

have been revived. Such inhuman treatment is being given to the people of Tamil origin and how long can we remain mute spectators to it? I want to request the hon. Minister that he should use his good offices in a proper manner. We have to find the solution in consultation with the Srilankan President on the basis of the strategy which we have chalked out. Our Tamil brothers are being harassed in different ways. Civilian settlement are being bombed, houses are being set on fire and we are just mute spectators to everything. It is unhuman. Our Government should pressurize the Government of Sri Lanka to stop inhuman treatment being meted out to the Tamils and a solution should be found to the problem after consulting each other so that both the communities can live peacefully. It took a long time for the Lanka of Ravana to burn and the reasons behind it were very clear, Ravana's Lanka was considered to be a land of gold and it was supposed to be the richest land on earth and the people were rich and prosperous. However, if we look into the history of Sri Lanka, we will find that destruction has taken place there constantly. The main reason behind such destruction is the absence of love between human beings. We will have to reconsider its political implications and pressurise the Government of Sri Lanka to not to involve outside powers in an internal problem. Instead, we should be consulted and the matter should be settled with mutual agreement so that cordial relationship can be established. With these words I will end my speech.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): May I convey my deep appreciation and thanks to the 12 members who have spoken in this debate on this very important subject. I will begin with a few preliminary remarks giving the background of the situation and then if I may, with your permission, take up various points made in the debate specially by the first speaker, Mr. Mohanty, who made a very valuable contribution on a very intricate, complex and sensitive issue which is of very serious and of very real concern to the people of India—not any particular part of

India. I am not, for a moment, denying that the people of Tamil Nadu living next door are emotionally and deeply involved as we are all. But to suggest that we are looking at this problem in any sectional or regional manner, to my mind, is most unfortunate. I will come to that later in the course of my statement when I will take up various issues raised by hon. Members.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You please continue after lunch.

13.00 hrs

The Lok Sabha adjourned for Lunch till Fourteen of the Clock.

The Lok Sabha reassembled after lunch at four minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

DISCUSSION RE : SITUATION ARISING OUT OF ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE IN SRI LANKA - CONTD.

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Shri Natwar Singh is to continue.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SRI K. NATWAR SINGH): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, just before we adjourned for the lunch break, I said in my remarks that the Government and the people of India were looking at the profoundly tragic situation in Sri Lanka from the national point of view and not from any sectional or regional point of view.

The suggestion made by the former Foreign Secretary at Vijayawada on the 25th of April that the Central Government was not paying sufficient heed to what was happening in Sri Lanka and that if a north Indian minority was involved then the reaction would have been different, is, if I may say so in regard to my former colleague, reprehensible, regrettable and unfortunate. The whole of India regardless of any party affiliations is concerned

[Sh K Netwar Singh]

about the denial of human rights in Sri Lanka, the treatment meted out to women, children and elderly people, innocent people who are in no way involved with any political activity. We find it really incomprehensible that the distinguished Head of State of Sri Lanka, who says that amongst his mentors is Mahatama Gandhi, should be permitting the Sri Lankan forces to commit the kind of atrocities that they are committing. I do not want to use harsh language although it is difficult not to do so in the circumstances. But as a Minister of the Government of India, I have to exercise the maximum circumspection and restraint. Let me assure you, this does not come to me naturally in a situation of this kind because our emotions, our passions and our feelings are deeply involved in what is happening in Sri Lanka.

I am most grateful to hon Members who have participated in this debate and who have focussed attention on a serious problem in what used to be a friendly, neighbouring non-aligned country.

The developments in Sri Lanka while speaking in absolute international terms are an internal matter for the Government of Sri Lanka. Nobody is denying and we have as a Government said that we are not in favour of a separate Tamil State-Ealam. We do not want the dismemberment of another country. But at the same time the Sri Lankan situation has peculiarities which we as a country and the people cannot disregard. We have no intention whatsoever to interfere in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka and for that matter the internal affairs of any other country.

