

Title: > DR. T. Ssubbrami Reddy called the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs> regarding situation arising out of killing of some person by Extermists in Jammu region.>

14.49 hrs

The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at forty-nine minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.

[Shri P.C. Chacko in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we take up the Calling Attention.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (VISAKHAPATNAM): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The situation arising out of killing of 22 Hindus by extremists in Jammu region and the action taken by the Government in regard thereto."

>THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): In three separate militancy related incidents, 20 people of a particular community were killed in the intervening night of 19th/20th February, 1999.

The first incident took place at Baljalaran in Rajouri Police Station (District Rajouri). The militants attacked the house of a teacher around 2245 hours where a marriage ceremony had just concluded. They fired indiscriminately with automatic weapons, killing five persons on the spot. The members of the Village Defence Committee retaliated and the militants fled away from the spot. Ten persons were also injured in the said incident, out of which two later succumbed to their injuries making a total of persons killed seven.

In the second incident in the intervening night of 19th/20th February, 1999 at Morha Patta near Khudbani in Dharamsal Police Station (District Rajouri), four persons were killed when militants attacked a house at 0130 hours and started indiscriminate firing on persons who were sleeping in the house.

The third incident took place at village Baryana in Arnas area in Police Station Reasi (District Udhampur) in the intervening night of 19th/20th February, 1999 where the militants fired indiscriminately on the inmates, after forcing entry into the house, killing nine persons and injuring one. On hearing the gunshots fired by the militants, members of the Village Defence Committee of nearby Morha Village retaliated due to which the militants fled away from the spot taking advantage of darkness. The injured was shifted to a hospital for treatment.

On the 20th February, 1999, the Minister for Education and Minister for Sheep Husbandry along with the Divisional Commissioner and the Inspector General of Police visited the village. On the 21st February, 1999, the Chief Minister accompanied by Prof. Chaman Lal Gupta, Member of Parliament and the Director General of Police followed by the Divisional Commissioner visited Baryana village to take stock of the situation. Senior Police, Civil and BSF officers have also visited Morha Patta on 20-21 February. The State Government and the district administration initiated prompt action in providing relief as well as additional security in these areas.

Immediately on getting information about the incidents, a two-member Team headed by a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs also visited Jammu and Kashmir. The Team held discussions with various authorities of the State Government and the Security Forces and talked to the villagers at Baljalaran.

Immediately on hearing about the incidents, the Security Forces undertook extensive combing operations. Encounters took place at several places, resulting in the killing of 21 militants within five days of the massacres, from the 20th to the 24th February. Due to sustained operations carried out by the Security Forces during the month of February, a total of 51 militants have been killed in Jammu Division.

To further consolidate the situation, the State Government is working inter alia on strengthening the Village Defence Committee System by providing them training and improved weaponry and communication equipment in select cases; increased frequency of patrolling by Security Forces of sensitive and vulnerable areas; clustering of minority population near their places of work for providing security, periodic visits by Senior State Government and Security Force Officers to remote and minority areas; and checking of infiltration of men, weapons and equipment. In addition, there is a constant monitoring of the security situation by the respective Unified Headquarters level at Jammu and at Srinagar. The situation is also monitored in the Department of Jammu and Kashmir Affairs of the Ministry of Home Affairs at regular intervals.

We would like to assure this august House, that the Government of India would continue to provide support to the State Government and the Security Forces in their efforts to tackle the militancy.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (VISAKHAPATNAM): Sir, as per the facts and also as per the information given by the hon. Minister of Home Affairs, so many people were killed just one day before the visit of our hon the Prime Minister to Pakistan. Our party also welcomed the Prime Minister's visit; everybody welcomed it.

But the sad thing is that, at 10.45 P.M., when some marriage was going on in Rajouri village, militants entered and brutally killed innocent people.

Again, in the second incident, in another village, when people were sleeping in the night, at about 1.30 A.M., they killed innocent people. Another incident also took place on the same night in which they killed 22 people. My question is: What was the Government of India or the Ministry of Home Affairs was doing about six or eight months back when militants were killing innocent people?

Secondly, when Prime Minister was going to Pakistan to develop relationship between India and Pakistan, was it not the duty of the

Government of India or the Ministry of Home Affairs to take utmost precautions from the security point of view in Jammu & Kashmir ? Why did they not visualise any attacks by terrorists?

