

INDIA SPEAKS

(Monthly Digest of Official Indian Statements on Middle East)

No. 33

April 2012

Bilateral Issues

a. Bahrain

1. Death of Four Indian Workers in Bahrain, New Delhi, 14 March 2012

Will the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether there are reports of four Workers from Kerala having died of inhaling poisonous gas in Bahrain due to lack of proper amenities in their lodgings; and
- (b) If so, the steps being taken by the Government to ensure better quarters and living for Indian workers working in the Middle Eastern and Arab countries?

Answer: The Minister of the State in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (Mr. Vayalar Ravi)

(a) & (b): Indian Mission in Bahrain has informed that five Indian nationals had rented one room. Due to cold weather in Bahrain they had decided to use empty paint tin containing firewood, and lighted it to get some warmth. This burning of the firewood resulted in poisonous carbon monoxide emission which was responsible for the death of four Indian workers, and the hospitalization of a fifth worker who is in a serious condition. The Indian Mission has informed that many Indian workers in Bahrain are living on modest wages and they make their own group- accommodation to save money.

The Government in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) has taken several initiatives to protect the welfare of overseas Indian workers which include:-

- (i) Indian had signed Labour Agreements with Jordan and Qatar in 1980s to protect the interest of the Indian Workers. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) were signed with United Arab Emirates (UAE) in December, 2006, with Kuwait in April, 2007, with Oman in November 2008, with Malaysia in January 2009, and with Bahrain in June 2009. An

Additional Protocol to the existing Labour Agreement between India and Qatar was signed in November, 2007.

(ii) These MOUs enhance bilateral co-operation in management of migration and protection of labour welfare. Under these MOUs a Joint Working Group (JWG) has been constituted that meets regularly in order to resolve bilateral labour issues.

In these Joint Working Groups, protection and welfare of the workers, compliance of contractual provisions of employment to be provided by the foreign employer relating to proper accommodation, working and living conditions are impressed upon.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 249 asked by Mr. Jose K. Mani

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=117286>

b. Egypt

2. Remarks by External Affairs Minister at the Unveiling Ceremony of Tagore Portrait at the House of Poetry, Cairo, 3 March 2012

H.E Dr. Shaker Abdel Hameed, Minister of Culture, Arab Republic of Egypt,

Ambassador Swaminathan,
Distinguished Members in the Audience and
Representatives of Young India

I am delighted to be here in Egypt. When I entered the hallowed district of Al Azhar, where the House of Poetry is located, I realized why Cairo is referred to as “Umm Al Duniya”, the mother of the world. This is the city that gave birth to so many luminaries of poetry. The House of Poetry, a heritage building, is indeed an appropriate place to nurture that legacy.

I also come from an ancient land where we value such a heritage. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, one of India’s greatest sons, is remembered 70 years after his death, not only for his lyrical poetry, his melodious songs, his marvellous dance dramas but also his path breaking ideas as an educationist. Most importantly, Gurudev Tagore's humanist philosophy believed in the essential one-ness of humanity.

As we strive to preserve our distinct identities as individuals, groups, communities and nations, it is important to recognize and celebrate our commonalities. I quote these celebrated lines from the Gitanjali:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high; Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of
dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

As Ambassador Swaminathan has said Gurudev Tagore visited Egypt twice, first as a
17 year old in 1878 and later as a mature poet philosopher in 1926.

There is an interesting anecdote from his second visit to Cairo in 1926. On 28
November, 1926 he was invited to the great Egyptian poet Ahmed Shawqi's house for
a lecture. Many political leaders attended the lecture. In fact, the Parliament session
which was to begin at 5 P.M was postponed by an hour to accommodate this function.

Tagore wrote in his travelogue, "I was told that this was unprecedented and that this it
could not have been done for anyone else. This was indeed a novel way to show me
their respect. I said this was homage paid to knowledge by politics. This was possible
only in the East."

I am conscious as I stand in the House of Poetry that for the second time Tagore has
been greatly honoured in this country. It is befitting that this is taking place during the
observance of 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Gurudev Tagore in Egypt. It is
also a testimony of the great friendship enjoyed between India and Egypt.

I am happy to note that the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, which
commissioned this portrait, earned the distinction of making this unique and lasting
contribution to the House of Poetry. I am confident that we would have more such
cultural exchanges between our two peoples, which would further strengthen our
bonds of friendship.

Thank You.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530119086>

3. Excerpts of Media Statement by External Affairs Minister at the Joint Press Conference following the 6th India-Egypt Joint Commission Meeting, Cairo, 4 March 2012

Excellency Mr. Mohamed Kamel Amr, Foreign Minister of Egypt
Distinguished representatives of Media.

I am delighted to be here in Cairo; this is my first visit to Egypt. Since my arrival, I have had the opportunity to meet His Excellency Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, Chairman, Supreme Council of Armed Forces and His Excellency Dr. Kamal El Ganzoury, Prime Minister.

I have just concluded very useful and productive discussions with Foreign Minister Kamel Amr and co-chaired with him the sixth session of Egypt-India Joint Commission Meeting.

We reviewed the entire gamut of our bilateral relations during the just concluded Joint Commission Meeting. Foreign Minister Kamel Amr and I accepted the recommendations of four sub-committees on Trade & Economic Co-operation, Scientific & Technical Co-operation, Cultural Co-operation and Information Technology on strengthening bilateral relations in these sectors.

We also signed four documents including a MoU on Cooperation in the field of Environment Protection, Cultural Exchange Programme for the years 2012-15, Work Plan for Agricultural Cooperation between Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Agricultural Research Centre of Egypt for the year 2012-13 and a MoU between Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Bureau of Indian Standards.

Yesterday, Egyptian Minister of Culture and I unveiled a portrait of Rabindranath Tagore, renowned litterateur and the first Asian to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature, at the House of Poetry. I was very happy to know that Tagore is the first non-Arab poet whose portrait has been installed at the House of Poetry.

This morning the Prime Minister of Egypt suggested that a multi-sectoral Indian delegation with representatives from both private and public sectors visit Egypt to focus on concrete areas of economic cooperation. I have welcomed this proposal and requested the Egyptian side to identify specific sectors of their interest so that we can take the proposal forward. We hope that this delegation will visit Egypt shortly for focused and productive discussions.

I also met His Excellency Dr. Nabil El Araby Secretary General of League of Arab States. India and Arab League has been holding regular political consultations since the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation in 2008. The first meeting of the High

Level Joint Committee of Arab-India Cooperation Forum was held in Cairo last week.

India has a robust cooperation arrangement with Arab countries and particularly with Arab League. Arab world and India share civilizational links, common cultural values and political beliefs and enjoy strong economic ties. With these activities, we propose to strengthen India-Arab cooperation further.

India-Egypt relations are over five millennium years old. In modern times, our relations were soundly founded on shared ideology and common beliefs. India has always viewed Egypt as a stabilizing factor in the region and in the world. Egypt has consistently played a vital role in the Non-Aligned Movement and championed the cause of the developing world. Our bilateral relations constitute a factor of peace and stability in international relations.

The leaderships of our two countries maintain close contact through regular Ministerial visits and exchanges at the highest level. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's visit in 2009 for the NAM summit was followed by visits of a number of Ministerial delegations to Egypt. Our bilateral trade of 3 billion US Dollars last year is promising to grow in the coming years. Indian investment of 2.5 billion dollars is generating employment for 30,000 Egyptians. None of the Indian companies who had invested in Egypt have left the country after the Revolution. In fact, one more Indian factory has been established in Ain Sukhna.

I thanked Foreign Minister Mohamed Kamel Amr for the warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation. I also take this opportunity to wish Egypt success in all its endeavours.

Thank you.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530119076>

4. Press Release on External Affairs Minister's Visit to Egypt, Cairo, 5 March 2012

H.E. Mr. S.M. Krishna, External Affairs Minister of India paid an official visit from 2-4 March 2012.

The Minister began the visit by chairing a Conference held in Cairo on 3 March with the Indian Heads of Missions (HOMs) accredited to the countries of West Asia and

North Africa region. The current developments in the region were discussed at the Conference with special emphasis on chalking out strategies for India.

On the same day, the Minister had a meeting with H.E. Dr. Nabil El-Araby, Secretary General of League of Arab States, who hosted a lunch in EAM's honour. India's traditionally close links with the Arab world have been strengthened further in recent years; special events like India-Arab Cultural festival, India-Arab Investment Projects Conclaves are being organized in India as well as in Arab countries. India-Arab relations as well as regional issues were discussed at the meeting.

External Affairs Minister unveiled, jointly with the Egyptian Minister of Culture, the portrait of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore at the 'House of Poetry in Cairo'. It is a signal honour to India that Tagore is the first literary figure whose portrait graces the House of Poetry.

On 4 March, External Affairs Minister called on H.E. Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, the Chief of the Chief of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces of Egypt and H.E. Dr. Kamal Ganzoury, Prime Minister of Egypt. During the meetings, both bilateral and international issues of mutual interest were discussed.

External Affairs Minister co-chaired with the Egyptian Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Mohamed Kamel Amr the sixth Meeting of India-Egypt Joint Commission. The entire gamut of bilateral relations was reviewed in detail during the Joint Commission Meeting. Preceding the Joint Commission Meeting, four sub-committees between India and Egypt met and identified steps for strengthening cooperation in the areas of Trade & Economic Cooperation, Science & Technology, Culture and Information Technology. A total of four documents were signed on the occasion including a MoU on Cooperation in the field of Environment Protection; Cultural Exchange Programme for the year 2012-15; Work Plan for Agricultural Cooperation between Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Agricultural Research Centre for the year 2012-13 and a MoU between Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Bureau of Indian Standards.

The Minister also had a meeting with Dr. Mohamed Morsy, President of the Freedom & Justice Party, and the party with largest number of seats in the current Egyptian Parliament.

During the visit, EAM also interacted with a number of Egyptian Ministers, opinion makers and members of the Indian community.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi
<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530219087>

5. Message of Condolence from External Affairs Minister to Foreign Minister of Egypt on demise of HH Pope Shenouda III, New Delhi, 19 March 2012

External Affairs Minister has conveyed his deep condolences to the Foreign Minister of Egypt, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Kamel Amr on demise of HH Pope Shenouda III.

The text of the External Affairs Minister's condolence message is as follows:

"Excellency,

I am deeply saddened to learn about the demise of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria and Head of the Coptic Orthodox church. Pope Shenouda III was both a great Egyptian patriot and believer in the virtues of religious tolerance and reconciliation. We in India share the sense of loss at the passing away of this great figure. On behalf of the Government and people of India, I offer my sincere condolences to the Egyptian people and members of the Coptic Orthodox faith.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration."

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi
<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530219128>

c. Iran

6. India-Iran to enhance cooperation in renewable energy, Tehran, 5 March 2012

India and Iran have agreed to enhance cooperation in the field of renewable energy. In a meeting with President of Iran Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Tehran, Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy Mr. Farooq Abdullah called for an enhancement in bilateral ties and economic cooperation with Iran especially in the field of renewable energy. President Ahmadinejad agreed that the two countries should use their full potential to enhance cooperation and bilateral ties.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Abdullah had a bilateral meeting with the Iranian Energy Minister, Mr. Majid Namjou. Mr. Namjou called India a leading country in the production of renewable energy. He added that Iran intended to develop renewable energies in cooperation with India. Dr. Abdullah outlined the progress that India had made in generating power through use of renewable energies, especially wind and

solar. He also highlighted the progress of India's National Solar Mission which has resulted in significant increase in installed capacity and an almost 40% fall in costs.