The two things make the Sri Lankan situation very grave and almost of daily concern to the Government of India. That is why the Sri Lankan situation is constantly being reviewed by Government and we are in constant touch with the Government and the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Of the two things one is that nearly 2 million Tamils live in Sri Lanka. They have lived there for centuries. They have made their contribution of the development and advancement of Sri

Lanka in all walks of life. They are part of Sri Lanka and that they should be denied of their basic rights in their own country is to us an outrageous state of affairs. We cannot ignore the feeling of 2 million Tamils because as Shri Kumaramangalam said people of Tamil Nadu and other part of India have relationship with the people living there and they are subject to violence that is being perpetrated upon them by the authorities and the Government of Sri Lanka.

Now, the second point is the international environment. Sri Lanka is a small country, our neighbour and there what do we see? Around Trincomlee, naval activities take place from time to time which cause us concern. Within Sri Lanka as the hon Members have said, there is the involvement of Israel, there is the involvement of Pakistan. Arms have come, we have read reports from South Africa. Other countries were involved. The KM services of the United Kingdom are training the Sri Lankan army. When I was in the United Kingdom, I met the Home Minister, Mr Douglas Hurd and the Minister of State, Mr Wadington, who had just been to Sri Lanka and said "it is a matter of very grave concern to us that the KM services are giving training to Sri Lankan armed forces and if any of these individuals who are there, and their number is increasing, were to be involved in the combat and captured, it would have a serious international repercussions. What they have said to us is that this is a private agency which has gone there, and been called by the Government of Sri Lanka."

Now, Sir, as the hon Members know the international landscape is littered with unexploded mines and we have to tread very wearily and carefully and above these are high tension wire, we have to approach these with very great skill. We cannot possibly be oblivious to the international environment in and around Sri Lanka. As a country, we just cannot be indifferent to it. No, the Prime Minister has drawn the attention of the President of Sri Lanka to this fact. I myself had the honour of speaking to the President of Sri Lanka and told him that if activities of these powers increase in Sri Lanka, then

the security environment which is bad enough would get worse and we simply could not ignore that. We said this in the interest of Sri Lanka because if outside powers come into this and play their role, they are increasing their role in a small island then very serious consequence can follow from this and we sincerely hope that the Government of Sri Lanka will in their own interest look at this very carefully in their long term interest and not for short term again in the quasi civil war that is going on in the Sri Lanka.

Hon. Members have spoken with great feeling and passion, let me assure them that we fully share their feelings we fully share their passions and our emotions are one with them particularly, the people of Tamil Nadu who are directly affected by the situation in Sri Lanka. Now, Sir, the Prime Minister speaking yesterday, had said that it was our hope that a peaceful negotiated political settlement was the best answer for the situation in Sri Lanka. Sir, that is what we have been trying to work for. We have not been silent spectators to the grim tragedy. But as a Government and as a people, 70 million people dealing with the problem of an Island State of 16 million, we have to be extremely careful to the sensitivities. Suggestions have been made that the matter might be taken up to the United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement and other International fora.

Sir, if one is to look at the past history of taking such issues to international fora, then you will agree with us that this would only make it more complicated, the issue would not be judged on its merits and all sorts of outside extraneous influences will get in an a difficult enough situation would be made impossible to the detriment of all concerned.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU (Gobichettipalayam): Sorry for interruption, Sir, Yesterday our Prime Minister has stated in the Congress Parliamentary Party Meeting that so far as Sri Lanka is concerned, he has got some proposals with him. May I know what are the proposals actually with the Prime Minister? Will the Minister come forward with regard to the proposals that he is having?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Sir, I am coming to that. If I may, Sir, with your permission inform the House that between the lunch break and now I met the Prime Minister. I just want to tell you that he takes daily interest in the situation in Sri Lanka. The Prime Minister had in mind the proposals of 19th December, and I shall read them out to you because they are now public property. They offer a package, a political package, for arriving at a negotiated settlement which would ensure a peace and amity with Sri Lanka.

