foreign policy. He laid the foundations.<sup>20</sup> As President of the Indian National Congress and later he showed keen interest in foreign affairs. He was frank enough to admit that: "Prime Ministership is not my profession and I would have resigned but for one thing, and that is my interest in the foreign affairs portfolio. In this field, I came to know much more than anybody else in the country. And it is because I feel that by running the External Affairs Ministry, I may do something good and useful for the country, that I have not resigned my office".<sup>21</sup>

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19 Shashi Tharoor, n.8, p.23.

20 A. Appadorai, n.1, p.226.

21 S.R. Patel, Foreign Policy in India: An Inquiry and Criticism (Bombay: N.M. Tripathi, 1966), p.34.

The human dimension of foreign policy in India reflected to a large extent Nehru's personality. But it is wrong to conclude that it was completely his origin. He only rediscovered it and as a student of history, perceived the specific situation of the Cold War and the bipolar world of the 1950s which was split into two rigid ideological and military blocs.<sup>22</sup> A charismatic leader like Nehru<sup>23</sup> could enunciate the policy of non-alignment which was very different from a negative policy or neutrality. It was a positive policy, facilitating the choice of a nation to judge everything on merits and decide a course of action on its own and in a given situation.<sup>24</sup> It did not try to take a 'holier-than-thou' attitude, nor was it excessively moralistic. A few scholars, however, thought it was. According to them, India's foreign policy 'manifested itself in the excessively moralist, populist-legitimist overtones'<sup>25</sup> during the Nehru era.

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22 See, Bimal Prasad, ed., India's Foreign Policy: Studies in Continuity and Change, (New Delhi, 1979).

23 A. Appadorai, n.1, pp.215-16.

24 See Michael Brecher, India's Foreign Policy (New York, 1957).

25 Cited in Walveen F. Ilchmann, "Political Development & Foreign Policy: The Case of India", Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, vol.4, no.3 (November, 1966), p.218.

It was really a pragmatic policy which "was evolved to strengthen the socio-economic and politico-strategic bases of the new countries".<sup>26</sup> It meant to aid the process of the political independence of the new nations of Africa and Asia and to give them a powerful voice in international forums. Its basic principles were the same as those enunciated in the Panchsheel Declaration which was made public during the bilateral Sino-Indian agreement of 29 April, 1954. Its preamble sets out these principles which have since guided India's foreign policy. They are:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty;
2. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs;
3. Equality;
4. Mutual benefit; and
5. Peaceful co-existence.<sup>27</sup>

Non-alignment is not the end of India's foreign policy, but rather the means to achieve that end. It

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26 See K.P. Misra, ed., Janata's Foreign Policy (New Delhi, 1979).

27 See V.P. Dutt, India's Foreign Policy (New Delhi, 1984).

is an independent policy incorporating the nation's convictions, memories of past events, future expectations and roles played.<sup>28</sup> They may be right or wrong, but she was determined to follow these means to achieve her ends. The ends of India's foreign policy are: maintenance of international peace and security, promotion of self-determination for all colonial people, opposition to racialism in all its manifestations, peaceful settlement of disputes; and securing for the newly independent Afro-Asian countries the voice and weight to which they were entitled in the councils of the world.<sup>29</sup>

Since then the message of non-alignment has spread far and wide all over the world. The result is that we have now a movement of 101 members, at the end of the VII Summit in New Delhi in 1983. Even in India, when the ruling party, the Indian National Congress (I) was thrown out of power in 1977, the same policy continued.<sup>30</sup>

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28 Ibid.

29 J. Bandopadhyaya, The Making of India's Foreign Policy (Bombay, Allied Publishers), p.13.

30 K.P. Misra, n.26, p.4.

For any study of the subject, one has to look back to the preceding period and see to it as a continuous process and not as an exclusive and a separate period. The VII Lok Sabha saw before it six series of the Lok Sabha, 5 Prime Ministers who presided over the affairs of the country, their personality moulding aspects of foreign policy, and the domination of a single political party, the Congress (1952-77) with a brief interrugnum of the Janata Party (1977-80).

Here it is worthwhile to have a look at Table 2.1 which shows the position of parties in Parliament. Suffice it to know the position of the parties in the Lower House or the Lok Sabha, which determines the majority party. We can see that till 1977, there is no strong opposition in Parliament, but rather several opposition parties, that did not at any time, threaten the Congress in Parliament. Only in the 1977 elections, do we see that the opposition parties formed the 'Janata' party and the Congress became the opposition party which was strong and united.

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TABLE-2.1: BREAK-UP OF SEATS IN THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS (1950-79) PARTYWISE

Year	Total No. of Seats	PARTIES										
		Cong.	Swat.	CPI	CPM	JS	PSP	SSP	REP	Ind.	Others	
I	1952	489	364	--	16	--	3	--	--	--		106
II	1957	494	371	--	27	--	4	19	--	--		73
III	1962	494	361	18	29	--	14	12	--	3	29	28
IV	1967	520	283	42	23	19	35	13	23	1	39	42
V	1971	520	350	8	23	25	22	2	3	16		66
									(Syndicate)			
VI	1977	540	152	269	7	22	8	28	19	3	17	15
			(Janata)				AD	CFD	(AIADMK)	(RSP)		

1. Cong. = Congress; 2. Swat. = Swatantra; 3. CPI = Communist Party of India  
 4. CPM = Communist Party of India (Marxist); 5. JS = Jana Sangh; 6. Ind. = Independents  
 7. PSP = Praja Socialist Party; 8. SSP = Samyukta Socialist Party; 9. REP = Republican  
 10. AD = Akali Dal; 11. CFD = Congress for Democracy; 12. AIADMK = All India Anna Party  
 Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam; 13. RSP = Revolutionary Socialist Party.

Note: Data put together after collecting it from the Six Lok Sabha Souvenirs, New Delhi, Lok Sabha Secretariat.

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There have been in-depth studies of politics and personalities in the Nehru era (1947-64) which would throw light on vital policy issues. Nehru himself was a fluent speaker and prolific writer, a compulsive educator of the Indian people in democratic values. Here is a significant passage from an article he wrote on himself, under the pseudonym, Chanakya, in 1937:

"...Men like Jawaharlal, with all their capacity for great and good work, are unsafe in a democracy. He calls himself a democrat, and a socialist, and no doubt, he does so in all earnestness, but every psychologist knows that the mind is ultimately a slave to the heart and that logic can always be made to fit in with the desires and irrepressible urges of man. A little twist and Jawaharlal might turn a dictator sweeping aside the paraphernalia of a slow-moving democracy and socialism, but we all know how fattened on this language and then cast it away as useless lumber..."

"Jawaharlal cannot become a fascist and yet he has all the makings of a dictator in him -- vast popularity, a strong will directed to a well-defined purpose, energy, pride, organisational capacity, ability, hardness, and, with all his love of the crowd, an intolerance of others and a certain contempt for the weak and inefficient. His flashes of temper are well known and even when they are controlled, the curling of the lips betrays him. His over-mastering desire to get things done, to sweep away what he dislikes and build anew, will hardly brook for long the slow processes of democracy. He may keep the husk but he will see to it that it bends to his will. In normal times, he would just be an efficient

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and successful executive, but in a revolutionary epoch, Caeserism is always at the door, and is it not possible that Nehru might fancy himself as a Caesar?

"Therein lies danger for Jawaharlal and for India".<sup>32</sup>

It is not only a brilliant profile but a serious exercise in self-criticism. We can hardly have a better insight into the psyche of a man, who moulded the destinies of India at home and abroad.

Taya Zinkin has said that India's foreign policy was influenced by Nehru's personality and its outlook on the rest of the world is conditioned by 4 factors, namely, "India is coloured; India is in Asia; India was only recently free; and India is desperately poor."<sup>33</sup> But some felt that there was the co-existence of two foreign policies; a foreign "political" policy featuring non-alignment and based, ostensibly on national values and principles, and a foreign economic policy concerned with pragmatic developmental goals.<sup>34</sup>

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32 Chanakya, "The Rashtrapati", Modern Review, November 1937, pp.546-47. This article was written to persuade the Congress against re-electing the President.

33 Taya Zinkin, "Indian Foreign Policy - An Interpretation of Attitudes", World Affairs, January 1955, vol.VII, no.2, pp.179-208.

34 Shashi Tharoor, n.8, p.22.

Nehru's political career showed that he nurtured democratic institutions and held Parliament in high regard. In spite of heavy responsibilities, hectic tours and tight schedule, he attended Parliament and participated in its proceedings, more often than any other ministers. He not only listened to his critics with patience, but often accepted their views. This led to the impression which was not altogether unjustified, that Nehru did most of the thinking on India's foreign policy. He also held the portfolio of External Affairs Minister in the cabinet, along with the Prime Ministership. He was a teacher, educating the MPs on foreign policy matters, the basics as well as the specifics, and could carry the policy through, most of the time. He was sensitive to the views of the opposition and responded favourably to them. Certain members of the opposition, whose views Nehru highly valued, could see him and even persuade him to change his earlier stand. For example, he is known to have admitted mistakes of official policy on the issue of Hungary.<sup>34a</sup> This helped to make the

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34a India, Lok Sabha Debates, vol.IX, no.3, Part-II, 16 November 1956. This contains Nehru's statement in the House.

the debates lively and interesting. It was also due to the presence of stalwarts on both sides of the House. It was a brilliant galaxy of high talent, with impressive assets like the oratorical skills of Hiren Mukerjee, Vajpayee and Frank Anthony, the thoroughness and forensic ability of Limaye, the grasp of data and the advocacy of M.R. Masani, the aggressiveness of Nath Pai, the devastating performances of Acharya Kripalani, and the procedural knowledge of the Socialist H.V. Kamath".<sup>35</sup> Added to these, were the debating powers of Dr. S.P. Mookerjee and the political and economic scholarship of Ashok Mehta, among other things.

Against this background, it would not be correct to assume that Nehru had an easy time in Parliament. On the contrary, there were many issues that did take the Government to a brink and some others in which the debates in Parliament had an undeniable impact on policy. Nehru had always to marshall his facts and defend the country's policy. Even as early as 1950, only three years after Independence, when the pangs

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35 M.C. Chagla, Roses in December (Bombay, 1975) pp.427, 450-455.

partition had not abated, the preoccupation with serious domestic issues did not stop Parliament from debating the Korean conflict. H.V. Kamath requested the Prime Minister "to place on the table of the House the text of the letters exchanged between the Prime Minister on the one hand and the President of the USA, the Prime Ministers of USSR and UK on the other, since the outbreak of the war in Korea upto date, with a view to a settlement of the conflict."<sup>36</sup> This was a fair measure of the interest of the individual members in the affairs of distant lands, though most of the debates during the Nehru era reflected a preoccupation with Pakistan and later on with China.

The democrat in Nehru was always uppermost in his dealings with the Houses of Parliament. He readily placed the papers requested on Korea on the table of the House. A motion on the Korean situation was moved, when Nehru placed the whole problem before the House, tracing its history upto the present day.<sup>37</sup> In the course of his speech on the subject, he said:

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36 India, Parliamentary Debates, vol.IV, 1 August 1950, Cols.64-65.

37 Ibid., vol.V, part-II, 3 August 1950, Cols. 217-237.

"Nevertheless problems external to India are not only of great importance, for what happens elsewhere might have a powerful effect on the internal problems we have to face".<sup>38</sup> Though he appreciated discussion, he felt that the House had no authority to pass judgements on the rights and wrongs, because of "the scant facts available". He also felt that, "...it was difficult in such a state of affairs to maintain a completely independent policy, we are affected by events of course, we are swept away by the course of events".<sup>39</sup>

In the ensuing debate, Nehru was criticised and Kamath was quick to note that Nehru had at first called the whole thing a civil war but now referred to it as aggression.<sup>40</sup>

In 1952-53, there was the question of the recruitment of Gurkhas by Great Britain in India. This came under strong criticism by Communist members in general, and Professor H.N. Mukherjee in particular, and this led to the early termination of the temporary facilities.<sup>41</sup>

Whenever Nehru got an opportunity, he tried to educate and persuade the Members of Parliament on the

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38 Ibid., cols.217-18.

39 Ibid., cols.217-389.

40 Ibid., col.369.

41 See Parliamentary Debates, House of the People Part-I, 5 November 1952, col.38, 12 December 1952, cols.1467-68; and 13 February 1953, col.13.

value of non-alignment. There were critics of his policy and the decision of India to remain a member of the Commonwealth. In a discussion on the demands for grants to the Ministry of External Affairs, one Member, N. Sreekantan Nair spoke with some common-sense and wit though the influence of his intervention was negligible. He said, "Foreign policy of India has all along been a weak-kneed policy. As a matter of fact, our policy has been tacked on to the apronstrings of mother Britain and we follow that policy, whether we like it or not...We have been idealists, empty idealists, very poor practical statesmen. Like Don Quixote with lances levelled, we tilted wind mills all the world over...to reconsider our policy and only to concentrate our attention to things, which directly concern us and our country, and not to pretend that we are a big force in the world politics. Let us be realists, let us be honest about our strength and our own weaknesses".<sup>42</sup>

This view was held by several others, including scholars on this subject. Whether it was valid or not,

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42 India, Lok Sabha Debates, Series 1, vol.II, 16 March 1953, cols.2145-46.



is a different matter. Parliament was a place where a variety of views were expressed and this indeed showed the diversity of perception of its members, even on remote foreign policy issues.

An important event in 1956 was the subject of vigorous discussion leading to a considerable Parliamentary pressure being built up which eventually made the Prime Minister shift from his earlier position.<sup>43</sup> This coincided with the Suez crisis. Initiating the debate, the Prime Minister came forward with a severe condemnation of the Soviet invasion in Hungary in an obvious bid to clear India of applying double standards. It was a "nationalist uprising",<sup>44</sup> in sharp contrast to his description of it as a 'civil conflict' at the Calcutta session (Bellighata) of 9 to 11 November 1956. He left the House in no doubt that his 'conversion' had been brought about by the passive and peaceful resistance (stoppage of all work) launched by the Hungarians in the face of Soviet armed might.

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43 India, Lok Sabha Debates, Series 1, vol.IX, no.3, part-II, 16 November, 1956, Cols.261-76.

44 Ibid., no.4, part-II, 19 November 1956, col.403.

This, he said, was "more significant of the wishes of the people than an armed revolt".<sup>45</sup> Nehru's speech was generally welcomed by all, including the Opposition. Ashok Mehta was quick to express his satisfaction that the Prime Minister had "corrected the focus and set the record straight".<sup>46</sup>

Even in the midst of severe criticism of British action against Egypt in the Suez crisis, Nehru refused to be led by the passion and anger of the Parliament. It is clear that while winding up the debate on 20 November 1956 on the Suez crisis, he rejected the Opposition plea for severance of the Commonwealth connection. He said, "India had already expressed herself strongly against Anglo-French aggression in Egypt and it would be wrong to cut away from the Commonwealth merely to show anger. The Commonwealth helped and could help the cause of peace".<sup>47</sup>

The subject of China became the preoccupation of Indian Parliament from 1954. This began with China's occupation of Tibet, which meant to India the

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45 Ibid., col.404.

46 Ibid., col.405.

47 Ibid., cols.261-76.

On 20 September 1962, the Chinese crossed the MacMohan line and the next month a massive attack was launched. Nehru was shocked and Parliament won an indirect victory. National emergency was declared on 26 October 1962.<sup>56</sup> Parliament was summoned on 8 November to consider the Chinese attack. Nehru could gauge the mood of the Members and shock at the betrayal. Parliament called for the resignation of Defence Minister, V.K. Krishna Menon.<sup>57</sup> His cut in the defence budget in 1959-60 and his differences with the Chief of the Army Staff, General Thimayya, brought him under strong criticism of the non-communist opposition who called him, "a known crypto-communist"<sup>58</sup> in charge of the defence portfolio in the face of an attack from a communist country. Masani declared the helplessness of the Opposition to provide an alternative in these words, "...in any country, such a government would have been dismissed; the party in office itself would have put in a new

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56 Ibid.

57 J. Bhandopadhyaya, n.29, p.120-22, says that it was the pressure of the Congress Parliamentary executive which made Menon to resign finally. But this Congress Parliamentary Executive gauged the mood of Parliament and acted swiftly.

58 India, Lok Sabha Debates, series-III, vol.19, cols.1281-1305.

loss of a buffer state between India and China. This subjugation of a smaller state by a bigger power led to fear among the MPs about Chinese aggressiveness and of eventual intrusion into Indian territory.<sup>48</sup> Though 1954 saw the signing of the Sino-India Agreement, public opinion and the attitude of Parliament started hardening and a tougher line was taken on China. From then on, the level of criticism reached its peak in 1959 and remained there till Nehru's death in 1964.

Parliament was extremely critical of what was described as the weak handling of policy towards China. Tension on the border grew in 1959-60, with an uprising in Tibet in early 1959, the presence of Chinese troops in Tibet and the anti-Indian propaganda made parliament restive. This led Nehru to assure Parliament that India would not compromise. Admitting that cracks were seen in the Sino-Indian Agreement, he concluded his speech with these brave words,

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48 Nancy Jetley, Parliament and India's China Policy 1950-64, thesis submitted at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, (New Delhi, 1973), p.13.

"Friendship cannot exist between the weak and the strong, between the country that is trying to bully and the other who accepts to be bullied... May I say that in spite of all that has happened and is happening today, that is still our objective and we shall work for it. That does not mean that we should surrender in anything we consider right or that we should hand over bits of territory of India to China to please them. That is not the way to be friends with anybody or to maintain our dignity or self-respect. But in the long run, it is of importance for these two great countries, whatever their internal structures or policies might be, to be friends".<sup>49</sup>

Three days later on 7 September 1959, the first white paper on India-China relations (April 1954 to August 1959) was placed on the table of the House.<sup>50</sup> Deep fissures and cracks were noticed. This led to a heated debate, in which Acharya Kripalani did not

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49 India, Lok Sabha Debates, Series II, vol.34, 4 September 1959, cols.6546-52.