Again, when Shri Gujral was the Prime Minister, he was going to Sri Lanka for holding some discussions with Pakistan. At that time, in the border, a lot of firing took place and I questioned at that time why the firing took place. It means that there is a knowledge that militants will take some advantage of such situations. Why have you not visualised it? This is my question. Unfortunately, the entire nation was shaken to hear that 22 people have been killed. After this incident, the Congress President, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi Ji, personally visited that area and also spoke to the bereaved family members. They informed her that one unfortunate victim who was attacked about seven and a half hours earlier was not rescued by anybody and by the time he was rescued, he was almost at the fag end of his life and died afterwards. She was also informed that in the second incident one boy was not rescued till two and a half hours. Afterwards, that boy also died. So, it seems that there is some negligence and lack of concentration in the security.

Now, the hon. Minister of Home Affairs says that after the incident, the Health Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Government went on the next day. The Chief Minister also went there. The hon. Minister of Home Affairs sent only two members' team headed by the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs. It was very sad from the Opposition's point of view and it is not correct also. It would have been fair on the part of the hon. Minister of Home Affairs to go himself to give a moral boost to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. We feel very sad about it. No doubt, our hon. Prime Minister has also expressed his distress about these incidents when he was in Amritsar. But still I want to know when he had brought it to the notice of the Pakistan's Prime Minister, Shri Nawaz Sharif, what was his reaction and also what assurances he has given that in future such things should not take place.

Now, I would like to quote what the President of Pakistan has said in Islamabad on 20.2.1999, on the day of the visit of the Indian Prime Minister:

"Pakistan is continuing its moral and political support to Kashmiris. He said that peace and security in the region depended entirely on the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. Pakistan will continue its political, diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmir on all fronts."

It was very unfortunate. I want to know when the President of Pakistan gives such a statement, whether our Prime Minister brought it to the notice of his counterpart, that is, the Prime Minister of Pakistan. What was the assurance given by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, this august House would like to know.

Then, afterwards, we are also surprised that Pakistan's Prime Minister gave a statement as if our Prime Minister has agreed to have a plebiscite on the Kashmir issue.

15.00 hrs.

Of course, our Prime Minister has denied it. But I would like to know why confusion is going on. Last time America said that the Minister of External Affairs says that we have agreed to sign CTBT. Afterwards Shri Jaswant Singh clarified that they have not agreed. Similarly, here also the Prime Minister gives a different version. Of course, our Prime Minister has given a statement that he never said like that. I want the Home Minister also to once again assure that whatever might happen in the relationship and in the development talks between India and Pakistan, Kashmir will be an integral part of India. The people of India and this august House expect a categorical assurance from the Home Minister on this point.

My next point is with regard to the proxy war. If proxy war is going on, where is the end to it? So, we must dream of stopping the proxy war and developing the relationship between India and Pakistan, and we must make all efforts without losing our integration and strength on this issue.

I am rather surprised by the various facts given by the Home Minister not only on today's Calling Attention Motion but even in the answer to an Unstarred Question given two days back regarding the special measures taken by the Government of India to prevent terrorism. The reply said: "Public order and police being a State subject". It is not appropriate to say that. I do agree that law and order is a State subject, but in Kashmir, where terrorists are being given weapons by Pakistan and they are killing the innocent people brutally, mercilessly and in an inhuman manner, how can they consider law and order as the State's responsibility? How can they say that they will be only strengthening their hands and will only be monitoring the situation from here? Here,. The Home Minister must draw the strength of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in his body and show a phenomenal result to the people of this country. MR. CHAIRMAN : Okay, sufficient explanation has been there. You frame your questions now.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: I shall take only two or three minutes, Sir. I have to make some important points. I shall read the reply given by the Home Minister and then ask the question as to what is the solution to those points. The reply said:

"Public order and police being the State subject, it is for the concerned State Government to devise various methods and take concrete steps in this regard. At the Central level, action is taken to facilitate coordination of the anti-terrorism operations of different States and to improve the flow of information useful for control of the activities among the States. Further, help is being provided to the State Governments in terms of financial assistance for modernisation of police, supply of improved weapons, development of financial assistance, etc."