Why are we saying that a political settlement is the only answer? Because a military solution -- and I am glad to say that a vast majority of the hon. Members who spoke beginning with Mr. Mohanty have ruled out military intervention because military intervention would have very serious repercussions for the entire region and I do not have to go into details of it and dwell on it. Hon. Members will know why such a step would lead to very grave consequences. So we are trying not only now, but for the last 4 years for a negotiated political settlement. Now, the difficulty is that from time to time when we are very near an agreement, as in the case of December 19 proposal, since I was personally involved in it along with my colleague, Mr. Chidambaram, the December 19 proposals had been typed out at the residence of the distinguished President of Sri Lanka. A copy had been left with him a copy had been brought here and we said that these proposals would convey to the Tamil groups in India because we thought that they were practical and that they did offer basis on which negotiations would begin for the final political settlement. Before we could convey these to the Tamil groups we had message from Sri Lanka saying that the President was finding some difficulty in making them acceptable to all concerned. We remained in Sri Lanka for three days, I am not going into the details about the discussions because they are confidential in nature, but I can broadly share with the House that we met all the representatives of the Eastern Provinces. Both Mr. Chidambaram and I were accompanied by the High Commissioner and we met the elected representatives, all Members of

[Sh. P. Kopalandaivelu]

Parliament and the Muslim Members who, at one state, had some reservation that if the Amperia district was taken out, if that electoral district was taken, out then the Tamils, Sinhala and Muslims will have equal representation there, it will meet the demands, not all the demands, later there could be institutional linkages between the North and the East like a common university, a common Planning Commission eventually may be a common governor I will read out the details. After five years they could have a settlement there could also be a possibility that Tamil would be accepted as a second language and that the second most highest office in Sri Lanka would go to a non-Sinhala.

This has been agreed. Now, when this has been arrived at, we have felt encouraged. We said, we will take this to the Tamil groups with whom we are in contact. Unless we carried these Tamil groups with us, there can be no lasting solution. But we should be able to take to the Tamil groups something which they find that they can offer to their people as a reasonable solution. After all, they are fighting a war and they are dying there. It is very well for us perhaps to say here that there should have been settlement. But these people are involved in the struggle and they are fighting for a cause. One has to take into account their deep feelings, their deep emotions, their deep passion and anger. We said, "All right, we will take this". But then the message came that Sri Lanka President had some difficulty. May I also say that along with this 19th December proposal, there was also an understanding that outside elements in Sri Lanka will have to withdraw? That it has to be a package settlement. Well we thought, this is an assurance given by responsible people and we took note of it. Now, when we heard that these proposals as a whole are no longer valid, we could not take piecemeal proposal to the Tamil groups.

Then, on the second of January, the blockade of Jaffna started and military activities mounted up. When these things mounted up - as Shri Kalandavelu has said, this is the time, we are discussing it. We discussed this matter

some months ago and I have mentioned that when the military activities speeded we conveyed to the Sri Lankan Government that for humanitarian grounds, the blockade should be lifted, the military activities should be curtailed or restrained; otherwise, innocent people will be badly affected. This did not happen. We debated this matter in the last Session of Parliament also. We also kept in touch with the Tamil groups who said, "Listen, unless we are given some assurance that their proposals of 19th December are valid and acceptable how, do we sit down and with whom do we negotiate?" This was the unanimous view of all the Tamil groups, not only LTTE who are bearing the major brunt of the fighting which is going on in Sri Lanka but others also. Now repeated messages have been sent. I spoke to the President of Sri Lanka on telephone. The Prime Minister sent messages asking for restraint, asking for understanding and asking for a peaceful settlement. But these activities kept on mounting. Then, in the middle of March, because the situation in Jaffna was very grim, the Prime Minister sent Mr. Dinesh Singh to say that if these things continued, serious consequences would follow. Since then, when we got the message, there was some indication that military activity was being reduced and there was some unwinding of the blockade. But suddenly in the month of April, these terrible tragic events have taken place. Since then, as the hon. Member has pointed out, the kind of statements that are emanating from Sri Lanka, by the Head of the State, by the Head of the Government and other responsible people in their Government, the language that has been used, the phrases that have been spun out, to say that the policies and actions of the Government of India are Hitlerian are, to say the least, appalling. We have conveyed our displeasure at this, to the Sri Lankan authorities through our High Commissioner and said this kind of thing for the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka to say that we are the enemies -- is unacceptable...