50 Nancy Jetly, n.47, p.148.

mince words, when he voiced his opposition to the government's policy towards China. He called for a change in foreign policy to make it more meaningful and effective. He added, "National territories belong to the people of the country. It cannot be subject of arbitration...Their vacillation and the Prime Minister's varying statements confuse the public minds...Restraint without action is meaningless."<sup>51</sup> Concluding his speech, he pledged the country's support to the Prime Minister. This disagreement on specific issues did not amount to mutual hostility or major difference in basic policy.

At times, the excitement and anger of Parliament broke all barriers, which shocked Nehru to the extent of his wondering, "Is this Parliament going to behave in this way?"<sup>52</sup> On the allegation that he kept Parliament in the dark, he was apologetic. "If I have erred in the past in some delay in placing the papers before the House, I shall not err again...that we have to

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51 India, Lok Sabha Debates, series-II, vol.34, 4 September 1959, cols.6449-52.

52 Ibid., cols.8006-13.

keep the country and especially the Parliament in full touch with the developments".<sup>53</sup>

Even after this, the issue dragged on and Kriplani moved an amendment to the main resolution, highlighting the failure of the government to secure India's frontiers and to safeguard her territorial integrity. He said, "...Today the Prime Minister says, "I will do what Parliament wants me to do". But the representatives of the people were never informed, of course, he can do what the Parliament wants him to do. He has an overwhelming majority".<sup>54</sup> A shrewd observer that Kriplani was, he knew what were the loopholes as the majority was with Nehru, while the opposition stood divided.

Even as the President's address was going on, Nehru's letter to Chou-en-Lai, the Chinese leader, was made public, that the opposition moved an adjournment, accusing the government of reversing the policy endorsed by the Parliament.<sup>55</sup>

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53 Ibid., (emphasis added).

54 India, Lok Sabha Debates, series-II, vol.35, 1959, cols.1711-12.

55 Nancy Jetly, no.48, p.207.

government in its place".<sup>59</sup>

Even the ruling party members were critical of the government's China policy. A record number of 165 members spoke in the debate on the Chinese invasion. This series i.e. the III Lok Sabha, saw the members use the tool of no-confidence motion against the government, six times, on the failure of foreign policy.<sup>60</sup> Though the motions failed, because of the overwhelming majority of the ruling party in parliament this did clearly show that parliament played an active part. Then there was the issue of providing an air-umbrella in early 1963. Following the sudden attack by China, government wanted to strengthen our air defence system so that we might be able to thwart a future attack. But the press thought that the foreign bases were being set up in the country.<sup>61</sup> Nehru clarified his position that Indian forces would defend her territory. It was only procuring sophisticated equipment from friendly countries. Parliament and government agreed

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59 Ibid.

60 Nancy Jetly, n.48, pp.347-48.

61 A. Appadorai, n.1, pp.73-74.



that India should be defended by her own forces.<sup>62</sup>

The other incident in which the Indian Parliament forced the government to modify her position was the agreement signed between government and the Voice of America (VOA) on 9 July 1963. This sparked a criticism that this would be used against the Soviet Union and it went against the principle of non-alignment. The Communist Party of India took an active part maintaining that India had to modify the position that no broadcast should be made from the transmitter. The strong criticism led to the natural death of the agreement.<sup>63</sup>

Even earlier, Ministers had resigned on foreign policy issues. To name a few, in 1950, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjea and K.C. Neogi, resigned from the Cabinet in protest against the Nehru-Liaquat Pact between India and Pakistan. In 1951, when B.R. Ambedkar resigned, one of his major criticisms was the appeasement of China by India.<sup>64</sup>

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62 India, Lok Sabha Debates, Series-III, vol.13, 21 February 1963, col.546.

63 Indian Foreign Affairs, vol.VI, no.8, August 1963, pp.7-8, 37, 39.

64 J. Bandyopadhyaya, n.29, pp.139-140.

Nehru accepted his failure to anticipate an attack from China and the shock hastened his death in 1964. This also served to expose the bankruptcy of our foreign policy.<sup>65</sup> This was a clear case, in which the legislature (i.e. Parliament) proved more realistic and vigilant than the executive (i.e. Government).

The Shastri transition<sup>66</sup> did not see a radical change of policy. There were no innovations in foreign policy. The victory with Pakistan in 1965 war did promise a readjustment of foreign policy.<sup>67</sup> Shastri's sudden death after a heart attack in Tashkent left things unsettled. But one political scientist felt that there was: "...little indication that a more empirical attitude to foreign policy decisions has been developing. In fact, some of the principal illusions of the Nehru era are still very much in evidence".<sup>68</sup> His handling of the 1965 war, with an independent Minister of

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65 Michael Edwards, "Illusion and Reality in India's Foreign Policy", International Affairs, n.41, January 1965, p.53.

66 Werner Levi, "Foreign Policy: The Shastri Era", in K.P. Misra, ed., Studies in Indian Foreign Policy (New Delhi, 1969), p.185.

67 See, A.P. Rana, The Imperatives of Non-Alignment (Delhi: Macmillan, 1976).

68 Shashi Tharoor, n.8, p.47.

External Affairs, however, inaugurated a short-lived assertiveness in foreign policy.

The legacy of the foreign policy was passed on to the new Prime Minister Indira Gandhi which was still Nehru's. The first few years, till 1971, saw Parliament and the opposition playing an active role. (vide the Table 2.1, where one can notice that the reduced majority for the ruling party in the 1967 elections). The split in the ruling party in 1969 saw Parliament taking up issues with greater vigour and the government being cautious, as if it were treading on a razor's edge.

Two issues really made the influence of parliament a reality. One was the question of India's unsuccessful bid to participate in the Conference of Islamic States held at Rabat in 1969.<sup>69</sup> There was something ironical in the attempt of a secular state like India to participate in this conference, though she managed to get an invitation. A more amusing thing happened, after she got it. After the Indian team had reached Rabat, the organising states refused

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69 Ibid., p.253.

to allow India to participate. This was an act of humiliation and the opposition parties made an unsuccessful attempt to defeat Mrs. Gandhi's government on this issue.<sup>70</sup>

The other issue on which the Prime-Minister had to go back on her earlier statement was regarding the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. There was a debate in the Lok Sabha on 11 December 1968, which saw a severe criticism of the government. Commenting on the government's stereotyped replies in parliament when found in a tight corner, A. Sreedharan said, "When it comes to such important questions, and when the government is in a muddle, they always give the stock reply, "No; it does not arise". "The Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia is not only a political event but also a challenge to the conscience of mankind".<sup>71</sup> He further wanted to know the reason why India had abstained at the voting in the General Assembly of the United Nations.

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70 Statesman, 18 November 1969.

71 India, Lok Sabha Debates, Series IV, vol.23, 1968, cols.1-5.

On 21 August, 1968, the Prime Minister made a non-committal statement of "profound concern" and "right of nations to live peacefully and without outside interference. Sucheta Kripalani's amendment to the main motion, which wanted to commit parliament to the position that the Soviet Union and its allies had committed a clear violation of the United Nations Charter by their armed action was lost by 182 votes against and 82 votes in favour. The government tried to cover up its changed position and accepted the resolution that had been tabled two weeks earlier by S.N. Dwivedi giving the reason that events had overtaken them.<sup>72</sup>

A noisy debate ensued and Ashok Mehta, a Cabinet colleague of Mrs. Gandhi resigned over differences with the government on its stand on the Czechoslovakian crisis. Ashok Mehta said that there was no question of India not being friendly to the Soviet Union, but he argued that friendship should not have prevented the country from voicing its protest and regret when the Russians committed what he called "a grievous mistake".<sup>73</sup>

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72 Asian Recorder, vol.23, 11 December 1968, cols.8501-05.

73 Ibid., vol.14, 23 to 28 September 1968, cols.8543-44.

The Consultative Committee of Members of Parliament attached to the Ministry of External Affairs met only twice during the IV Lok Sabha. It met on 27 October 1969 and on 10 February 1970. It was primarily called because the Foreign Minister faced a strong resistance from the non-Communist opposition. In both the meetings the agenda was on Nepal and South East Asia. These issues were not discussed but there was an uproar on the Rabat Conference of Islamic states. This was repeated at the second meeting where the members raised a storm about India's nuclear policy against the Chinese nuclear stance. The Foreign Minister was compelled to agree to an inquiry into the possible cost of a long-term nuclear weapons programme for India.<sup>74</sup>

So, it could be seen that this committee started on an agitational note, though it turned out later to be a temporary one. It is said that Mrs. Gandhi never attended a single meeting of the Committee.<sup>75</sup> Later it met infrequently and functioned like a 'question-and-answer session'.<sup>76</sup>

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74 Bandopadhyaya, n.29, pp.135-36.

75 Shasi Tharoor, n.8, p.276.

76 Ibid., p.217.

The Congress split in 1969 and then began the preoccupation with Pakistan, with whom we fought a war in 1971, which eventually led to the formation of Bangladesh. The year 1971 saw the signing of a Twenty five year Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. This has had its immediate use for the war and was honoured by both the countries. Parliament supported both these events wholeheartedly.

The year 1972 saw Mrs. Gandhi's return with a thumping majority. Many stalwarts were defeated and this gave Mrs. Gandhi a complete control over foreign policy and parliament. It was felt that during "most of Mrs. Gandhi's rule, the organised opposition had no leader of national standing, with the possible exception after 1969, of the then discredited Morarji Desai!"<sup>77</sup> This led to the decrease of influence exercised by Parliament.

With the Emergency clamped on the nation on 26 June 1975 Parliament became ineffective and a non-entity. The elections were held in March, 1977, which

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77 Shashi Tharoor, n.8, p.217.

saw for the first time in free India's history the defeat of the Congress; and the opposition parties' joint front, the Janata Party, was voted to power.

In the very first debate, during the Janata period, the External Affairs Minister, A.B. Vajpayee, paid a tribute to Nehru and his legacy of the policy of non-alignment. This clearly showed that the new government wanted to maintain a continuity of foreign policy.<sup>78</sup>

On 29 June 1977 in the Lok Sabha Vajpayee made a policy statement that "Non-Alignment is not the policy of an individual or a party. This is based on national consensus...the policy of non-alignment is, in fact a logical and essential extension of the national independence in the field of international affairs".<sup>79</sup>

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78 Ibid., p.364.

79 India, Lok Sabha Debates, Series VI, Second Session, 29 June 1977, cols.191-206. The speech was made in hindi during the discussion on the demands for grants for the Ministry of External Affairs.



The Janata Party found the Prime Minister outspoken on both the Super Powers. They were blamed for the deterioration of the world situation, regarding the bases in the Indian Ocean and feared the race between the Big Two, about which the smaller nations have to be careful.<sup>80</sup>

Relations with the USA were strengthened with the visit of President Carter to India in January 1978 and Prime Minister Desai to the USA in June 1978. The irritant was in the form of threat of an eventual US cut-off of supplies for the Tarapur Atomic Power Station which was also continued by the Lok Dal administration.<sup>81</sup>

The relationship with the Soviet Union was one of dependence and discretion and it was ably handled by the new government.<sup>82</sup> On events like the overthrow of the Bhutto regime in an army coup on 5 July 1977, the government took a noncommittal stand and this came under severe criticism.

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80 India, Lok Sabha Debates, Series VI, no.29, 14 July 1977, col.6.

81 Statesman, Editorial, "Tarapur Relations", 6 December 1977.

82 Shashi Tharoor, n.8, p.369.

There was a shift in India's nuclear policy. On 13 July 1978 the Prime Minister said in the Lok Sabha that, "no further nuclear explosions are necessary to be carried out now by India for purposes of harnessing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes".<sup>83</sup> In the Rajya Sabha on 22 December 1978, the Prime Minister faced greater oppositions due to the majority of the opposition party, the Congress. Here he said regarding the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty), "I will not sign, as it is discriminatory" and added, "Our policy is not to explode any nuclear device for peaceful purposes or make any nuclear weapons".<sup>84</sup>

In 1979, when the Foreign Minister was on an official visit to China on the last day of his stay, China launched an attack on Vietnam on 17 February 1979. So the Foreign Minister had to cut short his visit and returned to India immediately, thus showing India's concern. This caused an uproar in the Lok Sabha, as the Foreign Minister who returned two days

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83 India, Lok Sabha, Series VI, vol.16, V Session, 20 July 1978, cols.303-310.

84 Ibid.

earlier, made a statement in the House only on 21 February. Reacting sharply to this, an angry member said, "Sir, our Foreign Minister who was on tour in China had to cut short his journey and come back. But, unfortunately, after the whole question has been discussed everywhere else, he now comes out with this statement. I think it is an insult to the House, and he must report both about the Chinese aggression and about his visit to China. We are the direct representatives of the people". The cause of the delay was questioned. He further added, "on national issues which affect the entire people, it is the responsibility of the government to place them before us and allow a discussion".<sup>85</sup>

The Foreign Minister who was censured in the strongest terms as a "globe-trotting minister" was apologetic and tried to convince members that he had protested there (i.e. in China) on the last day. Not convinced about it, a member while speaking towards the end of the debate, which spread over two days, observed that 'this government does not see, this

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85 India, The Lok Sabha Debates, vol.22, no.3, 21 February 1979, cols.240-51.

government does not understand. This government again failed to recognise the revolutionary regime in Kampuchea."<sup>86</sup>

It was felt that India's position during this period declined and did not have the powerful thrust even over the power rivalries in the Indian Ocean.

With defections and a split in the Janata leading to the resignation of Prime Minister Desai, the government fell and elections were declared. The lame-duck Prime Minister, Charan Singh failed to face the parliament and his government was defeated, when he did. Thus ended the VI Lok Sabha amidst a lot of crises affecting national life and the future of parliament.

To sum up the long period, it could be said that parliament at first played the role of a consultative body and the Nehru years saw the personality of the man, as an educator. The active role of the parliament during these years (1947-64) was due to Nehru who as a Prime Minister tried to uphold democratic traditions. He always tried to keep parliament

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86 Ibid., no.4, col.339.

informed, attended and listened to the parliamentary debates with care. Though the opposition was divided and in a minority, he respected its views and even those of certain individual members in the opposition. This was illustrated in his change of perception from a 'civil conflict' to a "national aggression" on the Hungarian crisis in 1956 owing to the influence exercised by the parliament.

India's China policy also provides an example of parliament's victory. Nehru admitted his miscalculations and his Defence Minister V.K.K. Menon had to resign. This represented a hallmark in the rise of effective parliamentary activity. Nehru, the conscious and committed parliamentarian respected the democratic institution for he knew well that he was first a Member of Parliament which position enabled him to be the Prime Minister as the Leader of the majority party in Parliament.

The post-Nehru era saw an active role between 1967 and 1971 in the IV Lok Sabha, when there was a minority government in power after the Congress split in 1969. The opposition was strong, which was essential for Parliament to be active both in the House and the

Committees.

After 1972, the landslide victory for the Congress party led by Mrs. Gandhi, parliament did ask questions and kept to itself, accepting executive action. Unlike Nehru, Mrs. Gandhi was not a good and earnest parliamentarian. Her answers were generally vague and evasive; she seldom paid close attention to the views of members of this institution, which were taken for granted.

1977 saw for the first time the defeat of the Congress and the Opposition alliance came to power under the name of the 'Janata Party'. It did not last long enough. But the party leaders had enough time to fight among themselves in Parliament. Though there were debates like the one on the Chinese aggression on Vietnam, the period was short and pre-occupation with domestic issues had the effect of relegating foreign policy to the background. However, let it be said to the credit of the Janata government that they followed the policy of 'genuine' non-alignment. Though they made no major changes in the policy of the former government, in content, but there was an unmistakable change in style.

It might be pertinent here to assess the policy of the whole period under review. Nehru the educator and initiator left a legacy which was followed. He respected, informed and educated Parliament. Shastri was given too little time to assert himself. Mrs. Gandhi's reign saw the fusion of all foreign policy-making authority in the Prime Minister's hands, while the Janata rule marked the diffusion of authority and that of the Lok Dal reflected its confusion.<sup>87</sup>

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87 Shashi Tharoor, n.8, p.396.

### Chapter Three

#### ROLE OF PARLIAMENT: 1980-84

The Seventh Lok Sabha was an institution of the eighties. Here was a chance for India to change the trend and to enlarge the nation's option in determining its own future in foreign policy. The Sixth Lok Sabha came to an end after two-and-a-half years, the shortest series of the Indian Lok Sabha. It was a "no confidence" motion tabled in July 1979 that started the disintegration of the Janata Party. The Morarji Desai Government resigned<sup>1</sup> bringing about a constitutional crisis, with Charan Singh becoming the Prime Minister. The Government fell, when it failed to prove its strength on the floor of the House.

The Janata period saw (1977-79) the reassertion of "membership of and prominence in the non-aligned movement, faith, in the value of a close relationship with the Soviet Union, wariness about American motives, profound suspicion and mistrust of China, dislike of

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1 Avasthi and Maheshwari, Public Administration (Agra: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, 1986), p.38.



Superpower involvement in the region, desire for pre-eminence in the sub-continent, reluctance to associate with governments perceived as capitalist or right wing, fierce national pride and sensitivity to real or imagined insult, and yearning for international respect and approvation".<sup>2</sup> This was not only the Janata Parliament's concerns but that of Parliament since 1952 and more so after 1967. No government could afford to ignore these. The important contribution of the Janata Government was that in Parliament the members of the ruling party had demonstrated that there was enough room for interpretation of principle and policy and held different views which at times went against the official line.<sup>3</sup>

Consequent upon the failure of the Lok Dal government to face the Parliament, the House (Lok Sabha) had to be dissolved. The elections of 1980 saw foreign policy featuring as quite a major issue. The Congress-I, in particular, had utilized slogans like "the government

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2 Shashi Tharoor, Reasons of State: Political Development and India's Foreign Policy under Indira Gandhi 1966-77 (New Delhi: Vikas, 1982) p.417.