Here, I would like to know how they can treat the situation in Jammu and Kashmir like in any other State. Then how do they expect to control terrorism completely? They have to fully concentrate on this problem and see that some new system is evolved so that the Central Government is totally involved in tackling the Jammu and Kashmir's law and order situation and the question of protection of the lives and property of the people of Jammu and Kashmir should not be considered like in any other State. So, I want a categorical assurance on how they are going to solve it. I do not want to find fault with the Government, but people do say that during this year only, incidentally or accidentally, more incidents of killing have taken place. So, on that also I want a clarification whether the killings have increased this year or whether these are under control as compared to the previous year. If he says these have reduced, we shall be very happy, but if these have increased, then we would like to know how he is going to control them.

We would like to know that also.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, I am the only man who is talking. There is no other person to talk. This is an issue not concerning my house or your house but the whole country. I do not think, I am wasting time or I am accusing anybody, abusing anybody or attacking anybody. I am only talking facts.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We agree that these are very good points, but you have also to ask the question which the Minister will reply to.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : I will be concluding very shortly.

....(Interruptions)

SHRI VAIKO (SIVAKASI): His party has created the whole mess in Jammu and Kashmir for the past 45 years.(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Sir, I am on a point of order. Is it proper for this House to specify victims as Hindus? We do not mention the name of any community when there is any communal trouble or riot. Is it proper to specify the victims as Hindus? We do not mention the religion of extremists. The extremists are the militants and we do not specify their religions. Then, why should we specify the religion of the persons who are killed? Is it necessary? Is it proper?

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Here, I fully agree with him. That word has come by mistake. I withdraw that word even though by chance the Hindus are killed.(Interruptions) I agree with him. I am not agruing.(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : He is not correct. I do not agree. I always agree with him, but I do not agree with him on this aspect because he is from this side.(Interruptions). If this word had come from the other side, I would have no objection.(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Radhakrishnan, you have made the point and he has also agreed to that. The whole House agrees with you. Let us not prolong it like this.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : I did not use the word `Hindu' while calling the attention of the hon. Minister.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : He should not give communal colour to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Radhakrishnan, that point is appreciated by the whole House. So, please let him complete now.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Sir, he did not notice one point.(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have made the point very correctly.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : He did not notice one point. When I called the attention of the Home Minister, I did not use the word `Hindu'. By mistake, this word is found in the print. I removed that word because it is totally wrong to use the word `Hindu'. Actually, I agree with him and therefore, I did not use the word `Hindu'. I cannot use the word.(Interruptions) I am opposing it.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (BALASORE): Sir, I think that this procedure should be observed in future also. Let us not say atrocities on `Christians or Muslims'. We will say atrocities on `Indians'.(Interruptions)

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Yes.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (BALASORE): They should also say that. At that time, they should not say that atrocities on Christians or Muslims.(Interruptions) I hope that they will not say like that in future.(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Radhakrishnan, please take your seat.

... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Madam, please take your seat.

... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is not necessary. Let Dr. Reddy conclude.

Shri Reddy, any more question. I think, you have already put six questions.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : I would like to put in a nutshell what I want to know from the Minister. We always take the policy that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. The Home Minister must give a categorical assurance to this august House and the people of India that there will not be any change in the policy of Govt. under any circumstances. Second, proxy war should be tried to be stopped as much as possible. Third, the Central Government should not throw all the blame on the State Governments saying that they have been given equipment and all other things and security is there. Let us see what he is going to tell not for ally my questions.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: Mr. Chairman Sir, first of all, in so far as militancy in Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, the Government of India is fully involved in the battle that is being waged against militancy. So, when we mention a constitutional fact that law and order and public order are State subjects, it does not mean, in the least, trying to abdicate the responsibility of the Government of India in so far as militancy in Jammu and Kashmir or, for that matter, in any part of the country is concerned. In every part of the country wherever we are faced with militancy, it has an implication not only on public order. In the border States, it has relevance even to national security.

So, the Government of India is very much involved. As to the second point, we are waging a battle against militancy and proxy war with determination and resolve to quell it. Simultaneously, efforts are being made to bring about some kind of normalcy in Indo-Pak relations. Now, these two will go on simultaneously. There will be no let up on either front and certainly in so far as Jammu and Kashmir is concerned. This Government regards it as an article of faith to which the entire House and the country is committed that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India, and there can be no compromise on this issue at any point of time. On these issues, we are all unanimous, we are all clear.

