

[Sh. Vidyacharan Shukla]

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title stand part of the Bill"

The motion was adopted

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the long Title were added to the Bill

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

The motion was adopted

MR. SPEAKER: Now, we take up the discussion under rule 193 listed at No. 14. Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar.

10.20 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

DISCUSSION RE: REPORT OF ONE - MAIN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY RULE 193 RE : ASSASSINATION OF SHRI RAJIV GANDHI

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM (Sivaganga): Mr. Speaker, Sir, before my friend Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar initiates this discussion, I must with deep regret record my protest at the cavalier and almost contemptuous manner in which we have relegated this subject to this hour on the last but one day of this Session of Parliament. The report was submitted by a Judge of the Supreme Court who was invited by the Government to conduct the inquiry. He gave the report in June,

1992. The action taken note was placed in December, 1992 and almost as an after-thought, an amendment was placed in this House on the 28th April, 1993. This discussion was stated at 5 p.m. we are commencing this discussion at 6.20 p.m. Are we serious about discussing this subject? It is a subject involving the assassination of the former Prime Minister of India. If it indicates the scale of priorities of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs that another subject should be taken up at 5.00 p.m. jettisoning this subject to 6.20 p.m., I must record my protest against the scale of priorities of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Chidambaram, what is your suggestion? We would like to accommodate your suggestion.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, we must discuss this matter at 1200 Noon tomorrow.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN (Roserai): We have no objection. Let this be taken up in the afternoon tomorrow.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (Mayiladuturai): Sir, we are faced with the problem that tomorrow is the last scheduled day of this Session. If Zero Hour is permitted at 1200 Noon, one just cannot tell when it will end and if it is only then after lunch that we take up this issue, then we will find ourselves at 3.30 p.m. obliged to stop the discussion and deal with Private Members' Business. If, therefore, there is agreement in the House that we can actually take up this subject by about 1230p.m. and then we can continue this discussion until it comes to its natural end, then I, for my part, am willing to have this discussion taken up tomorrow as the first act of business after the completion of Matters under Rule 377 by about 12.30 p.m. If that is possible and if everybody in this House agrees to that, then we can take it up tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the House willing not to have the Zero Hour business tomorrow?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Tomorrow is the last day. How can we forego the Zero Hour? It is not possible.

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV (Azamgarh): Immediately after the Zero Hour, we can take up this discussion.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN (Rosera): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I heard with rapt attention the submissions of Shri Aiyar and Shri Chidambaram. For tomorrow Private Members Business is not scheduled as the session of the House has been extended. Therefore, this issue could be taken up tomorrow immediately after 'Zero Hour'. Both the treasury benches and the opposition are taking up the issue with all seriousness. In fact the opposition is more serious on this issue and has got much more to dwell upon than the treasury benches. Now the House can take up the other matter under rule 193. Tomorrow, immediately after 'Zero Hour', this issue can be taken up for discussion.

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH (Aonla): Mr. Speaker, Sir, discussion on Verma Commission's report is absolutely must and after that discussion on Bombay bomb blasts should be held. For shortage of time I would like to submit that..... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK (Phulbani): Sir, this is an item in the agenda.

MR. SPEAKER: If you speak like this every now and then, I take very serious objection. You are not understanding what he is saying. He has not made any wrong suggestion.

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: The issue pertaining to Bombay bomb blasts must be dis-

cussed in the House. I would like to submit that according to the agenda discussion on this issue should start today itself. The House will adjourn sine die tomorrow. When will the discussion be held and reply to the debate be allowed regarding the Bombay bomb blasts? Therefore, discussion on Verma Commission's report should start today itself.

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): I am very surprised to hear the observations made by Mr. Chidambaram on this matter. He being a very experienced member and lawyer should know that the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs does not allot any priority. These are done in the Business Advisory Committee where all the leaders and all sections of the House are represented. We do attach highest importance to this discussion. It is not that wilfully this has been brought up late or the time has been slid by us like this. We have seen the entire proceedings of the House right from February onwards where how many important and urgent business we had to deal with, even sitting late at night, even sitting late into early morning the next day. We have done all that only to accommodate all the discussions.

I wish we had two days of discussion because the matter to which we are not only emotionally attached but we want a proper and very reasonable conclusion to emerge from the discussion so that such mishaps, such tragedies do not recur in our country. If any suggestions are made here in the House and if any insinuations are meant to be given, I strongly protest against those. I would like to say from the side of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and the Government of India that there has been no negligence, no relegation of this discussion and we would like to again emphasise that we attach highest priority to the discussion and consideration of this report by this House and the other House and I hope that both the Houses will

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be able to discuss this matter in a dispassionate and proper manner.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): My only difficulty is that enough time should be given for this discussion, I have no objection to it. But the time should be allotted in such a manner that I am able to take up this issue because in Rajya Sabha also, it is coming tomorrow.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Calcutta South): As a matter of importance, if there is no Zero Hour tomorrow, we can discuss it after 12 O'clock. After this matter, we can discuss the bomb blast also.

SHRI R. PRABHU (Nilgiris): Sir, the report of the Verma Commission of Inquiry was laid on the Table of the House of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on the same day in December. But the Members of Rajya Sabha were given the report on 24-3-1993 and we were given this report at 7.30 onwards on 10-5-1993. Why are we being treated in a partisan manner? You could have discussed in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on the same day and you are worried about what happens in Rajya Sabha. They have got the report three months before. It is not fair. We should have an opportunity to discuss this matter. As our friend has said, this matter is very dear to our hearts. The darling of our masses has been assassinated. We would like to have a proper discussion and you must give us proper time to discuss this matter.

MR. SPEAKER: I do think that this matter can be taken up today. I do think that now we have time at our disposal. We can sit for four hours, five hours, six hours, if we like. If it becomes necessary to continue this discussion tomorrow at 12 O'clock, if there is no other kind of discussion, we can continue for a short time. But tomorrow also, we have to take up the discussion on the bomb blasts also. There is one more discussion which we have decided to take up

tomorrow. If we do not take up this discussion today, the time available tomorrow will be so short that the Members could not have an opportunity to discuss. Now that we have completed everything which is on the list and because on this matter the people have emotional attachment and because the time is unlimited, at least 12 hours time is at our disposal, we can utilise the time. I think, on a matter like this, it is not the momentary convenience of the Members sitting in the House which should be uppermost in their minds but whatever they want to say on this point, they should be able to say on this.

I think, the discussion should continue. Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar will start the discussion

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (Mayiladuturai): Mr. Speaker, Sir, In my maiden speech in this House which was my tribute to the assassinated former Prime Minister and former President of my Party who had given me the opportunity of becoming a Member of this House, I had said that for six years, Shri Rajiv Gandhi had walked in the shadow of death and I had walked in his shadow. It is this thought that comes back to me as I look at the Report of the Justice Verma Commission of Inquiry.