3 Ibid., pp.409-410. Parliamentarians like Madhu Limaye, S.N. Mishra and Subramaniam Swamy especially his opinion on China was not the official line.

that works".<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Indira Gandhi criticised the Lusaka disaster and a decline in India's international standing. The Congress-I General Secretary, A.R. Antulay, alleged that foreign minister S.N. Mishra (Lok Dal) and the President of Pakistan, Zia-ul-Haq, had struck a "sinister deal" at Havana, to create disturbances on the border so as to postpone the elections.<sup>5</sup> The divisions within the Janata Party helped the Congress-I to return with an impressive strength of 351 seats out of a total of 543. The predominance of the ruling party in Lok Sabha was evident. It had a simple majority in the Rajya Sabha. See Tables 3.1 and 3.2.

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4 Surjit Mansingh, India's Search for Power: Indira Gandhi's Foreign Policy 1966-82 (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1984), p.3.

5 See Statesman, 31 October 1979. Mrs. Gandhi gave respectability to the statements by her tacit support.

Table-3.1: Lok Sabha (December, 1980)<sup>6</sup>  
Speaker - Bal Ram Jakhar

Party	Seats
Congress-I .. ..	351
Lok Dal .. ..	34
Communist Party of India (Marxist) .. ..	35
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam .. ..	16
Janata .. ..	17
Bharatiya Janata Party .. ..	14
Congress-U (Urs) .. ..	11
Communist Party of India .. ..	11
Revolutionary Socialist Party .. ..	4
Forward Bloc .. ..	3
Muslim League .. ..	3
National Conference .. ..	3
All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam..	2
Independents & Others .. ..	20
Vacant .. ..	19
<b>Total .. ..</b>	<b>543</b>

Table-3.2: Rajya Sabha (December, 1980)<sup>7</sup>  
Chairman - M. Hidayatullah

Party	Seats
Congress-I .. ..	124
Congress-U .. ..	21
Janata .. ..	17
Lok Dal .. ..	14
Bharatiya Janata Party .. ..	14
Communist Party of India (Marxist) .. ..	9
Communist Party of India .. ..	7
All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam..	6
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam .. ..	6
Akali Dal .. ..	3
Muslim League .. ..	1
Nominated .. ..	8
Independents & Others .. ..	13
Vacant .. ..	1
<b>Total .. ..</b>	<b>244</b>

6 Lok Sabha Souvenir, Seventh Lok Sabha (New Delhi, Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1986).

7 Ibid.

The return of Mrs. Gandhi to power did have an immediate impact on India's external environment. The change saw that "India's opinions could not be ignored on the volatile crises of the day which were centered in India's geographical vicinity and directly could not be overlooked or submerged".<sup>8</sup> The first year saw Mrs. Gandhi visited by dignitaries from abroad, on whom she made statements in Parliament.<sup>9</sup>

Notable among the immediate concerns of Parliament was the Afghanistan crisis, with special reference to the statement of India's Permanent Representative at the United Nations. (The reaction of Parliament to this will be discussed in detail in the next chapter). The situation in the neighbourhood namely, arms supply to Pakistan, the reconsideration of the agreement on the sharing of Farakka waters, signed by the previous government, the rapid militarization

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8 Surjit Mansingh, n.4, p.3.

9 Mrs. Gandhi was visited by: Austrian Chancellor Kreisky, French President Giscard and U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim; the foreign ministers of Algeria, Australia, Britain, New Zealand, Soviet Union and West Germany, the Defence Minister of Oman; the Kings of Bhutan and Nepal and

of the Indian Ocean and the involvement of Super Powers in it, the Iran-Iraq war, the Israeli attack on Lebanon, the Sino-Indian and Indo-Bangladesh border problems and the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka were the other issues, to state a few of those that led to discussion and debate. (The last-named issue, viz., Sri Lanka, would be dealt with separately in the fifth Chapter).

These issues which were discussed and debated in Parliament will be taken up for study countrywise, as a matter of convenience. It would help the reader to gauge the interest of the House in the issues and its ultimate impact on policy.

## II

The relations between Bangladesh and India have been a focus of attention since 1971, partly because both have a long common border, which due to the influx of refugees from Bangladesh has raised the question of fencing and problems regarding the Farakka

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and the President of Bangladesh; and special envoys from Japan, Iraq and the United States. The visit of Gromyko had to be rescheduled due to intense diplomatic activity.

agreement. These were the main problems which agitated the Parliament.

When the Farakka agreement on the sharing of the Ganga waters between India and Bangladesh came up for discussion, many members were dissatisfied with the agreement reached by the previous government in power. The Minister for Irrigation, Kedar Pandey, made a statement on the outcome of the 19th meeting of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission.<sup>10</sup> In the course of this, he admitted the fact that Bangladesh did insist on Nepal being a member of the Commission, to which India did not agree. The Minister added that "India was unable to accept in terms of the November 1977 Agreement".<sup>11</sup> As was usual after every bilateral meeting, here also he said that a consensus did emerge and both sides would arrive at a solution in a spirit of understanding and good neighbourliness. A member from the State which felt that it would be affected, criticised the agreement

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10 India, Lok Sabha Debates, Series VII, vol.7, no.27, 15 July 1980, cols.59-60. This meeting was held in Dacca from 9 July to 11 July 1980.

11 Ibid., cols.555.

signed between the two countries, by President Ershad and Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi. He feared that the extension of the agreement would harm the water resources, which were already meagre in the lean period, "to the entire Calcutta port, its hinterland, the entire Eastern, North Eastern parts of the country". Emphasizing the point that federalism should be a reality, he felt that West Bengal should be consulted before any decision was taken by the Union Government.<sup>12</sup>

A much more sensitive issue than the sharing of Ganga waters has been the boundary issue and the question of fencing between the two countries, so as to stop the infiltration of the Bangladesh nationals into Assam, Tripura and other bordering states of India. It was alleged by one member that on 12 June, 1980, "the Bangladesh nationals had intruded at least twenty times into the Muhuri Charland of Belonia Sub-Division in Tripura, this year and so far there has been no compensation to inhabitants there." Some members called for the deportation of the infiltrators.<sup>13</sup>

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12 Ibid., vol.47, no.35, 12 April 1984, cols.268.

13 Ibid., vol.4, no.4, 12 June 1980, cols.26-27.

The concern of the people of Assam was also conveyed to the government on another count. It was regarding the piling up of arms at will by the Bangladesh nationals, with the excuse of protecting themselves. These sensitive issues were raised in Parliament, off and on during this period. This was the cause of the agitation in Assam against these foreigners, demanding their deportation. To stop future infiltration, constant patrolling and fencing of the borders were a few of the remedies suggested in Parliament.<sup>14</sup> The same situation existed in West Bengal, whose spokesman pointed that in ten years' time over three or four lakhs of people would have come in, when the yearly average was 20,000. There was also the problem of training the infiltrators, many were suspected to be anti-social elements. This was true in the Twentyfour Parganas. He alleged that, "it is said that in certain villages more than seventy per cent (70%) of the persons do not belong to our country".<sup>15</sup>

G.C. Bhattacharya (Uttar Pradesh) had been one of the most vocal members who felt that the reported killing

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14 Ibid., cols.27.

15 India, Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.128, no.14, 21 Dec 1983, cols.268-269.



of BSF jawans was the handiwork of the Bangladesh "criminals",<sup>16</sup> as he preferred to call them. He enlarged the whole issue relating it to the problem of India's security. He said, "...whether it is a question of fencing the border by the BSF jawans, the Bangladesh rulers have decided to pick up quarrels; and they always see a foreign hand, either that of India or the Soviet Union. It means that this is a part of a big conspiracy of encircling this country".<sup>17</sup>

On the same issue, with reference to incidents on the Indo-Bangladesh border, Suresh Kalmadi said rather bluntly: "Our external policy has totally failed. There must be an immediate discussion on the matter".<sup>18</sup> The demand was admitted and on the following day, a call attention motion was discussed on the situation arising out of the exchange of fire between the BSF jawans and the Bangladesh rifles over the issue of fencing along the Indo-Bangladesh border.<sup>19</sup>

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16 India, Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.128, no.14, 12 December, 1983, cols.268-69.

17 Ibid., cols.269.

18 India, Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.130, no.13, 25 April 1984, cols.119-125.

19 Ibid., vol.130, no.14, 26 April 1984, cols.139-166.

Jaswant Singh, who initiated the discussion, said in his speech, "the present government had been re-ushered into power and the present Prime Minister on that occasion, castigating the earlier government, in her characteristic style, said that during the Janata regime, India had sunk -- she used words to the effect, to the level where even little Bhutan could 'show his eyes'. Sir, it is a reflection of time, it is a reflection of the present Government's incapacity, that the country is today facing not just the unkind eyes, but the kind of attitude and response from Bangladesh to what is, without any doubt, India's sovereign right and duty."<sup>20</sup>

Continuing his speech in the same strain, Jaswant Singh pointed out the failures of the government since 1980 and in the present case where the fencing was very much within India's territory, it showed an inability to act. He added, "Sir, the question of illegal immigration is not of today. The question of fence has not

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20 Ibid., cols.139-140.

been recommended in 1980 or in 1983 or as a result of the tripartite discussions. The question has been articulated by concerned Members of both the Houses since the early Sixties".

Going back to the inception of the problem, the same member said: "In 1965, in reply to a specific query, the then Home Minister, Gulzarilal Nanda, had gone to the extent of saying, "yes, a fence will be erected so that illegal immigration is checked". This Government has been virtually in power, except for a short interval, since 1965 and it is because this Government is dithering and it is because this Government has not acted when there was the need to act that we today have to face the kind of situation with Bangladesh that we are facing". He also felt that "Bangladesh had no claim to stop any sovereign action that India may take to prevent illegal immigration, that Bangladesh is not reasonable to deny the problem of illegal immigration; that is and has been continuing in that region since Independence; that Bangladesh makes grievous error if it uses the exercise of India's sovereign right for domestic purposes".<sup>21</sup>

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21 Ibid., cols.139-40.

Other members were convened and virtually expressed the same feelings. They all felt that the Government of India should be firm. Though this motion was raised as an issue of foreign policy, the Minister for Home, P.C. Sethi, thought that he was competent to answer on behalf of the Ministry of External Affairs, claiming that he was adequately briefed by the Ministry. In his reply, at the end of the debate, he assured the agitated members that "We are doing the work of construction of barbed wire fence in our territory. Therefore, the question of our sovereignty being destroyed and our yielding to this does not arise. We shall carry on this work as desired, not only in Assam, but on the entire border, which is 2,300 kilometers long".<sup>22</sup>

Any incident occurring within Bangladesh which even indirectly affects India's security interests is raised in Parliament. Members are vigilant and this is helped by a free-flow of information through the Press. For instance, the reported threat to India's security by the U.S. attempt to establish a naval base in the Bay of Bengal. The fear was expressed by certain Awami

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22 Ibid., cols.165-166.

League leaders in the newspapers that the Island St. Martin, belonging to Bangladesh, in the Bay of Bengal, had been given away to the USA. This created such a furore that the Government had to deny the rumour and in its reply claimed that it was "untrue".<sup>23</sup>

The incident in which the Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh was shadowed in an objectional manner by the Bangladesh Security Personnel, was brought up. The allegation against the High Commissioner was that he was interfering in the internal affairs of Bangladesh. In his statement separately to both the Houses of Parliament, the Minister of External Affairs, P.V. Narasimha Rao, assured the members that India had taken note and lodged its displeasure to the Bangladesh Government.<sup>24</sup> Members were agitated that this incident was the second of its kind and India must not sacrifice

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23 India, Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.129, no.9, 5 March 1984, cols.287-288.

24 Ibid., vol.121, no.11, 4 March 1984, cols. 293-295.

her national self-respect. The Minister for External Affairs did admit that there were differences regarding the New Moore Island but India would not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.<sup>25</sup>

The military takeover in Bangladesh was discussed when Lt. Gen. H.M. Ershad, Chief of Army Staff of that country announced the suspension of the Constitution, dissolution of the civil administration and Parliament, and dismissal of the President and the Council of Ministers. This led to a heated debate in both the Houses of Parliament on the possible threat to India's security and the repercussions of the dissolution of the Parliament in Bangladesh. But the Minister for External Affairs felt that it was an internal problem and India could not interfere in it.<sup>26</sup>

Concern over the minority Hindu rights in Bangladesh and the rights of Indians are close to the hearts of the members of Parliament. The issue in question was

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25 Ibid., cols.302-03.

26 Ibid., no.24, March 24, 1982, cols.290-86. The Parliament discussed on the same day of the coup.

the confiscation of property belonging to Hindus and Indians and it provoked several members to speak. L.K. Advani echoed the feelings of the rest by saying that, "The Bangladesh Government cannot unilaterally issue ordinances of this kind, which affect not only the minorities there or the Indians here but also are likely to result in a massive influx into the country". As the external affairs minister was absent, the member requested the Parliamentary affairs minister to convey the concern of the House to him.<sup>27</sup>

### III

Pakistan, the next door neighbour on the West, with which India had fought two major wars is always closely watched both by the Parliament and the Government. The issues raised were: the encouragement to extremists in Punjab and the hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane, and return of the hijackers, the dispute over Kashmir, the arming of Pakistan after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the so-called USA-China-Pakistan nexus. These and allied issues have really worried the decision-makers in India, including members of Parliament.

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27 Ibid., vol.128, no.27, 15 December 1983, cols. 244-46.

What with memories of the partition and the ever-present communal angle, Parliament has been alert on any issue concerning Pakistan. The pressure has been kept up by Parliament on the Government, making it difficult for the latter to ignore the views of Parliament and public opinion. The Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi had already gone on record as refusing to go in for friendly relations with Pakistan and China at the cost of the national self-respect.<sup>28</sup>

The arms supply to Pakistan from USA made members rethink about the security dimensions in the region. The Government's attention was drawn by Parliament to the supply of sophisticated weapons from the USA and China. The immediate cause for apprehension among Members was the reported Chinese offer to Pakistan to help in building a military centre in Gilgit. It was surmised that these were preparations for another attack on India.<sup>29</sup>

The reported preparations by Pakistan to make an Atom Bomb, with the help and assistance of Libya attracted

28 Statesman (Weekly): 15 March 1980, p.1.

29 India, Lok Sabha Debates, vol.III, 27 March 1980, col.46.



the attention of Parliament. This created a scare among Members that more Islamic states might join in. The Government took the opportunity in Parliament to refute the accusation by the Pakistan President Zia-ul-Haq that India was starting an arms race in the sub-continent. They also made it clear that India was opposed to arms build-up, for it "leads to the diversion of precious resources away from the pressing task of economic development".<sup>30</sup>

Kashmir has always been a hurdle to the normalisation of Indo-Pakistan relations. Pakistan has always tried to embarrass India at several international forums, staking its claim for Kashmir. All possible devices had been pressed into use towards this end, by the rulers of Pakistan. President Zia-ul-Haq was no exception to the rule of continuous sniping. He made an adverse remark about India at the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers at Islamabad. This issue was raised in the Parliament under Rule 377 and members wanted the Government to take a tough stand. The rather tame and ineffective answer by the minister that the

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30. India, Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.114, no.10, 20 June 1980, cols.46.

Indian Government had conveyed its objection to the Pakistan Embassy in New Delhi, did not satisfy the members.<sup>31</sup> The occurrence of stray incidents of firing across the Jammu and Kashmir sector of Indo-Pakistan border was clarified on the floor of the house from time to time.<sup>32</sup>

The dominant preoccupation of the present Parliament had been the arms sale to Pakistan by USA. There was a calling attention motion of urgent notice regarding the reported multi-million dollar contract by Pakistan with USA for the purchase of sophisticated arms and ammunitions.<sup>33</sup> Added to this was the reported nuclear collaboration between Pakistan and China,<sup>34</sup> which made the whole situation look grave. These doubts had gained credence due to the reports that the Pakistan troops were concentrating at Poonch and

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31 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.46, no.27, 30 March 1984, cols.394-411.

32 Ibid., vol.18, no.3, 19 August 1981, cols.193-94.

33 Ibid., vol.45, no.22, 7 March 1981, cols.370-395. See also vol.18, no.3, 19 August 1981, cols.31-34; 109-110; 182-183.

34 Ibid., vol.46, no.27, 30 March 1984, cols.394-411.

moving into the area of occupied Kashmir. In a query about the violation of the Indo-Pakistan border by Pakistan in the last six months (from 1 December 1979 to 31 May 1980). The reply by the Minister of State for Defence was that, "twenty three firing incidents and one intrusion of a minor nature by the Pakistan forces, (had occurred) all on the Jammu and Kashmir border. There have been four air violations, one in the Jammu sector".<sup>35</sup> The members were assured that these violations have been taken seriously and "the Government has initiated appropriate measures from time to time to ensure full defence preparedness, at all times".<sup>36</sup>

Pakistan had tried to embarrass India at every opportunity. Another instance of this was the inclusion of Junagadh as a part of Pakistan in the maps distributed by its Government at Salisbury. Parliament reacted to this sharply, and felt that Junagadh was an integral part of India, as in fact it was.<sup>37</sup>

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35 Ibid., vol.5, no.7, 2 July 1980, cols.79-80.

36 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.18, no.3, 19 August 1981, cols.31-32.

37 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.4, no.4, 12 June 1980, col.96.

