

foreign press correspondents to that area, whose identity is of a doubtful nature?

**Shri Datar:** Government have this problem in view and they are taking necessary action from time to time

**Shrimati Manjula Devi:** May I know whether the hostile Nagas are receiving outside aid in the form of arms?

**Shri Datar:** It will be very difficult for me to answer it just now. Secondly, even if I have the material, it may not be in public interest to disclose it.

**Shri Raghubath Singh:** May I know whether the arms surrendered by the hostile Nagas have been examined and whether they know the make of the arms—Pakistani, Hindustani or UK, etc?

**Shri Datar:** In some cases, we know the makes.

**Shri Ranga:** Have Government sent any communication to the *Daily Express* in London contradicting the wrong information that has been published by their correspondent, or, will they do it at least now?

**Shri Datar:** I am not aware of this particular publication. All the same I shall try, if the hon. Member gives me the date, I shall look into it and see what action is necessary.

**Shri Hem Barua:** The date is 9th February and the name of the Correspondent is Donald Wise.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION No. 32

Riots in Sitamarhi, Bihar

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S.N.Q. No. 32. { Shri Vajpayee.  
Shri Assar:

Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state.

(a) whether it is a fact that Army was called to assist the Civil Administration in Riot-affected areas of Sitamarhi, Bihar;

(b) if so, the period for which assistance was sought and the period

for which assistance was actually rendered, and

(c) the number of Jawans and officers employed in this operation?

**The Minister of Defence (Shri Krishna Menon):** (a) Yes, Sir

(b) The period is not specified in such cases. Army assistance is given for only so long as the situation demands.

(c) It is not in public interest to disclose the number of troops employed.

**Shri Vajpayee:** May I know whether Government's attention has been drawn to grossly exaggerated accounts of these happenings in the Pakistan Press and if so, whether Government appreciate that it is the summoning of the Army that makes even the wild reports appear plausible?

**Shri Krishna Menon:** Obligations in this regard are confined to discharging the statutory obligations of placing the army assistance at the disposal of civil authorities when it is requested according to the procedure laid down by law.

**An Hon. Member:** He is not audible.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister has said that under statutory obligations—he is referring to the Criminal Procedure Code—the army authorities have to come to the help of the civil authorities in maintaining law and order. That was done. If others go on making all sorts of reports, it is none of their business.

**Shri Vajpayee:** What exactly is the procedure in such cases? I would like to know whether the Defence Ministry, before acceding to the requisition of armed units by local authorities, ascertains whether the situation does in fact warrant such assistance or whether it is incumbent on the Defence Ministry to come to the help of civil authorities.

**Mr. Speaker:** The matter was discussed here in connection with some other matter and it was pointed out

that it was according to the Criminal Procedure Code. The person who decides is the magistrate who is there on the spot.

**Shri Hem Barua:** May I know whether the attention of Government is drawn to a Pakistan radio broadcast last evening that has given a very exaggerated account of this incident? They have already said that some 2,000 people of a minority community are involved in it? If so, may I know whether our Government proposes to give a correct picture of the situation, so that there might not be any slander against this Government by a foreign government?

**Shri Krishna Menon:** The hon. Member will no doubt communicate his suggestion to the Home Ministry.

**Shri Assar:** May I know whether the army was used in controlling a defiant armed mob which wanted to loot a passenger train near Sitamarhi station?

**Shri Krishna Menon:** No, Sir; our information is that the army is patrolling the area to inspire confidence among the people.

**Mr. Speaker:** I was not able to hear the hon. Minister.

**Shri Krishna Menon:** The army is used only for patrolling the area.

**Mr. Speaker:** When the hon. Member put the question whether in view of the persistent effort by Pakistan radio and Press to give an exaggerated account of what has happened here, the Government proposes to give a correct picture, the hon. Defence Minister said that it is for the Home Minister. I thought the entire Cabinet is working together. If the hon. Minister considers that it is such a trivial matter, that is one thing. But to say some other Minister is to look into it, whoever might be the Minister, the hon. Minister has to report it to the other Ministry if it is really a serious matter. If it is a trivial matter, of course, nobody expects it.

**Shri Krishna Menon:** The question does not cover the matter of public relations. It covers the action taken by the army. The army's procedure in this matter is strictly according to the law. When the information was received in the Divisional Headquarters, the necessary complements were placed at their disposal for the purpose. On the request of the Government of Bihar, the 20 Infantry Division placed one infantry battalion at short notice to move by road to Patna and by rail from Patna to the affected area. There was widespread panic and chances of serious rioting breaking out in Muzaffarpur and elsewhere. The Government of Bihar requested the Station Commander at Dinapur on 20th April, 1959 to send two infantry companies immediately to Muzaffarpur in order to stabilise the situation.

As requested by the civil authorities, demonstration marches have been carried out by the troops to restore confidence and to act as a deterrent to further outbreak of disturbances. There has been no firing at all by the troops. The only incident reported is of two small thatched sheds being burnt in some place on 23rd April. The general situation is reported to be under control. The patrolling is being carried out by the army in collaboration with the civil authorities.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** In view of the special role of our army, which is not merely to put down the trouble-makers, but also to bind up the wounds of struggle, may I know if the Ministry has done something in this regard, specially in view of the reported observation of the Prime Minister that he was very highly distressed at the suffering of the innocent people there?

**Shri Krishna Menon:** As I have said, the army had to act strictly within the rule of the law in this matter under the guidance of civil authorities. I assure the hon. Member that the way they have conducted themselves has been in the direction of creating the effect he wants.