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU: Why do you not ask Mr. Jayewardene to apologise for having said Hitlerian? Is it not proper on our part to ask him?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: There are certain well established norms of diplomatic activities and sovereign Governments understand those norms. When a Government sends a message to another Government saying that the language that is used is unacceptable, it is pretty serious matter, it is a pretty serious matter and, if no regret is expressed by Sri Lankan authorities, then we and you and all of us come to our own conclusions. I do not have to spell them out. It is unfortunate that somebody who professes to be following Mahatma Gandhi should use this kind of language.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU: To say what?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: To say that we are enemies of Sri Lanka is amazing perversity and a use of language which I find quite unbridled and extraordinary and unacceptable. We conveyed our disapproval to them. I even said "You are using all these words and phrases. What use are they?" For a Government, language is the only means that we have and language is a very powerful weapon, if properly used. Ideas change the world and ideas are given body by the proper use of words and by the proper use of language. This is what we are trying to do.

SHRI VIR SEN (Khurja): In terms of the language they used, is it suggestive of their mood and their attitude towards the problem and how they want to solve it?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: That is why, it is all the more necessary for us, to look at this problem in a very mature and balanced way because if we were to use similar language, then there would be no difference between them and us.

SHRI VIR SEN: To take note of their mind.

MR. DEPUTY - SPEAKER: In desperate condition they may utter many things.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: We have carefully followed what they have said and it is very distressing that of all countries and of all leaders, a leader of Sri Lanka

with whom we have much close contacts should say this.

I may read out the proposals of 19th December. Much has been said that I think they offer the best hope there are:-

"The present territory comprising the Eastern province minus the Ampara electoral District may constitute the new eastern province.

A Provincial Council will be established for the new Eastern province.

The institutional Linkages between the Northern province and the Eastern province discussed earlier will be further refined in order to make it more acceptable to the parties concerned."

They have appeared in "The Hindu" in full.

"The Sri Lanka Government will be willing to consider a proposal for a second state of constitutional development providing for the Northern province and the new Eastern province coming together subject to modalities being agreed upon for ascertaining the wishes of the people comprised in the Northern province and the Eastern province separately.

"The Sri Lanka Government is willing to consider the creation of an office of Vice-President to be appointed by the President for a specified term.

The five Muslim MPs of the Eastern province may be invited to visit India and to discuss matters of mutual concern with the Tamil side under the auspices of the Government of India."

These proposals are now nearly six months old and they are public property and if, I remember correctly, they have also been tabled in the Sri Lankan Parliament and they appeared in "The Hindu" in full. We think these proposals still offer the best hope. Now, we have messages from Sri Lanka that these proposals are still valid. What makes it difficult for us to have our good offices continue in a sustained manner is to use Mr. Vir Sen's phrase Sri Lankan authorities blowing hot and cold."

[Sh. K. Natwar Singh]

It is difficult to do serious business with a government which changes its mind so often. How do you conduct serious business with people who go back on what they have said? I do not wish to say anything more. I use language respectfully and carefully when referring to sovereign Governments. When the temperature is heated up and the number of deaths mount up each day.

then this House discusses this problem, by doing so it does focus attention on this problem. I am sure that everybody in Sri Lanka takes note of what is said here because there is no difference of opinion in this House about the tense situation and that we should have a political solution.

SHRI C. K. JAFFAR SHARIEF (Bangalore North): Since the Tamils have been butchered every day and it is a human problem—No doubt the efforts of the Indian Government are there. The Sri Lanka response, as you said, is blowing hot and cold - and although it is a local problem, the origin is of Indian origin, whether they have any feeling of delicacy to communicate to us freely and frankly and if so instead of merely depending on bilateral relations whether any other channels also are open to us to deal with this problem.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: As I said earlier, we have not thrust ourselves on the Government of Sri Lanka. They had asked for our good offices and so did the Tamil groups. As I said earlier, if we were to bring in another party to this or to take it to the international forum, then, in our judgement and, bearing the past experience in mind, it is likely to further complicate the issues. So, we would like to contain this, bearing in mind the security environment and the dangers involved therein if outside influences are going to actively participate in trying to solve this problem.

