

July 31, 1978

**Prime Minister Morarji Desai's Testimony on the
Decision to not Pursue Further Peaceful Nuclear
Explosions**

Citation:

"Prime Minister Morarji Desai's Testimony on the Decision to not Pursue Further Peaceful Nuclear Explosions", July 31, 1978, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (ISDA), Rajya Sabha Q&A Documents.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/119762>

Summary:

Transcript of Prime Minister Shri Morarji Desai's testimony before Rajya Sabha on the decision to no longer conduct peaceful nuclear explosions and to focus on more peaceful purposes.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

इसमें दिलचस्पी रखते हैं। जो बातें अखबारों में निकल रही हैं उनको आप देख रहे होंगे। उसके बाद भी अगर उपेक्षा करें तो यह स्थिति खतरनाक हो जायगी सरकार के लिए। मैं समझता हूँ कि उसके लिए भी यह सफाई होना अत्यन्त आवश्यक है कि प्रधान मंत्री पर जो आरोप हैं, वे निराधार हैं और गृह मंत्री के ऊपर भी अगर आरोप लगे हैं तो वे निराधार हैं। नहीं तो सारा देश जब तक इस स्थिति में रहे कि कैबिनेट के दो वरिष्ठ मंत्रियों ने एक दूसरे के ऊपर बड़े भारी आरोप लगाये और सारे मंत्रि-मंडल को कहा उन्होंने . . .

SHRI MORARJI R. DESAI: May I correct my hon. friend? The Home Minister has made no charges of corruption against me. Nor have I made any charges of corruption against him.

श्री कमलापति त्रिपाठी : जी हाँ, यह बात सही है, आप कह रहे हैं कि मेरे खिलाफ नहीं लगाया है और उनके पुत्र के खिलाफ लगाया है। बात ठीक है, लेकिन आरोप लगाया है उन्होंने और जो उनके वक्तव्य में प्रकाशित हो चुका है वह सारे मंत्रिमंडल पर है। उन्होंने अपने वक्तव्य में कहा है :

"I am surrounded by corrupt people and I am relieved because I am out of the Cabinet now."

यह कहा उन्होंने कि मुझे बहुत शांति मिली कि मैं निकल कर बाहर आ गया, क्योंकि मैं चारों ओर से घिरा हुआ था करप्ट लोगों से। तो जो आदमी पत्र व्यवहार में, समाचार पत्रों में, वक्तव्यों में यह बात कह देता है कि सारे करप्ट आदमियों से चारों ओर से घिरा हुआ मंत्री मैं रहा हूँ और निकल आया हूँ कैबिनेट से, आज तो हमको बड़ी राहत मिली हुई है और प्रधान मंत्री जी के बेटे के ऊपर मैंने कमीशन ग्राफ इन्क्वायरी बिठाने की मांग की थी इसलिए इस्तीफा मांगा गया था मुझसे,

इसके बाद भी मान्यवर, अगर प्रधान मंत्री जी कहें कि दो मंत्रियों के बीच का यह पत्र व्यवहार है और देश को जानने का अधिकार नहीं है तो मैं अत्यन्त नग्नता के साथ वह रहा हूँ कि यह बड़ी भारी हउधर्मी होगी और इससे देश को, मेरे ख्याल से बड़ा भारी अकल्याण होगा। आज सारे देश और जो विरोधी दल यहां बैठा हुआ है एक नहीं, सबकी मांग है कि वह पत्राचार ऐसा है कि जो तमाम टेबुल पर रख दिया जाय। मोशन भी आपके यहां भेज चुके हैं उसके ऊपर भी आप देख कर के जल्दी से जल्दी फैसला करें, क्योंकि यह प्रश्न ऐसा है कि हमारे सारे देश को और हम सब लोगों के जितने यहां बैठे हुए हैं, उनके मस्तिष्क में एक प्रकार की हलचल सी पैदा कर दी है। इस स्थिति में रुदन को ले चलना और चलाना हमारे और आपके लिए जितना कठिन होगा उससे ज्यादा बठिन हो जायगा सरकार के लिए। तो मैं चाहता हूँ कि इस मांग को मान लिया जाय, रबीकार कर लिया जाय और पत्राचार टेबुल पर रख दिया जाय और जो मोशन भी आपको यहां दिया गया है उसके ऊपर भी आप जल्दी फैसला करें।

1 P.M.

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Reported statement of the Prime Minister to the effect that India would not undertake Nuclear Explosions even for peaceful purposes and the views expressed by him on the previous Nuclear Explosion in India in 1974

SHRI KALP NATH RAI (Uttar Pradesh): Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Prime Minister to his reported statement that India would not undertake nuclear explosions even for peaceful purposes and the views expressed by him on the previous nuclear explosion in India in 1974.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI R. DESAI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, my honourable friends have raised two questions to which they wish to call my attention. The first question relates to my statement that India would not undertake nuclear explosion even for peaceful purposes and the second question refers to the views expressed by me on the Pokharan explosion in 1974.

