

**Excerpts of the Prime Minister's statement in Lok Sabha on the debate on the
PM's recent visits abroad on July 29, 2009**

29/07/2009

On India-Pakistan relations

Madam Speaker,

As I have said many times before, we cannot wish away the fact that Pakistan is our neighbour. We should be good neighbours. If we live in peace, as good neighbours do, both of us can focus our energies on the many problems – our abject poverty that confront millions and millions of people in South Asia. If there is cooperation between us, and not conflict, vast opportunities will open up for trade, travel and development that will create prosperity in both countries.

It is, therefore, in our vital interest to make sincere efforts to live in peace with Pakistan. But despite the best of intentions, we cannot move forward if terrorist attacks launched from Pakistani soil continue to kill and injure our citizens, here and abroad. That is the national position. I stand by it.

I have said time and again and I repeat it right now again: it is impossible for any government in India to work towards full normalization of relations with Pakistan unless the Government of Pakistan fulfills, in letter and spirit, its commitment not to allow its territory to be used in any manner for terrorist activities against India.

This was a commitment made as my friend Shri Yashwant Sinha has mentioned to my distinguished predecessor Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and it has been repeated to me in every meeting I have had with the Pakistani leadership. The people of India expect these assurances to be honoured and this government recognizes that as the national consensus.

Madam Speaker,

The attack on Mumbai last November outraged our nation and cast a deep shadow over our relations with Pakistan. The reality and the horror of it were brought into Indian homes over three traumatic days that still haunt us. The people of India demand that this must never happen again.

Over the past seven months, we followed a policy, using all effective bilateral and multilateral instruments at our command, to ensure that Pakistan acts, with credibility and sincerity, as we would expect of any civilized nation.

Soon after the attacks, the United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions on the Lakshar-e-Tayeba and its front organizations, including the Jamaat-ud-Dawa. It also imposed sanctions on four individuals connected with the organization, including one of the masterminds behind the Mumbai attacks, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi.

We exercised great restraint under very difficult circumstances but made it clear that Pakistan must act. On 5th January 2009, we handed over to Pakistan the details of the links to Pakistan that were revealed by our investigators. Some action followed and Pakistan formally responded to us on two occasions regarding the progress of their own investigations - in February 2009 and then just two days before my departure for Paris and Sharm El Sheikh.

The latest dossier is a 34 page document that gives details of the planning and sequence of events, details of the investigations carried out by the special Federal Investigation Agency team of Pakistan, a copy of the FIR lodged and the details and photographs of the accused in custody and those declared as proclaimed offenders. It provides details of the communication networks used, financing of the operation and seizures made in Pakistan including maps, lifeboats, literature on navigational training, intelligence manuals, back packs etc.

The Pakistan dossier states that the investigation has established beyond doubt that LeT activists conspired, financed and executed the attacks. Five of the accused have been arrested, including Zakiur-Rehman Lakhvi and Zarar Shah, and thirteen others have been declared proclaimed offenders. A charge sheet has since been filed against them under Pakistan's Anti Terrorism Act and other relevant laws. We have been told that the investigations are nearly complete and that the trial will now proceed. We have also been asked for some further information. We will provide this shortly.

This is the first time that Pakistan has ever formally briefed us on the results of an investigation into a terrorist attack in India. It has never happened before and I repeat this is the first time. It is also the first time that they have admitted that their nationals and a terrorist organisation based in Pakistan carried out a ghastly terrorist act in India.

Madam Speaker,

The reality is that this is far more than the NDA Government was ever able to extract from Pakistan during its entire tenure despite all their tall talk. They were never able to get Pakistan to admit what they have admitted now. So the UPA government needs no lessons from the opposition on how to conduct foreign affairs or secure our nation against terrorist threats.

But while noting the steps Pakistan has taken, I have to say that they do not go far enough. We hope that the trial will make quick progress and that exemplary punishment will be meted out to those who committed this horrific crime against humanity. We need evidence that action is being taken to outlaw, disarm and shut down the terrorist groups and their front organizations that still operate on Pakistani soil and which continue to pose a grave threat to our country.

Madam Speaker,

In the final analysis, the reality is that, despite all the friends we have, and we should have as many friends as Shri Mulayam Singh ji has said, when it comes to matters relating to our national security and defence, we will have to depend on ourselves. Self-help is the best help. There is no substitute to strengthening our defence capabilities, our internal security structures and our emergency response mechanisms. I wish to assure the House that the government is giving these matters the highest priority and attention.

Several important steps have been taken to modernize, rationalize and strengthen our defence, security and intelligence apparatus. A detailed plan to address internal security challenges is being implemented in a time-bound manner. The Government is maintaining utmost vigil in the area of internal security. Measures have been taken to ensure enhanced information and intelligence sharing on a real time basis. A policy of zero-tolerance towards terrorism, from whatever source it originates, has been put in place.