For five years of his Prime Ministership from March, 1985 when I joined the Prime Minister's Office as Joint Secretary till October, 1989, when I resigned from the Indian Foreign Service to join Rajivji in the political world, it was my duty personally to look after the travel arrangements for him when he travelled outside Delhi. Those five years were, for me, five years of a running a battle with security. The reason for which I was embattled with security for five long continuous years was that while it was my job to protect Rajivji, it was Mr. Chidambaram's duty to protect him. There was a considerable amount of tension between the two of us, but a creative tension, a tension designed to discover what is the right balance to strike between a Prime Minister of democracy who is obliged to be out among the people and the Prime Minister of a democracy which is threatened by the

possibility of the assassination of that Prime Minister and ergo the head of that democracy. It was not a conundrum which we could easily resolve. Yet the fact remains that despite the fact that we never could quite resolve that conundrum, it did not stand in the way of Rajiv Gandhi visiting the most dangerous places during the time when he was Prime Minister of India.

My own very first visit with him anywhere outside Delhi was on the 23rd March, 1985 when I accompanied him to Hussainwala in Punjab, a Punjab that was impregnated with terror. Subsequently, I had the opportunity on some occasion to travel with him as he went from Sangrur in the South to Hoshiapur in the North, from Ferozepur in the West to Patiala in the East, fighting the election to the State Assembly of Punjab, in an atmosphere which was surcharged with tension and violence. It was during the course of that election that Sant Longowal with whom Rajivji had signed an accord on the 24th July, 1985 was assassinated, the sensible course would be to stop the election so that nobody else get killed and that, above all, the Prime Minister, the son of an assassinated mother, be not himself assassinated. It was not a piece of pusillanimity that Rajivji was willing to accept and, therefore, he travelled extensively in Punjab during that period and after the elections were over and an Akali Dal Government had been installed in Punjab, it was again my privilege to travel with Rajivji to the Thien Dam in the North-West corner of Punjab and from there right across to Patiala in the south East corner.

I went with Rajivji to Govindwal which is in the heart of the Mand area where terrorism was at its peak. We drove from the Airport several hours to reach Govindwal. Rajivji would stop on the way; get out of his car. He would be surrounded by hundreds and thousands of people. I had been in my earlier capacity as Information Advisor to the Information Minister to the town of Kartarpur which houses - in a Bedi family - the *Adi Granth*. The temper of the time was such that the head of that family infuriated at seeing a representative of the Government of India in his

house in Kartarpur in December 1984 had categorically refused to let me look at the *Adi Granth* or to film it for the film for which I had been sent to Punjab at that time. I was petrified when Rajivji completely spontaneously stopped his vehicle and stood in the middle of the road in the same town of Kartarpur.

That was not the end of it. We traveled through vast segments of Punjab before the floods there which you would recall. After the floods, Rajivji went back into the area. How dangerous that was can be gauged from the fact that the Brigadier who was the head of the Bhakra Dam Authority was assassinated for no other reason than that to save the Bhakra Dam he had allowed some more water to be released into the Sutlej and the Beas. As a result of the flow of that water, some houses had been damaged and some people had been drowned. So, that was why he was assassinated. It was in that atmosphere that Rajivji travelled in these areas.

I am not talking only of his visit to Punjab. We went to Mizoram in July 1986. An insurgency of 20 years had been brought to its paper-end, just the paper-end. A document had been signed here in Delhi Mizoram Accord. We drove for four days around hairpin bends: up the mountains and down into the valley.

Sir, I went with him to Darjeeling in December 1986 at the height of the Gorkhaland agitation when the temper of the people of the Darjeeling Hills was so against Rajiv Gandhi that in the public meeting there was a total of 186 persons present. Just 186 persons for the Prime Minister of India. That was the extent to which the local people of Darjeeling were dis-affected with Rajivji. Yet, he went there.

I was with him when we travelled in Tripura in 1987 and 1988. Bijoy Hrangkhyal was at large. The TNV insurgency had by no means ended. I was with him in Kashmir in 1988.

After the IPKF operation had started in Sri Lanka, there was an imminent, persistent threat

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to his life more in Tamil Nadu than in any other State of India because of the activities of the LTTE in my home State of Tamil Nadu. I had the privilege of making arrangements for Rajivji to visit Tamil Nadu. 13 times.

How was it possible? How was it possible to take the man under the greatest threat in India everywhere? No other individual in this country was anywhere near the degree of threat that Rajivji was under. How was it possible to make this individual the most widely travelled Prime Minister that independent India has had the privilege of having? There was one reason and one reason only. That reason was not Shri P. Chidambaram; that reason was certainly not I. That reason was the Special Protection Group, the SPG. That was the body specially trained, specially raised. Why was it specially raised? Why was it specially trained? It was because no other Body of police or security officials in India could possibly have provided the degree of protection that a man under the kind of threat that Rajivji was under, required. It was essential to have an absolutely top-notch security organisation, so top-notch that no previous Prime Minister of India would have required it and if we were to succeed, perhaps, no future Prime Minister of India would need it because the times were out of joint. What happened in 1984 October 31st, the assassination of a Prime Minister, has never before happened. And it was essential that it never again happened and to stop it from again happening, we said, "no security force in India, no body of police is capable of handling this job. Let it be handled by a specially raised and specially trained force. And as that force went into operation, Shri Rajiv Gandhi said, "my security is not my responsibility. My security is the responsibility of professionals. I put them under a newly created; Department called the Department of Internal Security in the Ministry of Home Affairs. "He picked the gentleman who he considered to be one of his top-notch civil servants as the civil service head of that Department, in charge of his personal security, not

other jobs, just in charge of his personal security. And he picked a Minister whom he regarded as being of exceptional competence, my honourable friend and senior colleague Shri P. Chidambaram as the Minister of State for Internal Security to look after his security. And at the same time, he picked on me to throw me against the combined weight of Shri T.N. Seshan and Shri P. Chidambaram. We fought it out, we fought it out for three years. I do not think, we ever found really how to strike the right balance. I do not think, we ever really did discover what was the faction optimum. But I do say with the lump in my throat, but pride in my heart that Shri Rajiv went to Punjab, he did not die; Shri Rajiv went to Mizoram, he did not die; Shri Rajiv went to Darjeeling, he did not die; Shri Rajiv went to Tripura, he did not die; and Shri Rajiv went 13 times to Tamil Nadu, he came back, a living human being. And all that was possible only because he had this top-notch highly trained, extraordinarily efficient and totally dedicated set of about 500 people who constituted the Core of the SPG, and its auxiliary wings. All the mistakes that Shri Chidambaram made, all the mistakes that Shri Seshan made, all the many many mistakes that I made were covered up because we had this SPG.

I remember once when I was trying to take Rajivji to Punjab, it was one of his earlier trips. Mr. Seshan was so angry with me that he said to me, "Mr. Aiyar, if one hair on Rajiv's head is touched, you will be hanged" I said, "that is a rather difficult target for any assassin to get at. In any case, you cannot hang me because I travel in an open jeep in front of him and before they can get him, they have to get me" But still, we managed, we came out of it.