Let me deal with the first question. The House must appreciate that science which exists to serve mankind has moved a long way since the first explosion of atomic bomb at Hiroshima, which in itself had awakened the conscience of the entire world to the immense potentiality of mass destruction by the use of nuclear science for military purposes. That awakening has grown and not declined with the passage of time and increased in qualitative and quantitative terms in regard to the arsenal of destructive atomic weapons by the Super Powers. The world has progressively realised more and more that this race in mutually destructive weapons has in it the germs of extermination of all life on this planet of the Earth itself. The so-called nuclear deterrent has not led to any reduction in this arsenal, in fact it has led to accumulation of this weaponry particularly among the two leading powers of the world, U.S.A. and USSR. It is a tribute to this awakening that these two powers have themselves shown an increasing awareness of these dangers and have addressed themselves to the task of reducing the extent of that danger and realise the necessity of eliminating such weaponry altogether.

The question of nuclear science, in the context of this development, has therefore become not merely a scientific problem but a political and humanitarian problem also. I am sure that this House will appreciate the fact that it is no longer for the scientists to call the tune in that field. The atomic energy has been utilised more for military than for peaceful

purposes both from the point of view of investment and research. The history of development of nuclear research has shown that the temptation to switch over from peaceful to non-peaceful purposes has proved difficult to resist on the part of those countries which consider it a matter of political and strategic advantage and resort to explosions ostensibly for peaceful purposes but in reality for military technology. During the last 33 years the number of such powers has grown from one, namely U.S.A. to seven i.e. U.S.A., U.S.S.R., U.K., France and China with Israel and South Africa among the suspects.

We have hitherto concentrated almost wholly on pursuit of nuclear research and development for peaceful purposes. I say almost wholly in view of the explosion at Pokharan in 1974 which has been taken by the world at large as a departure from that policy and the consequences of which we experience every time we enter into any cooperation and collaboration arrangement for the fulfilment of our need of fuel and equipment for the conduct of research and development. At every step we have to face doubts and suspicions of our intentions in all the countries from which we have to import these, without which our research and development have been suffering and will continue to suffer a set-back. At the same time even the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. have been realising the dangers of explosions. They have already entered into a treaty to abandon overground tests. They are negotiating about the comprehensive banning of the tests altogether including peaceful nuclear explosion for at least 3 or 5 years. Special session of U.N. General Assembly on Disarmament has called for the expeditious conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The question of peaceful nuclear explosions has ceased to remain a national issue only; it has become an issue for collective deliberations of the world powers, big or small, super or otherwise.

As regards scientific necessity of explosions, I have already stated that the main countries in which nuclear research is taking place are moving away from such explosions except for military purposes. Apart from this I cannot think of any use of such explosions which cannot be obtained by other means except that the alternatives would be more expensive and time-consuming. Should we subject thousands of people in the vicinity to hazards which are associated with nuclear explosions merely to save time and money? As regards the scientific value of such explosions from my knowledge of the result of Pokharan explosion I find that the 'experiment' if it can be called that merely confirmed certain theoretical knowledge and gave some information of the behaviour of radioactivity and neighbouring rocks and shells which was considered to be of value. I regard these results inadequate compensation for the jolt to international opinion which it has imported and the consequences it has had on our peaceful pursuit of nuclear research and development. It is true that in this development we have taken a unilateral decision to abjure explosions even for peaceful purposes. We now stand justified by the developing conscience of the whole world on it. It seems that France and China have chosen to follow their own independent line. So far as France is concerned it has been adapting itself to the voice of that conscience. It has accepted certain safeguards in the exercise of its own individual judgement. As for China it is my firm conviction that one day it would also have to bend before the judgment of the world and respond to the universal demand for a halt to the build up of nuclear arsenal and its reduction with a view to eventual elimination.