Mr. Abdullah also had bilateral meetings with the Governor-General of Shiraz, Mr. Hossein Sadegh Abedin, and Governor-General of Isfahan, Mr. Alireza Zakar Esfahani. Mr. Abdullah recalled the ancient, cultural and civilizational ties between the two countries and the similarities in lifestyle and languages of the two countries. He warmly spoke of the contributions of ancient Persia to Indian culture and architecture. He also called for enhanced cooperation in tourism, cultural exchanges and people to people contacts.

Mr. Abdullah was accompanied by Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, Minister for Science & Technology and Information Technology, Animal and Sheep Husbandry, Government of Jammu & Kashmir and Mr. Gireesh B. Pradhan, Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India.

Source: Press Information Bureau of India, New Delhi

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=80698>

7. Press Release on media reports on Iran, Embassy of India, Washington D.C, 6 March 2012

During the past several weeks, there have been several stories about India's import of Iranian crude oil carried by the media, many of which have presented a distorted picture by basing their conclusions on speculation and inaccurate information. These stories have in turn generated concerns here, including among some Members of the U.S. Congress.

Against this backdrop, we believe that it is important that the position of the Government of India and India's policy towards Iran is adequately understood.

India's relationship with Iran is neither inconsistent with non-proliferation objectives, nor do we seek to contradict the relationships we have with our friends in West Asia or with the United States and Europe.

India has consistently said that Iran must cooperate with the IAEA to address and resolve all outstanding issues about its nuclear program, issues that continue to raise understandable doubts in the minds of the international community. India believes that while Iran has rights to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, it must simultaneously and rigorously fulfil the treaty obligations which it has acceded to. Our stand in this regard

has been, and remains, consistent, well-enunciated including in the IAEA, and perfectly clear.

India has scrupulously adhered to the multilateral sanctions against Iran as mandated by the United Nations, and remains fully engaged with the United States Administration and Congress on this issue.

To provide perspective, it may be added that the linkages between the Indian and Iranian people are civilizational. Iran is also India's only corridor for land access to Afghanistan, through which is routed most of our development and reconstruction assistance to that country – a historic mission to assist Afghanistan, in which India and the United States share a deep convergence of interests.

Unfortunately, though, a series of recent media reports have presented a picture which not only distorts India's foreign policy objectives and energy security needs, but also creates misunderstanding about its actions. These reports overlook the imperative of India's dependence on oil imports from Iran to serve the energy needs of its people, more than 400 million of whom do not as yet have access to commercial energy. Allusions in the media that India's overall oil imports from Iran are increasing just because its monthly uptake of Iranian oil reportedly increased in January this year are based on selective use of information, misrepresenting the fact that in aggregate terms, crude imports from Iran constitute a declining share of India's oil imports. Nonetheless, given the imperative of meeting the energy needs of millions of Indians, an automatic replacement of all Iranian oil imports, is not a simple matter of selection, or a realistic option.

As a responsible member of the international community, India takes its obligations most seriously. At the same time, it firmly believes that the situation concerning Iran should not be allowed to escalate into a conflict, the disastrous consequences of which will be in nobody's interest. As a country that has six million of its nationals in the Gulf region, India is naturally concerned and urges all its partners to give diplomacy a fair chance to seek a peaceful resolution of the issues involved.

India's relationship with the United States is built on shared values and converging interests. It is based on our fundamental belief that we have mutually beneficial stakes in each other's success. Indeed, in India, we attach crucial importance to our strategic partnership with the United States both for advancing global peace, stability and progress, as well as in the pursuit of India's national development goals. The bipartisan encouragement and support that the India-U.S. strategic partnership has

received in the U.S. Congress is a source of immense strength and abiding inspiration for us. We remain confident that this partnership will only grow stronger in the times ahead.

Source: Embassy of India, Washington D.C

<http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1875/press-release-on-media-reports-on-iran>

8. Exemptions from international sanctions on purchase of Iranian oil, New Delhi, 13 March 2012

Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state?

- (a) Whether Government has asked for an exemption from the U.S. and the European Union sanctions on purchase of crude oil from Iran;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) If not, the reasons therefore;
- (d) The financial implications of these sanctions on India's State-owned companies;
- (e) Whether Government has prepared any contingency plan regarding alternate markets for crude oil; and
- (f) If so, the details thereof?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Mr. R.P.N Singh)

- (a) No, Sir.
- (b) Does not arise.
- (c) India implements its obligations under UN sanctions only. India is not under any obligation to observe unilateral sanctions by any country. The question of waiver under US / EU sanctions is a matter of domestic US/EU law and it is for the United States/EU to determine how they choose to apply provisions of their domestic law.
- (d) At present, there is no financial implication of the sanctions on our oil PSUs.
- (e) & (f) In order to reduce its dependence on any particular region of the world, India has been consciously trying to diversify its sources of crude oil imports. During 2011-12, the country imported crude oil from more than 30 countries spread across different continents.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 133 asked by Mr. N.K Singh

<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/OResult.aspx>

9. Spotting of mysterious Iranian cargo ship near Lakshadweep, New Delhi, 14 March 2012

- (a) whether it is a fact that Indian Navy has spotted a mysterious Iranian cargo ship close to Lakshadweep; and
- (b) If so, the details thereof and what action the Navy has taken?

Answer: Minister of Defence (Mr. A.K. Antony)

(a)& (b): An Indian Navy patrol Aircraft on routine coastal surveillance in October, 2011 spotted an Iranian Merchant Ship “MV ASSA” anchored 140 NM South West off Karwar in the Arabian Sea. Subsequent monitoring by Indian Naval Ships and Aircraft reported transfer of personnel and stores between MV ASSA and other vessels transiting through the area. The issue has also been taken up with the Embassy of Iran and Indian Navy is keeping constant surveillance in the area.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 204 asked by Mr. Govindrao Adik

<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

10. Default on payment by Iran on rice export, New Delhi, 14 March 2012

- a) Whether it is a fact that Iran has defaulted on payments on rice exports, to India;
- b) If so, the details thereof;
- c) Whether Government has conducted an assessment of the same;
- d) If so, the details thereof; and
- e) If not, the reasons therefore?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Mr. Jyotiraditya M. Scindia)

(a) & (b): The arrears due to Indian Rice exporters amount to more than INR 1830 millions (Rs.1,837,399,711.85). The amount was initially to be paid by Iranian companies in Dubai, which have since wound up their operations and relocated.

(c) & (d): Embassy of India, Tehran has informed that there have been delays in payments due to 9 Indian exporters for export of rice to Iran from two Iranian companies registered in UAE. Defaulters are Iranian private companies and not government entities. By February 2012, these delays in payments were estimated at Rs. 184 crores.

(e): Does not arise.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Unstarred Question No. 167 asked by Mr. Piyush Goyal

<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

11. Impact of US Sanctions on Iran, New Delhi, 14 March 2012

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether India has assessed the impact of fresh US and western countries sanctions on Iran on December 31, 2011;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) Whether India is finding it difficult to pay its oil bill to Iran;
- (d) If so, the details thereof;
- (e) Whether Indian foreign secretary visited US to seek waivers on sanctions;
- (f) If so, the outcome thereof;
- (g) The present position in regard to oil supplies and payments to Iran; and
- (h) The steps taken by the Government to continue friendly relations with Iran to meet its energy needs?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Ms. Preneet Kaur)

(a) to (h) India implements UN sanctions on Iran. However, unilateral sanctions by countries or group of countries have an impact on the bilateral trade with Iran, including on the settlement of our trade payments to Iran. Foreign Secretary visited United States from 6-8 February 2012 for the annual India-US Foreign Office Consultations and other bilateral meetings. During his visit, the two sides discussed bilateral cooperation and regional and global issues of mutual interest. The question of waiver is a matter of domestic US law and it is for the United States to determine how it chooses to apply provisions of its domestic law. In this context we are in close consultations with the Iranian authorities to ensure prompt settlement of payments.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 454 asked by Mr. Asaduddin Owaisi and Mr. Nilesh Narayan Rane

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=116678>

12. International development against Iran, New Delhi, 15 March 2012

- (a) Whether Government is monitoring current international developments against Iran as this may adversely impact on our nation as we are importing 70 percent of our crude requirement from Iran;
- (b) Whether our Foreign Policy towards Iran is influenced by US Government;
- (c) Whether Government is approaching Iranian Government for hiring their infrastructure development projects in exchange of import of crude oil as it would be benefited for both nations; and
- (d) If so, the details thereof?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

- (a) India is monitoring international developments in relation to Iran. While Iran is an important source for our crude imports, in 2010-11 our import of crude from Iran was less than 12% of our total crude imports.
- (b) Our foreign policy is independent and is based on national interests. Our relations with a country are not based on our relations with other countries.
- (c) & (d) Government is in discussions with the Iranian authorities to ensure uninterrupted supply of crude.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 360 asked by Mr. Bharatsinh Prabhatsinh Parmar and Mr. Parshottam Khodabhai Rupala
<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

13. Dependency on Iran for oil, New Delhi, 15 March 2012

- (a) Whether it is a fact that India is dependent on Iran for oil;
- (b) Whether New Delhi is pushing for negotiations to settle the crisis in West Asia instead of supporting sanctions against Tehran;
- (c) Whether it is a fact that sanctions are not desirable as they are ineffective and sometimes counter-productive; and
- (d) Keeping this interest in mind, the further steps the Ministry is taking to resolve the issue?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

(a) India sources crude oil from various countries including Iran.

(b) Due to the presence of a large Indian community living and working in the West Asian region and our strong economic and commercial ties, peace and stability in this region are of vital importance to India. Keeping in view our close relations and mutual interdependence, we keep a close watch on the developments in the region through our Missions. We maintain regular interactions with the leaderships in the countries of the region. In all our interactions with them, we emphasize that we accord the highest priority to peace and harmony in the region which has a bearing on progress and prosperity for both of us. As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), we closely coordinate with other members to ensure peaceful solutions to problems in the region.

(c) USA and EU along with some other countries have imposed economic sanctions on Iran targeting its nuclear programme. We continue to maintain that we are bound by UN sanctions and unilateral sanctions imposed by countries or group of countries should not impact legitimate trade relations with Iran.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 365 asked by Mr. Govindrao Adik

<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

14. Sanctions against Iran, New Delhi, 15 March 2012

- (a) Whether it is a fact that USA and European Countries have recently imposed sanctions against Iran and have also stopped importing crude oil from Iran;
- (b) If so, the details thereof and reasons for imposing such sanctions;
- (c) Whether USA and European Countries are coercing other countries to follow them; and
- (d) The reaction of Government with regard to US and European moves against Iran?

Answer: The Minister of External Affairs (Mr. S.M Krishna)

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (d) of Rajya Sabha starred question No. 55 regarding “Sanctions against Iran” for answer on 15.03.2012

The U.S. National Defence Authorization Act, signed into a law by the U.S. President on 31 December 2011, imposes sanctions in the form of prohibition from access to the

U.S. financial system for foreign financial institutions that engage in significant financial transactions with effect from 28 June 2012 with the Central Bank of Iran or other U.S. designated Iranian financial institutions for sale or purchase of petroleum products from Iran. The law provides for exemption from sanctions for the concerned foreign financial institutions engaging in such transactions, if the U.S. determines that the country of primary transaction has significantly reduced its petroleum imports from Iran. The U.S. has further issued an Executive Order on 6 February 2012, which requires U.S. financial institutions to freeze any transaction connected with Government of Iran or any Iranian financial institution passing through its system. EU has imposed various sanctions on Iran since 2007 in response to its concerns over Iran's nuclear proliferation activities. Further, the European Union Foreign Affairs Council announced on 23 January 2012 its decision to impose new sanctions on Iran. The new sanctions impose a ban on new contracts for imports by EU member countries of crude oil, petroleum products and petrochemicals from Iran with immediate effect. An allowance, however, has been made for execution of existing contracts till 1 July 2012 for crude oil and petroleum products.