In the area of defence, steps are underway to substantially improve our coastal and maritime security. Large acquisitions of major weapon systems and platforms have been approved for the modernization of our Army, Navy and Air Force. There has been a special focus to improve the welfare of the Armed Forces personnel.

We will spare no effort and no expense to defend our nation against any threat to our sovereignty, unity and integrity. This is the sacred and bounden duty of any Government of this great country.

Madam Speaker,

We do not dilute our positions or our resolve to defeat terrorism by talking to any country. Other major powers affected by Pakistan based terrorism are also engaging with Pakistan. Unless we talk directly to Pakistan, we will have to rely on third parties to do so. That route, I submit to this August House, has very severe limitations as to its effectiveness, and for the longer term the involvement of foreign powers in South Asia is not something to our liking.

I say with strength and conviction that dialogue and engagement is the best way forward.

This has been the history of our relations with Pakistan over the last decade. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee took a decision of political courage to visit Lahore in 1999. Then came Kargil and the hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane to Kandahar. Yet, he invited General Musharraf to Agra and again tried to make peace. The nation witnessed the terrible attack on Parliament in 2001. There followed an extremely difficult phase in our relationship. The armed forces of the two countries stood fully mobilized.

But, to his great credit, Shri Vajpayee was not deterred, as a statesman should not be. In 2004, he went to Islamabad, where a Joint Statement was issued that set out a vision for a cooperative relationship. I must remind the House that opposition parties supported these bold steps. I, for one, share Shri Vajpayee's vision, and I have also felt his frustration in dealing with Pakistan.

In my meetings with President Zardari in Yekaterinburg and with Prime Minister Gilani in Sharm El Sheikh, I conveyed, in the strongest possible terms, our concerns and expectations. I conveyed to them the deep anger and hurt of the people of India due to the persistence of terrorist attacks in India.

I told them that the operations of all terrorist groups that threaten India must end permanently. I urged them to make no distinctions between different terrorist organizations. I said that it was not enough to say that Pakistan is itself a victim of terrorism. They must show the same political will and take the same strong and sustained action against terrorist groups operating on their eastern border as they now seem to be taking against groups on their western border.

Both President Zardari and Prime Minister Gilani assured me that the Pakistan government was serious and that effective action would be taken against the perpetrators of the Mumbai carnage.

Shri Yashwant Sinha asked me what had changed between my meeting with President Zardari and the meeting with Prime Minister Gilani. In between came the dossier which showed progress though not adequate progress. Shri Sinha also asked me do we trust Pakistan. Let me say that in the affairs of two neighbours we should recall what President Reagan once said – trust but verify. There is no other way unless we go to war.

I was told that Mumbai was the work of non-state actors. I said that this gave little satisfaction and that it was the duty of their Government to ensure that such acts were not perpetrated from their territory. I told them that another attack of this kind will put an intolerable strain on our relationship and that they must take all possible measures to prevent a recurrence.

Madam Speaker,

After I returned from Sharm El Sheikh, I made a statement in Parliament, which clarified and elaborated not just the Joint Statement issued following my meeting with Prime Minister Gilani, but also what we discussed.

I wish to reiterate that the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan know, after our recent meetings, that we can have a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan only if they fulfill their commitment, in letter and spirit, not to allow their territory to be used in any manner for terrorist activities against India. This message was repeated when the Foreign Ministers and Foreign Secretaries met.

I stand by what I have said in Parliament - that there has been no dilution of our position in this regard.

An interpretation has been sought to be given to the Joint Statement that we will continue to engage in a composite dialogue whether Pakistan takes action against terrorism or not. This is not correct. The Joint Statement emphasized that action on terrorism cannot be linked to dialogue. Pakistan knows very well that with terrorism being such a mortal and global threat, no civilized country can set terms and conditions for rooting it out. It is an absolute and compelling imperative that cannot be dependent on resumption of the composite dialogue. In the Joint Statement itself, the two sides have agreed to share real time, credible and actionable information on any future terrorist threats.

Madam Speaker,

When I spoke to Prime Minister Gilani about terrorism from Pakistan, he mentioned to me that many Pakistanis thought that India meddled in Balochistan. I told him that we have no interest in destabilizing Pakistan nor do we harbour any ill intent towards Pakistan. We believe that a stable, peaceful and prosperous Pakistan living in peace with its neighbours is in our own interest.

I told him then, and I say it here again, that we are not afraid of discussing any issue of concern between the two countries. If there are any misgivings, we are willing to discuss them and remove them.