The issue of the construction of the Karakoram Highway, with Sino-Pakistani cooperation in the disputed territory of occupied Kashmir, was also raised. The Minister of External Affairs stated that the Indian Government had protested against the opening and use of the Khunjerali Pass; but Pakistan characterised this protest as unwarranted and unacceptable.<sup>38</sup> China also felt that it had not violated India's sovereignty, though India did not agree with these views. The Minister concluded by saying "Developments in our neighbourhood impinging on our security are monitored and all necessary precautionary measures taken".<sup>39</sup>

The reports that Pakistan's military expenditure has been on the rise gave credence to the charge that Pakistan was preparing to produce the Atom Bomb, otherwise called "the Islamic Bomb". This raised not only eyebrows but created an uproar in Parliament. One member, R.P. Gaekwad, provided the details which confirmed the doubts. He said: "The whole thing has a

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38 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.39, no.4, 28 July 1983, cols.34. This note was dated 22 May 1983 for the Khunjerali Pass served as a terminus on the Karakoram Highway to traffic between China and Pakistan.

39 Ibid., col.35.

code name "Project 706". A commercial enrichment facility is coming at Khahuta, which is 40 kms., away from Islamabad and a pilot enrichment plant at Sinhala, which is three kms., away are being set up". Giving these details, the member wanted the Government's reaction. The Minister for External Affairs expressed concern and told Parliament about the assurance given to him by President Zia of Pakistan, that these atomic projects are for peaceful purposes".<sup>40</sup>

Further reports clearly established that Pakistan was acquiring essential components for a nuclear weapon of the explosion type, inspite of the declaration to the contrary to facilitate transfer of conventional weapons from the USA.<sup>41</sup>

The Indian Parliament's concern about the question of Pakistan's Atom Bomb, continued during this period. Any reports in the Press about the progress in the making of the Atom Bomb were brought to the attention of Government by Parliament, where fears were raised,

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40 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.5, no.18, 3 July 1980, cols.159-160.

41 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.39, no.4, 28 July 1983, cols.112-113. This information was published in the reports of the International Institute of Strategic Studies and the Times of India dated 19 May 1983 reported it, from where the member picked it up.

dangers predicted and immediate action was called for from the Government.

This one which was about the completion of the nuclear fuel treatment plant by Pakistan was raised by a member, who based his information on newspaper reports. He said, "the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant is being assembled at the Chashma Nuclear complex near Lahore and some European countries are continuing to supply spare parts and equipment needed for the plant".<sup>42</sup> The Government gave the oft-repeated reply that it had seen the reports and would take the issue up with the Government of Pakistan.

The decision of the United States Government to supply sophisticated Harpoon missiles and the Vulcan air defence system was taken serious note of and members expressed their concern and fear at the increase of tension in the sub-continent, in both Houses of Parliament.<sup>43</sup> A member, G.C. Bhattacharya, referred to the entire exercise as preparation and the danger of an armed attack on India by Pakistan. He elucidated

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42 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.6, no.29, 17 July 1980, cols.75-76.

43 Ibid., vol.40, no.11, 8 August 1983, col.406.

his point by saying that, "these objectives are sought to be achieved through lightening attack against India by Pakistan, so that they can come up to Amritsar and thereafter go back, causing immense losses to India and creating a base in Khalistan and their agents are demanding the resignation of the Prime Minister, repeating the events in the aftermath of the Chinese aggression".<sup>44</sup>

The other problem that came in the way of normalization of relations was the issue of prisoners of war. Many Indian prisoners were languishing in Pakistani jails. This has been a constant concern since the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war<sup>45</sup> and the problem of refugees in India.<sup>46</sup>

The return of the hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane and the question of harbouring terrorists and the protection of sanctuary given to the self-styled President of Khalistan, Jagjit Singh Chauhan, was raised several

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44 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.128, no.6, 22 November 1983, cols.231-32.

45 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.5, no.14, 7 June 1980, cols.298-99.

46 Ibid., vol.4, no.7, 17 June 1980, cols.38-39.

times in Parliament.<sup>47</sup> The concern increased due to the worsening of the Punjab crisis in 1983-84 end, which literally occupied most of Parliament's attention.

The murder of the Indian diplomat, Ravindra Mhatre, in Birmingham and the responsibility of which was claimed by the Kashmir Liberation Front, which had its base in Pakistan.<sup>48</sup> This further hardened Parliament's attitude. The activities of the Jamiat-ul-Tulba in Jammu and Kashmir and its secessionist demands were discussed in a calling-attention motion. Syed Sahabuddin said that the leader had called upon the people, "to throw out the Indian intruders from Kashmir", adding that, "the Sheikh Tjamul is trying to rewrite history".<sup>49</sup>

Among the other irritants in the bilateral relations that were brought to the attention of Parliament was the arrest of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly

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47 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.121, no.8, 3 March 1982, cols.179-182.

48 Ibid., vol.129, no.1, 23 February 1984, col.21.

49 Ibid., vol.123, no.11, 26 July 1982, cols.234-37. The President of the Jamiat-ul-Tulba is Sheikh Tjamul Islam who is reported to have made the statement while addressing a meeting at the Idgah in Srinagar.



known in India as Frontier Gandhi. His advanced age and failing health, made a worried Parliament demand his release.<sup>50</sup> Another was the ill-treatment of minority Hindus<sup>51</sup> and the destruction of temples in Kashmir. Several Hindus were injured in these communal riots.<sup>52</sup> This led to an uproar in the Parliament, members strongly condemning the incidents.

#### IV

The position of the Indian Ocean and the Super Power rivalry in the region have indeed held a good share of the attention of Parliament in this series. Diego Garcia was often mentioned, with reports of the decision that the U.S. was to establish a nuclear weapon base on the island. This decision, with its likely effect of causing instability in the region, was discussed in Parliament.<sup>53</sup> The involvement of other powers in the region, like New Zealand and Australia, served further to increase the concern of Parliament.

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50 Ibid., vol.124, no.17, 2 November 1982, cols.123-24.

51 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.28, no.46, 29 April 1982, col.329.

52 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.122, no.2, 27 April 1982, cols.220-221.

53 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.3, 27 March 1980, cols.256.

News Items like the one that a US bomber flew over the Indian Ocean were enough to agitate the members who wanted that the Indian Ocean should be declared a Zone of Peace.<sup>54</sup>

Any time the Government got an opportunity to reiterate the policy on the Indian Ocean, it did so. When one member wanted confirmation of the reports that the Soviet Union had expressed its willingness to withdraw from the Indian Ocean, the Government pleaded ignorance, but expressed their great concern over the dangerous situation in the Indian Ocean. It also gave a call, "for the dismantling of the naval and military bases in the area, for preventing the creation of new bases and condemned attempts to build up foreign military presence in the Indian Ocean". India had constantly supported the United Nations declaration on a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean. The Minister concerned added that the Soviet Union had expressed its willingness to resume the bilateral talks with the USA for limiting and reducing their presence in the Indian Ocean area.<sup>55</sup>

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54 Ibid.

55 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.133, no.16, cols.122-23.

To a question about the details of the naval activity by Super Powers in the Indian Ocean, the characteristic reply from the Minister of State for Defence, C.P.N. Singh, was that, "It will not be in the interest of national security to reveal further details".<sup>56</sup> This ended further discussion and Parliament is kept in the dark in the "interest of national security".

The speculation about the entry of the Seventh Fleet of the American Navy into the Indian Ocean was raised in 1980 and the Government felt that it knew nothing about it.<sup>57</sup> Naval (or other military) bases really caused concern in Parliament. The report that USA has established a new base on the West Coast of Australia near Perth was brought to the attention of the Government. It was further added that US claimed it to be for homeport facilities for the US Pacific Fleet at the Australian Cockburn Sound Naval base near Perth. The Government reassured Parliament that the USA has no interest at present in the creation of a permanent fleet in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian

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56 Ibid., vol.114, no.9, cols.22-35. (emphasis added).

57 Ibid., col.122.

Sea.<sup>58</sup> Concern over the US presence in the Indian Ocean was uppermost in the minds of the Members and this was directly linked with the arms supply to Pakistan and the growing proximity between China and USA on the one hand and Pakistan on the other.<sup>59</sup>

This ultimately led to the question of the legal right of Mauritius over Diego Garcia and the demand for its return to Mauritius.<sup>60</sup> A member wanted to know the stand of the Government on it. The Minister of External Affairs replied that, "the Government of India, right from the beginning, had opposed the excision of the Chagos Archipelago (which includes Diego Garcia) from Mauritius. India has continued to mobilise world opinion, particularly those of the littoral states for the establishment of a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean, in accordance with the UN Declaration of 1971. The establishment of a base on Diego Garcia is contrary to the objectives of that declaration".<sup>61</sup>

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58 Ibid., vol.114, no.14, cols.155-56.

59 Ibid., vol.120, no.2, cols.288-293.

60 This was demanded by Mauritius at the Organisation of African Unity Summit at Freetown.

61 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.6, no.24, cols.203-204.

Demilitarization of the Indian Ocean was one of the chief concerns of the Indian Parliament. Even the other Super Power, the Soviet Union, though on cordial terms with India, was not spared in Parliament. The question of the presence of the Soviet Union nuclear weapons in Asia was raised as this would be a threat to India. In such cases, the government preferred to be ignorant about such things.<sup>62</sup> The statement made in a public speech by the former Prime Minister Morarji Desai alleged that the Soviet Union had instigated him to attack Pakistan. This caused considerable embarrassment to the Government in its relations with Pakistan vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. It created an uproar in Parliament, with a few members asking the former Prime Minister to withdraw his words and others accusing the Soviet Union of war mongering through shadow-boxing.<sup>63</sup>

Question on the issues ranging from spying by the Russians in India,<sup>64</sup> the supply of heavy water to the inspection of nuclear installations by other powers,<sup>65</sup>

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62 Ibid., vol.2, 2nd Session, no.2, col.64.

63 Ibid., vol.10, 4th Session, no.3, cols.297-306.

64 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.124, no.13, cols.226-227.

65 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.4, no.3, cols.2-6.

were discussed. Official pronouncements on military aid from the Soviet Union had been very vague and unclear. Most of the replies from Government were predictable. For instance, this one, that "the defence supplies covered by these agreements had been under discussion for about a year-and-a-half. It will be appreciated that it would not be in public interest to divulge the exact extent of the procurements."<sup>66</sup>

A statement made in the House about bilateral talks was very typical of this attitude. The statement said, among other things, "the talks covered international situation and bilateral relations. India's concern over the developments in and around Afghanistan was conveyed to the Soviet side. Both sides shared the view that it was necessary to take steps not to escalate tensions in the region without delay".<sup>67</sup> It can be seen here that not much information has been

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66 Ibid., cols.58-59. (emphasis added).

67 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.4, no.4, col.82. This particular statement was made after the talks between the Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi and the Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, which took place on 12 February 1980.

conveyed to Parliament, which has a right to know. The above statement mentioned above was the stereotype for any statement to be made with only the change in context regarding the outcome of bilateral talks.

The present Parliament was always kept in a "veil of secrecy" and this exercise has been oft-repeated by the Government while answering questions which did not necessitate the divulgence of "vital" information. Farooq Abdullah wanted to know whether there was any military pact between India and the Soviet Union. This was the answer the Minister of State for Defence had given, "It is not advisable in the national interest and in the interest of friendly relations with foreign countries to reveal further details".<sup>68</sup>

The other aspects of Indo-Soviet relations covered the question of assistance for building atomic plants in India<sup>69</sup> and the non-participation of the Soviet Union in the Olympic Games. Some members felt that sports should be above politics.<sup>70</sup>

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68 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.6, no.8, col.42 (emphasis added).

69 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.5, no.17, col.135.

70 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.130, no.13, cols.141-46.

Relations with both the Super Powers have been high on the priorities of the Members. The main issues discussed in the House were the bilateral relations were the US supply of enriched uranium to Tarapore, the supply of sophisticated weapons to Pakistan, the granting of a visa by US to J.S. Chauhan, and the decision of the US to make the deadly missiles.

Members wanted to know about the uranium shipment to India. The Government replied that the total quantity of enriched uranium received from 1966 to date was 233.6 tonnes. The quantities pending shipment total led 39.6 tonnes. Members felt that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was discriminatory and should not be signed by India.<sup>71</sup>

The collaboration between the US and Pakistan in research in bacteriological warfare at a research institute at Lahore, called for reconsideration of India's nuclear policy.<sup>72</sup>

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71 Ibid., vol.118, no.5, cols.176-210. This was discussed under a calling attention motion about the reported US move to terminate Indo-US nuclear cooperation agreement of 1963 of supplying uranium to Tarepore.

72 Ibid., vol.121, no.27, cols.45-50.



Trivial incidents like the remarks uttered aloud at a party could cause an uproar and straining of relations. It was reported that the US Ambassador to India Robert Goheen had characterised Mrs. Gandhi as an ambitious dictator, a suppressor of democracy and one who sold the country to the Russians. The member who raised this issue was very angry that he demanded the immediate recall of ambassador Goheen and his declaration as a persona non grata.<sup>73</sup>

The granting of a visa to Jagjit Singh Chauhan the self-styled leader of Khalistan to enter USA, brought out strong reactions in Parliament. One member said: "I strongly condemn the US activities of helping the secessionist movement in India and also encouraging such forces inside the country for disintegrating the country". He wanted the Government of India to lodge a protest with the US Government. He went to the extent of suggesting that India should cut off her diplomatic relations with USA, if the visa was not cancelled.<sup>74</sup> Emotions

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73 Ibid., vol.113, no.11, cols.444-45. Robert Goheen is reported to have said this aloud to the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, that he was guilty of an unforgiveable sin of inviting Mrs. Gandhi at a reception at the Saudi Arabian embassy.

74 Rajya Sabha Debate, vol.125, no.14, cols.159-60.

ran high when it was reported that the US Senate, especially its Foreign Relations Committee, was holding a public hearing about the situation in Punjab after the Operation Bluestar. Several members thought that this amounted to interference in the internal affairs of India.<sup>75</sup>

Spying is universal activity and it is even more true in the case of the Super Powers, and USA is no exception to the general rule.<sup>76</sup> There was a calling-attention motion regarding the reported decision of the US Government to go in for the production and deployment of the deadly missiles. Certain individual members read up the subjects and collected facts, so that they might have an intelligent discussion in the House. Syed Shahabuddin quoted from SIPRI Year Book 1983 and the details he gave in the House were interesting. He said, "It amounts not only to Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), but it is indeed SAD for the rest of humanity because if a war takes place, all of us, the entire humanity, will disappear".<sup>77</sup>

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75 Ibid., vol.131, no.5, cols.190-91.

76 Ibid., vol.128, no.22, cols.398-99.

77 Ibid., vol.125, no.17, col.280.

## V

India's relations with all other nations were cordial except for a few trouble spots, China had been in the minds of Members, due to her nuclear cooperation with the USA and Pakistan. Israel's invasion of Lebanon attracted adverse attention, along with some statements made by their Vice-Consul in India. South Africa was criticised for her policy of Apartheid. The problems of Indian labour in the Gulf countries, the discriminatory policy followed by Britain, these were a few of the major issues discussed and debated. The two conferences of the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting (CHOGM) and the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit brought up the problem of the Iran-Iraq War and the question of recognition of Kampuchea.

China has been always on the mind of Parliament since 1954, because of the unresolved border dispute. Now the problem was of the Pakistan-China nexus in its nuclear programme, which had led to entrenchment of Chinese forces in Aksai Chin and the deployment of missiles in Sinkiang and Gilgit.<sup>78</sup>

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78 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.20, cols.146-47.

The border problem still continues to be a hurdle to the normalization of relations between India and China. Members were agitated over the Chinese offer to settle the border problem on the basis of the present line of actual control, which they felt was unfair.<sup>79</sup> The President, in his address to both the Houses of Parliament, said, "India remains willing to discuss all issues with China, including the boundary question, in search of a peaceful solution based on equality. We hope to progress also as regards bilateral exchanges."<sup>80</sup> On a question by a Member on the Government's stand on Tibet and the question of the return of refugees, Government made its stand clear, beyond any shadow of doubt. "It has been the consistent policy of the Government of India that Tibet is an integral part of the People's Republic of China. The Government of India have no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of any other country".<sup>81</sup>

The arms supply to China did cause considerable concern. The US-China-Pakistan cooperation in this area

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79 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.5, no.7, cols.189-202.

80 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.114, no.10, cols.44-45.

81 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.6, no.29, col.75. This was specifically with regard to a memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister by the Tibetan National Voluntary Defence Force.

made members nervous and the Government assured the House that its concern was conveyed to the Chinese government. In reply, the Chinese Government had made it clear that these weapons, the launching pads and missiles, were not aimed at India.<sup>82</sup>

The relations with Britain were under some strain during the period. The British Government's arrest and deportation of Romesh Chandra at the Heathrow Airport was criticised in Parliament.<sup>83</sup> The discriminatory policy pursued by British towards Indian doctors and virginity tests on women and the free hand given to J.S. Chauhan to pursue secessionist activities against India were brought up when the Members demanded a statement from the Government on the outcome of talks with British Prime Minister. Bhupesh Gupta accused the British Prime Minister Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, of being a racist, Reagan's spokesman, Pakistan's arms supplier, the one responsible for Diego Garcia becoming an American base and the remilitarization of the Indian Ocean.<sup>84</sup> A typical reaction of a Communist Member of Parliament.

82 Ibid., cols.166-67.

83 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.112, no.6, cols.215-16. Romesh Chandra was the President of the World Peace Council.