The U.S. law follows the designation of the financial sector of Iran as a jurisdiction of primary money laundering concern by the U.S. Government in November 2011. The U.S. maintains that the sanctions on Iran are aimed to support its goal of persuading Iran abide by the UNSC and IAEA resolutions pertaining to Iran's nuclear programme. The stated reason of the latest sanctions on Iran imposed by EU was to encourage Iran to return to negotiations without preconditions.

It is the publicly stated policy of the U.S., as reflected in the Section 1245 of the National Defence Authorization Act, that the U.S. President shall persuade countries purchasing oil from Iran to limit the use by Iran of revenue from purchases of oil to purchases of non-luxury consumer goods from the country purchasing the oil. It has also publically called upon countries importing petroleum products to reduce their dependence on Iran.

Government implements its obligations under the UN Security Council Resolutions on Iran. We continue to maintain that we are bound by UN sanctions and unilateral sanctions imposed by countries or group of countries should not impact legitimate trade relations with Iran.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Starred Question No. 55 asked by Mr. Rajkumar Dhoot
<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

15. European Union-United States sanctions on trade with Iran, New Delhi, 15 March 2012

- (a) Whether India shall not be adhering to EU and US sanctions put on trade with Iran;
- (b) Whether talks have been held between two countries to build a natural gas pipeline; and
- (c) If so, the details thereof in view of the sanctions imposed by EU and the US?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

(a) India implements its obligations under the UN Security Council Resolutions on Iran. We continue to maintain that we are bound by UN sanctions and unilateral sanctions imposed by countries or group of countries should not impact legitimate trade relations with Iran.

(b) & (c) Purchase of natural gas from Iran through a pipeline has been discussed during the various bilateral meetings including in the last meeting of the Joint Working Group on Cooperation in the Hydrocarbon sector held in Tehran on December 19 - 20, 2010. Among the issues that have been focused upon relating to the pipeline project are those relating to pricing, transit fee and transportation tariff, point of delivery, project structure and security of the pipeline. Such multilateral projects involve protracted discussions, as all the aspects have to be carefully examined and deliberated upon to the satisfaction of the participating countries to protect each country's interests and to avoid any problems in the future in the successful operation of the Project.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 378 asked by Mr. Rajkumar Dhoot <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

16. Press Release on Exports to Iran, New Delhi, 19 March 2012

India has recently announced its strategy for doubling exports by 2014. As such there is a big focus on widening the trading partners and increasing exports across the globe. Amongst other regions, west Asia is also focused as an important market. Presently, there is huge trade deficit in the balance of payment with Iran; hence steps are being taken to increase bilateral trade with Iran.

Iran is an important trading partner of India and there are good business opportunities in sectors like food items, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment etc. Federation of Indian Exporters Organization (FIEO) has organized a visit of high level business delegation to Iran from 10-15 March 2012 to explore business cooperation to enhance Indian export to Iran (non-sanctioned items) so as to reduce the bilateral trade deficit.

(e) No agreement has yet been finalized with regard to paragraph 1 and 2 above.

This information was given by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Mr. Jyotiraditya M. Scindia in a written reply to a question raised in Lok Sabha today.

Source: Press Information Bureau of India, New Delhi

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=81212>

17. Decrease in oil import from Iran, New Delhi, 20 March 2012

Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state?

- (a) Whether it is a fact that the import of crude oil from Iran by the public sector oil companies of the country is decreasing continuously for the last four years;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) Whether it is also a fact that India may also make payment for Iran's oil export in rupees; and
- (d) If so, the details thereof and the reasons for decreasing import of oil from Iran in spite of increasing import of oil in India every year?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Mr. R.P.N Singh)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Data on crude oil imported from Iran during the last 4 years are as under: Year 2008-09 2009-10 2010-11 2011-12 (April – Jan) (Provisional) Quantity in Million Metric Ton 21.81, 21.20, 18.50, 14.78

(c) India and Iran have agreed for part-payment of crude oil imported from Iran by India in the Indian Rupee.

(d) Quantum of crude oil imported by Indian refineries from various sources is decided by them on the basis of technical, commercial and other considerations. In order to reduce its dependence on any particular region of the world, India has been consciously trying to diversify its sources of crude oil imports to ensure energy security for the country. Currently, India is importing crude oil from more than 30 countries spread across different continents.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 746 asked by Mr. Ram Jethmalani <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

18. Investment by Indian oil companies in Iranian oilfields, New Delhi, 20 March 2012

Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state?

- (a) Whether it is a fact that Government would supply gas from ONGC's oil fields for power generation in order to offset the negative effects of lesser production of gas from KG-D6 fields;
- (b) If so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) The respective quantum of gas supplies made from ONGC's fields along with the recipients industries and the leftover quantum being used for other purposes?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Mr. R.P.N Singh)

(a) & (b): All the available domestic gas (excluding what is covered under Small & Isolated Fields Policy and allocation of which has been delegated to National Oil Companies) has already been allocated to various consumers. No further gas is available for allocation, at present.

(c): During 2010-11 the total production of natural gas by ONGC was 63.273 mmcmd out of which 50.62 mmcmd was supplied to various industries either directly by ONGC or by GAIL. The industry-wise supply of gas produced by ONGC during the above period is as follows: Industry Supply in mmcmd, Fertilizer 13.27, Gas Based LPG plants for LPG extraction 3.03, Power 21.00, CGD 4.34, Court mandated customer other than CGD 0.97, Small consumers having allocation less than 50,000 SCMD 1.95, Refineries 1.21, Petrochemicals 1.42, Sponge Iron 1.61, Others 0.70, Internal consumption-P/L 1.12, Total 50.62

The balance quantity of 12.653 mmcmd is either flared for technical reasons or consumed internally by ONGC.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 737 asked by Mr. Ramchandra Prasad Singh and Mr. Shivanand Tiwari <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

19. Losses to exporters due to Iranian currency depreciation, New Delhi, 21 March 2012

- a) What steps Government is taking urgently to ensure that Indian exporters do not suffer due to currency depreciation;
- b) whether any talks has been held with the Iranian Government on how to fix some benchmark for currency valuation so as to encourage trade with Iran; and
- c) What steps will Government take to ensure that Indian exporters get some subsidy to continue their traditional exports to Iran?

Answer:

(a) The movements in the Iranian Rial and Indian Rupees since end-August 2011 indicate that while Indian Rupee had depreciated more sharply against US dollar than the Iranian Rial till end- December 2011, the Rial depreciated more than the Indian Rupee against US dollar since January 2012. If Iran Rial depreciates against the US dollar more than the Indian Rupee, its net impact on India's exports may not be very large. This is because India's imports from Iran are far higher than its exports to Iran and largely comprises of crude oil which is essentially invoiced in US dollar. The exports from India to Iran constituted about one per cent of its total exports while imports accounted for three per cent of its total imports.

(b) Yes Sir.

(c) Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has issued necessary notification on 5th March 2012, a copy of which is at Annexure.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 787 asked by Mr. Syed Azeez Pasha <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

20. Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative of India at the United Nations Security Council briefing on the 1737 Committee concerning Iran, New Delhi, 21 March 2012

Thank you, Mr. President

I would join other colleagues in thanking Ambassador Nester Osorio for presenting the 90-day report of the 1737 Committee. We commend his stewardship of the Committee and as also the professionalism with which the Committee has been implementing its mandate.

Mr. President, the Panel of Experts is mandated to assist the Committee in the implementation of the relevant resolution and has to work under the direction of the Committee. We appreciate the work, including outreach activities, that the Panel has

been doing and encourage it to continue its work in strict compliance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council in an independent, objective, transparent and impartial manner. The Panel should also brief the Committee regularly on all its activities.

During the reporting period, the Panel has submitted several reports, including a quarterly update on the implementation reports of the Member States submitted during the period from 1 November 2011 to 31 January 2012. We thank the Panel for these reports, which we are carefully studying. In January this year, three members of the Panel visited India. They had a useful exchange of views with the concerned authorities in New Delhi.

Mr. President, India has consistently supported the right of all nations to peaceful uses of nuclear energy in accordance with relevant international treaties to which they are a party. Iran should fully cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to restore the confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. In this connection, we welcome the recent exchanges between Iran and the IAEA. We hope that the outstanding technical issues concerning the Iranian nuclear programme will be resolved peacefully through Iran's cooperation with the IAEA. We also welcome the decision to resume talks between the P5 + 1 and Iran. These talks should serve as an important confidence building measure and help avoid escalation of the situation.

Mr. President, India supports the full implementation of relevant resolutions of the Security Council concerning the Iranian nuclear issue. While implementing these resolutions, it is necessary that all efforts should be made so that legitimate trade and economic activities do not suffer.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we support the Chair's intention to hold an open briefing along with the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts in April 2012 for interested member-states on implementation procedures. This briefing will also serve as a useful opportunity for the members of the Committee and the Panel to get views of the wider UN membership.

I thank you.

Source: Permanent Mission of India to United Nations, New York
<http://www.un.int/india/2012/ind2003.pdf>

21. Oil Exploration in Iran, New Delhi, 22 March 2012

Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state:-

- (a) the details of the Indian oil companies, both in the Government and private sectors, which have been allocated oil sectors in Iran, sector-wise, along with the nature of exploration work being undertaken by them;
- (b) The adverse effects likely on ONGC Videsh's plans on oil exploration in Iran due to the on-going sanctions imposed by the United States of America and other European countries;
- (c) The details of ONGC Videsh's planning in Iran, including production or exploration blocks involving Master Development Plan;
- (d) the details of the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure safe development work of ONGC Videsh's plans in Iran; and
- (e) the details of production along with the amount of investment made by the Indian companies in Iran and the time frame by which production is likely to be started therefrom?

Answer: Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Mr. R.P.N Singh)

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

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (e) of the Lok Sabha starred questions No. 126 by Dr. Padmasinha Bajirao Patil and Shri Dinesh Chandra Yadav to be answered on 22.03.2012 regarding Oil exploration in Iran

(a): ONGC Videsh Limited.(OVL) along with consortium partners Indian Oil Corporation Limited(IOCL) and Oil India Limited(OIL) had earlier carried out exploration work in Farsi offshore Block in Iran under a contract signed during December, 2002.

In so far as private companies are concerned, Ministry does not compile information in this regard.

(b): The United States (US) and European Union (UN) sanctions on Iran make various services including technical and financial required for oil exploration extremely difficult.

(c) to (e): OVL consortium had earlier carried out the exploration work in the Farsi Block. Thereafter, no further contract has been entered into.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 126 asked by Mr. Patil Padamsinha Bajirao and Dinesh Chandra Yadav

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=117758>

22. Impact of Iran Problem, New Delhi, 22 March 2012

- (a) Whether Government is studying the impact of Iran problem on our country;
- (b) If so, the sectors, which would directly or indirectly be affected due to this;
- (c) The steps that have been taken by Government to deal with any adverse impacts on our country in the future; and
- (d) If so, the details thereof?