Scientific discoveries like gunpowder, automobile, electricity, aircraft, electronics and atomic energy have uses both peaceful and otherwise. Of these the nuclear energy

can be the most destructive of mankind and even the world. The world is getting increasingly alert to that danger. It is incumbent on all the nations of the world to save the world from that catastrophe which has cast its dark shadow over it. We have to do so in time and my submission is that that time is here and now.

So far as India is concerned, as a nation we have been traditionally devoted to peace. Throughout history we have stood for certain spiritual and moral values in the light of which we developed our own lines of internal and external policies. If we stand for those values and if we translate into actual policies that passion for peace and love of humanity for which the world knows us and if we are sincere about disarmament and universal brotherhood, there is no alternative for us but to stand for exercising the demon of use of the nuclear science for non-peaceful purposes. To my mind the only way to secure this objective is by way of outlawing all atomic tests or explosions. This is the objective to which the world is moving and this is the goal which we have set for ourselves. This is the field in which we have to set an example.

I shall now come to the second problem namely my views on the nuclear explosion at Pokharan in 1974. I know from my discussions with heads of foreign countries how much misunderstanding that explosion has created in their assessment of our devotion to pursuit of this great scientific discovery of modern times. Nor am I convinced that we have gained information of scientific value for peaceful use which would justify the risk of such misunderstanding and consequential embarrassment in the international relationship on this issue. Scientists now realise what handicaps they are experiencing in carrying on with their research activities. The way it was carried out

[Shri Morarji Desai]

in secret exposed us to the accusations made against us both internally and externally. The manner in which we indulged in self praise after the explosion and it was exploited for the sake of prestige both internally and externally and in the light of the scientific value and necessity of the results achieved, there is only one conclusion which can be reached and it is that the considerations were more political than scientific. I feel I am justified in thinking that it was done more for political than for scientific gains. At the same time I should like to make it clear that I have maintained and said so to foreign dignitaries with whom I have discussed the matter that I do not believe that Pokharan explosion was directed towards a switch over to military purpose.

I have deliberately decided to explain the points which underline this calling attention matter in order to enable the House to view it in the broader perspective of our traditions, our spiritual and moral values and our passion for peace, our love for humanity, the children of Mother Earth of which we are an undissoluble constituent element. We have to attempt to save the world from the holocaust of a much greater nuclear explosion than the explosion at Pokharan. Let the House keep before it this wider concept in dealing with our policy in regard to explosions for peaceful purposes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned and it will reassemble at 2.15 P.M.

The House then adjourned for lunch at eleven minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at seventeen minutes past two of the clock, Mr. Deputy Chairman in the Chair.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC UNDERTAKINGS

SHRI HARISINH BHAGUBAVA MAHIDA (Gujarat): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Fourteenth Report of the Committee on Public Undertakings (1978-79) on Jute Corporation of India Ltd.—Organisational Matters.

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Reported statement of the Prime Minister to the effect that India would not undertake Nuclear Explosions even for peaceful purposes and the views expressed by him on the previous Nuclear Explosion in India in 1974—contd.

श्री कल्प नाथ राय (उत्तर प्रदेश): आदरणीय उपसभापति जी, माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी ने अणु के संबंध में जो अपना वक्तव्य दिया है मैं उनके उस विचार से सहमत नहीं हूँ। पोखारन में जिस समय अणु का विस्फोट हुआ उस समय बैलगाड़ी के युग से निकल कर हिन्दुस्तान ने आणविक युग में प्रवेश किया था। उस समय हिन्दुस्तान के अंदर, पूरे देश के अंदर खुशी की लहर दौड़ उठी थी। न केवल हिन्दुस्तान के अंदर बल्कि तीसरी दुनिया, काली दुनिया ने अपना मस्तक ऊंचा उठाया था। पहली बार साम्राज्यवादियों के मुकाबले तीसरी दुनिया, काली दुनिया ने अपना मस्तक ऊंचा उठाया था।

यह महान दुर्भाग्य और बदकिस्मती की बात है कि मोरारजि भाई जैसे प्राइम मिनिस्टर जब अपने देश से बाहर जाते हैं तो यह वक्तव्य देते हैं कि हिन्दुस्तान ने जो आणविक विस्फोट किया 'इट वाज मोस्ट अनफार्चुनेट' प्रधान मंत्री जी ने अपना बयान दिया है 'इ वाज प.लिटिकली मोटिवेटेड'। बिना संसद और अपनी कॅबिनेट की राय लिए हुए अमेरिका में जाकर यह बयान देते हैं कि हिन्दुस्तान भविष्य में भी पीसफुली का के लिये एटोमिक विस्फोट नहीं करेगा