84 Ibid., no.1, cols.149-154.

Israel has been the "pariah" state as far as Indian foreign policy is concerned. This attitude continued, even in this series of Parliament. The Israeli attack on Lebanon gave an opportunity to Parliament to condemn Israel and justify its own policy.<sup>85</sup> There was a hue and cry on the incognito visit of Moshe Dayan during the previous regime, stating that his visit would destroy India's cordial relations with the Arab world.<sup>86</sup> There was a predictable kind of phobia among certain Members of Parliament, when it came to the issue of Israel. When the Government was accused of following an anti-semitic policy, a member of the ruling party declared that "we are not against jews but we are against the Zionists".<sup>87</sup>

South Africa has been another pariah state, as far as India's foreign policy was concerned. The obvious explanation is in its racist policy. An Indian plane that was hijacked to Salisbury was returned and

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85 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.40, no.2, cols.295-312 and Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.123, no.24, cols.295-312.

86 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.118, no. 4, cols.182-83.

87 Ibid., vol. 23, no.2, cols.203-04.

and passengers were saved due to the able handling of the Government of South Africa.<sup>88</sup> This was a welcome gesture, for we have no diplomatic relations. Whenever an opportunity arose the Government of India had made its stand clear. A Member echoed the feelings said that, "This Parliament must also unequivocally reassert our anti-apartheid policies and firmly reject the approaches of those who would like us to take a soft line towards the racist regime of South Africa."<sup>89</sup> The hard line advocated by Parliament has been accepted by the Government. The election of India as the Chairman of the Non-aligned Movement entitled a further responsibility to the country to shoulder in the international context. The seat for Kampuchea was left vacant, in Parliament some Members did press for the recognition of the Heng Samarin Government.<sup>90</sup> But the answer of the Government had been that it was "actively considering the matter".<sup>91</sup> The Iran-Iraq War has been a constant

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88 Ibid., vol.120, no.4, cols.314-18. The Plane was hijacked on 26 November 1981 and it came for discussion on the same day.

89 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.51, no.23, cols.215-16.

90 Ibid., vol.48, no.52, cols.392-93.

91 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.114, no.21, cols.116-68.

problem as both the parties involved in it were non-aligned countries. This problem was too complex and it still remains unresolved.

The House endorsed the New Delhi message calling for peace, disarmament, development and a New International Economic Order at the end of the New Delhi Summit of the Seventh Conference of the Heads of Government or State of Non-Aligned countries.<sup>92</sup> This summit had reinforced the unity and the international role of the non-aligned community.

The Consultative Committee on Foreign Affairs had 22 meetings during the seventh Lok Sabha. It has in all 44 members, 32 from the Lok Sabha and 12 from the Rajya Sabha. The issues discussed by this Committee were few. It was over engrossed in 1980-81 and 1981-82 in the question of external publicity. The other issues related to the Indian Ocean, foreign policy projection in the 1980s, non-alignment and India-China talks. (For further details, see Table 3.3).

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92 Ibid., cols.409-25.



Dinesh Singh had said, that this Committee functioned like "a question-and-answer session", and this Committee is said to have had a very favourable responses to the Government's point of view.<sup>93</sup>

Several times, individual members of Parliament have risen to support noble causes and upheld the concept of freedom of thought and expression, the basis of any modern democracy. Here it is worthwhile to quote the words of an eminent Parliamentarian, Pilloo Mody, who brought his wit to lighten an otherwise a dull debate. He raised it to the heights of the ideal of Edmund Burke, when he said, "Sir, it hurts me to think that the hospitality of this country is limited or in anyway qualified. Hospitality should be unqualified. Our country is supposed to be the greatest and the biggest democracy in the world, having the finest constitution in the world and yet a visitor says what he thinks or observes I cannot understand how on the one hand, we can claim for ourselves this great liberalism and on the other, object to people whose opinions run counter to our own...They have the courage to

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93 Shashi Tharoor, n.2, pp.278-79.

come and say that over here. The whole thing should be taken as a series of observations of people who had met ...<sup>94</sup> He brought out the true spirit of a Member of Parliament and the essentials of a democracy.

## VI

To sum up, the Seventh Lok Sabha saw hectic activity and an eventful period in foreign policy. During the period under review we note that the individual Members did disagree with the official policy, but thanks to the majority of a single party and the opposition being hopelessly divided, the role of Parliament was found reduced. This re-establishes the single-party domination in Parliament. (See Tables 3.1 and 3.2) It would also clearly show the predominance of the ruling party. The two major crisis areas that would be considered in the following chapters, Afghanistan and to a larger extent Sri Lanka, cut across party lines and the discussion and debate in Parliament reflected a foreign policy in the making. But the other events, which were discussed in this chapter - saw Parliament

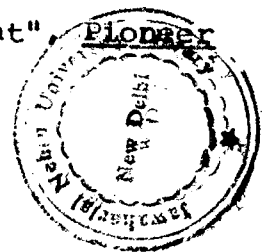
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94 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.124, no.13, 19 October 1982 cols.230-35. This was regarding the reported remark of a Canadian Jurist, Jules Deschenes, at the International Bar Association's Biennial Conference about the erosion of independence of the Judiciary in India. A Member, M.C. Bhandari, took objection to the remarks. Pilloo Mody was clarifying the Member's remarks.

and the government having similar views, the former reinforcing the latter. Parliament endorsed the official policy, and made the government reassure it, when the need came. It could be said that Parliament did not bring any major policy changes, though several times it was able to pressurise the government. No major change was visible, partly because these two institutions complemented each other and held similar views. This was possible because of the majority of the ruling party in both Houses of Parliament. This period also witnessed the government effectively cutting short discussion on an important issue by keeping Parliament in the dark, saying that this was done in 'national interest' or "for national security" or "for public interest" or "in the interest of friendly relations".

One scholar, who had studied this period felt that, "Adjournment motions are being treated mainly as censure motions and generally disallowed. The zero-hour, unheard of during Nehru's time, is increasingly reducing Parliament to a zero. Even senior MPs do not think twice before making defamatory statements."<sup>95</sup> It was seen

95 Inderjit, "The Slide-down in Parliament" (Lucknow) 24 December 1980, p.6.



that Members do not pursue a question and are satisfied with whatever the Government says in reply. The complaint of most opposition leaders is, "What are we supposed to do if our adjournment motions are repeatedly disallowed and questions not answered adequately?"<sup>96</sup> The responsibility for this not only lies with the Members for their attitude, the Prime Minister who does know the means to by-pass the views of Parliament, and the role of the Speaker or the Chairman as the case may be.

In spite of these drawbacks, Parliament's role did mirror public concern as most of the foreign policy issues dealt with were, directly or indirectly, vitally linked with the interests of India, internal as well as external.

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96 Ibid.

Table-3.3: Statement indicating particulars regarding Consultative Committee in the Ministry of External Affairs (1980-84)

Year	No. of Members			No. of meetings held	Dates when held	Subjects covered
	LS	RS	Total			
1980-81	32	12	44	4	16.5.80, 5.8.80 29.10.80, 16.12.80.	To improve India's external publicity effort, Indian Ocean
1981-82	32	12	44	6	4.5.81, 13.7.81, 14.7.81, 17.9.81, 2.11.81, 19.12.81	External publicity
1982-83	32	12	44	6	4.2.82, 28.4.82, 25.6.82, 9.8.82, 24.9.82, 3.11.82	Foreign Policy projection for the 1980s: General discussion on Passport matters.
1983-84	32	12	44	6	31.1.83, 19.4.83 7.7.83, 24.8.83, 26.10.83, 21.12.83	Non-alignment and related matters; No decisions; progress made in implementation of decisions taken at the non-aligned meeting in Delhi; India-China talks.

Courtesy: Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi.

## Chapter Four

### AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan is a land locked country with whom India has had long cherished history of bilateral relations.

The event of 27 December 1979 when the Soviet troops entered this mountainous state, drew protests from all over the world. The Indian Parliament also discussed and debated the subject. The main policy issue that came under severe criticism was the statement made by the Indian permanent representative in the United Nations. It is from this total support for the Soviet Union's action in Afghanistan, that the Government had to modify its position, clearly due to the pressure of Parliament.

The British and the Russians had maintained a balance of power in this region in the nineteenth century. The British Government in India had invaded Afghanistan twice to "forestall what they perceived as a Russian threat to take over the country and to use it as a staging area for an attack on India. Twice

the Afghans made it so uncomfortable for them (the Russians) that, within a few years, the British withdrew".<sup>1</sup> Later, they came to an agreement whereby both decided to keep out of Afghanistan. Britain controlled the foreign policy and Russia agreed that it was outside its sphere of influence.

It is noted by students of history that the Soviet army's entry into Afghanistan in December 1979 was not the first of its kind, but the fourth in this century. The previous invasions or incursions were in 1925, 1929 and 1930. Two of them were small-scale affairs, but the one in 1929 resulted in a large number of casualties. It is felt by all observers that the invasion of 1979 was the biggest.<sup>2</sup> Figure 4.1 and Table 4.1 gives an idea of the main ethnic groups of Afghanistan, and also an idea of the composition of the country's population.

With the whole of the Western world loudly protesting against the Soviet action, India was placed in a very

- 
- 1 Antony Arnold, Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Perspective (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1981) p.2. For details on the history and background this book is useful.
  - 2 Thomas T. Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan: The Communist Coup, the Soviet Invasion and the Consequences (Boulder, 1984), p.4.

difficult position. She had to adjust her foreign policy requirements in such a way as to contain the crisis, without having a spillover effect. It was also important to try and bring about normalization of the situation and at the same time not allow her relations with Pakistan, China, the Soviet Union and the western powers to be affected. This put India in a delicate and difficult position.<sup>3</sup> These were the considerations that influenced India's foreign policy on this issue they were reflected in Parliament also.

Afghanistan being very close to India, only separated by the buffer state of Pakistan, the stresses and strains of the new situation are likely to be felt by the latter. (See figure 4.2). This presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan after December 1979 was both a new development in world power relationships and the relic of an old legacy. It was a new reach for Soviet Army control, the first territorial expansion by direct use of Soviet military power in the 34 years since the end of Second World War.<sup>4</sup>

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3 Bimal Prasad in "India and the Afghan Crisis", in K.P. Misra, ed., Afghanistan Crisis (New Delhi, 1981) p.77.

4 Thomas Hammond, n.2, p.2.



When the main event occurred, the caretaker government of Charan Singh as Prime Minister conveyed India's concern to the Soviet Ambassador in New Delhi. It was fully expressed as "India's deep concern at the substantial involvement of Soviet military forces in Afghanistan".<sup>5</sup>

The next Government, headed by the Congress-I leader, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, did not agree with the position taken by its predecessor. She felt that the whole issue should be considered in the global situation and not in isolation.

India's permanent representative at the United Nations, B.C. Mishra, made certain remarks, which surprised several countries and this led to a heated debate in Parliament. The debate in the General Assembly took place on 11 January 1980.

The Indian Envoy made the following points in his speech which sparked off a controversy.

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5 Quoted in Bimal Prasad, n.3, p.77.

"One, the Soviets sent troops to Afghanistan on December 26 at the request of the Afghan Government.

Two, while India was against the presence of foreign troops and bases in any country, it had no reason to disbelieve a friendly country like the Soviet Union when it said that it would withdraw troops from Afghanistan when asked to do so by the Government of Kabul;

Three, India hoped that the Soviet Union would not violate the independence of Afghanistan and would not keep troops in that country a day longer than necessary;

Four, India was gravely concerned over the response of the United States, China, Pakistan and others to the Soviet action; the arming and training of Afghanistan rebels and encouragement given to subversive activities in Afghanistan amounted to external interference in Afghan affairs; building bases, pumping arms to small and medium countries, and expanding naval activities in the Indian Ocean might lead to an intensification of the Cold War and threaten the peace

and security of the region and ultimately pose a threat to India.<sup>6</sup>

The Seventh Lok Sabha opened on 20 January 1980. The same day, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi spoke to the various leaders of the Opposition parties. Here she made it clear that India was opposed to any kind of outside interference anywhere and wanted the problem to be solved as soon as possible. The President's Address on 23 January 1980 also contained indirect references to the Afghanistan situation. He said, "The intervention of outside forces and the induction of armaments in the region as well as in our neighbourhood have created a situation not only for ourselves but for the entire area. Recent developments in Afghanistan highlight the re-emergence of the Cold War. This is a matter of grave concern. The countries of the region

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6 Bhabani Sen Gupta, The Afghan Syndrome: How to Live With the Soviet Union, (New Delhi, Vikas, 1982), pp.106-107.

K.P. Saksena has said that being just to B.C. Mishra, India's permanent representative's statements' contents or the choice of words, were not his because it was from New Delhi. He adds that from reliable sources, Mrs. Gandhi, consulted former Foreign Secretary T.N. Kaul. It was he who drafted the speech, p.109. For the statement in the General Assembly see A/ES/6/PV-1, 10 January 1980 and A/ES-6/PV-3, 11 January 1980. K.P. Saksena, "Afghanistan Conflict and the United Nations" in K.P. Misra, ed., Afghanistan Crisis.

should be allowed to devote their energies to the promotion of regional stability and cooperation with one another. The resources of the region are enormous and should be utilized for the welfare of the people there. To subject these countries to big power rivalries is totally unacceptable to us".<sup>7</sup>

There was a call attention motion in the Lok Sabha on 23 January 1980 on the situation in Afghanistan. Members were quite agitated. The Minister for External Affairs, P.V. Narasimha Rao, explained the country's policy in concrete terms. He said, "India had close and friendly relations with the Government and people of Afghanistan, and we are deeply concerned and vitally interested in the security, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of this traditionally friendly neighbour of ours, and we believe that they have every right to safeguard them".

"It is our hope that the people of Afghanistan will be able to resolve their internal problems without any

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7 Lok Sabha Debates, Series VII, First Session, vol.I, no.3, cols.7-9.

outside interference. As the Prime Minister has clearly indicated, we are against the presence of foreign troops and bases in any country. We have expressed our hope that Soviet forces will withdraw from Afghanistan".<sup>8</sup>

The next day in the Rajya Sabha, that is, on 24 January 1980, there was a calling attention motion. A member complained that its title was changed without his prior permission. He had given notice of it as "Russian intervention in Kabul" but it was changed to "Serious developments arising out of decisions of the Governments of the USA and China to extend massive arms aid to Pakistan in the wake of the Russian intervention in Afghanistan". The Chairman felt that this change had to be done in following a liberal approach so as to accommodate the views of all groups.<sup>9</sup>

Different members described these "developments" in different ways. A wide range of expressions were used, from "occupation", "intervention", "military occupation", "penetration of Russia" to "involvement".<sup>10</sup>

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8 Ibid.

9 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.112, no.2, col.21.

10 Ibid., cols.21-22.

The Minister for External Affairs tried to look at the whole problem as a global issue, with very little direct reference to the countries involved. He felt that it was an internal problem and the Afghans would be able to solve it by themselves"<sup>11</sup>. In the ensuing debate, D.N. Dwivedi felt that the Indian Representative at the United Nations had taken the right stand when he expressed confidence that Russia would withdraw her troops. Immediately came the interjection from Viren J. Shah, "Like the British did from India after a hundred and fifty years...With a hundred thousand troops, do you mean to say they are not intervening?" One member wanted the speech of B.C. Mishra to be placed on the table of the House, for it was alleged that words were being added and he was being misquoted. The Chairman felt that the whole thing was going out of hand and he intervened to say that "you will soon have the chance of hearing the Minister of External Affairs". Pilloo Mody was quick to add, "He (B.C. Mishra) has left nothing for him to say".<sup>12</sup>

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11 Ibid., cols.24-27.

12 Ibid., cols.27-32.

The debate continued, with members speaking on both the sides. But it was clear that all ruling party members chose not to criticize the official policy. V;P. Dutt appealed to the members to rise above party approaches as this was too serious a matter to play around or to make of it a party issue. He said that, "...should there have been in Kabul, a pro-Pakistani, a pro-west, a theocratic and a Mullah dominated Government imposed from outside? Or was it in our interest that there should be a more radical and a progressive government there, which answered the social needs? We know there had been split in the revolutionary movement there and there had been power struggle". He agreed that the revolutionary base was narrow and was controlled by an elitist group.<sup>13</sup>

Now, to go back a little in to the developments, immediately preceding the Soviet action. The Saur Revolution started with the overthrow of the Daoud government in 1978 by the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Nur Mohammad Taraki became the President in April 1978. He was replaced by Hafizullah

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13      Ibid., cols.39-45.

Amin.<sup>14</sup> The two groups within the PDPA -- the Parcham and Khalq factions reopened their old differences and purges. Amin had become unpopular and there was insurgency in the countryside. It was then that the Soviet troops entered when the situation was out of control. Amin was killed and replaced by Babrak Karmal.<sup>15</sup> It was this last phase that received worldwide attention. Even the debate in the Indian Parliament was on this last phase, especially the speech of the Indian representative at the United Nations.

Dinesh Goswami had effectively put across what the House and its members felt. He said, "there has also been an effort made by many, particularly by my friends on the other side who have intervened in this debate, to equate the involvement of Soviet Russia in Afghanistan with the supply of arms by America to Pakistan. Sir, if we equate both issues, I think we will be losing the perspective of political history". He recalled that much before the American Supply, Pakistan had been

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14 Henry S. Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union (Durham: Duke Press, 1983), p.5. For further details this book is useful especially to the background of the problem.

15 Ibid., pp.269-271.



helping the rebels. Later on, in his speech he added, "...I would like to emphasize this point because we believe in non-alignment and because we know that Soviet Russia had been one of our trusted friends, as friend to friend probably we are in a much better position to talk unequivocally and clearly and express our own mind to the Soviet Union. Otherwise, that friendship has no meaning. Public opinion has gone against India due to India's confusing foreign policy stand".<sup>16</sup>

The Minister for External Affairs tried to explain that non-alignment meant independence of India to take a stand without fear or favour and to work in pursuance of that policy.<sup>17</sup> Immediately a member Sadasiv Bagaithar said, "Sir, it is my duty to bring to your notice that the honourable Minister is trying to mislead the House. The Prime Minister's first statement said that it is at the invitation of the Afghan Government that the Soviet armies went there. Then she revised it and said

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16 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.112, no.2, cols.70-76.