Answer: The Minister of External Affairs (Mr. S.M Krishna)

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (d) of the Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 125 regarding “Impact of Iran Problem” for answer on 22.03.2012

Government is studying the impact on India of the problems that have arisen due to imposition of sanctions against Iran. The UN sanctions against Iran call for restricting transfers relating to technology and items relating to the nuclear and missile fields to Iran. Apart from UN sanctions, other countries/group of countries like US/EU has imposed unilateral sanctions on Iran. The sanctions imposed by US and EU on Iran target its alleged nuclear weapons program. These sanctions have specifically targeted Iran’s banking and oil sectors, which have an impact on bilateral trade, particularly in the energy sector. Iran is an important source of oil for India. Indian companies have faced difficulties in making payments for crude oil and other imports from Iran through international banking channels. Government implements its obligations under the UN Security Council Resolutions on Iran. We continue to maintain that we are bound by UN sanctions and unilateral sanctions imposed by countries or group of countries should not impact legitimate trade relations with Iran. India is in discussions with Iran to ensure prompt settlement of payments and uninterrupted supply of crude oil. Moreover, to strengthen the country’s energy security and to reduce its dependence

on any particular region of the world, India has been consciously trying to diversify its sources of crude oil imports to ensure energy security for the country.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Starred question No. 125 asked by Mr. Ram Kripal Yadav <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

23. Address by Ambassador Nirupama Rao at the Hudson Institute on “Indian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities”, Washington D.C, 22 March 2012

...I would like to say a few words about Iran in this regard. We have consistently said that Iran must cooperate with the IAEA to resolve all the outstanding issues about its nuclear program that continue to raise doubts in the minds of the international community. We acknowledge that Iran has the right to utilize the benefits of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. But, this right has to be exercised in conformity with international obligations that Iran has voluntarily undertaken as a non-nuclear weapon state party to NPT. We have maintained that Iran must comply with its obligations, fully and transparently. But, we also hope that these issues are resolved peacefully. The need of the hour is diplomatic drive and creativity to address the situation. In this regard, we feel that it is a positive development that P5+1 and Iran have agreed to have another round of talks in the near future. It is our hope that all the sides will utilize this opportunity to engage in a constructive and serious manner to find a way forward. This task will not be easy but we do believe that if the parties demonstrate a seriousness of purpose then gradually the issues can be resolved.

We do not see our relationship with Iran as either being inconsistent with our non-proliferation objectives, or in contradiction with the relationships that we have with our friends in West Asia or with the United States. As a near neighbour, and our only surface access to Central Asia and Afghanistan, engagement with Iran is of relevance and meaning to us. And, even though we do have imports of oil from Iran, the share of such imports continue to decline and is currently under 10% of our overall imports. I would like to emphasize that India, as a responsible member of the international community, takes its obligations most seriously. We have scrupulously adhered to the multilateral sanctions against Iran as mandated by the United Nations, and remains fully engaged with the United States Administration and Congress on this issue...

Source: Embassy of India, Washington D.C

<http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1892/address-by-ambassador-nirupama-rao-at-the-hudson-institute-on-andquot%3Bindian-foreign-policy-in-the-21st-century%3A-challenges-and-opportunitiesandquot%3B>

24. Import of crude from Iran, New Delhi, 22 March 2012

Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state:-

- (a) the monthly and company-wise breakup of the total quantum of crude oil imported from Iran both by the public sector and private sector oil companies from 1 April, 2000 to 1 March, 2012;
- (b) the quantum of refined petroleum products exported or re-exported after importing crude both in the public and private sector during the corresponding period;
- (c) Whether the graph of export and import during the aforesaid period has shown an increasing or decreasing trend and the details thereof;
- (d) the details of payment mechanism being worked out by India for payment of Iranian crude and whether India is planning to pay Iran in gold as a backup in case the alternative banking route worked out through UCO Bank in rupee is also hit by sanctions; and
- (e) the details of back up strategy of the Government in case Iran's oil imports cease completely due to accentuating and extraneous circumstances?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Mr. R.P.N Singh)

- (a), (b) & (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.
- (d) After the Asian Clearing Union was withdrawn by the RBI in December 2010, the Government has operationalized a new payment mechanism in August, 2011 under which all the outstanding payments due to National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) have been settled successfully, and payment for crude oil import from Iran is made through this mechanism as and when due. India and Iran have also agreed for part-payment of crude oil imported from Iran by India in the Indian Rupee.
- (e) To strengthen the country's energy security and to reduce its dependence on any oil imports to ensure energy security for the country. The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas keeps in close touch with oil and gas producing countries, and imports crude oil from more than 30 countries spread over different continents.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 1498 asked by Mr. Manish Tiwari, Mr. Harsh Vardhan, Ms. Supriya Sule, Mr. Sanjay Dina Patil, Mr. Sanjeev Ganesh Naik, Mr. P. Viswanathan, Mr. K Sugumar
<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=117775>

25. Payment issues with Iran, New Delhi, 26 March 2012

Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether Iran has agreed to part payment in Indian currency through Indian banks for crude oil sale to India;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether such payment in Indian currency is likely to be extended for imports of other items from Iran, other than crude oil;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore;
- (e) whether such transactions violate the international standards of business transactions; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the response of the Government thereto?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Mr. Jyotiraditya M. Scindia)

- (a) Yes Madam.
- (b) Confidential commercial arrangements have been worked out for part payment in Indian currency.
- (c) Yes Madam.
- (d) Confidential commercial arrangements that have been worked out are due to large trade deficit of India with Iran.
- (e) No Madam
- (f) Does not arise.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No.1884 asked by Mr. K. Sudhakaran <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/qsearch15.aspx>

26. Iran Conference on Disarmament, New Delhi, 29 March 2012

- (a) Whether Government supports Iran conference on disarmament recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the present status thereof?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

(a) to (c) India participated in an international conference on disarmament and non-proliferation organized by Iran in Tehran on 17-18 April 2010. The conference deliberated upon various aspects relating to disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. On June 12-13, 2011, Iran organized the Second International Conference on Disarmament. An invitation was

extended to the Embassy of India, Tehran only for the inaugural session of the conference. A senior diplomat of Embassy attended the inaugural session. Government continues to support the goal of global and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1750 asked by Mr. Mohd. Ali Khan <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

d. Iraq

27. Utilization of crude supply from Iraq in backward regions of A.P, New Delhi, 13 March 2012

Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state?

- (a) whether it is a fact that Iraq offers to double crude supply to India;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the MoUs signed so far; and
- (c) the manner in which Government will use such supply in the industries which are existing in the backward regions in Andhra Pradesh compared to other States in the Twelfth Five Year Plan?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Mr. R.P.N Singh)

(a) The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has not received any offer from Iraq to double crude supply to India. Oil Companies procure crude oil through term contracts from the National Oil Company of Iraq.

The crude oil imported from Iraq during the last three years is as under – Year Import from Iraq (Million Metric Ton) 2009-10 (14.96), 2010-11 (16.83), 2011-12 (April'11 – Jan'12) (Provisional) 21.16

(b) & (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 125 asked by Mr. Mohd. Ali Khan, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

e. Israel

28. Minister of External Affairs S.M Krishna's interview to Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore, 9 March 2012

Q6: In the big picture of foreign policy, does India intend to move towards neo-nonalignment of not taking sides with reference to the United States and China on the global stage and also with reference to Saudi Arabia and Iran in West Asia?

Mr. Krishna: It has been India's consistent policy to judge issues based on their merits and their effect on India's interests rather than aligning with one group or another. This was also reflected in our policy of non-alignment which remains a cornerstone of

India's foreign policy. [India's first] Prime Minister [Jawaharlal] Nehru used to call it a policy of 'enlightened self-interest'. Today, this policy has enabled us to work with all the major powers without exception, in accordance with our national priorities. We are committed to uphold the core values of this policy such as respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=500419112>

29. Attack on Israeli Diplomat, New Delhi, 13 March 2012

Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether the explosives and methodology used in the car bombing of an Israeli diplomat in Delhi was a first incident of its kind in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any evidence has surfaced even prima-facie that could substantiate the averments made by the Israeli Government about the perpetrators of the attack;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the details of the inputs given by foreign intelligence agencies regarding this case; and
- (f) the number of terrorist attacks which had taken place between January 2009 and February 2012 along with the charge sheets filed, persons convicted/acquitted/pending cases in each of these cases?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Mr. Mullappally Ramachandran)

(a) to (e): A magnetic bomb attack took place on an Israeli Embassy car on February 13, 2012 near the crossing of Race Course road and Aurangzeb Road. Four persons, including Ms. Tal Yehoshua, Koren w/o Alon Yehoshua, Defence Attaché of Israeli Embassy, were injured in the attack. The matter is under investigation.

(f): The details of terrorist attacks that have taken place between January 2009 and February 2012 are at Annexure.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 77 asked by Mr. Manish Tewari

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=116595>

30. Agreement with Israel in Agriculture, New Delhi, 13 March 2012

Will the Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether the Union Government has made any agreement with the Israel for boosting agriculture cooperation in technology;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the extent to which the agreement is likely to be useful for agriculture sector?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Processing Industries and Parliamentary Affairs (Mr. Harish Rawat)

(a) & (b): Yes, Madam.

An agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Israel for cooperation in the field of agriculture has been signed on 24th December, 1993.

The MoU provides for collaboration in the areas of water and soil management, arid and semi-arid crop production, fruit and vegetable production, post harvest, plant and animal sciences, plant protection and control, veterinary science, agri-business, farm mechanization and technology, agricultural training and extension, agricultural research and agro-forestry etc.

(c): Thereafter an Action Plan (2008-2010) was agreed upon in January, 2008. Progress has been achieved in the areas of horticulture mechanization, protected cultivation, orchard and canopy management, nursery management training, micro irrigating and PHM etc.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 41 asked by Mr. Manicka Tagore

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=116719>

31. Magnet bomb attack on Israeli diplomat, New Delhi, 14 March 2012

- (a) whether the use of Magnet Bomb attack on the Israeli Diplomat is a new threat and challenge to Government in countering the terrorist activities;
- (b) if so, the manner in which this new challenge is going to be tackled by Government; and
- (c) what is the progress in the case involving attack on Israeli Diplomat?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Mr. Mullappally Ramachandran)

(a) to (c): A magnetic bomb attack took place on an Israeli Embassy car on 13.02.2012 in which four persons, including the driver and an Israeli lady occupant of the car, as also two other persons in a nearby car, were injured. The matter is under investigation by Delhi Police who have so far arrested one person in this connection.

Security arrangements for diplomatic missions and diplomats of foreign countries, as also for international organizations, located in the country are reviewed periodically on the basis of inputs given by the central security agencies and appropriate advisories issued. The actual arrangements, based on these inputs and advisories, as well as local threat assessments, are made by the local/State police concerned.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 242 asked by Mr. Sardar Balwinder Singh Bhundar, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

32. Attack on Israeli diplomat, New Delhi, 14 March 2012

- (a) whether an Israeli diplomat and some other persons have been targeted and attacked during February, 2012 with magnetic bomb in New Delhi, barely 20050 meters away from official residence of Prime Minister;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the details of persons died/injured;
- (c) whether intelligence agencies had informed the Ministry regarding such type of attack in VVIP zone;
- (d) if so, the reasons for failure of security agencies to check the terror strike; and
- (e) if not, the reasons for failure of intelligence agencies?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Mr. Mullappally Ramachandran)

(a) to (e): A magnetic bomb attack took place on an Israeli Embassy car on 13.02.2012 near the crossing of Aurangzeb Road and Race Course Road in New Delhi. In the incident four persons, including the driver and an Israeli lady occupant of the car, as also two other persons in a nearby car, were injured. The matter is under investigation by Delhi Police who have so far arrested one person in this connection.