I said to him that I had been told by the leadership of Pakistan several times that Indian Consulates in Afghanistan were involved in activities against Pakistan. This is totally false. We have had Consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad for 60 years. Our Consulates perform normal diplomatic functions and are assisting in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, where we have a large aid programme that is benefiting the common people of Afghanistan.

But we are willing to discuss all these issues because we know that we are doing nothing wrong. I told Prime Minister Gilani that our conduct is an open book. If Pakistan has any evidence, and they have not given me any and no dossier has been given, we are willing to look at it because we have nothing to hide.

Madam Speaker,

I believe that it is as much in Pakistan's vital interest as it is in ours to make peace. Pakistan must defeat terrorism, before being consumed by it. I believe the current leadership there understands the need for action.

I was told by the parliamentarians who accompanied Prime Minister Gilani that there is now a political consensus in Pakistan against terrorism. That should strengthen the hands of its leaders in taking the hard decisions that will be needed to destroy terrorism and its sponsors in their country.

Madam Speaker,

Our objective, as I said at the outset, must be a permanent peace with Pakistan, where we are bound together by a shared future and a common prosperity.

I believe that there is a large constituency for peace in both countries. The majority of people in both countries want an honourable settlement of the problems between us that have festered far too long and want to set aside the animosities of the past. We know this, but in the past there have been hurdles in a consistent pursuit of this path. As a result, the enemies of peace have flourished. They want to make our alienation permanent, the distance between our two countries an unbridgeable divide. In the interests of our people, and in the interest of peace and prosperity of South Asia, we must not let this happen.

That is why I hope and pray that the leadership in Pakistan will have the strength and the courage to defeat those who want to destroy, not just peace between India and Pakistan, but the future of South Asia. As I have said before, if they show that strength and that courage, we will meet them more than half way.

There are uncertainties on the horizon, and I cannot predict the future in dealing with neighbours, two nuclear powers. We have to begin to trust each other, but not blindly, but trust and verify. People say that we have broken the national consensus. I refuse to believe that we have broken the national consensus.

For the present we have agreed that the Foreign Secretaries will meet as often as necessary and report to the two Foreign Ministers who will meet on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. The two Foreign Ministers have met even before the Joint Statement in Trieste. I met President Zardari in Russia. So in operational terms the effect of the Statement that the two Foreign Secretaries will meet as often as necessary followed by the Foreign Ministers is no more than what we are doing at present. Does it involve surrender or a sign of weakness?

As neighbours it is our obligation to keep our channels open. Look at what is happening in the world. The US and Iran have been sworn enemies for thirty years, and yet they feel compelled to enter into a dialogue. Unless we want to go to war with Pakistan, dialogue is the only way out. But we should do so on the basis of trust but verify.

On End Use Monitoring

All governments, including our Government, are particular about the end uses to which exported defence equipment and technologies are put to and for preventing them from falling into wrong hands.

Since the late nineties, the Governments of India and the US have entered into End Use Monitoring arrangements for the import of US high-technology defence equipment and supplies. These were negotiated before this agreement in each case by successive Governments of India. The Government has only accepted those arrangements which are fully in consonance with our sovereignty and dignity.

What we have now agreed with the US is a generic formulation which will apply to future such supplies that India chooses to undertake. By agreeing to a generic formulation, we have introduced an element of predictability in what is otherwise an adhoc case by case negotiations on each occasion.

I should add that we need access to all technologies available in the world for the modernization of our defence forces. The threats to the country are growing and we need to have the capability to deal with them, and to be ahead of them. Our Armed Forces are entitled to the best equipment available anywhere in the world. It is also in our interest to diversify to the maximum extent possible the sources of our imports of defence items and equipment.

You have my assurance that the Government has taken all precautions to ensure an outcome that guarantees our sovereignty and national interest. Nothing in the text that has been agreed to compromises India's sovereignty. There is no provision for any unilateral action by the US side with regard to inspection or related matters. India has the sovereign right to jointly decide, including through joint consultations, the verification procedure. Any verification has to follow a request, it has to be on a mutually acceptable date and at a mutually acceptable venue. There is no provision for on-site inspections or granting of access to any military site or sensitive areas. This is the position in regard to the end use monitoring.

On Climate Change

The Major Economic Forum Declaration adopted at L'Aquila is not a declaration of Climate Change policy by India, nor is it a bilateral declaration between India and another country or a group of countries. It is a declaration that represents a shared view among 17 developed and developing countries, the latter category including China, South Africa, Brazil, Indonesia and Mexico. Therefore, the formulations are necessarily generally worded to reflect different approaches and positions of a fairly diverse group of countries.

It has been argued in some quarters that the reference in the Declaration to a scientific view that global temperature increase should not exceed 2°C, represents a significant shift in India's position on Climate Change and that it may oblige us to accept emission reduction targets. This is a one-sided and misleading interpretation of the contents of the Declaration.