17 Ibid., cols.76-77.

that it does not mean that we approve of it. Whatever it may be, whether it is ambivalence or lapse on the part of the Government, to say there is no ambivalence is not correct".<sup>18</sup>

This exposure in Parliament of India's ambivalent stand and a clear shift has been well documented by a political scholar in his analysis of the statements made by the Prime Minister to the Press.<sup>19</sup> From these statements it is clear that India was trying to shift from an openly pro-Soviet stand in the United Nations to a more bold stand after the visit of the Soviet

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18 Ibid., col.78.

19 Shashi Tharoor, Reasons of State: Political Development and India's Foreign Policy, under Indira Gandhi, 1966-77 (New Delhi, 1982), pp.418-19. He shows it by collecting Mrs. Gandhi's statements to the Press. They start with, "We are against all interference. One interference invited the other" (Financial Times, January 7, 1980). "The Revolutionary Council...had invited the Russians...I am not justifying it. We do not approve of it". (Times, January 18, 1980). "The West has been interfering in this region" (Newsweek, January 21, 1980, p.26). "What happened in Afghanistan is an internal matter of that country" (International Herald Tribune, January 31, 1980), "We will make every effort to ensure speedy withdrawal of Russian troops" (Observer, February 3, 1980). "We are not going to seek to learn who is right, especially since both sides are certainly wrong. All that interests us is how to avoid a war..." (Le Figaro, March 3, 1980).

Foreign Minister, A. Gromyko, to New Delhi in February 1980. But when the joint communique was released, Afghanistan was not mentioned.<sup>20</sup> Both the governments preferred silence on the subject. It was only on 17 June 1980 that the Minister of External Affairs, while reporting on his visit to the Soviet Union, took an independent and mature stand. His stand was as follows: "any talk about the withdrawal of forces without furnishing of complete and reliable guarantees of an end to interference would merely hinder the achievement of a solution".<sup>21</sup>

Due to the pressure of Parliament and public opinion the government had to make a substantial shift from the unfortunate position taken by the Indian permanent Representative at the United Nations. The Afghan issue dragged on in Parliament till 1984. The issue was taken up at the Non-aligned conference in 1983. The members kept the whole problem alive by their alertness, compelling the government to the cautious. They wanted a follow-up action for Russian withdrawal from

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20 Ibid., p.419.

21 Cited in Bimal Prasad, n.3, p.79.

Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup> Here in a starred question it was known that India had called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces and a political settlement of the problem.<sup>23</sup> One member felt that there was a great variation between what the Government of India had originally proposed and what finally emerged from the Foreign Ministers Conference of the non-aligned countries.<sup>24</sup> In para 24, it says, "The Ministers noted with grave concern the situation in South-West Asia and agreed that it carried dangerous consequences for the peace and stability of the region...The Ministers viewed the situation in Afghanistan with particular concern. They urgently called for a political settlement on the basis of the withdrawal of foreign troops and full respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Afghanistan and strict observance of the principle of non-intervention and non-interference".<sup>25</sup>

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22 Lok Sabha Debates, Series VII, vol.XV, Session V, cols.95-96.

23 Ibid., vol.XII, Session V, cols.23-25.

24 Ibid., col.30.

25 Ibid., cols.25-26.

The debate in Parliament was conducted on all the aspects, including the proposal for USA-USSR Summit to resolve the Afghanistan issue.<sup>26</sup> Some members wanted India to take the initiative towards a solution.<sup>27</sup> The problem of the Afghan refugees in India was also raised in Parliament.<sup>28</sup> To sum up Parliament did exercise pressure on the government and helped them to realise its initial mistake at the U.N. The debate and discussion in Parliament were more balanced, as they reflected all the views from the Left to the Right. This also showed that Parliament as a political institution would express a plurality of views, which helped government to shift from a totally pro-Soviet stand to the middle and take an independent non-aligned stand.

The initial ambiguity in foreign policy was evidently due to the pre-occupation with the general elections and the time taken by the new government to come to grips with the problem. The check of parliament on executive policy had helped no doubt to correct

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26 Ibid., vol.15, 2 April 1981, col.43.

27 Ibid., vol.15, 2 April 1981, cols.95-96. Also see, *ibid.*, vol.2, 20 March 1980, col.224.

28 Ibid., vol.22, 10 December 1981, col.248; vol.31, August 1982, cols.196-98.

the initial confusion and project a clear stand. This led to India taking interest in the withdrawal of all foreign forces and the preparation for a political settlement, which would help the refugees to return to their country.

In dealing with this, as with other problems, both the parliament and the government realised that they were not the sole and ultimate authorities in themselves; they were rather the means to attain certain ends. In this case, the end was the removal of all foreign forces and the reaching of a political settlement on the Afghanistan crisis. This must be rightly related to the needs, and interests, as also values and aspirations of the millions who are subject to that government.<sup>29</sup>

Parliament did play its role of providing checks and balances to the government in its foreign policy on the specific issue of Afghanistan.

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29 A.G. Noorani, India's Constitution and Politics, (Bombay: Jaico, 1970), pp.60-64.

Table-4.1: Main Ethnic Groups of Afghanistan<sup>30</sup>

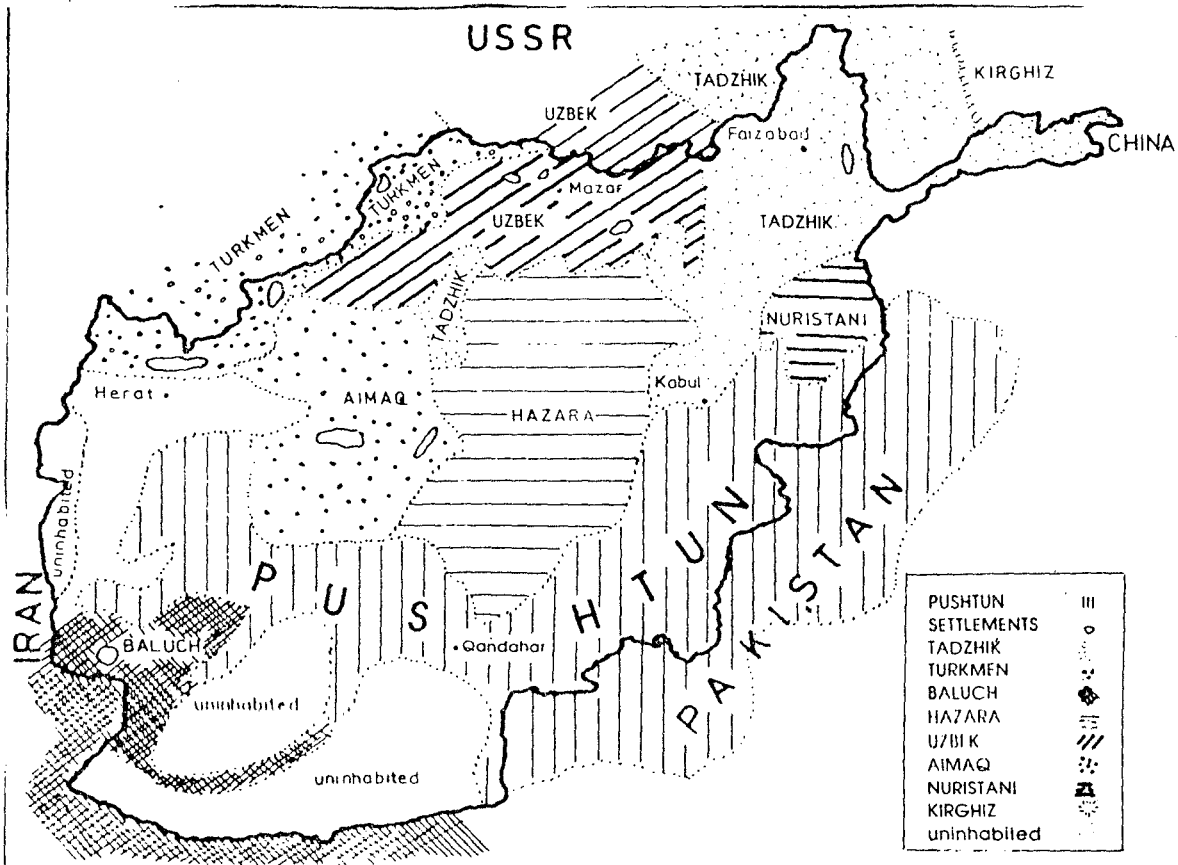
Main Ethnic Groups	Population
Total Population (1979)	.. 15,500,000
Pushtun (Pathan)	.. 06,500,000
Tabzhik	.. 03,500,000
Uzbek	.. 01,000,000
Aimaq	.. 00,800,000
Hazara	.. 00,870,000
Farsiwan	.. 00,600,000
Brahui	.. 00,200,000
Turkmen	.. 00,125,000
Baluch	.. 00,100,000
Nuristani	.. 00,100,000

30 Thomas T. Hammond, n.2, p.5.

FIGURE 4.1

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MAIN ETHNIC GROUPS OF AFGANISTAN 31.



31. THOMAS, T. HAMMOND, n. 2, p. 4.



FIGURE 4.2 AFGANISTAN AND HER NEIGBOURS

32 11

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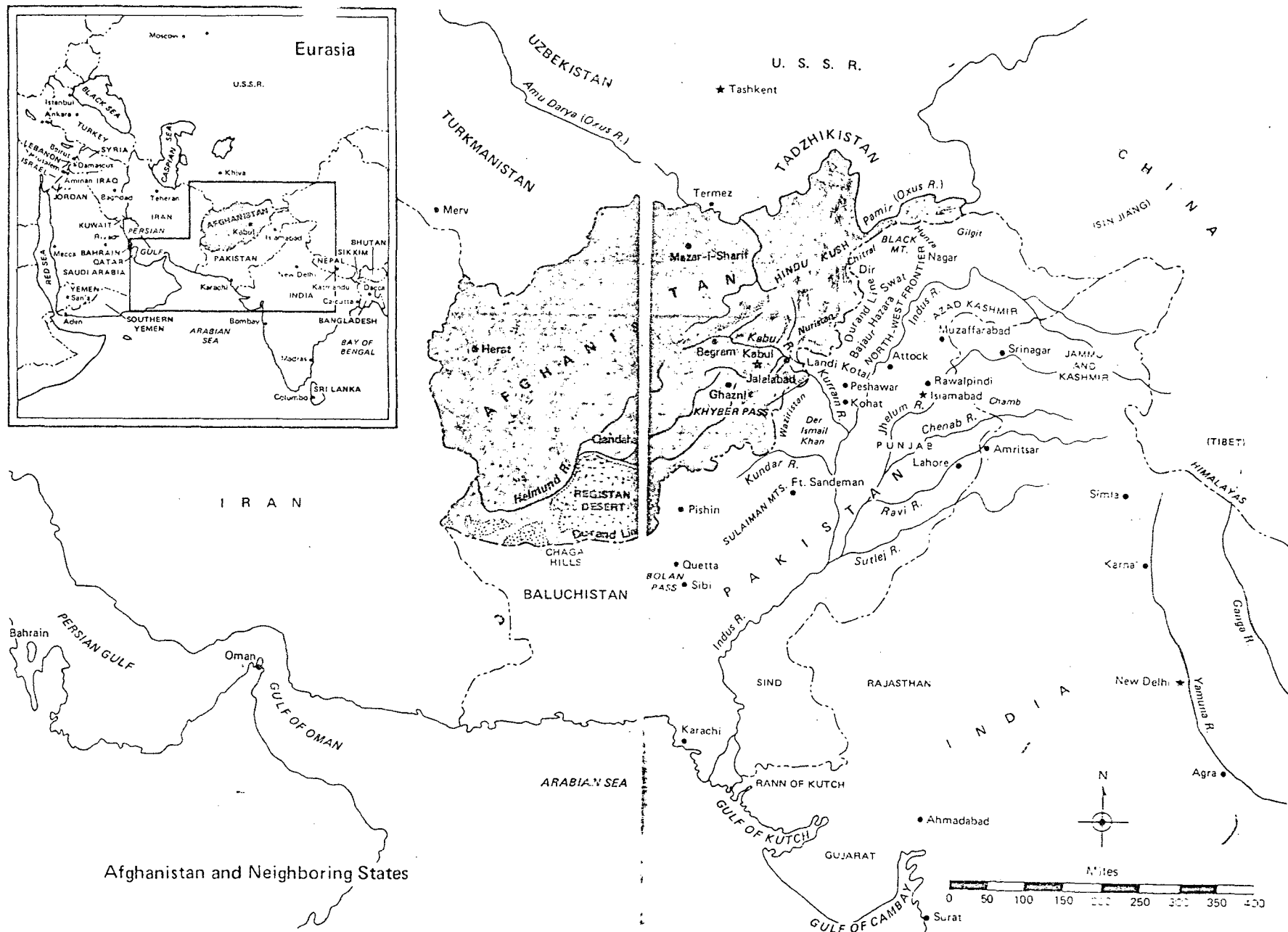


FIGURE 4.2

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STANLEY WOLPERT, *ROOTS OF CONFRONTATION IN SOUTH ASIA: AFGANISTAN, PAKISTAN, INDIA AND THE SUPERPOWERS* (NEW YORK, 1982), p.1.

## Chapter Five

### ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN THE SRI LANKA CRISIS

The ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka has persisted since the Independence of that country in 1948. The Indian Parliament has been discussing this issue from 1952 onwards. But the problem reached a boiling point in 1983; and it has shown no sign of improvement since. The Seventh Lok Sabha was concerned about the spill-over effect of this crisis, which defies solution. And it did spill over, when large numbers of displaced Tamils crossed the Palk Straits and sought refuge in Tamil Nadu. Parliament was exercised over this and called for military intervention. The Government was equally concerned, but it had to act with moderation as it affected the country as a whole. As the possible intervention by the Super Powers might endanger the security of the region, the Government tried its best to use its good offices as a third party to bring about a peaceful political settlement, which is still to materialise.

The ethnic differences in Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) have led to riots for long, at least for the

last one hundred years.<sup>1</sup> But both the Tamils and Sinhalese, whose ancestors are of Indian origin, have been the inhabitants of the island for centuries now. As rightly put by a Member of Parliament, V. Gopalaswamy, the problem related mainly to the Indian Tamils. He said, "There are two categories of Tamils. The Ceylon Tamils are the descendants of the Tamils who lived and ruled themselves from the dawn of history. They had their own kingdom till it was conquered by the Portuguese in 1619 A.D. The Indian Tamils were brought from South Indian villages by the British Government, to work on tea, rubber and coffee plantations from 1837 onwards. (They were brought as "Indentured labour"). But when they were recruited, they were recruited on the terms of equal rights with the rest of the population in Ceylon".<sup>2</sup> (See Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1).

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1 V.P. Vaidik, "Ethnic Crisis in Sri Lanka: India's Options (New Delhi, 1986), p.1. He says that the first communal riots took place in 1883 in Colombo between the Buddhists and the Catholics. The second major riots occurred between the Sinhalese and Muslims in 1915.

2 India, Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.127, no.4, 28 July 1983, cols.203.

These equal rights were not granted under the Soulbury Constitution, which was adopted after independence. This Constitution did not recognise the rights of the minority and no permanent structures were designed for the distribution of power between the majority and the minority. It was felt that the minority was numerically large enough to withstand the thrust of the majority.<sup>3</sup> But the disenfranchisement of 900,000 Indian Tamils, was a device through which the majority community could easily muster a two-thirds majority".<sup>4</sup> This led to tension, ethnic riots and communal violence between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils. These riots began in 1956 and recurred in 1958, 1961, 1972, 1977, 1979, 1982 and 1983, resulting in danger to life and limb and property of the Tamils.<sup>5</sup>

The worst riots were those that occurred in July 1983, which has shaken the very foundations of the body politic of the state. The attacks were mostly by members of the Sinhalese majority (71.0 per cent

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3 Radhika Coomaraswamy, Sri Lanka: The Crisis of the Anglo-American Constitutional Traditions in a Developing Society (New Delhi, 1984), p.11.

4 Ibid.

5 India, Lok Sabha Debates, vol.48, no.52, 14th Session, col.431.

of the population) upon the Tamil minority (21.6 per cent).<sup>6</sup> This surpassed, in scale, all previous riots and brought the state of Sri Lanka under severe criticism especially in the Indian Parliament.

In Parliament, during the period under study, there was no angry opposition to the Sri Lanka policy of the Indian Government. Members wanted action and took the initiative to call for a statement or for a discussion on the Sri Lanka situation. In August 1981, there was a call-attention motion on the issue of 'Reported racial violence and attacks on Tamils in Sri Lanka and reaction of the Government thereto'.<sup>7</sup> Even before the discussion a Member wanted an informal understanding that 'the relations between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Government of India, should not be spoiled because it is an emotionladen subject'.<sup>8</sup>

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- 6 James Manor, ed., Sri Lanka: In Change and Crisis (London: Croom Helm, 1984), p.1. For further details refer to this book.
- 7 India, Lok Sabha Debates, Seventh Series, vol.XVIII, no.3, Sixth Session, col.293.
- 8 Ibid., cols.294. The Member was Dr. Subramaniam Swamy, who felt inspite of him being a Tamil, things should not be stirred up.