What was the role of the SPG? How is it that they were able to be so effective? Two reasons. One, they were experts in proximate security. They used to throw almost invisible concentric circles around him. I say, "almost invisible" because very often on the television screen or in photographs you can see one or two people, who were obviously security men standing very very close to him. But it was by no means true

that those one or two or three or four personal security officers, PSOs were all that the SPG was about. There was a series of circles and most of these circles were invisible not just to the naked eye but they were invisible even to me, whose job it was to travel everywhere with him. So, that proximate security was of the highest order available anywhere in the world. That was one task of the SPG - proximate security through concentric circles.

And the second, Sir, was advance liaison. SPG teams would go out in advance, fan out all over the country side, wherever Rajivji was supposed to go and I ran a battle with the Director of SPG because Rajivji's programme would keep changing and when they changed, there were people out in the field who would find themselves today in Kanyakumari and tomorrow in Mizoram - I am not joking, it actually happened once or twice - and they were out there checking minute by minute, second by second, what needs to be done to protect him from himself because if Rajivji was to be the leader of a democratic country, he was obliged to go out to the people, he was obliged to throw himself into the crowds, he was obliged to hug people, he was obliged to accept garlands from people, he was obliged to accept burfies. If a school girl comes and gives you a burfi and you are the Prime Minister of India, you are obliged to accept it. And it happened; with my own eyes I saw it in no place other than Naxalbari. When our minds were full of the Naxalite movement, he was sitting in Naxalbari and a 12 year old girl gave a burfi to Rajivji. He had put it into his mouth and poor Shri Seshan who was also along with him almost had an apoplectic fit.

But to guard against every possible such contingency we had these people out in the field advance liaison - with total authority and total responsibility. They could overrule anyone; although these officers were very often young men in their twenties or their thirties, because they had to be extraordinarily physically fit they were very often junior as IPS officers to the IPS officers who were serving in the State adminis-

tration. And yet, such was the ethos of the SPG, a relatively junior officer of SPG going out on advance liaison could overrule anyone. He could overrule a PCC president. Sorry, Sir, I should explain what PCC means - Pradesh Congress Committee. PCC presidents for five years were constantly ringing me up to say what kind of rude people have you sent out, who is he, what does this chap know about where meetings are held, has he ever got elected and I would then quarrel with Shri Chidambaram and Shri Chidambaram would then have to pacify his customers. But at the end of the day, the authority finally rest with the man on the spot who overrule the PCC presidents, who overruled the State administration whether represented by the District Magistrate or Collector or even by the Chief Secretary of the State, who overruled the State police officials even though he was in the same service as these State police officers was junior to them. It was this total authority and total responsibility in advance liaison work that made it possible for Rajivji to commit, what Shri Chidambaram regarded as excesses in running too many risks with security and what I regarded as lack of excesses because as I said, after all he was a democratic leader, he was not going to be elected by this SPG ring that was around him, he was going to be elected by the ring that is big beyond. So, sir, there were these two major functions - proximate security and advance liaison.

And my submission to you, Mr. Speaker, is that the Sniperbudur incident would never, never have happened had the SPG been detained to Rajivji's security on the 21st of May, 1991. Advance liaison by the SPG would never, never have permitted inadequate barricading, inadequate lighting, crowding at or near the rostrum, the collapse of access control which have been listed in the Verma Commission of Inquiry Report as among the contributory causes to the assassination, at paragraphs 11.14, 11.15, 11.27 and 11.29. Yes, these lapses did take place; yes, barricading was inadequate; yes, lighting was inadequate; yes, there was crowding at the rostrum, near the rostrum; yes, there was a total collapse or virtually a total

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collapse of access control. Could any of this have happened if the SPG had been in position? If it could have happened, why is it that never, never, never while the SPG was in charge that any of these charges were brought against either Shri Chidambaram or me or any of our colleagues in the State capitals?

I would imagine I undertook a million miles of travel with him, five years of travelling with him; not hundreds of journeys, but thousands of journeys; not scores of meetings but hundreds or thousands of meetings with him. We saved him in all this because there was an SPG, an SPG which could tell both Shri Chidambaram and me to mind our business because their business was so important that while a potential assassin could afford to miss a thousand times, the SPG could not afford to have their enemy win even once.

At Sriperumbadur had the SPG been there, there would have been a ring of experts as PSOs around him; indeed a series of concentric rings. What did we have at Sriperumbadur by way of proximate security? One solitary PSO. One man: even he was without a weapon. We would have had a ring of experts; not an Inspector General of Police whose normal job was to look after forests. Shri Raghavan was not IGP Security. Shri Raghavan was in charge of chasing after Veerappan, the sandalwood man. He was the other concentric ring around Rajivji then. And the third, the poor man who lost his life there, was the SSP of that district who had never, never, never been inside a school for the training of the SPG. I - who did not even need him - had as my SSP from SPG in Thanjavur District from where I was fighting my election. If this administration could have thought of picking on at least one SPG man to come in, maybe something could have been done to save the situation. Rajivji was due in my constituency exactly to the minute, eleven hours after he was killed. Because this ex-SPG SSP was in charge of security in Mayiladuturai, nothing of the problems

that we saw in Sriperumbadur was permitted to be done there. Despite the fact that I was standing for election for the first time. My colleagues were all assuring me that if Mr. Sawani continued his activities, I was going to lose the election. Because there was an SPG mind-set and that mind-set remained with the man even after he ceased to be an SPG man. There would not have been an IPG of Forests and a non-SPG trained SSP around Rajivji, if the SPG had been permitted to be there there would have been a highly trained a posse of securitymen around him.

Against this background I wish to draw the attention of the House to the statement made by the hon. Minister of Home Affairs in this House a few days ago where he said that the V.P. Singh Government in withdrawing SPG cover from Rajivji had "a contributory responsibility" for the death of my friend and my mentor. My question is this. It is not addressed to Shri V.P. Singh; it is not addressed to the opposition; it is addressed to the Minister of Home Affairs of my Government. If Shri V.P. Singh's responsibility was a contributory responsibility, then, would the Home Minister please tell us, what was the root cause of the tragedy? What was the root cause of the disaster? In other words, if the SPG had not been withdrawn, would the Minister of Home Affairs agree with me that the tragedy of Sriperumbadur would not have happened? And if he agrees with me that had the SPG not been withdrawn, the tragedy of Sriperumbadur would not have happened, then would he agree with me that the withdrawal of the SPG by the V.P. Singh Government did not amount to a contributory responsibility for the assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi? It was the root cause, the root cause of the death of the man who would have been sitting there, had the SPG not been withdrawn. And if it was the withdrawal of the SPG that was the root cause for the assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, will the Minister of Home Affairs fix responsibility for the person who took this decision?