Security arrangements for diplomatic missions and diplomats of foreign countries, as also for international organizations, located in the country are reviewed periodically on the basis of inputs given by the central security agencies and appropriate advisories

issued. The actual arrangements, based on these inputs and advisories, as well as their own local threat assessments, are made by the local/State police concerned. Based on the inputs given by the central security agencies, Delhi Police has taken additional precautionary measures to strengthen security.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 215 asked by Mr. Prabhat Jha, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

33. Status of enquiry into Israeli Embassy car attack, New Delhi, 14 March 2012

- (a) whether it is a fact that Israeli Embassy car exploded just 500 meters from Prime Minister's residence;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) what is the present status of the enquiry in this case and which terrorist organization is responsible for this attack; and
- (d) what are the steps Government is taking so that in future such incidence do not occur?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Mr. Mullappally Ramachandran)

(a) to (d): A magnetic bomb attack took place on an Israeli Embassy car on 13.02.2012 near the crossing of Aurangzeb Road and Race Course Road in New Delhi. Four persons were injured in attack. Delhi Police is investigating the matter. So far one person has been arrested in this connection.

Security arrangements for diplomatic missions and diplomats of foreign countries, are reviewed periodically on the basis of inputs given by the central security agencies and appropriate advisories issued. The actual arrangements, based on these inputs and advisories, as well as local threat assessments, are made by the local/State police concerned.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 244 asked by Mr. Tariq Anwar, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

34. Extradition Treaty with Israel, New Delhi, 14 March 2012

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:-

Middle East Institute @ New Delhi, www.mei.org.in

- (a) whether the Union Government has signed an extradition treaty and also a pact on transfer of sentenced prisoners with the Government of Israel, recently; and
(b) if so, the details thereof?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Ms. Preneet Kaur)

(a) Yes.

(b) The Government of India has signed an Extradition Treaty as also an Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons with the Government of Israel. Both the Treaty and the Agreement were signed during the visit of the External Affairs Minister to Israel from 9-11 January 2012. The Extradition Treaty will provide a legal framework for seeking extradition of fugitive criminals between the Contracting States while the Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons provides the opportunity to persons of each Contracting State sentenced in the other to serve their sentences in their own country.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 380 asked by Mr. A. Ganeshmurthi,

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=116662>

35. Attack on Israeli Diplomat, New Delhi, 14 March 2012

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether the Government has reviewed the situation in regard to India's relations with other countries after the attack on Israeli diplomat's car in New Delhi recently; and
(b) if so, the details and the outcome thereof?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

(a) and (b) Government has strongly condemned the recent attack on Israeli diplomat's car on February 13, 2012. While the incident is under investigation, Government continuously monitors all developments having a bearing on national security and takes all necessary steps to safeguard it.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 447 asked by Mr. Harsh Vardhan,

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=116675>

36. Export of Gas by Israel, New Delhi, 15 March 2012

Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether Israel has offered to export gas to India in the form of Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) and invited partnership of Indian Companies;
- (b) if so, the details of the initiative taken by the Government in this regard;
- (c) whether any talks have been held between the two countries on the import of gas from Israel;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the details of steps taken by the Government to meet the energy security of the country?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Mr. R.P.N Singh)

- (a) No, Madam.
- (b) Does not arise.
- (c) No, Madam.
- (d) Does not arise.
- (e) To strengthen the country's energy security, the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas keeps in close touch with oil and gas producing countries, and imports crude oil from more than 30 countries spread over different continents. Further, Oil PSUs are being encouraged to adopt a global vision in their pursuit of raw materials and raw material-producing assets abroad.

To boost the domestic production of oil & gas, India is intensifying the exploratory efforts in the Indian sedimentary basin through the New Exploration License Policy which provides for a stable fiscal and contract framework for exploration & production of hydrocarbons. The Government has also initiated steps for development of alternate sources of hydrocarbons in the unconventional areas like Shale Gas, Tight gas, Coal Bed Methane, Gas Hydrates etc.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 589 asked by Mr. Dharmendra Yadav, Mr. Shivaji Adhalrao Patil and Mr. Babar Gajanan Dharmshi
<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=117132>

37. Press Release on the incident in New Delhi involving Israeli diplomat, New Delhi, 16 March 2012

In response to a question the Official Spokesman said:

On the basis of thorough and carefully undertaken investigations three Iranians have been identified by the investigating authorities as suspects in the terrorist attack on an Israeli diplomat in New Delhi on February 13, 2012. Warrants of arrest against these persons have been issued and the process of issue of red corner notices has been initiated. Investigations in the case are on-going and no conclusions can be drawn at this stage. We have informed the Iranian Ambassador of these developments so as to seek the cooperation of the Iranian authorities in bringing those involved in this dastardly attack to justice.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi,
<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530319124>

38. Anti-terror plan between India and Israel, New Delhi, 21 March 2012

- (a) whether Government of India and Israel have recently agreed to firm up on anti-terror plan between the two countries; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Mr. Mullappally Ramachandran)

(a) & (b): A Government of Israel delegation led by Minister of Public Security visited India in the month of November, 2011 and held talks with Government of India delegation led by Union Home Minister. During the talks, bilateral security matters of mutual interest were discussed.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 861 asked by Mr. Rajeev Chandrasekhar, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

39. Israel's offer for gas ventures, New Delhi, 27 March 2012

Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state?

- (a) whether it is a fact that Israel has offered gas ventures in its country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has responded to such an offer; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Mr. R.P.N Singh)

- (a). No, Sir.
- (b) to (d). Do not arise.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No.1520 asked by Mr. Piyush Goyal, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

40. Concern over Indo-Israel ties, New Delhi, 29 March 2012

- (a) whether it is a fact that All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat has expressed its concern at the ever increasing India-Israel ties, especially the strategic ties;
- (b) whether it is being perceived as Anti-Muslim all over the world;
- (c) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and
- (d) the steps being taken in this regard?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

- (a) Government have seen a report on an internet site attributed to All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat expressing concern on India-Israel ties.

- (b) Each country has its own policy on issues like this.

- (c) & (d) does not arise.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1751 asked by Mr. Mohammed Adeb, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

f. Jordan

41. Chief Election Commissioner Leads a Delegation to Jordan, New Delhi, 17 March 2012

At the invitation of the Jordanian Prime Minister to support Jordan in electoral reform and election management process the Chief Election Commissioner of India, Mr. S. Y. Quraishi today left for Amman at the head of a four-member delegation, in response to an invitation by the Prime Minister of Jordan, to explore modalities of supporting Jordan's electoral process against the backdrop of political reforms taking place in Jordan and in the West Asian region. The Jordanian request was made during the visit of Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. E. Ahamed to Amman in November 2011. Election Commission of India (ECI) accepted the request of Ministry of External Affairs to explore possibilities of extending such support.

A major purpose of the visit is to explore the possibility of assisting Jordan in enacting an electoral law, which would ensure the highest degree of fairness and transparency of the polling process and emergence of a truly representative Parliament. The other members of the delegation are Mr. Akshay Rout, Director General, ECI, Mr. Umesh Sinha, Chief Electoral Officer, Uttar Pradesh and Mr. S.K. Mendiratta, Legal Advisor, ECI.

The four-day visit will commence with a call on Mr. Awn Al Khasawneh, Prime Minister of Jordan, and will include meetings with Ministers of Justice, Legislation, Political Development and Parliamentary Affairs, Legal Affairs, Minister of Planning & International Cooperation, and senior officers and other stakeholders involved with the electoral reforms and the polling process. Later, PM will host a dinner for the CEC & delegation.

The visit is a part of the Election Commission's preparedness to share its professional and technical expertise with the developing countries, particularly the Arab world, in the light of developments in the region for electoral reform. In the recent past, ECI has responded promptly and positively to requests for technical and professional assistance from its sister bodies in Tunisia, Egypt and other countries bilaterally and also under requests from UNDP in the spirit of South-South cooperation. The offer of the Commission's experience and expertise to these countries is taking place through ECI's new training Institute, the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM).

Source: Press Information Bureau of India, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=81128>

g. Libya

42. Keynote address at the Harvard Kennedy School at the Conference: India: The Next Frontier, Extempore remarks by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, New York, 24 March 2012

...So, why this noise about the manner in which the R2P concept has been implemented in the case of Libya. And that brings me to Libya as a case study. The manner in which R2P has been implemented in Libya is what is giving R2P a bad name...

...Why then this immediate urge to move in with military force? And I conclude Libya very quickly by telling you, first of all, no one as in no one in the Security Council

held a brief for Col. Gaddafi. The nature of his rule was such; the atrocities that he was committing were such, that there was very little international sympathy either within the Security Council or in the UN for Col. Gaddafi. Therefore, the Security Council had no difficulty in passing Resolution 1970. We were a little weary, we wanted a gradual and calibrated approach to Libya because we thought a gradual and calibrated approach will produce better results. But when the Arab League approached us and said look, rivers of blood will flow, when Gaddafi attacks Benghazi and, therefore, the international community has to step in. The Security Council immediately agreed to resolution 1973 which provides for protection of civilians. Incidentally, all this is in the name of protecting civilians. The use of "all means necessary", means that you are allowed to use military force but there was some balancing provisions in the Security Council Resolution. Point one that there was a provision for a ceasefire and mediation with the help of the African Union. And point two that the punitive and coercive measures included "an arms embargo." The problem arose because the Security Council resolution was, we thought, balanced but the real purpose for some proponents of military action was regime change, which was not part of the Security Council resolution per se. So, when the military action started, a stage was reached in which the military machine of Gaddafi perhaps had already been sufficiently weakened, and there was a possibility of calling for ceasefire and some scope for mediation. But those who were keen on regime change did not want any of that. They wanted military action to continue. But more serious, the provision for arms embargo, was selectively interpreted to mean, almost that you could bomb the hell out of Qaddafi and his military machine; but at the same time, you could provide weapons to the Benghazi rebels. These three easy steps to Revolution: Security Council resolution, NATO military action and arming of the rebels, this is what started creating major difficulties which has now spilled over into Syria.

And that, I think, is the problem also with the Arab Spring because in these countries where you had peaceful social mobilization, as in the case of Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt by and large you find that the Gandhian methods have a much greater chance for success, but where you use military force as in the case of Libya the outcome is seriously problematic, I kept protesting in the Council and I continue to say this now, that the problem in Libya is that the society there, is deeply fragmented and divided along tribal lines. Use of military force accentuates tribal animosities and as we are seeing now, we are finding it difficult to celebrate the birth of democracy in Libya, after one year of military action. The problem is now spilling out and we saw the government in Mali fall the other day, largely because of what happened in Libya. There may be other governments in the region, Chad and Niger, which are equally vulnerable. And finally, to conclude, on Syria where the Security Council should have

been on the same page, in terms of urging both President Assad and the rebels to walk back from the violence, the experience of Libya has vitiated it. With great difficulty, we could get support for the Kofi Annan mission.

Source: Permanent Mission of India to United Nations, New York

<http://www.un.int/india/2012/ind2005.pdf>

h. Saudi Arabia

43. Press Release regarding “Open House for the community members at the Embassy of India, Riyadh on Thursday 15th March, 2012 from 0900 hrs to 1200 hrs.,” Riyadh, 10 March 2012

The Embassy of India Riyadh will hold an Open House for the members of the Indian community residing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on March 15, 2012 in the Embassy premises from 0900 hrs. to 1200 hrs.