Members agreed that it was a serious matter and one Member from Tamil Nadu wanted a statement by the Government of India and full-fledged discussion to follow.<sup>9</sup>

The Minister for External Affairs, P.V. Narasimha Rao, in his statement in the House, told the Members that the violence had occurred during the election campaign for the District Development Councils in the Jaffna area. It was soon brought under control. But within a few days violence broke out in Colombo, where the Tamils had been the victims. He felt that the Government of Sri Lanka would be able to bring peace and these events were essentially an internal affair of Sri Lanka. He added, "It is, therefore, our hope that the Government of Sri Lanka will succeed in its efforts to put an end to the present violence and restore confidence, so that the present difficulties would be soon resolved and no shadows are cast on the traditional close relations which exist between India and Sri Lanka".<sup>10</sup>

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9 Ibid., cols.295-298. The Member was C.T. Dhandapani of the DMK.

10 Ibid., cols.298-299.

There was also other problem that persisted since 1948 when "the Senanayaka Government passed two draconian Acts of Parliament, the Act of 1948 and then the Act of 1949 by which more than 12 per cent of the population were rendered homeless".<sup>11</sup>

These two Acts rendered several Indian Tamils stateless citizens. Some Members felt that even after the expiry of the Shastri-Sirimavo Pact of 1964, the rigor of the problem continued. One of them said that this agreement was "a gross betrayal of millions of citizens of Indian origin". He added that Prime Minister Nehru was never prepared to sign the agreement, realising its grave consequences. The member wanted to know from the Minister of External Affairs the number of Indian Tamils granted citizenship. The Minister replied that "the persons granted citizenship were 1,63,172 and the remaining were 2,11,828 persons."<sup>12</sup>

The issue that shook the world and shocked the Indian Parliament was the riots of July 1983. Its

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11 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.121, no.16, 12 March 1982, col.151.

12 Ibid., cols.149-179. The first agreement was signed in 1964 and amendment was signed in 1974. The total time frame for the implementation of Repatriation Agreements was seventeen years and this expired on 31 October 1981. In July 1981, the Sri Lankan Parliament passed a Bill declining grant of Sri Lanka citizenship from physical repatriation of Indian citizens to India.

impact shattered the traditional image of Buddhists as pacifists. The riots took a heavy toll of human life. Four hundred people lost their lives, 150,000 Tamils were rendered homeless, according to Government sources.<sup>13</sup>

It is mentioned by an author, familiar with the country, that the rioting was indulged in by a leaderless mob, to start with. But by afternoon, organised gangs joined in the fray and systematically looted, plundered and killed as if they had been trained and "operated with military precision". Their targets were the economic bases of the Tamils in Colombo and their homes. Tamil homes were thus systematically consigned to the flames. Such homes were identified with pinpoint accuracy, using electoral lists".<sup>14</sup> Some members felt that these riots were provoked by the army men and felt that it was the Army which openly indulged in mass-scale arson, looting and cultural vandalism.<sup>15</sup>

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13 V.P. Vaidik, n.1, p.13.

14 T.D.S.A. Dissanayaka, The Agony of Sri Lanka, (Colombo, 1984), pp.80-81. The author is a senior official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Colombo.

15 Also cited by James Manor, "Sri Lanka: Explaining the Disaster", The World Today (London) November 1983, pp.450-59.



The Lok Sabha discussed the issue, beginning with a statement by the Minister of External Affairs on the reported attacks on the Tamil-speaking people in Sri Lanka and on the residences of the Acting High Commissioner and other members of the staff of the Indian High Commission. He said that the members must be aware that ethnic violence had sharply increased in Sri Lanka which affected seriously the life and property. He felt that the adverse criticism in the Sri Lanka Press of India, was unwarranted and unbecoming. Hoping that the Sri Lanka Government would take appropriate action, he added, "we also value our relations with this friendly neighbouring country. We wish them success in quickly restoring communal harmony".<sup>16</sup>

The Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, was also present in the House, showing her concern about the gravity of the situation. She said, that her Government was criticised for not maintaining as good relations as the previous Janata Government. It was because "We speak up more strongly when we consider that the interests of India are affected in any way".<sup>17</sup>

16 Lok Sabha Debates, Seventh Series, vol. XXXIX, no. 3, Twelfth Session, cols. 354-358.

17 Ibid., col. 367.

One Member felt that the Indian Army should be sent to Sri Lanka in an observer capacity, because the Sri Lanka Government was unable to control the situation and to see that such a situation did not arise again. He wanted the Indian citizens to be evacuated, while making it clear that it was not a re-play of the Ramayana.<sup>18</sup> Many members thought it important to exercise restraint.<sup>19</sup> In the Lok Sabha, one member strongly pleaded for interference by India, reiterating that there had been systematic persecution of the Tamils since 1948.<sup>20</sup>

The Minister for External Affairs, who was replying at the end of the discussion, said that this was a situation where "we have to keep our heads cool. We have to look to the permanent relations between the two countries, although we cannot lose sight of what is happening right now".<sup>21</sup>

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18 Ibid., cols.371-73 (emphasis added).

19 Ibid., col.398.

20 Ibid., cols.404-409.

21 Ibid., cols.444-447.

The next day, the Prime Minister made a statement to inform the House, interrupting a Member in his speech. She had rung up the President of Sri Lanka the previous day and expressed grave concern on behalf of the Members of Parliament and the people generally all over India, and especially the people of Tamil Nadu and the South. The Foreign Minister left that evening to see things for himself.<sup>22</sup>

In the Rajya Sabha, the members were black badges. One of the most vocal members, V. Gopaldaswamy, wanted the Minister of External Affairs to make a statement. The statement was more or less a repetition of the statement made in the Lok Sabha, the previous day. He agreed that on June 4, the Government of Sri Lanka had promulgated the Public Security Ordinance, which was to be confined to the Northern Province. A provision of this Ordinance authorised the Armed forces to dispose of the dead bodies without any inquest or post mortem. This measure, among others, has been viewed with appre-

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22 Lok Sabha Debates, vol. XXXIX, Twelfth Session, no. 4, cols. 458-59. The discussion which was interrupted was on the Vegetable Oil Cess Bill.

hension both in Sri Lanka and abroad.<sup>23</sup> A member felt that "now the holocaust and massacre has reached alarming proportions" that he requested the Government of India to raise the issue in the United Nations, especially in the General Assembly.<sup>24</sup>

This Member put forward the point that all the political parties, irrespective of their affiliations, have sunk their differences and were united on this problem. He requested the Government to issue an ultimatum and, if this does not work, to cut off diplomatic relations with Sri Lanka.<sup>25</sup> He alleged that the Americans were using Trincomalee, one of the finest natural harbours in the world, as a refuelling centre and as a base.<sup>26</sup> He expressed the view that the movement led by the Tamils was a democratic movement and struggle for freedom. It was not a terrorist movement and the

23 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.127, no.4, 28 July 1983, cols.199-202.

24 Ibid., cols.203-205. V. Gopalaswamy based his views on reports of the International Commission of Jurists namely Professor Virginia A. Leary, Ethnic Conflict and Violence in Sri Lanka, and Paul Sieghart, Sri Lanka: A Mounting Tragedy of Errors.

25 Ibid., col.209.

26 Ibid., col.321.

extremism that characterized it, was the result of the army offensive, he added.<sup>27</sup> One member felt that it was incorrect and inappropriate to compare the Eelam Tamil Movement with the Khalistan movement.<sup>28</sup> The request to send the Indian army to Sri Lanka became more vocal.<sup>29</sup>

The Minister for External Affairs, in his reply, assured the House that 'this was not a party matter and the Government does not treat it as such; that the entire nation is at one on this issue and we are fully aware of the implications and repercussions and that Government will take full stock of the deteriorating situation since it is fraught with dangerous consequences for our own country, as a close neighbour of Sri Lanka.

In this elucidation, a clear shift could be seen from the one taken earlier. He ended his reply by acknowledging the role of Parliament and assuring the

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27 Ibid., cols.214-15.

28 Ibid., cols.216-17.

29 Ibid., col.245.

House that some of the points raised and specific suggestions made would be given serious thought. He also promised them that Parliament would be taken into confidence from time to time.<sup>30</sup>

On 2 August, 1983, the DMK members staged a walk-out, as a mark of their dissatisfaction with the Government's reaction.<sup>31</sup> In the meantime, as a part of the Indian diplomatic efforts at ethnic reconciliation, G. Parthasarathi, a seasoned diplomat, was sent as a special emissary to hold talks with the political leaders in Sri Lanka. As a result of his efforts came into existence, the document Annexure-C. Parliament commended Parthasarathi's role, though there were a few critics.<sup>32</sup>

This problem continued and at every opportunity, Members especially from the State of Tamil Nadu, were

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30 Ibid., cols.264-65. Some members were disappointed for they wanted the Government to commit itself and agree to send the Indian Army to save the Tamils. This was the opinion of several local leaders of Tamil Nadu as well.

31 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.127, no.7, cols.293-331. DMK is Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.

32 Ibid., vol.128, no.11, 7 December 1983, cols.407-424.

trying to impress upon the Government its urgency and seriousness and asking for the latest information on the situation.

The President's address expressed grave concern on the situation in Sri Lanka and felt gratified that "the Sri Lanka Government accepted our offer of good offices to facilitate a viable political settlement".<sup>33</sup> In the Motion of thanks, a Member, V. Arunachalam, made it clear that the Tamil leaders have not been obstinate and unreasonable, and to prove his point, quoted from the speech made by Thondaman in the Sri Lanka Parliament. He added that it was the Government of Sri Lanka that had twice withdrawn from the talks at the last minute and was unable to honour its agreement with the Tamils, who always wanted to settle the problem peacefully and honourably.<sup>34</sup> In the light of all this, he had reason to doubt the bonafides of the present Government.

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33 Ibid., vol.129, no.1, 23 February 1984, col.21.

34 Ibid., vol.129, no.4, 28 February 1984, col.225. S. Thondaman is the leader of the Ceylon Workers Congress and leader of the Tamil Estate Workers Party, who accepted a post in the Jayawardena Cabinet. The two earlier pacts which the Sri Lankan Government did not honour were the Bandaranaike-Selvanayakam pact and another in the time of Dudley Senanayake.

In the course of a discussion on the International situation and the policy of Government of India in that context<sup>35</sup> one Member who was generally a severe critic of the Government supported the policy followed by India in relation to Sri Lanka. "We have made distinction between the problems of Tamils of Indian origin in Ceylon and the other political and economic problems",<sup>36</sup> he said. Another member thought that the Sri Lankan situation was mishandled, adding, "The Government and Parliament are ignorant of the exact facts. The Minister is hiding facts". He felt that the Government of India has failed to inspire any confidence in Sri Lanka, either among the Tamils or the Sinhalese. "Sri Lanka was buying time and is not solving the problems of the Tamils",<sup>37</sup> he added.

Emotions rose high and one Member felt that his blood boiled, when a Minister in the Sri Lanka Cabinet had said that 'the Indian Ocean will be the burial ground of the Tamilians'.<sup>38</sup> He thought that the

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35 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.XLVIII, Fourteenth Session, no.52, col.54.

36 Ibid., col.388.

37 Ibid., cols.396-97.

38 Ibid., cols.419-21.



Buddhist clergy, which was powerful, was sabotaging any political settlement. He wanted a Buddhist Convention to be held where these monks could be taught what really the Buddha stood for.<sup>39</sup> Excitement reached such a high pitch as to make some members, especially from the South, to suggest rescue missions to be sent.<sup>40</sup> The Minister for External Affairs tried to pacify members and promised to convey their feelings to the Sri Lanka Government.<sup>41</sup>

In India, there were a lot of refugees who had fled the wrath of the Sinhalese; and this was causing strains on the Government of India and the Tamil Nadu State Government. One scholar put it so aptly, when he described them as "unwanted in Sri Lanka and unwelcome in India".<sup>42</sup> As on 31 January, 1984, 107,345 families had come to India, out of which 83,690 or 78.0 per cent have been rehabilitated in Tamil Nadu alone.<sup>43</sup> This is one of the reasons why members of

39 Ibid., cols.423-24.

40 Ibid., col.432.

41 Ibid., cols.473-74.

42 V. Suryanarayan, "Tamil Repatriates: Rehabilitation Not Easy", World Focus, 57, September 1984, p.26.

43 Ibid., p.28.

Parliament from Tamil Nadu were agitated, apart from their cultural links and ethnic affiliations.

It was becoming increasingly clear that the Government of Sri Lanka was seeking a military solution, despite promises made otherwise, which cause a lot of violence against the Tamils. The Minister of State for External Affairs, Ram Niwas Mirdha, made a statement that on the night of 2 August 1984 that a bomb had exploded at the Madras Airport building, killing 29 people, injuring 38 persons and had caused extensive damage.<sup>44</sup>

In a few days, the situation in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka had sharply deteriorated. The Minister of State, while making a statement on Sri Lanka, said it was reported that "the towns of Velvetiturai has been extensively shelled by the Sri Lankan Navy, causing very heavy damage to life and property.

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44 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.50, 15th Session, no.11, cols.400-404. India had to face the brunt of the retaliation by Tamil militants whose target was Colombo Airport misfired as the Air Lanka plane refused to take unaccompanied luggages (two in number). This gave an opportunity to the Sri Lanka Government to say that India was giving protection to terrorists.

These tragic happenings have caused agony and shock". He added that the Prime Minister had condemned the outrage at the Madras Airport and felt that the Sri Lanka leaders should refrain from making irresponsible and unfounded statements that India was harbouring Tamil militants.<sup>45</sup>

This large-scale killing sparked off an emotional outburst among Members, from the South, especially from Tamil Nadu. One Member got so agitated that he said: "The entire Tamil race would be annihilated in the name of religion. Sir, you can throw me out, you can kill me. It does not matter. But my people are dying there".<sup>46</sup> He wanted some concrete action to be taken to save the lives of the people there.<sup>47</sup>

The reports of the Sri Lankan armed forces conducting largescale operations in Jaffna, Velvettiturai, Chunnakam, Mannar and other parts of Northern Province,

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45 Lok Sabha Debates, vol.50, no.13, 15th Session. Col.364-65. The Government of India preferred to call them Tamil militants and Sri Lanka preferred to call them terrorists.

46 Ibid., col.366.

47 Ibid., col.368.

where the Tamils constitute an overwhelming majority of the population, was causing serious concern to the Members.<sup>48</sup> The Minister of State for External Affairs said in his statement, that, "It is tragic that this cycle of violence has erupted and generated a climate of tension, confrontation and conflict. The Tamils are gripped by fear and understandable resentment".<sup>49</sup> He felt a military solution was not possible and reaffirmed the commitment of the Government of India to the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka.

Earlier, the Prime Minister had refuted President Jayawardene's claim that militants had decided to come out in open and challenge the security forces. She felt that as the militants were small in number as compared to the Sri Lankan Army, they could pose no challenge at all. She added that the Sri Lankan Army should not over-act.<sup>50</sup> Here we see that the Government slowly and steadily taking a firm stand and coming closer to the view of Parliament. While Parliament at times

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48 Ibid., vol.50, no.18, 15th Session, cols.292-98.

49 Ibid., col.293.

50 Ibid., cols.295-96.

over-reacted to the situation, Government remained moderate, without forgetting to act in time.

Agitated members wanted immediate action from the Government. They gave vent to their anger on the situation, saying, "the Sri Lanka Government has let loose terror and violence", "it is a genocide", "massacre", "state terrorism", and "an invasion of the army against the Tamil people".<sup>51</sup> One member felt that there was inaction on the part of the Government of India for the last four or five days. He added, "we are committed to the policy of non-intervention, but that cannot mean that we can be indifferent to massacres of this kind taking place of Tamilian citizens".<sup>52</sup> The Independence Day (15 August 1984) was observed in Tamil Nadu as a mourning day. It was suggested that the entire nation should observe it as a day of mourning.<sup>53</sup>

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51 Rajya Sabha Debates, vol.131, no.17, 14 August, 1984, cols.158-62.

52 Ibid., col.160.

53 Ibid., cols.161-164.

The Minister of State for External Affairs made a statement, on 16 August, in which he said, "Apparently, the Government of Sri Lanka has embarked on a series of military operations and the Tamil population of the Northern Province feels terrorised. What is worse, the Army seems to have gone out of control, as admitted by a Sri Lankan Minister and is reportedly on a rampage in various areas, where whole bazars and houses have been burnt. Civilians have been arrested and killed indiscriminately". He appreciated the strong feeling of the House and took notice of the induction of elements of foreign security agencies. He said that "the Government is keeping a close watch on the evolving situation and will take whatever steps are called for".<sup>54</sup>

Some members felt strongly that there was nothing to evolve, as the Sri Lankan Government had gone on a rampage and the genocide, which was a human problem, was staring us in the face.

One Member expressed the feeling of the House eloquently, when he said, "The Tamil blood is flowing

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54 Ibid., vol.131, no.18, 16 August 1984, cols.166-68.

in the streets of Jaffna, Velvettithurai, Chunnagam and Mannar". Recalling the fact that this violence has been continuing since 1981, he did not understand how the Government could receive people like Jayawardene and Athulathmudali, who were pledged to wipe out the Tamil race and whose hands were stained with the Tamil blood. He reminded the Government that he had warned, "Don't become a Chamberlain of India. Chamberlain was hoodwinked by Hitler. The same thing will happen. Now it has happened. You assured the whole world, the people of India, the people of Tamil Nadu, that something was going to take place in the Round Table Conference. He wanted to buy time. Now he is wiping out that community".

Referring to the Prime Minister's expression of concern and the mourning, by members, he exclaimed: "What is the use?" You can mourn for the whole Tamil race once it is finished". He wanted the Government to be firm like the Margaret Thatcher Government (of Britain) which cut off diplomatic relations with Libya, following the shooting of a single policewoman. He wanted a categorical reply on the failure of the

Government to take a stand at international forums. He regretted that the Government was not prepared to move a resolution in Parliament. He alleged that the Government was being hoodwinked by Jayawardena, and in the bargain, was hoodwinking the people of Tamil Nadu, which amounted to a betrayal of the Tamils. He expressed his disappointment, at what he called "the Government's inaction".<sup>55</sup>

The Minister of State for External Affairs tried his best to pacify the extremely agitated Members, assuring them that "the Government of India will not leave anything unturned to take whatever initiative the situation warrants in this respect". He thought that the most effective way was to work for a peaceful solution through political discussion. He refused to commit himself that a resolution would be moved by the Government as it was done in the case of Bangladesh in 1971.