Sir, I am a Member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Scam. In that Committee and generally in public opinion when it is consid-

ering the issues before the Committee, we are told repeatedly that it is not enough to identify the systems failure that led to the scam. We are told again and again that we must establish the culpability of individuals and not merely the culpability of junior individuals, we must establish the culpability of the top individuals who are responsible for the scam. I say, Sir, let us apply the same principle to an issue which is even graver than the scam. I am not suggesting that the scam is not a grave issue. But, to the best of my knowledge, no one has died as a result of this scam. But, as a result of what happened when Shri V. P. Singh decided to withdraw the SPG, one man has died. Yes, in a sense, he is no more than one man. But, in another sense, he is a man who mattered very specially to very many of us. He is a man who was, as I said, at one stage, the head of our democracy and looked set at 10.20 pm on the 21st of May 1991 at Sriperumbudur to once again become the head of that democracy. Let us apply the same principle. I accept, as I accept in respect of the scam that there was a systems failure. I also accept that if those systems failures had not taken place, there would not have been the culpability of the individual. But, just as it is necessary to add to systems failures, the culpability of individuals in respect of the scam, so also is it here in this extremely serious matter where a great son of India was quite unnecessarily sacrificed. To not only identify what went wrong in terms of the system, but also to identify who were the individuals and above all, who were the top individuals who were responsible for allowing this ghastly scenario to take place? I want to know from the Home Minister his opinion on four points:-

First: Why was the SPG withdrawn?

Second: Is it a fact or is it not a fact that when SPG was withdrawn from Rajivji, the Congress party or its authorised representatives protested?

19.00 hrs.

Thirdly: Could the withdrawal of SPG have been

forestalled? Fourth: Who personally was responsible for the withdrawal? I will quickly repeat; why was the SPG withdrawn; was the withdrawal protested; could the withdrawal have been forestalled, and who was responsible for the withdrawal.

Sir, I will be the first to admit that the SPG Act did not provide for SPG protection to ex-Prime Ministers. And, this is the common ground of everyone in this House from the Union Minister of Home Affairs to the Leader of the Opposition. There is no quarrel on this score. We all agree that the legal position, as it obtained on the 29th November, 1989, when Rajivji with great dignity left the Office of Prime Minister, was that the SPG Act talked only of the Prime Minister. It did not deal with the ex-Prime Minister. Let me also admit that during the period that Rajivji enjoyed, if that is the right word, SPG protection there were two living Prime Ministers; Shri Charan Singh and Shri Morarji Desai, who were not afforded the privilege of SPG cover. Nothing untoward has happened to them and I do not think any same person would suggest that the threat under which either Shri Morarji Desai is or Shri Charan Singh was, was even approximately of the same order as the threat under which Rajivji was which led to the creation of SPG. I admit it.

I also admit to the arrogance that was in the mind of the Congress Party when at the time of framing the Act it did not envisage the possibility that Rajivji would cease to be the Prime Minister and would still be in need of SPG protection I confess that. Yet, when the SPG Act on the 29th November, 1989 did not provide for SPG cover to ex-Prime Ministers, the fact is that SPG cover for an ex-Prime Minister was continued from the 29th November, 1989 to the 30th of January, 1990, for a period of two months. Does this mean that Shri V. P. Singh was culpable of breaking the law? No, he was not. Despite the fact that the SPG Act did not provide for the protection of ex-Prime Ministers, Shri V. P. Singh was not guilty of breaking the law by extending SPG cover to Rajivji for an additional two months because the high Powered Committee in charge of security,

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under the Chairmanship or leadership - it would appear from the records - of the Cabinet Secretary and comprising every single official of the Government of India, I think it is the most senior level, who could be dealing with question of security or intelligence, come to two very important conclusions. These conclusions are all based upon what is reported in the Verma Commission of Inquiry Report paragraphs 9.14, 9.15 and 9.16.

What were the two conclusions? They were that the threat to Rajivji remains, I quote the word 'undiminished' in spite of his ceasing to be the Prime Minister. And second that; what was needed was to undertake "a fresh threat assessment". So, it is because the High Powered committee held that his need for that level of security remains undiminished and that they must undertake a fresh threat assessment to determine what is the nature of the threat that Rajivji is under and until it is done, SPG cover may be allowed to him, that Shri V.P. Singh provided for SPG cover to Rajivji for the additional two months.

My question to the Minister of Home Affairs, Sir, is was a fresh threat assessment ever undertaken by the V.P. Singh Government? Justice Verma Says: "No, no fresh threat assessment was undertaken by Shri V.P. Singh Government." Does the present Government, the Government of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, I ask this question through you of our Union Minister of Home Affairs, does our Minister of Home Affairs agree with Justice Verma that no fresh threat assessment was ever undertaken? If he does agree with me, and can see, no way in which he cannot agree with me that no fresh threat assessment was ever undertaken, how can he describe Shri V.P. Singh's action as tantamount to contributory responsibility, "when clearly this was the root cause of the tragedy that was to overtake us?"

There was no fresh threat assessment. But the Cabinet Secretary, who had either headed or led, that is a technicality, the High Powered Committee which had looked into this issue was removed summarily long before his term expired and a classmate of Shri V.P. Singh was brought in as the Cabinet Secretary. I have personally the highest respect for that classmate. He was, along with me, one of the co-authors at the drafting stage of the Panchayati Raj Bill. I venture to suggest that that classmate was a closer personal friend of mine than he was of Shri V.P. Singh's. But on that basis, on the basis that.

I know that classmate better than his own Prime Minister know him, I also know that his experience of security, his Professional experience of security was zero; his experience of SPG level security was zero; in contrast to his predecessor's who had, by then, become the country's biggest expert at the Civil Service level on security and more especially SPG level security for the head of our democracy. Yet, this new boy, this *anadi* walks into the Cabinet Secretariat, assumes the high office of the Head of India's Civil Service and reverses the decision of his predecessor, without making a fresh threat assessment.

Sir, we have, in the Verma Commission Report, at Annexures XXI and XXII the full text of the documents produced by the High - Powered Committee, under the Chairmanship or leadership of Shri T.N. Seshan and immediately after that is a kind of tragic *zuxta* position, we have, at Annexure XXIII, the note recorded by the new Cabinet Secretary for the benefit of the Prime Minister. It is a note that was put up on the 30th of January, 1990. The document is there for any one of us to see. I would like to draw the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs - because it is really he who matters - through you, Sir, to this point. The rest, I regard as spectators at the ground. I want to ask him whether he has noted that in the note prepared by Shri Vinod Pande, the new Cabinet Secretary, there is not one single reference to the documents included

at Annexures XXI and XXII of the Verma Commission Report? There is no reference whatsoever to the Reports of the High Powered Committee. Yes, he is dealing with such a serious matter. Second, not only, does it not make any reference to the documents prepared by the high-powered Committee and reproduced at Annexures XXI and XXII, it begins by denigrating, what had been done earlier, by saying that "the earlier orders were both verbal instructions". It is a pity that Pande Sahib went to Allahabad University rather than St. Stephens. I think what he means is that there were only "oral instructions". He ignores the written instructions in the opening paragraph of his note for the Prime Minister. We are not talking here of an LDC, we are talking about the highest civil servant in the land. He ignored the written documents and referred only to what he called the verbal instructions of the Cabinet Secretary. He then went on to claim that personnel deployed on SP duty could not be spared for Shri Rajiv Gandhi. And then comically I say this, advisedly I stress that Vinod Pande is a very close personal friend of mine comically, he says, that he has reservation about the high profile visibility of the SPG. What has that to do with security? And whose security are you talking about? It is Vinod Pande deciding to play Mani Shankar Aiyar. It is I who used to decide whether we should show or not show too many security people on the TV. Are we to undertake security for the sake of publicity?