It is India's view, which has been consistently voiced at all forums, that global warming is taking place and that its adverse consequences will impact most heavily on developing countries like India. The reference in a document to 2°C increase as a possible threshold reflects a prevalent scientific opinion internationally and only reinforces what India has been saying about the dangers from global warming. True, this is the first time that India has accepted a reference to 2°C as a possible threshold guiding global action, but this is entirely in line with our stated position on global warming.

Drawing attention to the seriousness of global warming does not automatically translate into a compulsion on the part of India or other developing countries represented in the Major Economic Forum to accept emission reduction obligations. I would like to mention that our position and the Chinese position are nearly identical, and we have been coordinating with that country. Quite to the contrary, the greater the threat from global warming, the greater the responsibility of developed countries to take on ambitious emission reduction targets. That is why, 37 developing countries including India, China, Brazil, South Africa and Indonesia, have tabled a submission at the multilateral negotiations, asking the developed countries to accept reduction targets of at least 40% by 2020 with 1990 as the baseline.

The Major Economic Forum Declaration reaffirms the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in particular, the principle of equity and of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. As is well-known, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change imposes emission reduction targets only on developed countries. Developing countries are committed to sustainable development. The full incremental cost of any mitigation by them must be fully compensated by transfers of financial and technological resources from developed countries. This is fully reflected in the Major Economic Forum Declaration.

Furthermore, at the insistence of India, supported by other developing countries, the Declaration includes an explicit acknowledgement that in undertaking climate change action, the "first and overriding priority" of developing countries will be their pursuit of the goals of economic and social development and poverty eradication. This should allay any apprehension that India will be under pressure to undertake commitments that may undermine her economic growth prospects.

On the G 8 Statement on nuclear issues

Some Members have raised the issue of the Statement issued by the G-8 countries on Non-Proliferation at their L'Aquila Summit in Italy earlier in July, and the references in it to the transfer of enrichment and reprocessing items and technology.

The concern appears to be as to whether an effort is being made by certain countries to prevent the transfer of enrichment and reprocessing items and technology to non-NPT countries, i.e., countries like India who have not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Madam Speaker,

The government is fully committed to the achievement of full international civil nuclear cooperation. Consistent with this objective, in September last year India secured a clean exemption from the Nuclear Suppliers Group, one that was India-specific. At that time also attempts were made to make a distinction. The NSG has agreed to transfer all technologies consistent with their national laws.

The 'Statement on Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India' approved by the Nuclear Suppliers Group on September 6, 2008 contains India's reciprocal commitments and actions in exchange for access to international civil nuclear cooperation. It is our expectation that any future decisions of the NSG relating to the transfer of enrichment and reprocessing items and technology would take into account the special status accorded to India by the NSG. The NSG has given us this clean exemption knowing full well that we are not a signatory to the NPT.

Prohibition by the NSG of such transfers would require a consensus amongst all the 46 countries. This does not exist at present. The exemption given to India by the NSG provides for consultations and we will hence remain engaged with that body, so that any decisions take into account the special status accorded to India by it.

As far as the G-8 is concerned, the fact is that we have no civil nuclear cooperation agreement with the G8 bloc per se. We have, however, signed bilateral agreements with France, Russia and the United States. As I have said before, and I repeat it here, when I raised this matter with President Sarkozy, he was gracious enough to tell me that as far as France is concerned, there will be no restrictions. He also said that if we want him to go public on this, he will do so. Therefore, there is no consensus in the NSG to debar India from such technologies. We expect that the countries concerned will honour and implement their bilateral commitments.

Madam Speaker,

In the course of the discussions, some Hon'ble Members have raised the issue of our accepting pre-conditions for transfer of enrichment and reprocessing items and technology. I wish to once again state that pending global nuclear disarmament, there is no question of India joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon State.

I would also like to clarify that the transfer of enrichment and reprocessing items and technology has no bearing whatsoever on India's upfront entitlement to reprocess foreign origin spent fuel and the use of such fuel in our own safeguarded facilities.

Finally, I would like to bring to the attention of this august House that India has full mastery of the entire Nuclear Fuel Cycle, and this includes enrichment and reprocessing technology. We have a well entrenched E&R infrastructure as well. Our domestic three-stage Nuclear Power Programme is entirely indigenous and self-sustaining. Our indigenous Fast Breeder Reactor Programme and linked technology puts us in the league of those very few nations which today possess cutting-edge technologies.

The transfer of enrichment and reprocessing items and technology to India as part of full international civil nuclear cooperation would be an additionality to accelerate our three-stage programme.

New Delhi
July 29, 2009