During the Open House, members of the community can meet His Excellency Mr. Hamid Ali Rao Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other officers of the Embassy to discuss their consular, labour-welfare and any other issues.

All interested members of the community are invited to attend the Open House.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

44. Press Release, Embassy of India, Riyadh, 11 March 2012

The Consular officials of Embassy visiting Hafr Al Batin Central Jail on 11-12 March, Al-Kharj Jail on 12 March and Al Hassa Deportation Centre on 12 March to provide welfare and consular assistance to Indian nationals with a view to facilitate issue of emergency certificates to them for their departure to India.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

45. Cooperation with Saudi Arabia in hydro carbon exploration, New Delhi, 13 March 2012

Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state?

- (a) whether India has sought greater co-operation from Saudi Arabia in exploration and production of oil and other hydrocarbons to cater to its growing energy demands;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether India has also agreed to participate jointly with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the exploration and production activities in the two countries; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Mr. R.P.N Singh)

(a) to (d) To strengthen the country's energy security, our oil PSUs are continuously exploring opportunities for collaboration with E&P Companies, including those from Saudi Arabia, for joint participation in countries of mutual interest, including India and Saudi Arabia, in the upstream projects either through future licensing rounds or through Government to Government Channels or farm – in opportunities into producing assets / blocks under development having significant proven reserves, subject to techno economic evaluation.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 122 asked by Mr. A. Elavarsan

<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

46. India and Saudi Arabia finalize Annual Hajj Agreement, Jeddah, 14 March 2012

A High Level Delegation led by Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India, Mr. E. Ahamed visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 13th and 14th March 2012 for discussions on the Bilateral Agreement for Hajj 2012. The Minister was accompanied by Mrs. Mohsina Kidwai, Chairperson, Hajj Committee of India and other officials.

The Annual Hajj Agreement was finalized today by Minister Mr. E. Ahamed and by Dr. Bandar Bin Mohammed Bin Hamzah Asad Hajjar, Hon'ble Minister for Hajj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

More than 170,000 pilgrims would be performing Hajj from India this year. In view of the large number of Indians applying for Hajj, the Hon'ble Minister made a special request to Minister of Hajj for an additional quota of 10,000. The additional quota is usually released near the time of commencement of the Hajj.

Hon'ble Minister has also made a formal request for providing Metro Train Facility for the pilgrims coming through Hajj Committee of India. The Hon'ble Minister of Hajj has assured to look into the request.

Hon'ble Minister also met with Chairman South Asian Moassasa yesterday and discussed various issues related to Hajj arrangements.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi
<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530219121>

47. Press Release, Embassy of India, Riyadh, 14 March 2012

The officials of the Embassy visiting Jubail and Nuayriyah Jails on 17-18 March to provide welfare and consular assistance to Indian nationals with a view to facilitate issue of emergency certificates to them for their departure to India.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh
<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

48. Press Release, Embassy of India, Riyadh, 17 March 2012

All Indian citizens who are working in Saudi Arabia and who need Police Clearance Certificate should get the same before their final departure from the Kingdom as per the prevalent rules to avoid any inconvenience at a later stage.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh
<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

49. Press Release, Embassy of India, Riyadh, 20 March 2012

Three Indian Ships from Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard (INS TIR, INS SHARDUL and ICGS VEERA) of the Southern Naval Command are visiting Jeddah

Islamic Port (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) on a friendly Goodwill Visit from 26 to 29 March 2012. The ships are being commanded by Captain Ajay Sirohi, Captain Sanjay Sachdeva and Commandant VK Varghese respectively.

Goodwill visits to foreign lands by Navies the world over are undertaken to enhance relations between countries and to foster greater Defence Cooperation between the countries. The present deployment of Training Squadron is aimed at strengthening friendship and harmony with India's maritime neighbours.

The last Goodwill Visit to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was undertaken by three Indian Naval Ships INS TIR, INS KRISHNA and ICGS VEERA to Al Jubail from 24 to 28 March 2011. Two Royal Saudi Naval Forces ships had undertaken Goodwill Visit to India (Mumbai) in July 2008.

The undergoing Goodwill Visit will contribute to further enhance and strengthen the historical and friendly relationship between the Republic of India and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

50. Press Release regarding “Indian Catalogue Show (IndiaCatex), on 27th March, 2012 (Tuesday) at Hotel Intercontinental, Hofuf, Al Ahsa”, Embassy of India, Riyadh, 21 March 2012

The Embassy of India, Riyadh in association with Al Ahsa Chamber of Commerce & Industry is organizing a Multi-Product Catalogue Exhibition at Hotel InterContinental, Hofuf, Al Ahsa.

The ‘India Catex’ will showcase a large number of product catalogues and CDs from various sectors of Indian Industry and Trade such as: Agriculture & Food Products, Automotive, Construction, Building Materials, Chemicals, cosmetics, Electrical Products, Electronics, Engineering Goods, Fasteners, Valves, Furniture, Handicrafts and Gift items, IT & Telecom, Leather Goods, Machinery, Plants and Equipment generators, Medical & Pharmaceutical products, Metals & Minerals, Packaging material, Pumps, Rubber & Plastic products, Sports Goods, Textiles & Garments, stationery items, books and periodicals etc.

The exhibition will be held at Hotel Intercontinental, Hofuf, Al Ahsa, on 27 March, 2012 (Tuesday) (from 0900 hrs to 1300 hrs).

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

51. Consular post in Saudi Arabia, New Delhi, 22 March 2012

- (a) the estimated size of the Indian community in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia;
- (b) whether Government proposes to open a Consular post in the province; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer:

(a) The population of Indian expatriates in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is estimated to be about 2 million. No estimates are available of the size of Indian community in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

(b) & (c) No such proposal is under consideration. The consular requirements of the community are being met by the Embassy in Riyadh.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 974 asked by Mr. Manishankar Aiyar, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

52. Press Release, Embassy of India, Riyadh, 26 March 2012

A team of consular officials of Embassy of India, Riyadh, will visit Dammam from March 28-30 to provide welfare and consular assistance to Indian nationals at Dammam Deportation Centre with a view to facilitate issue emergency certificates to them for their departure to India. On Wednesday, the team will visit the Dammam Deportation Centre and on Thursday and Friday, the consular official will provide attestation service at VFS's Passport Application Centre at Dammam.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

53. Visit of Saudi Youth Delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Dr. Yousef Terad Al Saadon to India, New Delhi, 30 March 2012

Speaking at a valedictory function in New Delhi today, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Dr. Yousef Terad Al Saadon said he was, “carrying a message that calls for friendship, dialogue and building mutual understanding between cultures– an understanding that promotes respects for all cultures and appreciates diversity as a source of enrichment”. Mr. E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs, recalled the successful visits of His Majesty King Abdullah to Delhi in 2006 when he was the honoured Chief Guest of Republic Day parade and visit of Prime Minister to Riyadh in 2010 when the two countries embarked on a strategic partnership.

The remarks came at the end of a path-breaking ten day visit by a Saudi youth delegation and in the context of the establishment of the India-Saudi Youth Forum. The Forum, established in fulfilment of the mandate given by the leadership of India and Saudi Arabia in 2010 and embodied in the Riyadh Declaration, is aimed to strengthen bonds of friendship and foster exchanges between youth India and Saudi Arabia. The Forum also fits into the initiative of His Majesty the King of Saudi Arabia encouraging youth of the country to understand and appreciate different religions and cultures of the world.

Under the aegis of the Forum, a 43 member delegation comprising students studying Communications and Information Technology as well as officials and media persons visited India from 21 to 31 March 2012. As a mark of the importance attached to the exercise, the entire delegation is headed by Dr. Yousef Terad Al Saadon, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Economic and Cultural Affairs of the Saudi Government. Public Diplomacy Division of the Ministry coordinated and facilitated the visit in association with Young Indians (Yi) Group of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The delegation visited Hyderabad and Bengaluru prior to their visit to Delhi where they were received at the Indian School of Business, Indian Space Research Organization, Infosys, Narayana Hridayalaya, Computer Associates, TCS and Infotech. In Delhi, they interacted with the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India and the National Informatics Centre and were briefed by Secretary (East). Hon’ble Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology Sachin Pilot received the delegation and interacted with them. Hon’ble Minister of State E. Ahamed hosted a lunch in honour of the delegation.

Upon the conclusion of the official programme today, the India-Saudi Youth Forum presented a joint letter addressed to Hon'ble President of India and His Majesty the King of Saudi Arabia. Another joint letter addressed to Secretary General of United Nations was also presented. The letters speak of the rich experience which the Saudi youth obtained during the visit, the potential of using cutting edge technologies like tele-education and tele-medicine in addressing the challenges of education and healthcare and pledge the support of the youth in contributing to strengthening bilateral relations and also to peace and progress.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi,
<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530219170>

54. Remarks by Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. E. Ahamed at the India-Saudi Arabia Youth Forum, New Delhi, 30 March 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome all of you in New Delhi. I congratulate the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this excellent initiative to establish India-Saudi Arabia Youth Forum to enable the youth to learn from each other's' cultures and further strengthen our friendly relations.

I hope that you have enjoyed your stay in India and you have had an opportunity to explore India and interact with its people and get a flavour of our culture and its diversity.

India and Saudi Arabia enjoy a unique relationship shaped by a common economic and socio-cultural history, extensive people-to-people contacts and robust trade that go back to many centuries. Today also Saudi Arabia is home to 1.8 million strong Indian Community. The community has not only excelled in all walks of life, profession and businesses but also has contributed immensely to the development and growth of the Kingdom. Each year more than 170,000 Indian visit the Kingdom for performing Hajj and many more visit to perform Umrah. These interactions have left strong influences on the cultures of both the countries.

In 1932, when His Majesty King Abdul Aziz Al-Saud unified the Arabian Peninsula and established the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru was full of praise for the King for his courage and statesmanship in unifying the Peninsula.

India became independent in 1947 and adopted a Constitution in 1950. In May 1955, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Faisal bin Abdul Aziz, who was also the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, came to New Delhi laying the foundation for our bilateral relations in the post war period.

Soon after that, His Majesty King Saud bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud paid a 17-day long visit to India - the first ever visit by a Head of State of either country to the other. During the historic visit His Majesty King Saud toured a number of Indian cities including New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Mysore, Simla, Agra, Aligarh and Varanasi, many more than this youth delegation has visited.

In 1956 when our Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited the Kingdom he was not only received with warmth and fervour, but was given the unique honour of addressing a public gathering at a football stadium in Jeddah, a distinction which has not been accorded to any other visiting leader.

A new beginning in our bilateral partnership was the landmark visit of His Royal Majesty King Abdullah, the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques of Mecca and Medina, to India in January 2006. His Majesty termed India as his “Second Home”. The participation of His Majesty as the Chief Guest at our Republic Day celebrations was a matter of deep honour for the people of India. The visit opened a new chapter in our bilateral relations and the 2006 ‘Delhi Declaration’ signed by His Majesty the King and our Hon’ble Prime Minister enshrines our shared vision for a new relationship.

The momentum generated by the extensive bilateral interactions after His Majesty’s visit culminated in the historic visit of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Saudi Arabia in February 2010. In keeping with the new global realities and unfolding opportunities of the 21st century, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and His Majesty King Abdullah signed the “Riyadh Declaration” which among other things recognized the importance of the youth in strengthening the relations between our countries. Your visit today is actually the result of their wisdom and foresight.