But the Cabinet Secretary on the 30th of January, 1990 was looking into the withdrawal of the SPG, which was the key to Shri Rajiv Gandhi's survival; and instead of dealing with the security question, he told us that one major reason why he wanted to withdraw it was "The high profile visibility of the SPG".

And then what I can only call the atrocity in that same memorandum to the Prime Minister, and this is from the high civil servant in the land. He says, there is "Criticism even from the State Governments". Who are the State Governments to have any view at all about whether SP

protection is or not required for Shri Rajiv Gandhi? Is it a zoo? Is it a circus? Is it a gimmick? Is this the way in which the VP Singh's administration viewed the role of the Special Protection Group? Did they think that these were planquin bearers. That we were living in a feudal society? Did they have no understanding of whatsoever of the threat to this country and therefore the threat to the person who was in charge of the destiny of this country?

You have a Cabinet Secretary a Head of the Civil Service replacing the SPG while denigrating his predecessors decision actually telling the Prime Minister of India that because some State Governments - I presume this must have included some of the rather peculiar new State Governments we got as a result of the 1989 election - had complained, we had to listen to them about SPG for Shri Rajiv Gandhi.

And that note reproduced at Annexure XIII dated 30th January 1990 ends with the following words "PM may kindly see for approval." PM is the standard bureaucratic term for Prime Minister. It was when the Prime Minister of the time Prime Shri V.P. Singh approved the note of the 30th January 1990 that was put up to him by the Cabinet Secretary that the countdown to the end began - Shri Rajiv Gandhi had only 477 days to live. I want to ask the Home Minister through you is this a contributory responsibility or the root cause? Does the Home Minister agree with Justice Verma?

I refer now to paragraphs 16.01 and 16.02 of the Report. Does our Home Minister agree with Justice Verma that (1) the reasons advanced by the VP Singh's Government even for withdrawing SP cover for Shri Rajiv Gandhi were "tenuous"? (2) Does our Home Minister agree with Justice Verma that the action was "prompted by lack of proper perception"? Does he agree that Shri VP Singh's Government was prompted by lack of proper perception? (3) Does the Home Minister agree with Justice Verma that Shri V P Singh's Government lacked the "requisite will"? Does the Home Minister agree

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with Justice Verma that "the stated reasons" advanced by Shri V.P. Singh's Government for withdrawing SPG cover were "unjustified". Does the Home Minister agree with the stated reasons of Shri V.P. Singh for withdrawing SPG cover were unjustified? Does he agree with Justice Verma that "Rajiv Gandhi's real security requirements were ignored.

"I ask these questions of him. I am not asking the Home Minister if agrees with me. I am not asking that. I am not going to indulge in that kind of *gustakhi*. I am asking the Home Minister, does he agree with Justice Verma? If not, why not? And if he does agree with Justice Verma on all these points that Shri V.P. Singh's arguments were tenuous, that Shri V.P. Singh was prompted by lack of proper perception, that Shri V.P. Singh lacked the requisite will, that Shri V.P. Singh's stated reasons for withdrawing SPG cover were unjustified and that Rajiv Gandhi's real security requirements were ignored then does this amount to contributory responsibility or was it the root cause of Rajiv Gandhi's death?

There were two basic reasons for the decision incorporated in the Cabinet Secretary's note of 30 January 1990. The first one was the following and I quote from Para 2 of Annexure XXIII.

"According to the SPG Act, the force is meant only for the security of the Prime Minister and his family members. Its charter cannot be amended to cover ex-Prime Ministers.

Then how has this Government extended that charter to give SPG cover to the same Prime Minister now an ex-Prime Minister who agreed with his handpicked favoured Cabinet Secretary that the SPG Act could not be amended for the charter to be extended?"

Sir, I do not care what Shri V.P. Singh says. I want to know what our Home Minister says. Was there a constitutional impediment to extending the charter of the SPG Act to cover its Prime Ministers? Was there a legal impediment to an amendment being brought Or was it just politics? If the withdrawal of the Special Protection Group was politics then what is Shri V.P. Singh's responsibility, "contributory" or the root cause?

Secondly, what does the Home Minister say on the other point made in the Cabinet Secretary's note that it was difficult to find personnel to handle both the present Prime Minister's security duties as well as the ex-Prime Minister's. I am asking him, could Shri V.P. Singh have found the additional personnel to run an SPG both for himself as well as for Rajiv Gandhi? I think he could have. But if he could not have, how is it that Shri S.B. Chavan has now found that he is protecting not only the Prime Minister of India with the SPG, he is protecting Shrimati Sonia Gandhi and her family, he is protecting Shri V.P. Singh and his family and he is protecting Shri Chandra Shekhar and his family.

In other words, if it was possible for Shri S.B. Chavan to do this, why was it not possible for Shri V.P. Singh to do this or Mufti Mohammad Sayeed to do this? In these circumstances, is what Shri V.P. Singh did a contributory responsibility or the root cause?

Sir, the spokesmen of Shri V.P. Singh and I think he himself have been saying, bruiting it around that the Congress in effect took it lying down when we were told that SPG cover was being withdrawn. They have asked, why was the shouting brigade not brought into operation on this issue?

Sir, I want to know whether the Home Minister agrees with Shri V.P. Singh and his spokesmen that the Congress party took this decision lying down?

I want to draw his attention in this regard to Annexures XXIV, XXV, and XXVI of the Report of the Verma Commission of Inquiry, which contains the correspondence between Shri P. Chidambaram, who was named by Shri Rajiv Gandhi as his designated representative to deal with personal security matters and Shri G.S. Bajpai, Secretary (Security) in the Cabinet Secretariat. It records all the protests that we made, it records all the reasons for which we made these protests and it also records the really ugly fact that after Shri P. Chidambaram had written to the Cabinet Secretary, saying, that "I thought we were going to come to an agreement yesterday. It seems now from your letter that we are not going to come to an agreement now."

Therefore, The V.P. Singh Government broke off all contact with No. 10 Janpath. Nothing was done! The protests of Shri P. Chidambaram went not only unattended, but even unanswered. I want to know from the Home Minister, who, in his opinion, was responsible for the unilateral breaking off of all contacts between the Government and Shri Rajiv Gandhi's designated representative, my hon. friend Shri P. Chidambaram?

As for public opinion, in India, what did the public in India think of this? I have here a sheaf of newspaper cuttings obtained from nowhere much farther than LAARDIS. I do not have the need to read them. There were newspapers many of which had, in fact, bitterly opposed Shri Rajiv Gandhi and had no desire whatsoever to see him or his party return to power, saying that it was an atrocity that without taking into consideration what was the personal security requirement of Shri Rajiv Gandhi and his family that the SPG was being withdrawn. And the most dramatic of these was a headline in the *Times of India* on the day that Shri Rajiv Gandhi made his first tour out of Delhi to Manipur without security protection—I mean without SPG protection and that headline read "Lone security man in Rajiv's wake."