On a number of occasions and, now, even till two days ago, Mr. Gamini

Dissanayake, in Madras made a statement to which you have referred and he has also said that the good offices of the Government of India are welcome. If I remember correctly the said December 19 proposals offer a good basis for starting negotiations. We get the impression that within the Sri Lankan Government, there are opinions, there are different shades of opinions and that is why it makes it difficult for us to know as to when precisely they are speaking with one voice to say that these proposals are there and that we can on this basis ask the Tamil groups to come to the conference Table Now, we have spoken to the Tamil groups saying: "This is something worth looking at". Their pointed view is that so long as the killing goes on, so long as the economic blockade continues and so long as there is no let up in the military activity, they cannot be expected to go to the conference table with a pistol aimed at their head. This is the difficulty. So, what they are saying is that the economic blockade which has caused so much hardship to the civilians, should be undone and the military activity should stop so that a climate can be created for discussing these proposals or if the Government of Sri Lanka had any other proposals to offer, we certainly look into them. But to say that a military option is the only option they have is, in our judgement, not going to solve the problem. It is only going to create more difficulties within Sri Lanka and around Sri Lanka.

The Prime Minister had very long meetings with Mr. Jayewardene in Bangalore. I was present myself. Mr. Tiwari was present. Mr. Chidambaram was present. We discussed all the aspects and the ramifications. Thereafter, we had been there. One of the Ministers was here, sometimes ago. We talked to them. Our High Commissioner has come and reported to us. We are unable to find out as to what precisely they would like, apart from the December 19 proposals. Because when they say that India was not being helpful, that India was encouraging

the Tamils, they must realise our situation. There are 55 million Tamils living in Tamil Nadu. There are 140,000 refugees who come from Sri Lanka. They are the responsibility of the Tamil Nadu Government, the Government of India. What are we going to do if the repression continues there and if they come from there? Is the Tamil Nadu Government going to shunt them? How is it possible? They cannot live in their own country where they were born and where their forefathers had lived, and if they are going to come as refugees, are we to deny them the succour, just to accommodate the Government of Sri Lanka? This is not going to happen. This country has the age-old tradition of opening its doors to refugees from any part of the world. This is one of the glories of India, the heritage, the culture and the history of India that, if they come here, we look after them. But how many and for how long can this continue without creating serious problems within Tamil Nadu? That is why this particular problem of Sri Lanka impinges on the internal and external affairs of India. That is why, it is so complex, that is why it is so sensitive. That is why, for a country of 780 million people, one has to deal with it very, very carefully because you are dealing with a country of 16 million people. And if we were to give the impression that we are the big brother and are using the big stick, it will create the wrong kind of atmosphere. We do not want to do that. We have never done it. We are falling backwards to accommodate Sri Lanka with a view that we can find a solution for this problem. I am not saying that the solution is easy. It is not easy, it is a difficult solution, but for this you need the cooperation of the Government of Sri Lanka.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU: You know full well about the troubles that we are facing in Tamil Nadu. Nearly two lakh refugees are there. A Minister of Sri Lankan Government, Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, came to Madras and he made a press statement two days back

stating that our Chief Minister has granted Rs. 4 crores for the Sri Lankan Tamils. Only after taking a unanimous decision through the Assembly, it was granted. But he says that it is an act of folly. Can't you come forward to condemn what Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, the Land Development Minister of Sri Lanka has said, that what he has said is wrong? That should be condemned by the Government of India. Why don't you say like that?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Mr. Gamini Dissanayake is here. We will certainly get the text of what he has said. I do not want to go into the question of Rs. 4 crores that the hon. Member has mentioned. We are also in touch with the Government of Tamil Nadu; they are aware of the background, of the facts....

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU: It is an insult to India.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The Minister says that he will find out the text.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: I have taken note of what you have said.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU: Sir, you have to condemn it. What is this? Things are going like this in our own soil. He has stated in our own soil, in India. Can you not condemn it? What is this?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: As the hon. Member has said, we are aware that he is here, we are aware that he has made a statement. We are trying to find out what he precisely said. If he has said something which he should not have said, we will certainly bring it to his notice that this should not have been done. Beyond this, I cannot, in this House, make instant policy. I do not want to. What you have said, I have taken note of. You leave it to me to deal with it. Give me that much credit.

Twelve hon. Members have spoken. First of all, I would like to thank them for

[Sh. K. Natwar Singh] their views, for the concern expressed which we in Government share fully. Mr. Mohanty who opened the debate said that he did not think that a military solution was an answer and, like us, he has also said that any solution has to be found within the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka being maintained. That is our point of view also. He also referred to the outside forces that are making the situation worse, the statements of the various leaders to which a strong exception has been taken in the House by hon. Members and the protest that we have lodged with the various Governments. He has referred to the violation of human rights. This has been taken up at the Human Rights Commission. He has also, if I may say, very rightly said that what is happening in Sri Lanka, goes on and if no solution is found it will have serious repercussions over our good neighbourly relations in Sri Lanka. And we have to keep this very much in mind that we want to have had the closest possible relations—historical, cultural, political and other relations—with Sri Lanka. We sincerely hope that better sense will prevail that violence will be reduced and they will come round to the view that the only solution is a negotiated settlement. He also referred to the statement of the former Foreign Secretary to which I have already referred and said that we think this statement to be extremely improper and unfortunate. He also referred to the Jaffna hospital. The latest news is that there is a possibility that this Jaffna hospital will not be shifted. But I don't really know in view of the fact that there are from time to time different points of view expressed. He also said that some kind of humanitarian help would be given. This certainly will be considered and is very much before us and as and when the step has to be taken we will take it in consultation with the international agencies and with the Government of Sri Lanka and the Government of Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Shahabuddin also referred and he compared the situation in Southern Africa

with Sri Lanka. If I am not mistaken, my own impression is during the last few years more people have died in Sri Lanka than in Southern Africa. This gives you the immensity of the conflict and the situation of quasi-civil war going on in this Island. He also said we should refer this issue to outside agency and I have earlier given the reason why we think that this could not be particularly helpful in arriving at a solution which might only make the situation much worse. He mentioned NAM, UN and SAARC. SAARC so far has not taken up political bilateral issues. That is why, it is able to function. Otherwise the moment political issues are injected, problems will be created and position will be taken not on the merits of the case but with regard to other geo-political reasons. He was also against any military intervention in Sri Lanka because of the ramification that it might have. He also said that this was not a situation comparable with Bangladesh for obvious reasons. He saw some ray of hope in the statement made with regard to political settlement by Mr. Dissanayake. We are again trying to get what precisely he said and what precisely he meant. He also mentioned one or two things that we might take some action with regard to our navy etc. We have noted what he said.

Mr. Swell referred to the geo-political situation there. He referred to the situation in 1973. But there is a basic fundamental difference in the situation in 1973 and now. He also referred to what is happening in Trincomalee and Central Command. We are fully aware with this and share his grave concern. He also referred to the language that was used in this connection. Again I referred to it how strongly we condemned the language that was used.

Then Mr. Chowdhary and Mr. Vir Sen spoke in a similar way and I will come to the remarks of Mr. Kolandaivelu because the Tamil Nadu Government has to deal with the situation constantly. He referred to the news item that had appeared in the

Daily News in London. I have not seen it. And I advocate that we don't go by what appear in newspaper report. You also said that if there could be a Fund for South Africa, an AFRICA Fund-it is not for South Africa, it is a Fund for the Frontline States-why could not there be a Fund for this. We will certainly have a look at what you have suggested. You have also referred to my statement in the Rajya Sabha. The statement that I made in the Rajya Sabha was the considered views of the Government of India.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU: Today also you are repeating the same views, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It is the policy.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: You must find this very trying; you must find this not particularly exciting. But I am not going to say anything exciting or dramatic because in this situation we want to reduce the trauma of it, we want to reduce the tragedy of it and we want to find a solution for this. It is not an easy problem. But I know how you feel and I share your agony, your passion or anxiety and also the lack of confidence that you have in the Government of Sri Lanka. I am sharing all these with you. But I wish I had a magic solution. But I don't have. The Government does not have it and I don't think you have it. You have expressed your views, I know. But you have not offered a solution because an easy solution is not available.

The only solution that is available is the December 19 solution.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Natwar Singh, Mr. Kolandaivelu is having a magic; but you won't accept his magic, that is the problem.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: If your magic is politically peaceful, then I would like to have a look at it.

SHRI BRAJAMOHAN MOHANTY (Puri): I want to seek two clarifications. Firstly, I would like to know whether the Government of India still continues or exercises its authority as a mediator or we have been discouraged. Secondly I would like to know whether the Government of India is alert about the super-power confrontation there and how the situation is there right now.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He would like to know whether India's role as a mediator is going on or not and also whether the foreign power confrontation in Sri Lanka will affect our country.

SHRI BRAJAMOHAN MOHANTY: In the background of the Prime Minister's statement, I would like to know whether we are still continuing as a mediator or not. Another thing is that, as the situation is seen by us, different forces are working inside Sri Lanka. I would like to know whether we are alert about the super-power confrontation.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Our good offices are available.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: But they must not take it as a weakness.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: The Sri Lanka Government from time to time says that India's role is important, they would like us to play their role and sometimes says that India has no role to play..(Interruptions). We cannot arrive there and say that we are offering our good offices. Our own feeling and view is that India's good offices are essential for finding a peaceful solution. The latest indication, if Mr. Dissanayake's statement means anything, is that they are having a second look at it. The situation within Sri Lanka is very complicated; certain developments are taking place on which I won't comment.

With regard to the second point, the confrontation of outside super powers we

[Sh. K. Natwar Singh]

hope that such a confrontation will be avoided and we would like to avoid it. That is why we have said that we should keep the super-power confrontation outside and no outside influences should be allowed to come there and the Sri Lankan people should settle this issue peacefully.

May I say in conclusion that I once again thank the Hon. Members for their forbearance and patience? I conclude by saying that we fully share the concern of the House and deplore the killings of innocent women and children who are in no way involved with the political activity. Because if this situation continues, the greatest tragedy would of course come to the people of Sri Lanka. But it must have its repercussions on areas near Sri Lanka, particularly in Tamil Nadu. If the people of Tamil Nadu feel disturbed, then the whole of India feel disturbed. Thank you.

14.50 hrs

STATUTORY RESOLUTION *RE*
APPROVAL OF PROCLAMATION IN
RELATION TO THE STATE OF PUNJAB

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS
(S. BUTA SINGH): Mr. Deputy Speaker,
Sir, I rise to move:

" That this House approves the proclamation issued by the President on the 11th May, 1987 under Article 356 of the Constitution in relation to the State of Punjab."

The copies of the Report of the Governor of Punjab and the proclamation have already been laid on the Table of the House.

Sir, this august House will recall that on 24th February this year we had apprised this House about the development in Punjab. In the debate which ensued the hon. Members gave their full support to the Barnala Government to fight fundamentalism and terrorism. Simultaneously an all party campaign was

lunched with the cooperation of the leaders of all the parties of both the House of parliament as well as the leaders of all the parties in Punjab with a view to combat the forces of fundamentalism, separatism, communalism and terrorism in Punjab.

It was hoped that with this all out mobilisation in Punjab we would be able to control the situation and restore peace and confidence among the people of Punjab. In all the four big rallies that took place in Punjab I had a very close touch with the hon. leaders before they departed for Punjab and after they came back from Punjab. Invariably all the leaders of the political parties used to tell me that although the people have started coming out to listen to the speeches of the political leaders and they have come out openly this is the first time that the people have felt that they can also assemble against terrorism and extremism in Punjab. But one specific suggestion by all the leaders was that this will lead only to the creation of an atmosphere of confidence and peace in Punjab if the local administration is favoured to curb with a heavy hand the activities of some of the elements operating in the rural areas of Punjab. The administration must gear up and especially the ruling party must pick up all the courage to combat these forces. Unfortunately their impression was that though the people came in a big way to attend the rallies and listen to the speeches yet the impression was that since these rallies are not followed by stern action much is not being done on the ground. This was the impression of all the leaders of the political parties and what followed subsequently is much more serious.

After the March rally in Amritsar suddenly these forces changed their *modus operandi*. Of course, the killings continued. They increased. In the past two months it has been an unprecedented period in the history of Punjab so far as the killings by the terrorists are concerned. The highest mark was achieved in the last month, that is, April

AN HON. MEMBER : How much.

S. BUTA SINGH: The law and order situation has deteriorated. In the month of