The youth is the most powerful resource on the earth. Nations must empower their youths through value-based education and leadership so that they build their world and plan their future by themselves in which they can live in peace and enjoy the fruits of progress and prosperity. Today, both India and Saudi Arabia have more than 50 % population under the age of 30 years. Youth is the force of change and in both the countries the youth is responding positively to the global challenges both in the social

and economic fields. Interactions between the Youth of both the countries will certainly chart a new path in the relations between our two great nations.

All of you have heard the words of wisdom of Khalil Jibran. What did he say about youth? - “Youth is a beautiful dream, on whose brightness books shed a blinding dust. Will the day ever come when the wise link the joy of knowledge to youth's dream? Will the day ever come when Nature becomes the teacher of man, humanity his book and life his school? Youth's joyous purpose cannot be fulfilled until that day comes. Too slow is our march toward spiritual elevation, because we make so little use of youth's ardour.” I hope that the visit of this youth delegation is an answer to Khalil Jibran.

Thank you.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530119172>

55. Press Release, Embassy of India, Riyadh, 31 March 2012

A team of consular officials of Embassy of India, Riyadh, will visit Dammam from April 4-6, 2012 to provide welfare and consular assistance to Indian nationals at Dammam Deportation Centre with a view to facilitate issue emergency certificates to them for their departure to India. On Wednesday, the team will visit the Dammam Deportation Centre and on Thursday and Friday, the consular official will provide attestation service at VFS's Passport Application Centre at Dammam.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

i. Syria

56. United Nations Resolution on Syria, New Delhi, 14 March 2012

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether India has voted in the United Nations Security Council against Syria recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the advantages likely to accrue to the country as a result of this decision; and
- (d) the name of other countries voting along with India on the same resolution?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Ms. Preneet Kaur)

(a) & (b) India supported the Resolution on the situation in Syria which was voted upon in the Security Council on 4 February 2012. The Resolution was supported by 13 of the 15 members of the Council, including India, but was not adopted due to a veto exercised by both Russia and China.

(c) India's support for the Resolution was in accordance with our support for the efforts by the League of Arab States for a peaceful resolution of the crisis through a Syrian-led inclusive political process. The Resolution expressly ruled out any measures under Article 42 of the UN Charter and called for serious political dialogue between the Syrian government and the whole spectrum of the opposition, under the auspices of the League of Arab States. In our Explanation of Vote (EoV) on that occasion, India explicitly stated its belief that the leadership of Syria is a matter for the Syrian people to decide. India also noted the necessity for all opposition forces in Syria to peacefully engage in constructive dialogue with the authorities and hoped that this would create a new environment for peace and would facilitate a political process. India also stated that this political dialogue should build upon the political reforms already announced by the Syrian leadership with necessary changes so that they find acceptance among all sections of Syrian society.

(d) The 12 other members of the Security Council besides India who voted in favour of the draft resolution were: Azerbaijan, Colombia, France, Germany, Guatemala, Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, South Africa, Togo, United Kingdom, and United States.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), unstarred Question No. 265 asked by Mr. P. Lingam and Mr. Om Prakash Yadav

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=116642>

57. Casualties of Indians in Syria, New Delhi, 14 March 2012

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) the number of casualties of people of Indian origin reported till 29 February, 2012 in the violence erupted in Syria;
- (b) the action taken/being taken by the Union Government to provide security to the people of Indian origin in Syria; and
- (c) the total number of families of Indian origin living in Syria?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

(a) There has been no casualty of people of Indian origin until 29 February 2012 in the violence in Syria.

(b) Government continues to closely monitor the situation in Syria and take necessary steps for the safety and security of Indian nationals residing in there. Our Embassy in Syria is in close touch with the members of the Indian community and have been holding regular meetings to apprise them on the security situation and advise them to take due precautions. Ministry of External Affairs has issued a travel advisory to avoid all non-essential travel to Syria for the present.

(c) There are approximately 1000 Indian nationals, including family members, in Syria. Approximately 100 of them have left Syria in the wake of violent incidents

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 332 asked by Mr. Manikrao Hodlya Gavit

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/OREsult15.aspx?qref=116652>

58. UNSC resolution on Syria, New Delhi, 15 March 2012

- (a) whether it is a fact that India supported the UN Security Council resolution on Syria recently; and
(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

(a) & (b) Yes. India supported the resolution on the situation in Syria which was voted upon in the Security Council on 4 February 2012. The resolution was supported by 13 of the 15 members of the Council, including India, but was not adopted due to a veto exercised by both Russia and China.

India's support for the Resolution was in accordance with its support for the efforts by the League of Arab States for a peaceful resolution of the crisis through a Syrian-led inclusive political process. The resolution expressly ruled out any measures under Article 42 of the Charter and called for serious political dialogue between the Syrian government and the whole spectrum of the opposition under the auspices of the League of Arab States. In its Explanation of Vote (EoV) on that occasion, India explicitly stated its belief that the leadership of Syria is a matter for the Syrian people to decide. India also noted the necessity for all opposition forces in Syria to peacefully engage in constructive dialogue with the authorities and hoped that this would create a new

environment for peace and facilitate a political process. India also stated that this political dialogue should build upon the political reforms already announced by the Syrian leadership with necessary changes so that they are acceptable to all sections of Syrian society.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 364 asked by Mr. M.P Achuthan, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

59. Discussion on Syria, New Delhi, 22 March 2012

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether the Government has held discussions with Arab League on Syria;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the outcome of the discussions; and
- (d) the steps taken in this regard?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

(a) & (b) The Government of India maintains regular contact with the League of Arab States (Arab League) on a number of important regional and global issues including the developments in Syria. The issue of Syria was discussed during the last meeting between Hon'ble External Affairs Minister and Secretary General of the Arab League in Cairo on 3rd March 2012. During the meetings, Arab League, inter alia, briefed India on the developments in Syria.

c) & (d) India conveyed to Arab League that all sides must abjure violence in Syria and engage in political dialogue and resolve the crisis taking into account the aspirations of the people of Syria. The process should be Syria-led without external interference. The Arab League has taken a number of initiatives in resolving the Syrian issue. Government of India is of the view that the Arab League, as an important regional organization, should play its required and historic role in promoting political dialogue among the Syrian parties.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 1277 asked by Mr. Sukender Reddy Gutha
<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=117237>*

j. Tunisia

60. Press Release on agreement Between India and Tunisia, New Delhi, 19 March 2012

A Cooperation Agreement in the field of small and medium-sized enterprises was signed on February 2, 2007 in Tunis (Tunisia) between the Governments of the Republic of Tunisia and India for promoting cooperation in the field of MSME. As per Article-5 of the Agreement, a Joint Committee from the Indian side has been constituted and communicated to Tunisia through Ministry of External Affairs. The composition of the Joint Committee from Indian side is:-

1	Secretary, MSME	Co-Chairman
2	AS&DC, MSME	Member
3	Joint Secretary, MSME	Member
4	Joint Secretary, MSME	Member
5	CMD, NSIC	Member
6	Director, NIMSME	Member

The Ministry of MSME has not received any formal composition of the Joint Committee from Tunisia. However, representative from the Tunisian Ministry of Industry, Energy and SMEs and representative from Industry Promotion Agency (API) along with others have attended the 1st and 2nd meeting of Joint Committee held so far as per Article-6 of the said Agreement. 1st Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) was held on April 8, 2008 in New Delhi and 2nd Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) was held during September 30, 2009 and October 1, 2009 in Tunisia. Tunisian side designated their Director General of Tunisian Ministry of Industry, Energy and SMEs as Tunisian focal point and head of the Tunisian party in the mentioned Committee.

This information was given by the Union Cabinet Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Mr. Virbhadr Singh in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha today.

Source: Press Information of India, New Delhi

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=81198>

61. Agreement between India and Tunisia, New Delhi, 19 March 2012

Will the Minister of MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES be pleased to state?

- (a) whether an MoU was signed between India and Tunisia for promoting cooperation in the field of MSME in 2007;
- (b) if so, whether both the countries have set up Joint Commission for implementation of said MoU;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the number of times the Commission has held its meetings, so far; and
- (d) by when the said MoU would be operational?

Answer:

(a) A Cooperation Agreement in the field of small and medium-sized enterprises was signed on 8/2/2007 in Tunis (Tunisia) between the Government of the Republic of Tunisia and the Government of India for promoting cooperation in the field of MSME.

(b) & (c) As per Article-5 of the said Agreement, a Joint Committee from the Indian side has been constituted and communicated to Tunisia through Ministry of External Affairs. The composition of the Joint Committee from Indian side is as under: (1) Secretary, MSME Co-Chairman; (2) AS&DC, MSME Member; (3) Joint Secretary, MSME Member; (4) Joint Secretary, MSME Member; (5) CMD, NSIC Member; (6) Director, NIMSME Member.

The Ministry of MSME has not received any formal composition of the Joint Committee from Tunisia. However, representative from the Tunisian Ministry of Industry, Energy and SMEs and representative from Industry Promotion Agency (API) along with others have attended the 1st and 2nd meeting of Joint Committee held so far on as per Article-6 of the said Agreement. 1st Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) was held on 8/4/2008 in New Delhi and 2nd Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) was held during 30/9/2009 and 1/10/2009 in Tunisia. Tunisian side designated their Director General of Tunisian Ministry of Industry, Energy and SMEs as Tunisian focal point and head of the Tunisian party in the mentioned Committee.

(d) The said Agreement is already in operation.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 538 asked by Mr. Nand Kumar Sai, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

Specific Issues

k. Palestine Issue

62. Support for Palestine, New Delhi, 28 March 2012

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether India pledges support for Palestine;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the present position thereof?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

Yes.

& (c) India's support to the Palestinian cause is a matter of record. Our unwavering support to the Palestinian people is not limited only to economic and humanitarian support but we have a long history of supporting the 'Palestinian cause'. India supported Palestine even before she herself attained independence in 1947. In 1975, India was the first non-Arab State to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In 1980, we accorded full diplomatic recognition to the PLO Office in New Delhi. On 16 November 1988, we recognized the State of Palestine, pursuant to the Algiers Declaration of a State of Palestine on 15 November 1988. Hon'ble Prime Minister had stated in his speech in the United Nations General Assembly on 24 September 2011 that India has been steadfast in its support for the Palestinian people's struggle for a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders side by side and at peace with Israel, as per the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet roadmap. The Prime Minister added that India looks forward to welcoming Palestine as an equal member of the United Nations. India supported Palestine's admission as a member to the UNESCO recently.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 2331 asked by Mr. Suresh Kumar Shetkar

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=118821>

Multilateral Issues/ Regional Issues

I. India and the Middle East

63. Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, Debate on Situation in the Middle East: Challenges and Opportunities, at the United Nations Security Council, New York, 12 March 2012

Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me begin by welcoming you, Mr. Foreign Secretary, and other Ministers to the Security Council. I would like to thank the UK delegation for organizing today's Debate to discuss developments in West Asia and North Africa over the last year. I would also like to thank the Secretary General and other distinguished speakers and you, Mr. President, for the valuable statements. We have listened carefully to the views expressed and hope that today's deliberations will help the international community develop a more coordinated and consensual outlook to the serious challenges posed by developments in the region and beyond.