Who broke the discussion? Was it the

Congress or was it Shri V.P. Singh? And if it was the Congress then Shri P. Chidambaram must be named for having broken off those conversations and punished for doing so. And if it was not Shri P. Chidambaram who broke those discussions, then obviously those discussions were broken by Shri V.P. Singh's Government. Therefore, we need to know whether this was low level decision of some Cabinet Secretary, some Secretary (Security) in the Cabinet Secretariat or was it the Prime Minister himself who announced "No more conversations with Shri P. Chidambaram", and fix the responsibility.

I now come to the next Government, the Government of Shri Chandra Shekhar. I draw your attention to Annexure XXVII of the Verma Commission of Inquiry Report. There is a letter there dated the 13th February, 1991 written by Shri V. George, Private Secretary to Shri Rajiv Gandhi to Shri Markandey Singh, Lt. Governor of Delhi—and ergo—someone who came under the control of the Home Ministry of the Union, and therefore, under the personal responsibility of Shri Chandra Shekhar and his Home Minister.

That letter dated 13-2-1991 stated, I quote—

"That latest intelligence report communicated by IB"—that is the Intelligence Bureau—

"Gives an alarming note with regard to the security arrangements for Shri Rajiv Gandhi and his family members."

That was on the 13th February, 1991. What did the Chandra Shekhar Government do? Nothing was done except to get his Deputy Prime Minister to put his constables on to spying on Shri Rajiv Gandhi! That was the only reaction. They did nothing to protect him and they sent two constables to start spying on him. Nothing at all did that Government of Shri Chandra Shekhar do! Nothing on the day they assumed office. Thanks to the generosity of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, nothing till the tensions between Shri

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Rajiv Gandhi and Shri Chandra Shekhar reached the point where it was necessary to communicate through a letter from his Private Secretary to the Lt. Governor of Delhi. Nothing when the 9th Lok Sabha was dissolved; nothing even when committees of judges were appointed on other issues, nothing during the pendency of the election; nothing, Sir, even on the 20th of May when the Intelligence Bureau, according to the Verma Commission Report 'frantically reiterated' to Shri Chandra Shekhar and his minions he need for top class security cover to Shri Rajiv Gandhi. And when they ignored that frantic reiteration, Shri Rajiv Gandhi only had one day left to live.

What action if any did the Chandra Shekhar Government, according to our Home Minister, take on all these matters? If he took no action, why did he take no action? Why does the Home Minister's statement not even fix constructive responsibility on Shri Chandra Shekhar and his Government?

I now come to my last word. Sir, you have been very indulgent to me. I am most grateful to you. You have not only been considerate to my arguments but you have also been considerate to my emotions.

My last word is based on paragraph 9.16 of the Verma Inquiry Commission Report. I quote one sentence:

"The security prescribed and provided for Shri Rajiv Gandhi on the withdrawal of SPG cover was inadequate to meet the threat to him."

Again I quote paragraph 9.16:

"The security prescribed and provided for Shri Rajiv Gandhi on the withdrawal of SPG cover was inadequate to meet the threat to him."

Does our Home Minister agree? If so, who was responsible for inadequate security being both prescribed and provided? And specifically, what is the Home Minister's assessment of the personal responsibility of the two Prime Ministers- Shri V.P. Singh and Shri Chandra Shekhar - in this regard? What action does the Home Minister propose to take (1) against these two Prime Ministers; (2) against their Ministers; (3) against their officials for it was their negligence that was the root-cause of the death of an innocent man?

Rajiv Gandhi *Amar Rahe*.

19.28hrs.

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA (Pali) : Honourable Speaker, Sir, the report of hon. Justice Verma in respect of the assassination of the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi is being considered by this august House. On such occasions it is natural that emotions are bound to have an upper edge because of the associations, because of his status, extra-ordinary political position in which he was; and particularly when the entire discussion is regarding the responsibility to be fixed of the assassination did, why it could not be averted. Then it is but natural that those who had remained more associated, attached, intimate relationship are bound to have emotional urge.

Sir, while appreciating that aspect and realising the sentiments expressed by Shri Aiyar, I would like to draw the attention of this hon. House and the Home Minister to certain matters which the whole country wants to know from the present Government, the hon. Home Minister, after coming of the report in the hands of the Government. Broadly, instead of putting up my own words, I would like to first point out the conclusions and the findings of the report which have been arrived at after a-through judicial, quasi judicial enquiry conducted by very eminent judge, Justice Verma. I had an occasion to practice with him when he was the Chief Justice in Rajasthan and he has done a wonderful job while giving this report in which he

has examined all aspects of it. Now, the question is whether the Government after receiving the report had applied its mind. Under the Commission of Inquiry Act, after the judge gives the report, the Government is supposed to act upon it. Technically, the Commission of Inquiry Act in terms nowhere mentions that the report is binding on the Government. But, by very healthy judicial conventions, it has been more or less an established practice that leaving aside a few exceptions here and there, such reports or findings of eminent apex judicial authority are accepted by the Government and acted upon. Now, in this case, the unfortunate assassination took place at a time- details of which have been given by Shri Aiyar and I need not repeat them -when Shri Chandra Shekhar was holding the Office of the Prime Minister. It is also well-known to all of us that Shri Chandra Shekhar initially was made the Prime Minister with the expressed support of late Shri Rajiv Gandhi and Congress (I) party itself because he was in hopeless minority after Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh resigned and he could not form the Government. Therefore, the President decided to permit Shri Chandra Shekhar to function as Prime Minister after Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress (I) decided to support him and conveyed it to the hon. President of India.

Now, in a situation like that, the responsibility is fixed by this Commission in three parts and I will read very briefly the salient findings arrived at. One is the Central Government, which means the Government headed by Shri Chandra Shekhar, supported by Congress (I). Secondly, it is Tamil Nadu Government, which means again there being President's Rule at that time and *Not recorded the Governor of that place in Office...

MR. SPEAKER : The reference to the name of Governor will not go on record.

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA : I am not taking any names. But, I am just mentioning

*Not recorded.

facts. Nonetheless, if the rules do not permit, I am sorry. The Governor is in charge of the entire State on behalf of the President as contemplated by article 356 and 357 of the Constitution of India.

The third part which is equally important and which is to be noted and kept in mind is that it was not a Government function, it was an election meeting where Congress (I) candidate was contesting and late Shri Rajiv Gandhi had gone there to canvass and appeal to people for supporting the Congress (I) candidates for parliamentary elections who were set up by them in Tamil Nadu.

Justice Verma had divided it into three parts. Our hon. Minister has accepted the findings in part and expressed inability to share or accept the findings in other parts, which I would come to a little later.

