

**INDIA - FIJI, 1990 \*****EXTRACTS FROM OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT ON FIJI OF 5 JUNE, 1990**

"It would be recalled that on the 23rd of May, the authorities in Fiji had asked India to close its mission there within 24 hours and that all Indian nationals employed in the Mission should leave Fiji within 14 days. The Fijian authorities had taken this action on the grounds that India had launched an international campaign against Fiji, banned trade with that country and opposed Fiji's re-entry into the Commonwealth. They also made the unfounded allegation of alleged interference by the Embassy in Fiji's internal affairs. We have made it absolutely clear that our initiatives were taken in response to the setting up of an illegal regime in Fiji. They had seized power after a military coup that removed the newly democratically elected Government led by Dr. Bavadra

We had, at the time of receiving these instructions, from the Fijian authorities, made it clear that the allegations of our interference in their internal affairs were totally false and malicious. It was more likely that the Fijian authorities, who had set up this illegal regime, were disturbed by the strength of the democratic movement in Fiji.

Our support for the multiracial democratic movement was the principal cause which motivated the illegal regime to insist on the closure of the Mission. Racial discrimination is on the retreat even in South Africa and will not survive for very long in Fiji. India had, a fortnight ago, said that it would continue to mobilise world opinion to sustain its support for the democratic movement of the valiant people of Fiji in their struggle for the restoration of democracy and racial harmony. We had declared that we would avail ourselves of every opportunity to voice our opposition to racial discrimination, whatever its form and wherever it is practised.

In pursuance of this objective, our representative at the ESCAP session on June 6, expressed strong opposition to the representative of the racist regime assuming Chairmanship of the session. We said that our opposition to the Fijian regime stems from its illegal overthrow by military force of the earlier democratically elected Government, and its attempts to institutionalise racial discrimination. In voicing our opposition, we also declared that this was not a bilateral matter between India and Fiji. The struggle against racism and racist regimes, is a matter of fundamental human rights, which has been in the forefront and will continue until racism is eradicated from the face of the earth. Our highlighting these racial policies there was much appreciated.

When this announcement was made on the 23rd of May, you will remember that our Minister had said in the Parliament that the Government placed on record its appreciation of the commendable manner in which the members of the Embassy had discharged their duties. He also said that they had projected our policies faithfully and had scrupulously refrained from any interference in the purely domestic matters of Fiji."

**\*[This statement was provided by the High Commission for India, Canberra]**