Mr. President, for more than a millennium now, societies in West Asia and North Africa have played an important role in world history. By virtue of the genius of their peoples, their strategic location and, more recently, their natural resources, these societies have attracted considerable interest from far and wide. Over centuries, countries in the region have built multifaceted socio-economic and strategic linkages with the rest of world. Developments in the region have implications within and beyond the region and they naturally are of interest to the international community. The relationship between India and the Arab world is unique with age-old historic and cultural connections. The impact of the Arab and Islamic world on India itself has been profound and far-reaching; giving rise to a composite culture that is rich in its diversity and enduring in its essential unity. The region is home to over 6 million Indians with some of our largest economic and trade linkages. It is also the most important source for our energy needs and, being in our extended neighbourhood, vitally important to India. The unrest in West Asia and North Africa, which began more than a year ago, has its roots in the desire of people to play a greater role in shaping their destiny, politically and economically. These aspirations will not be met through violence or armed struggle. Nor can a solution be reached through prescriptions from outside. In fact, given the history of foreign interference, such prescriptions will not only be suspect in the eyes of various segments of society but may also have the potential to exacerbate the problem.

Mr. President, in dealing with developments in West Asia and North Africa, the international community needs to use all the tools of diplomacy at its disposal and be there to assist the concerned countries in transiting to an inclusive and participatory polity while maintaining social stability and cohesion. Since the exact nature of grievances varies from country to country, there cannot be one set of measures that can be applied to all of them. The solutions of the problems in each country have to take into consideration the society's particular circumstances and the genius of its people. However, what is certain is that solutions cannot include intervention through military force or arming of the civilian population. Such a course of action will only fuel further bloodshed and instability and create new marginalized groups. This also risks breeding extremism and intolerance whose adverse consequences will be felt in the region and beyond.

I would like to recall what the Father of the Indian Nation, Mahatma Gandhi said, and I quote, "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind". Even during the course of the last year, we have seen that wherever changes have taken place without violence, not only has normalcy returned faster, the changes have been accepted by society as a whole. We are, therefore, of the considered view that the political leaders of the concerned countries in West Asia and North Africa should resolve the problem through inclusive internal political processes that meet the aspirations of their people in an atmosphere free of violence and bloodshed. The principles of national sovereignty, political independence and territorial unity and integrity must be respected. The international community should, including through the auspices of the United Nations, use diplomatic leverages and make available technical assistance in fields such as political, security and justice sector reforms, drafting of new constitution and legal frameworks, electoral institutions and conduct of elections, etc. Actions based on selective or partial interpretations of a mandate of the United Nations must be avoided to ensure that long-term political reconciliation is achieved among various sections of society through peaceful inclusive political processes.

Mr. President, the international community also needs to be galvanized to expeditiously resolve the long-pending problem of the West Asian and North African region, namely the Arab-Israeli conflict, including Israeli-Palestinian problem. This problem cannot be allowed to be lost in the din and pre-occupations of other developments in the region. Quite apart from the fact that without resolution of this conflict, developments in West Asia and North Africa cannot be adequately addressed, we seriously run the risk of violence if the people of Palestine feel marginalized and sense a complete loss of attention to their plight. Their protests may get radicalized

unless concrete action is taken to end the occupation of Arab lands so that all peoples in the region can live in peace in their respective homelands and build cooperative relations. Moreover, the call of the international community for democratic and political reforms sounds hollow to Palestinian and other people in the region living under occupation. In this connection, some important and immediate measures need to be taken, including end to all settlement activities and favourable consideration by this Council of the Palestinian application for membership to this Organization.

Mr. President, as the world's largest democracy, India supports measures by the countries in the region to address the grievances of their people in an atmosphere free of violence and bloodshed. India stands ready to share its experiences with the concerned countries in building democratic and plural political institutions and to partner with them in such fields as drafting of new constitutional and legal frameworks, judicial and security sector reforms, creation of impartial and independent electoral institutions and conduct of elections, human resources development, including training and technical assistance, etc.

India will continue to support this Council in meeting the challenge of assisting the countries in West Asia and North Africa so that they can implement required political reforms without recourse to violence and violation of fundamental human rights and build an inclusive political system that enables participation of all people. This alone will create long-term peace, security and stability within the region and beyond.

I thank you.

Source: Permanent Mission of India to United Nations, New York
<http://www.un.int/india/2012/ind1999.pdf>

64. Keynote address at the Harvard Kennedy School at the Conference: India: The Next Frontier, Extempore remarks by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, New York, 24 March 2012

...So, why this noise about the manner in which the R2P concept has been implemented in the case of Libya. And that brings me to Libya as a case study. The manner in which R2P has been implemented in Libya is what is giving R2P a bad name. Let me, as a starting point, say that we are all for democracy and human rights. On that there is no doubt. The international community has accepted human rights as a

mainstream value system and there is a universal declaration on human rights. But insofar as R2P is concerned, the Secretary General's report talks of three pillars. Pillar one, that each State has the responsibility to protect its own citizens from genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and so on. I think that no one can be against that, because nobody wants another occurrence of mass killing of the kind that took place in Rwanda. Pillar two, says that if a State is not in a position to protect its citizens from these mass atrocities, then the international community has an obligation to provide technical assistance to those states in order to help build their institutions. Again there is no problem. The problem comes with pillar three which relates to implementation. Now, immediately when the concept or doctrine was enunciated in 2005, a former French Foreign Minister - he was not Foreign Minister then, but became Foreign Minister subsequently - Bernard Kouchner described R2P as the doctrine for humanitarian intervention. In other words, if some country is failing, the international community has the obligation to intervene. First of all, the trigger point for invocation of R2P is not human rights violations per se. Human rights violations will take place everywhere, in the United States, Western Europe, in Sri Lanka and India, everywhere. But that does not mean the international community should mount a military offensive to go in and interfere. The trigger point has to be mass atrocities, and the trigger point has to be looked at, in terms of what each of those mass atrocities imply. In the case, for instance, of genocide, there is the UN Convention on Genocide. What does that convention say? It says and I want to quote to you the precise language so that there is no confusion in terms of what we are dealing with here. In case of genocide, the genocide convention provides a threshold as "when committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national ethnic, racial or religious group as such." In other words, when the international community has information and reasonable basis to believe that an entire nation or a religious group or an ethnic group or a racial group is vulnerable, and could be exterminated then the international community has an obligation to act. In the case of crimes against humanity, there is the International Criminal Court or the Rome Statute which provides the threshold as "a widespread or systematic attack targeted against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack pursuant to or in furtherance of a State or organizational policy to commit such acts." And then for war crimes, you have the Geneva Convention. In other words, basically you have a responsibility to move in, and again the R2P doctrine, also said that you should try pacifist ways, you should try diplomacy.

Why then this immediate urge to move in with military force? And I conclude Libya very quickly by telling you, first of all, no one as in no one in the Security Council held a brief for Col. Gaddafi. The nature of his rule was such; the atrocities that he was

committing were such, that there was very little international sympathy either within the Security Council or in the UN for Col. Gaddafi. Therefore, the Security Council had no difficulty in passing Resolution 1970. We were a little weary, we wanted a gradual and calibrated approach to Libya because we thought a gradual and calibrated approach will produce better results. But when the Arab League approached us and said look, rivers of blood will flow, when Gaddafi attacks Benghazi and, therefore, the international community has to step in. The Security Council immediately agreed to resolution 1973 which provides for protection of civilians. Incidentally, all this is in the name of protecting civilians. The use of “all means necessary”, means that you are allowed to use military force but there was some balancing provisions in the Security Council Resolution. Point one that there was a provision for a ceasefire and mediation with the help of the African Union. And point two that the punitive and coercive measures included “an arms embargo.” The problem arose because the Security Council resolution was, we thought, balanced but the real purpose for some proponents of military action was regime change, which was not part of the Security Council resolution per se. So, when the military action started, a stage was reached in which the military machine of Gaddafi perhaps had already been sufficiently weakened, and there was a possibility of calling for ceasefire and some scope for mediation. But those who were keen on regime change did not want any of that. They wanted military action to continue. But more serious, the provision for arms embargo, was selectively interpreted to mean, almost that you could bomb the hell out of Qaddafi and his military machine; but at the same time, you could provide weapons to the Benghazi rebels. These three easy steps to Revolution: Security Council resolution, NATO military action and arming of the rebels, this is what started creating major difficulties which has now spilled over into Syria.

And that, I think, is the problem also with the Arab Spring because in these countries where you had peaceful social mobilization, as in the case of Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt by and large you find that the Gandhian methods have a much greater chance for success, but where you use military force as in the case of Libya the outcome is seriously problematic, I kept protesting in the Council and I continue to say this now, that the problem in Libya is that the society there, is deeply fragmented and divided along tribal lines. Use of military force accentuates tribal animosities and as we are seeing now, we are finding it difficult to celebrate the birth of democracy in Libya, after one year of military action. The problem is now spilling out and we saw the government in Mali fall the other day, largely because of what happened in Libya. There may be other governments in the region, Chad and Niger, which are equally vulnerable. And finally, to conclude, on Syria where the Security Council should have been on the same page, in terms of urging both President Assad and the rebels to walk

back from the violence, the experience of Libya has vitiated it. With great difficulty, we could get support for the Kofi Annan mission.

Question: ...My second question, Facebook may be responsible for Arab Spring but the regimes there are not responsible like India or the US. Where is it taking us?

Answer: ...On the Arab spring and Facebook, there was a lot of excitement from the Arab spring because people had the expectation that change would be conducted according to a western democratic liberal template and the results would resonate with western democratic values. So, after the Egyptian elections took place, people suddenly got worried and said is this the Arab Spring we wanted? But look, let's be clear, after a country or any region has been under authoritarian regime for 40 years, and change comes, you can't say I want change, only if it produces a result which conforms to my aspirations. Then that's not clear. Well you have used some harsh words about Facebook, and I am technologically challenged. I don't go on Facebook, because I think a civil servant should follow some discipline. And, therefore, I allow my colleagues in the publicity department to do that. I stick to more conventional means of communication.

But let me tell you, you can't blame Facebook for the Arab Spring. The ferment on Arab Street was already there. It was political alienation, economic grievances. Facebook only facilitated that ferment by articulating it and getting people from other countries to join in on to that. So don't blame the medium for it.

Source: Permanent Mission of India to United Nations, New York

<http://www.un.int/india/2012/ind2005.pdf>

65. Address by Ambassador Nirupama Rao at the Hudson Institute on “Indian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities”, Washington D.C, 22 March 2012

...In our extended neighbourhood to our west, we enjoy traditionally close political, economic and cultural linkages with the countries of the West Asia. These countries are among our largest trading partners. Our trade with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries amounted to 130 billion US Dollars last year. Secondly, close to 50 per cent of our crude oil requirements are met by the region. Thirdly, the region hosts more than six million Indians who contribute to the economies of the region and remit significant foreign exchange back into their households in India. Accordingly, we have a vital stake in the peace and stability of the region, and continued progress and

prosperity, of the countries in this region. As a democracy, committed to the secular ideals of our founding fathers, our hope is that the secular, democratic spirit that we saw blooming at the outset of the Arab Spring last year does not dissipate, to be overcome by extreme ideologies...

Source: Embassy of India, Washington D.C

<http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1892/address-by-ambassador-nirupama-rao-at-the-hudson-institute-on-andquot%3Bindian-foreign-policy-in-the-21st-century%3A-challenges-and-opportunitiesandquot%3B>

66. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Media Statement at the Fourth BRICS Summit, New Delhi, 29 March 2012

...We had an in-depth discussion on the situation in West Asia. We agreed that a lasting solution to the problems in Syria and Iran can only be found through dialogue...

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530119163>

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