This brought about shouts from members condemning the attitude of the Government of India and a Member

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55 Ibid., cols.172-74.



tore up the statement. Before staging a walk-out, the Member declared that he was prepared to "join the youths to take up guns to protect our people. For this cause we are prepared to die". This extreme emotional outburst made the Minister leave the Chamber, not knowing what to say.<sup>56</sup>

Gauging the mood of members and the opinion of the House, the Government started putting pressure on the Sri Lankan Government directly and through international opinion. It was due to the government's pre-occupation with the Punjab problem, the Sri Lankan issue could not get its undivided attention. Parliament was also concerned about the Punjab problem. There was no doubt, however, that the Government was slowly evolving a firmer stand on the Sri Lankan issue.

It could be clearly seen from the statement in 1981 that the Sri Lankan Tamils issue was treated as an internal problem of Sri Lanka and the Government of India had expressed its confidence in the ability of the Sri Lankan Government to solve the problem. It was

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56 Ibid., cols.175-182.

so till 1983, when the Prime Minister herself was personally present and she expressed to Parliament the concern of the Government. She rang up the President of Sri Lanka, J.R. Jayawardena, to convey the concern of Parliament, the Indian people, especially the people of Tamil Nadu. The Foreign Minister immediately proceeded to Colombo to see and talk to the leadership. Then the Government had sent a Special Emissary in G. Parthasarathi, himself a Tamil and a seasoned diplomat, who knew the problem well and evolved the document, Annexure-C, of proposals made at the All-Party Round Table Conference. In spite of these efforts, the violence and shelling by Sri Lanka armed forces continued into 1984 when the Government declared that it would leave no stone unturned to take whatever initiative might be warranted by the situation.

To sum up, Parliament reacted strongly to the situation, the Government accepted the main thrust in spirit, but moderated it in policy. Government exercised restraint, when Parliament went all out for strong measures, ultimatums and the sending of the Indian Army to the island. Following the unfortunate assassination of Mrs. Gandhi, however, the Indian Government had to be so

fully preoccupied with internal problems and the elections in December 1984, that the issue of the Sri Lanka crisis was sidelined for a few months.

It must be recognised in fairness that the Prime Minister and her Government had handled a delicate issue with care and caution, combined with firmness and realism. Her untimely death left all her policies unfinished. She reacted to situations with maturity and in this case saw to it that Parliament's views were taken into consideration in the slow and steady evolution of the Government's policy towards Sri Lanka from a cautious, non-committal stance to a bold unequivocal stand, in 1984. She ably moderated the reactions of Parliament in translating them in terms of policy and made it clear to the Government of Sri Lanka that the Government of India meant business.

Parliament generally took the initiative in policy and Government responded well to the challenge. India kept herself loyal to its principles of non-intervention and at the same time made her position clear that the Government of Sri Lanka should go in for a political

settlement through peaceful means. The Consultative Committee of Parliament attached to the Ministry of External Affairs did not feel free to play a role of any consequence. Though Parliament's role was often marginal, in this case, it took the initiative and gave a lead to the Government of India in the evolution of a rational and realistic policy towards Sri Lanka.

Table-5.1: The Composition of Society

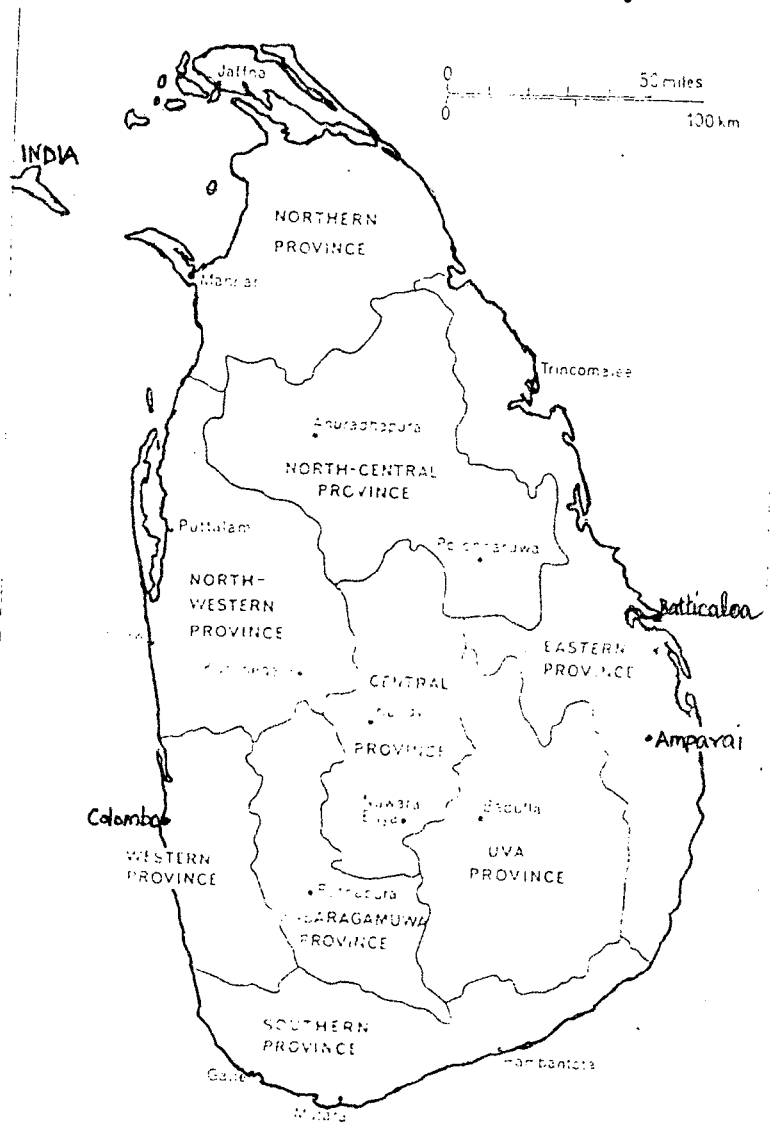
Social Groups	% of total Population	Approximate number
Sinhalese	71.0	10,650,000
Low country Sinhalese	42.2	06,330,000
Kandyan Sinhalese	28.8	04,320,000
Tamils	21.6	03,240,000
Sri Lankan Tamils	11.0	01,650,000
Estate Tamils	10.6	01,590,000
Muslims	06.7	01,005,000
Others	00.7	00,105,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>15,000,000</b>

Source: James Manor (ed.), In Change and Crisis  
(London: Croom Helm, 1984), p.7.

FIGURE 5.1

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MODERN SRILANKA : PROVINCIAL DIVISIONS  
AND PRINCIPAL TOWNS



SOURCE: A. J. WILSON, POLITICS IN  
SRILANKA 1947-1973 (MACMILLAN,  
LONDON, 1974).

## Chapter Six

### POST-SCRIPT AND CONCLUSION

Parliament is the corner-stone of our democracy at the political and institutional level. It has control and influence over all aspects of national policy, including foreign policy. Foreign policy has always been important. It has now become all the more important in the nuclear age, where a false step might be a signal for mutual annihilation. This has understandably made Government's cautious and Parliaments vigilant.

Parliament's role in foreign policy has been marginal and uneven in India, as well as in the rest of the world. A scholar who has done a study on "Parliament and Foreign Affairs", has expressed a similar view of the British experience.<sup>1</sup>

The record of Parliament everywhere has been uneven. It is a place where ministers deliver speeches and submit statements. Debates on war and peace, tend

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1 Peter G. Richards, Parliament and Foreign Affairs (London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1967), p.158.

to be disjointed and lopsided, inadequate and inconclusive. Ministerial speeches and statements are, by and large, marked by excessive care and caution so as to avoid adverse reactions abroad and misunderstandings at home. This could be seen in the stand of the Government of India on the Afghanistan problem and the Sri Lanka crisis.

Parliament, by the organisation of debates and the formulation of policy seeks to represent and reflect public opinion. Walter Bagehot rightly says, "the greatest teacher of all in Parliament, the headmaster of the nation, the great elevator of the country, so far as Parliament elevates it, must be the Prime Minister; he has an influence, an authority, a facility in giving a great tone to discussion or a mean tone which no other man has".<sup>2</sup> This is also true of a country like India, though it has had experience of parliamentary democracy only for the last forty years.

Prime Minister Nehru (1947-64) was a great teacher, a national educator, as already mentioned in this study.

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2 Walter Bagehot, The English Constitution (Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1928), p.149.



He tried to educate the MPs on foreign affairs. He took pains to get the relevant facts and provide them with the background. He carefully listened to their speeches and gave due consideration to their views, even those of individual members. He seldom ignored the backbencher, whose reactions and responses tended to be predictable. His failure to anticipate the Chinese invasion was due to his excessive idealism and the illusion that Modern China continued to cherish all its ancient values.

In other words, he was more familiar with ancient Chinese history than with contemporary Chinese politics. Nehru did commit mistakes as most others in his position, but he preserved parliamentary control of foreign policy and elevated the general tone of Parliamentary debates. Lal Bahadur Shastri represented the period of transition. He stayed for too short a time to leave a lasting impact on foreign policy. Mrs. Gandhi's period saw the assertion of the executive in all policy matters. The annual exercise of presenting a "White Paper" in Parliament was stopped after 1968. No member even raised the issue in the House. Foreign affairs was not considered to be a subject conducive to parliamentary

endeavour. Many take interest but few specialize in the field. In this Parliament, V. Gopaldaswami was one of the few members who spoke knowledgeably on Sri Lankan issues, though at times he tended to be too emotional. Many members come to parliament with no experience in international affairs, but pressures from the constituency compel them to concentrate on local issues. For instance, on a subject like the Sri Lankan crisis, debate was found to be lively, even heated, with crystallisation of opinion, but the degree of attention left much to be desired.

The Afghanistan problem persists, though the Soviets recently have decided to quit in gradual stages. Critics of India's foreign policy on this and other issues, feel that we should give primary importance to friendship with our neighbours and maintain a stance of equidistance from the two super-powers.<sup>3</sup> Talking of equidistance, a member felt that Parliament should be balanced in its attitude and not be unduly influenced by party loyalty, nor by the so-called official line, or the popular stereotypes. He

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3 Lok Sabha Debates, Seventh Series, vol. XLVIII, 14th Session, no. 52, col. 54.

said, "On every little thing, the U.S. is brought in (saying that) the Opposition is being encouraged by the U.S. in all that goes on. If you want to have cordial relations with the U.S., you must recognize that not only the CIA is active, but the KGB is no less pervasive. You have to take a balanced relationship. That is why I talk about "equidistance". I am not saying "support the US on Diego Garcia". On Diego Garcia, if you want to condemn them, condemn them. On Grenada if you want to condemn them, I will join with you. But at the same time, by the same measuring rod, you also judge the Soviet Union".<sup>4</sup>

These words were spoken by a member who was always active and became a force to reckon with in the Seventh Lok Sabha, the Lok Sabha Member, Dr. Subramaniam Swami.

The Sri Lankan crisis continued. The new Government of Rajiv Gandhi tried to follow a good neighbourly policy but this did not help in the resolution of the problem. Mrs. Gandhi had played her cards well in her

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4 Ibid., col.402.

time: negotiations at the diplomatic level, with the militants keeping up the pressure on Colombo only to the extent of forcing it to reach an agreement acceptable to Delhi. But the scene changed by June, 1985. The new Prime Minister openly opposed the demand for Eelam. He put the emphasis only on diplomatic effort. To appease the Sri Lanka Government, New Delhi deported the two leaders, S.C. Chandrasaran and Anton Balasingham. But the order of deportation had to be cancelled, following a public uproar against it in Tamil Nadu.

Delhi's stand on this issue was marked by lack of stability and direction. Meanwhile, the Thimpu talks ended in a failure; and intra-group rivalry among the Tamils resulted in the murder of Sabaratnam, leader of TELO (Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation) by the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam). The more militant groups stuck to the demand for a separate State; and solution to the problem seemed as far as ever. Obviously, realising the futility of its new strategy, the government of India chose to revert to its old policy in response to the adverse criticism

in Parliament, and the pressure from Tamil Nadu.<sup>5</sup>

It is obviously not very difficult to understand or explain all the varied patterns of foreign policy. Some of them tend to be rather irrational; some others may be affected by so many variables that it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to isolate the impact of each factor; the working of a few others may be shrouded in a veil of secrecy. The role of the Indian Parliament in the present context has been an important factor, though not the most important. Its constant influence could be seen or felt on the Sri Lankan issue. Members of Parliament, especially those from Tamil Nadu took always the initiative and kept up the pressure on the Government forcing it to make policy statements and even to reconsider its stand and strategy on some occasions.

Even so, the Opposition in our Parliament had not been as effective as it could have been. For one thing, it was small in size and divided against itself. The Communist group always tried its best to avoid criticizing the Soviet Union for its occupation of Afghanistan which it saw as an attempt to save a non-aligned nation from the jaws of capitalist imperialist forces. The

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5 K. Manoharan, "Sri Lanka Turmoil", Seminar, no.324, August 1986, pp.34-37.

non-communist opposition was marginal in its strength and influence, except for a regional party like the DMK, which was a force to reckon with on the Sri Lankan issue.

Against this background the role of the Indian Parliament seems discouraging, unless it decides to reform its procedure and assert its powers. An old Parliament hand felt that the Lok Sabha was becoming increasingly irrelevant, especially in view of the rising trend of executive authoritarianism, which is both uncurbed and unabashed. The landslide victory of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has not made him sensitive to and solicitous of the Parliament's rights and privileges. Added to this, was the inability of the members of the ruling party, to assert their rights and even the Speaker's failure to protect the Parliament's position.<sup>6</sup> In the summing up of his impression, the old Parliament hand says that "Parliament has a special responsibility to ensure that the Prime Minister remains in good behaviour" and can resist

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6 Hiren Mukerjee, "Lok Sabha in Decline-I", The Statesman, 9 June, 1986.

pressure to abandon national ideals". He adds to say that it will be able to complete the task only if it also discharges the key role of "mobilising the people's spirit".<sup>7</sup>

Now, to mobilise the people's spirit the Parliament has first to reform itself. It could do this by following the example of the Mother of Parliaments. In the Parliament of 1979 in Great Britain (known as the Reform Parliament) reforms were undertaken to increase the parliamentary scrutiny of government in three areas, in particular: (1) Policy and Executive Actions, (2) Supply and (3) Legislation.<sup>8</sup> As our system is also based on the Westminster model, our Members of Parliament should carefully examine the new features of this "Reform Parliament" and seek to incorporate appropriate changes in the Indian Parliament so as to increase parliamentary scrutiny thereby enabling to serve as a "real" check to arbitrary executive action.

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7 Hiren Mukherjee, "Lok Sabha in Decline-II", The Statesman, 10 June 1986.

8 Philip Norton, "Britain's Reform Parliament", The Parliamentarian, vol.LXVII, no.2, April 1986, pp.59-64.

There are also a few other safeguards to be effected. The Consultative Committee of Parliament, attached to the Ministry of External Affairs, should not be a mere debating club, but a body where the members could discuss the problems in greater depth and detail. As the proceedings of this body are secret as of now, the public are kept in the dark about what has been discussed. These proceedings or at best their outcome, should be thrown open to the public and the powers of the committee should be enhanced so that it might be able to call for official records and examine public servants, like the Congressional Committees in the U.S.A.

More important than all else is the attitudinal change which is an indispensable pre-requisite for an effective procedural change. Recognising the need for members to play a more meaningful role in the influencing of policy, the Special Committee on "Reform of the House of Commons" said in its report: "We have reached the conclusion that what is called for to resolve the issue is a change in attitudes rather than changes in the rules and procedures of the House".<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Report of the Special Committee Reform of the House of Commons, June, 1985. Chairman, James A. McGrath (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer for Canada), p.5.



Change is necessary, on all sides -- the government, party leaders and individual members. This type of action, which is innovative calls for political courage, on the part of all the parties concerned. This could certainly be expected to make parliamentary government more effective.

Parliament is looked up to as the ultimate custodian of our liberties.<sup>10</sup> Change and progress are necessary to adapt itself to new situations and several changes can be thought of to ensure its continuity and stability. One of them is to broadcast parliamentary proceedings which could make members more conscientious and responsible. Parliament reflects the nation; it does not create it. Like all living organisms, it is dynamic. If the survival of democracy is to be ensured, Parliament has to be revitalised and its role reinforced. It alone can be entrusted with the power to control the executive and be the true mirror of public opinion in our political system.

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10 George Thomas, "The Changing Face of Parliamentary Democracy", Parliamentary Affairs, vol. XXXV, no. 4, Autumn 1982, pp. 348-55.

This study leads to the conclusion that there was a dominance of domestic factors on a few issues in this period. It also underlines the recognition of the powerful place of domestic politics in the formulation of foreign policies, whereby internal variables condition external behaviour. The parliament in India has a vital role to play as one of the domestic factors that influence the formulation and articulation of foreign policy. For foreign policy in any country to be effective there is need for "experienced, realistic and responsive statesmen, a professional bureaucracy, sophisticated public awareness and debate in parliament, and mass media".<sup>11</sup>

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11 Shashi Tharoor, Reasons of State: Political Development and India's Foreign Policy Under Indira Gandhi, 1966-77 (New Delhi, 1982), p.16. (emphasis added).

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