The conclusions arrived at by Justice Verma are given in Chapter XVI. The caption is "Conclusions-Findings etc." I am basing my submissions on Chapter XVI. The Central Government's responsibility has been discussed at page 80. Without reading the entire thing on page 81, I quote para (12):

"There was failure of the Central Government to provide to Rajiv Gandhi a, suitable alternative cover for his proximate security after withdrawal of the S.P.G. cover as a result of Central Government's decision dated 30-1-1991 in spite of a felt need for the same evident from the proposals of the I.B. from time to time to provide ex-S.P.G. personal or N.S.G. escort culminating in the fruitless proposal of I.B. on 20-5-1990 to provide N.S.G. escort even after announcement of general elections accentuating that threat to him and the media reports projecting Rajiv Gandhi as the prospective Prime Minister resulting in a further aggravation of that threat."

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The detailed findings are covered by para (12). I would not read them but I would only pose a few questions for the consideration of the hon. Home Minister and of this august House. As I have said just now, V.P. Singh having resigned, Chandra Shekhar has come into power with the help of late Shri Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress Party. Whatever has been said by Mr. Aiyar just now that a certain new legislation or Act was there, according to the old Act there was no contemplation of providing special security. It is a peculiar type of security but I would not go into the details of that. May I ask that when late Shri Rajiv Gandhi supported Chandra Shekhar and Chandra Shekhar took charge as Prime Minister, was any attempt made for either amending the law or for providing that very security which he enjoyed as Prime Minister, by the Congress People whose leader was late Shri Rajiv Gandhi? Of course, later on after elections were declared or before elections were declared when support was withdrawn from Chanders Shekhar, it can very well be said that it was not association of late Rajiv Gandhi or Congress (I) with Chandra Shekhar and, therefore, the latter part is absolutely for Chandra Shekhar sticking as caretaker government and who were naturally in a position at that time to get anything done from Shri Chandra Shekhar inside the Parliament or outside the Parliament, by executive order or by legislative order. If not, why not? It is a very pertinent question, Sir, although I do not hold any brief for Shri Chandra Shekhar and any lapse on his part he has to account for and Congress party has to account for being partners in the Government in the sense of supporting the Government. But I want to know whether any attempt was made by all those who are sitting in the Treasury Benches here and all those who were at that time important persons in the Congress Party to ensure that Rajiv Gandhi being under security risk which undoubtedly he was, was provided with the same security which he enjoyed as Prime Minister. If not, Sir, then the answer is very simple. There is no responsibility for Shri Chandra Shekhar after that, Sir, and

if at all, the contributory responsibility or the contributory liability whether it is criminal or civil or whether it is negligence, whatever, it may be, is of course there, and therefore, when this finding of the Central Government is read in Verma Commission's Report, it is to be read in this background with this whole historical analysis which I have given regarding Shri Chandra Shekhar's Government coming into power.

Then second part of it is regarding the Government of Tamil Nadu. Again at page 82 in para 1 it is stated:

"There was of the Tamil Nadu Police force to strictly adhere to and enforce the prescribed standard of security for Rajiv Gandhi", and so on and so forth.

Para 4 again says:

"The Tamil Nadu Police force also failed to deal firmly with the Congress Party men and organisers of the meeting in respect of matters relating to security arrangements over which the police force had exclusive authority and control. The police force appears to have succumbed to every whim of the Congress Party men and organiser even when they committed breaches of security requirements over which the police force has exclusive authority and right to control."

Now, Sir, here, as I have prefaced my submissions, the Tamil Nadu Government was under President's Rule and therefore, there is no ground absolutely for blaming A party of B party of any person in Tamil Nadu itself. If the police officers were acting there, they were acting there in Tamil Nadu Government which was at that time under the President's rule clearly. And therefore, whatever lapses have been pointed out of the Tamil Nadu police force or the Tamil Nadu Government whatsoever, there also it is for the hon. Home Minister to satisfy this House

about these police officers or these Government officers, I would not say Governor or any person, but whoever were acting on behalf of the president, whether they were Advisors appointed there or whether they were some other bureaucrats who were functioning there, how they succumbed to the Congress party because the crux of this Report is, if I may say so, which I found in the third part at page 83 in which the honourable Judge has held as to why this incident happened. And therefore, he has said like this:

"There was constant intransigence of the Congress Party functionaries including the Congress candidate to ensure the largest possible gathering with minimum arrangements to encash the visit of Rajiv Gandhi for better election prospects.

There were difference between the TNCC (1) and the candidate Maragathan Chandrasekhar who excluded the TNCC (1) from participation in the arrangements resulting in the lack of available party infrastructure and support for the meeting.

Choice of Temple Land as the venue of the meeting by M. Chandrasekhar was unsuitable as compared to the available School Ground from the Security angle.

The Chief Organiser A.J. Doss did not have the competence to control the partymen at the venue who created chaos and confusion throughout.

TNCC (1) President, K. Ramamurthy was unwilling to involve himself in the arrangements for the meeting at Sriperumbudur and remained away apparently to avoid incurring the displeasure of M. Chandrasekhar who had excluded the TNCC (1) from any involvement in the arrangements. However, K. Ramamurthy could have intimated this fact to the AICC (1) on learning that the arrangements at Sriperumbudur were un-

satisfactory, as he did in the choice of night halt for Rajiv Gandhi.

There was lack of discipline and general irresponsibility in the behaviour of the Congress partymen present at the venue of the meeting.

The general behaviour of the Congress Partymen and the organisers at the venue of the meeting contributed...."

Sir, this is very important. I would seek your indulgence to emphasize it by repeating it.

"The general behaviour of the Congress Partymen and the organisers at the venue of the meeting contributed to an environment of disorderliness and confusion which was conducive to flagrant breaches of the security norms.

"There was a total lack of awareness in all the Partymen that they had a contributory role in the security arrangements flowing from their obligation to facilitate the task of the police force."

Now, these are the findings, not accusations of one political party against another political party. If we very quietly consider these findings of the eminent judge of the Supreme Court, then the question which assumes very serious and new dimensions is, whether the assassination of late Shri Rajiv Gandhi during the election tour can be attributed to negligence of the Congress party and omissions and commissions of the Congress Party apart from the Central Government and the Tamil Nadu Government, because it is a positive and clear finding of Justice Verma that this could have been averted. If the Congress party organisers there had not been so particular only to encash his personality for the purposes of elections and cooperated with the police force for security arrangements, today this House would not have been without Shri Rajiv Gandhi amongst us. Therefore, howsoever sad, howsoever unfortu-

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nate it maybe, the responsibility also lies with the Congress I party organisers of the election meeting for the murder of Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Justice Verma makes it clear that three factors which were responsible for creating the situation where Shri Rajiv Gandhi's murder took place, could have been averted otherwise, could have been avoided otherwise, were the Central Government, the State Government and the police—of course, I do not go into the details of IB and other police disciplines and sections. But the crux of the matter is, the Central Government the Tamil Nadu State Government and the epolice force were responsible. Just now, I have shown to the House the Home Ministry's note in which it has been emphasised—the findings of the Verma Commissions in this respect are that strict enforcement of duty could have avoided this unfortunate murder—that there was no dereliction of duty on the part of Tamil Nadu Government or the Central Government or the IB.