So far as these particular incidents are concerned, the hon. Member pointed out that you need not have used this word and you withdrew it.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : I did not use it.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: It was in the Calling Attention Notice (as framed). But I would say that we should understand that the militants have an objective and that objective is not merely to kill people and create a sense of fear, but if possible, to provoke communal disturbances in various parts of the country. Therefore, this is a matter of design that this has happened. It is not incidental that those killed belong to a certain community. As I have said, it is a design and that design has to be frustrated. So far as we are concerned, we are conscious that the world over, those who indulge in these terrorist activities think that there are certain occasions where if you do it, the focus of attention will be greater. Therefore, when an effort was being made by the Prime Minister of India to proceed to Lahore by bus, which is going to evoke the attention of the whole world and establish the credentials of this country in so far as bringing about normalcy in India and Pakistan is concerned, they might have thought as to why not use that occasion to spoil the atmosphere by this kind of a thing. So, there is little doubt that this was a calculated design and planned to be done on that very night. We had certain apprehensions and we warned the State Government, we alerted our security forces. But even then, in a remote part, these three incidents did occur. As I have said, immediately thereafter, the action was taken. Even otherwise, the action that is being taken has succeeded to a certain extent in quelling this situation. In this area, this is the first major incident after nearly five or six months. Six months ago something similar happened. Now, once again, it has happened. We are vigilant in this respect and we would continue to intensify our efforts at fighting militancy.

It is a matter of gratification for the Government that, for the first time in many years, this year's Republic Day was observed throughout the State, in almost every tehsil place, every district place, without a single incident occurring anywhere. They used to be a target for them. We were able to do it. But at the same time, as I have said, we do not think that the militants who are indulging in it, whether within the country or from across the border, have abandoned their designs or objectives; those objectives are still there. Therefore, we are all the while vigilant, keeping the State Government as well as the security forces always on alert, and fighting them wherever it happens and providing the victims whatever relief is necessary.

So far as the number of militants who have been killed this year is concerned, I may mention that the number of militants killed during 1998 is 999, touching nearly four figures which is, perhaps, the highest in many many years.

It is a vigorous action. But the more important aspect of this battle against militancy is that the people who are killed and the militants who are apprehended are mostly mercenaries. The number of people who are being recruited by these militants from Jammu and Kashmir itself is lessening. It is gradually becoming lesser and lesser. This is a very welcome sign. So much so that, for all practical purposes, 1998 in the Kashmir valley has been very very quiet and peaceful. As a result of that Kashmir valley, the valley proper, which has been the focus and centre of attraction for tourists from throughout the country and abroad is regaining its past status. Tourism that has dried up in the last eight-ten years suddenly picked up in a very big way in 1998.

More than one lakh tourists from within India and abroad visited the Valley besides the one and a half lakh pilgrims who went to Amarnath for the yatra. Everyone knows that film producers and film companies have always found Pahalgam, Srinagar and Gulmarg as very picturesque places to shoot their films in. But, for several years now all those who wanted to have such scenes in their films were going to places like Ooty, Kullu-Manali, Darjeeling or abroad. They were hesitating to go to Srinagar or Gulmarg. This year, once again, there has been a rush of such film producers trying to shoot their films there. I am mentioning all these facts because Jammu and Kashmir has been moving towards normalcy. The businesses of those who survive on tourism, the houseboat owners, the restaurant owners, hoteliers, etc., is back again. I would not say that they have become absolutely normal but there has been a big spurt in their occupancy, etc. It is a matter of satisfaction for us. These unfortunate incidents that have taken place on that particular day had a very definite objective and that objective should be understood by all. We are alive to it. We have been pursuing the battle against militancy with all the strength at our end.

I would like to add that the State Government also has been exerting in a very powerful manner. The coordinated effort on the part of the security forces, the paramilitary forces, and the Central Government has brought about the sea change in the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Sir, hon. Home Minister did not touch in his reply the point raised regarding the Pakistan Prime Minister.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: So far as we are concerned, as you have read in the papers also, the Prime Minister while talking to his counterpart in Pakistan drew attention to these killings in Rajouri and in Udhampur and said that if this continues, we cannot bring the situation to normal. That is all that I would like to say. So far as we are concerned, we drew attention to this fact.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : The issue of plebiscite is also left out.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: There is no question of plebiscite.

MOTION RE: TENTH REPORT OF BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MR. CHAIRMAN (SHRI P.C. CHACKO): Item No.9 - Shri P.R. Kumaramangalam.

THE MINISTER OF POWER, MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this House do agree with the Tenth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 8th March, 1999."

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That this House do agree with the Tenth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 8th March, 1999."

The motion was adopted.
