

12.05 hrs

STATEMENT RE : ACTIVITIES OF
SOME PERSONS IN THE
GOVERNMENT DETRIMENTAL
TO NATIONAL INTERESTS

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN) : On January 18, 1985, the Prime Minister had taken the House into confidence regarding a matter of grave importance arising from the activities of some persons in the Government which were detrimental to our national interests. Since then more details regarding this matter have become available. I am now in a position to disclose that the secret operations undertaken by our intelligence agency had recently brought to light that some persons in sensitive positions in the Government of India had been passing on classified documents and reports to an Indian, who, in turn, was transmitting them to an agent of a foreign power based in New Delhi. Our intelligence agency was directed to vigorously pursue the matter and in the light of their further enquiries a case under the Official Secrets Act was registered on January 17, 1985. As a result, several persons, including a representative of a private firm and some employees of the Government in the office of the Principal Secretary to the PM, Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Finance and the President's Secretariat have been arrested and are being interrogated. Searches conducted in the course of investigation have resulted in the recovery of a large number of classified and highly sensitive documents. At the instance of the Government of India, the agent of a foreign power involved in this case has been withdrawn from our country. Further investigation is in progress.

I would like to assure the House that considering the wide-ranging nature of the espionage activity that has been brought to light by our intelligence agency, no efforts will be spared by the Government to bring to book all those even remotely involved in such activity. Simultaneously a thorough review of security procedures regarding handling of classified information has

already been undertaken and modified instructions in this regard have already been issued to all concerned.

Hon'ble Members will appreciate that more disclosures at this stage would hamper investigation of the case.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur) : We would like to have a discussion on this. (Interruptions) I have a submission to you. The Statement is very brief. For instance, today the press has mentioned that one French official, who has been named as an important foreign link in the espionage case, has been allowed to leave the country from Palam Airport. Therefore, we would like to have a full-fledged discussion on this so that we will be able to get better information, more reliable information in the interest of the integrity and security of the country. Please accept our demand. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Why are you getting agitated unnecessarily ? I can listen even to a small whisper. Even if you whisper, I will listen. I say that there is a provision, we can all for a discussion under the rules. There is no problem... (Interruptions)

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ (Baramulla) : But the House should be taken into confidence.

MR. SPEAKER : I think the first day when the Prime Minister came here, he immediately informed the House. Then I have also been keeping in touch because it is my duty to keep in touch, and that is why when I came to know, I asked him to make a statement before the House. And now it is open for us to have a discussion. We shall sit together and decide what discussion should be there...

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Why are you shouting unnecessarily ?...

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN (Badagara) : I have given a notice for seeking leave for an Adjournment Motion.

It is a very complacent view that the Minister has taken in his statement. There has been a breach of security on all fronts—breach of security in the Prime Minister's Secretariat and in the Home Ministry and the Finance Ministry—and here he says...*(Interruption)*.

MR. SPEAKER : It is all right. It is in the national interest that I have to decide what sort of discussion we shall have...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : We want to censure the Government on this. Something unprecedented has happened.

MR. SPEAKER : I have never debarred any discussion, I am open to suggestions. I have told you that we shall sit together and find a way out...

(Interruptions)

Any problem I am ready to listen to.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : The House has not been taken into confidence...

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : We want to know whether the foreign person had any diplomatic immunity, whether extradition has been sought? We want to know the details of these and also we want to know which country has been involved. This has been agitating the public mind. You cannot shut us out.

MR. SPEAKER : Have I said that I am going to shut you out? Did I say that?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : Please ask him to clarify.

MR. SPEAKER : I say that we shall sit together and find a way out for discussion...

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Am I doing something wrong?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : No, no, I am not suggesting even remotely that

you are doing something wrong. I am just explaining. What I have said is that I have sent a notice of Adjournment Motion and I have suggested that an element of censure is involved in all that they have been doing. I have reason to believe that the case diary began ten months ago, it is not something that has happened overnight, and you are saying that the Prime Minister has informed the House...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. SPEAKER : No, no, you are misinterpreting me. I only said when this case of espionage was broken, then he came. Other-wise, if it had been told ten months ago, there would have been no catch...

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : You are not following. Please ask him to clarify and answer some questions...

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : I have given an Adjournment Motion...*(Interruption)*.

MR. SPEAKER : No question of Adjournment Motion. We are going to have a discussion...

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shrimati Ram Dulari Sinha.

12.12 hrs.

FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION
 (REGULATION) AMENDMENT
 BILL*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
 MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
 (SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA) :
 I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill