

[Shri Janardhana Poojary]

Table—(1) A copy of Notification No. 199/87-Customs (Hindi and English versions) published in Gazette of India dated the 11th May, 1987 together with an explanatory memorandum making certain amendments to Notification No. 224/81 Customs dated the 1st October, 1981 so as to reduce the customs duty on Vinyl Chloride Monomer (VCM) for manufacture of PVC resin from 25 per cent *ad valorem* to 10 per cent *ad valorem*, under section 159 of the Customs Act, 1962. [Placed in library. See No. LT-4452/87]

(2) A copy of Notification No. 136/87-Central Excises (Hindi and English versions) published in Gazette of India dated the 11th May, 1987 together with an explanatory memorandum seeking to prescribe concessional excise duty at the rate of 5 per cent *ad valorem* on automatic cone winding machines, issued under the Central Excise Rules, 1944. [Placed in library. See No. LT-4453/87]

DISCUSSION RE SITUATION ARISING OUT OF THE ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE IN SHRI LANKA -*Contd.*

[English]

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN (Kishanganj): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the grim situation in Sri Lanka today is indeed too deep for tears with all its human and moral consequences. Sri Lanka is virtually in a state of civil war. The anguish and the agony of the Sri Lankan people, the Tamil people is felt by us because of our natural kinship relations. I would like to say here that this anguish is not limited to the Tamil people in South India. This anguish and agony is felt by all the people of our country to whichever part they belong and to whatever ethnic origin they might belong. The Government of Sri Lanka has unfortunately in quest of a military solution has declared a war on its people. In quest of a final solution which is nothing short of decimation and subjugation and humiliation of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, no Government, far less a Government which calls itself democratic and civilised has a right to kill a section of its own people or stop them into submission or humiliation. If racism is the basis of Apartheid, then Sri Lanka is turning into another South Africa today. What we need today is firmness and action. We cannot compare terrorism with the State violence. We condemn terrorism. I am not here to justify the act of terrorism but no one can equate an act of terrorism by an unofficial group with a State violence and war launched by a Government against its own people. Today what is happening in Sri Lanka is riot affecting just the militants as the Sri Lanka Government claims. It is affecting directly the civilian population of that country. There have been thousands of casualties and people are starving. What is worse, the Government of Sri Lanka seems to be proud of its record. It is engaging in a very intemperate and irresponsible language.

We all here condemn the massacre of Sinhalese also in Trincomalee and Colombo, though our friend pointed out that there is some suspicion about what really happened in Colombo and who is behind it. But we know one thing; that this Government of Sri Lanka was elected in 1977. It got through a referendum extended its life by a whole term in 1983 and may be today it is looking for an excuse to perpetuate itself into power, to give itself yet another term of office. That particular aspect we cannot ignore when we look at the Sri Lanka situation today.

The Sri Lanka situation therefore is a national tragedy for Sri Lanka, a civilised State has been militarised and a whole generation is being brought up on hatred and violence. It is indeed a political and social tragedy in a country which was considered to be very advanced and liberal; a crime being committed against its own people and the social fabric being torn beyond repair. But it is also a regional tragedy. It is a threat to peace to our region because external powers have not been slow in trying to fish in the troubled waters.

They are readily and willingly getting involved or getting stuck into the situation. The situation has a human aspect. It is a great human tragedy. There is a persistent pattern of gross and massive violation of human rights. It almost amounts to genocide and a crime of genocide is a crime against humanity.

For us Sir, in India who consider both Sinhalese and Tamils as our kin, it is indeed a family tragedy. Therefore, it is our duty and responsibility not to be silent spectators; but to do all that is possible to bring Sri Lanka to a peaceful environment.

Sir, what have we done so far? We have been sending emissaries after emissaries. I must say that there is something wrong with the functioning of the foreign office. At one stage we had Mr. Parthasarathy's silent and low profile and low decimal diplomacy. You suddenly substituted it by Mr. Romesh Bhandari's very high pressure and very high esteemed diplomacy. Then you have the duo sent in there of our dear colleagues Mr. Natwar Singh and Mr. Chidambaram, who I don't know have been able to achieve what. Suddenly after December they seem to have gone for sleep. Then suddenly Mr. Dinesh Singh was catapulted into the situation. I don't know why. His style perhaps is that of dinner diplomacy. But melodrama is not diplomacy and a sudden brainwave does not amount to statesmanship.

We need experience, We need the vision, we need the knowledge that comes over a sustained effort and a continuous exercise. We have been changing horses in mid-stream and I am not therefore surprised that over a period of time we are losing effectiveness and also our credibility with both sides.

I must quote what Mr. Jayawardene is reported to have told somebody. "Now I feel like Sunny Gavaskar. India has sent six bowlers, one after another, and I am still not out". He seems to gloat over the situation. But what we need today is to set our own house in order. Let us have a firm

think-tank. But let us have a permanent negotiating team until this problem is settled. I don't mind if Mr. Natwar Singh is there. In my view he should be there. But there should also be the Foreign Secretary. This should be handled in a competent and professional manner and not in a lackadaisical and off-again and on-again manner. We must activate Indian diplomacy and give it a sense of purpose and a sense of direction and a clear role if we want our diplomacy to succeed in Sri Lanka. Now what are our options? Well one can easily say one is bilateral pressure, persuasion, call it good offices or mediation whatever you like but pressure works only when the other side knows that you mean business and you are prepared to support your pressure with something more tangible, if necessary. We have the option of military intervention. I shall not go into that at the moment. There is also the option of international mobilisation. After all if you agree with my diagnosis that Sri Lanka is turning into a second South Africa why cannot we activate the Human Rights Commission? Why can't we bring in SAARC? Why can't we take it up with the non-aligned movement and why can't we finally go to the United Nations if we think the situation does not improve and constitutes a threat to peace of our region?

As far as intervention is concerned I am inclined against this because we have got to look into the possible reaction and the impact on all our neighbourhood. But I may recall that international law and the history of international relations is not devoid of examples when situations have arisen compelling powers to intervene militarily. For example, let me recall to you the situation in Armenia. The Massacre which led the whole of the European powers to intervene in Turkey in order to save people who were also threatened with extinction and annihilation. We have, of course, the example of Bangladesh. But the Bangladesh situation is not on all fours with the situation in Sri Lanka for one reason that the whole vast majority of Bangladesh people had risen in revolt and had formed the Government. That

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Government we had recognised and it is to the assistance of that Government that we had rushed into Bangladesh.

PROF. N. G. RANGA (Guntur): Even then Pakistan invaded us.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: And also that Pakistan had committed the foolishness of attacking some of our airfields. Well I do not want to put Jayawardene on par to commit that foolishness.

Now because I said I am inclined against military intervention for the moment because I still feel that there is a ray of hope. I read the statement of the Sri Lanka minister, Mr Dissanayake today. He has, of course, a brief. But reading between the lines I sense a certain signal. He says Sri Lanka wants to find a political solution. Now this is a round about-turn from what Mr. Jayawardene had stated a few days ago. Secondly, they are willing to negotiate with the Tamil militants. Thirdly, Sri Lanka still stands by December, 19 proposals. Now you put these three elements together which are interspersed through that statement. I have not seen the text of it. I have got it from the newspaper report. This gives me a ray of hope.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU: He has also stated referring to reports about foreigners training Sri Lanka soldiers. That is also there. You go through the statement.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN I am only referring to the possibility of a solution I have read all that

As I said reading between the lines and intersperse through the statement I find these three signals. These three signals taken together constitute a certain glimmer of hope, that is to say, if we now come in there is a possibility that we can perhaps again bring the two sides back to the conference table. If there is a slightest chance and this to my mind is absolutely

the last chance. There is no reason why our diplomacy should miss it.

Now what should then in my view India do now? I am not one of those who would say we should throw all caution and restrain to the wind because we shall be mistaken for cowards otherwise. I am not one of those but I would still suggest to you in very clear and emphatic terms that time has come that considering the totality of the situation and considering the brutality of what is happening on the Sri Lanka soil today, considering its long-term threat to our own area you must very clearly stand up and say you shall review your policy towards Sri Lanka. In reviewing the policy, you shall not foreclose any options. Then, you should appeal for an immediate cease-fire to be followed by lifting by the Sri Lankan Government of all forms of economic blockade, this fuel embargo and what not and an immediate induction of an International Red Cross persons in the light of the March 12 Resolution of the UN Commission on Human Rights to which all of us are a party.

Then, the third leg of that will be once that situation gets stabilised, the negotiations must be reviewed on the basis of 19th December 1986 proposals. I do not think that the 19th December proposals are the last words. I do not think that even Mr Natwar Singh would claim that. But surely that is a working basis for finding an acceptable and satisfactory solution in which the autonomy of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka can be guaranteed. It means their cultural rights, their social rights, their political rights can be guaranteed. And I would think it would be a sad day if everything broke down on the simple thing whether there shall be one Tamil province or two Tamil provinces.

Sir, time has come for us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to put Sri Lanka on notice. If they do not listen to us, if they do not respond to our appeal, we must make it clear that we are in a position to exert whatever influence we can bilaterally as well as multilat-

erally in order to stop a problem from assuming more grim direction.

Sir, we can stop export of materials which we are still unfortunately sending to Sri Lanka, which has a military potential. **Why can't we stop the export of buses and trucks?** Why can't we have gone on a humanitarian mission supply and tell Sri Lanka that this embargo continues when you do not listen to us, that we shall supply food, fuel and medicines to the diseased people, that we are capable of cutting off air and shipping links, that we **shall mobilise world public opinion** on the question of genocide?

Finally, Sir, we shall not stand in the way of those who are prepared to sacrifice themselves and to participate in the liberation struggle of the Tamil people. In order to **back up what we say**, we mean, can't we hold a few naval exercises off the Sri Lanka coast in the Bay of Bengal? Isn't that a part

of the diplomatic process of a graduated response to a worsening situation?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is our area. We have a responsibility. India is central to South Asia. We shall not permit in our part of the world freedom to be knocked out. We shall not permit human spirit to be suppressed. We shall not permit Sri Lanka Tamils to be decimated and subjugated. We shall see to it that justice will prevail, that peace will dawn and the green island shall smile again. Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The debate will continue tomorrow. The House stands adjourned to reassemble tomorrow at 11.00 A.M.

**18.19 hrs.**

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, May 12, 1987/Vaisakha 22, 1909 (Saka).*