That being so, one important aspect which is very important for the people of the country, not for any political party, not for any individual is what is the responsibility of the Congress-I party towards this tragedy and murder? Are they prepared to win it? Have they put their house in order? What action has been taken against those persons in Tamil Nadu Congress who are fighting amongst each other? This is Justice Verma's findings. They were fighting amongst themselves. In that inner fight of the Party, they did not allow proper arrangement to be made. They did not allow the police to control the entire security arrangement. They did not allow even the State Congress boss, President of PCC-I to make arrangements.

If this is the state of affairs, then I must say, instead of accusing or abusing Mr. V. P. Singh or somebody else, one must understand in order. Physician heals thyself. One must understand what is our fault—omissions and commissions. Of course, to err is human. I

cannot say, it cannot happen in any other place or some other person may not committ omissions and commissions. To err is human.

Having read this report, I was shocked and surprised that Mr. Aiyar did not speak a single word about the responsibility of the Congress-I. If he wanted to defend, he could have done so. He could have said, Justice Verma has gone wrong in saying that TNCC President was a not allowed to arrange security there; he has committed a mistake in saying that the Congress-I created mob there; they did not allow the security officer to function. Mr. Aiyar could have said that he has committed a mistake in saying that the candidate who was there and Mr. Das who was given the charge, were responsible. This finding is incorrect. of course, the findings are neither the Bible, neither the Ramayan nor the Quran. He can also commit mistake. But Mr. Aiyar tried to demonstrate with all his eloquence, with all the vocabulary, with all the specialised knowledge, as he has said it, rightly he has said it but he has not touched this aspect of the matter.

Therefore, I would now like this particular aspect to be considered by the Home Minister and by the hon. Members who have now come here.

A note has been circulated by the Home Minister. This note says what is the report, the findings and the action taken by the Ministry of Home Affairs. I would not take your time by reading any portion of it but I would say subject to correction by the hon. Minister, all that he was said in this, right from the para which started with saying the action taken at p. 3 para 1, 95 per cent points which he has mentioned about the finding and action taken, among them, he has summarised them in a precise form 32 points. Out of those 32 points, in 25 points he has said that State Governments and Union Territories and IB are being advised to take necessary action on the lines suggested by the Commission. The hon. Home Minister himself has put it and Mr. Chidambaram, our earlier Minister

had said that it is a very serious matter and it deserves that seriousness and attention. What attention has been paid to it? It is a post office work. A post-master can always shift the mail from this station to that station. What action has the Home Minister taken? Not a single word. I can challenge the Home Minister kindly to show from his reply what action he has taken. Has any of the Officers been suspended or charge sheeted? Has any change been made in the system by amending the Actor by doing something? Has any action been taken against the IB and the Officer who was in charge at that time? Has any action been taken against the persons who were in Congress Party and who were primarily responsible for all these unfortunate tragedies? Of course, that is for the President of the party. The Home Minister will not be able to remove them from the Party or take any action but in a set up which we have got, the President of the Party and the prime Minister are the same, one individual, all amalgamated in one personality.

Therefore, we would like to know from the Home Minister, whether the Prime Minister has taken action against any of these persons who are named in the report. Has the High Court Judge named person? We have known in the case of Shri Sharad Pawar, he has obtained a stay order. Serious legal complications were there. In the murder of the late Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the leader of the party, what action have they taken? They must enlighten us. May be we are ignored. May be, the prime Minister can say that we have removed this person from Office. We have taken disciplinary action and so on and so forth. That can be said subject, of course, to correction. But seemingly, this note which is circulated by the Home Minister only shows a very superficial white-wash. There is no in-depth study of the entire findings. There is no in-depth seriousness for taking any action.

If that is so, may I submit that the main thrust of this report, finding having come before the Home Minister and the action of the Govern-

ment, the Government naturally at the moment owes much to late Shri Rajiv Gandhi and, therefore, it is expected that might have done or should have taken the best action which was possible.

20.00hrs.

But that has not been done.. Now, I come to the second aspect of the matter. The point is: how does the Home Ministry take the report? I would just like to point out one thing. Please refer to the note which has been circulated. This note is termed as 'Action Taken on the report of the Verma Commission of Inquiry.' After the 32 points which have been summarised in a precis form, there comes the comments. On the comments, there are the comments of the Home Ministry. I am reading it for the benefit of the House because it is very important. I crave your honest indulgence for quoting them. Please look at page 10. It has been stated:

"In addition to the above recommendations, the Commission has attributed certain lapses on the part of the State Government of Tamil Nadu and its officials, the central Government/IB and the Congress (I)/organisers of the meeting."

It contains the action taken by the Home Ministry and the views expressed by it. Point No. 2 in the Action Taken Note says:

"That Commission has held that the Tamil Nadu police Force failed to provide the requisite proximate security and prevent access of the human bomb near Shri Rajiv Gandhi which was the proximate cause of the assassination. The Commission has also held that the State Intelligence Branch failed to provide intelligence back up and keep a watch on the suspicious elements at the meeting which has been held to be a contributory lapse. The commission has also observed

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that the assassination could have been averted..." This is very important. I quote again :

"The Commission has also observed that the assassination could have been averted but for the lapse of the Tamil Nadu Police force. Insofar as the lapses attributed to the State Government of Tamil Nadu and its officers are concerned, it is proposed to forward a copy of the report of the Commission to the State Government of Tamil Nadu to take necessary follow up action in the light of the Report."

Sir, kindly see the action taken. What they say is: "It is proposed to forward a copy of the Report to the State Government." This is the monitoring or this is the action which has been taken by the Home Ministry; There also they say about the necessary follow up action. They are not precisely suggesting that this line of action which they think proper should be taken. They have not said like this: "after having gone through the report and considered everything, now we want the Tamilnadu Government to take such and such action." In a small matter, they say that the Rajasthan Government has not done this thing; the Uttar Pradesh Government has not done this thing. But, in the matter of assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, their own leader, they leave it to the State Government to do as per the rules. It is just like a routine note written by a clerk saying: "as per the rules; forwarded for necessary action;" This is what the lower division clerk writes and the Secretary signs on it. But we expect our Home Minister in this particular matter- if not anything else- to put his heart, soul and dead, all the three together to suggest the precise line of action he proposes to take through the State Government of Tamil Nadu etc. That has not been done.

Now, I would like to quote point number 3 which says:

"The Commission has held that the IB failed to share with the State Government the entire intelligence information available to it including that received from the Cabinet Secretariat. It has also held that the Central Government failed to provide a suitable alternative proximate security cover to Shri Rajiv Gandhi after the withdrawal of the SPG cover and this was not justified. The Commission has further held that the Central Government failed to have greater interaction with the State Government about the security of Shri Rajiv Gandhi as Tamil Nadu was then under President's Rule and the responsibility of MHA in this regard had hence somewhat increased."

Now this is the relevant and important finding of the Home Minister who is vetoing the findings of Justice Verma. Unfortunately, the precedents are very bad. Here the Home Minister gives a finding against Justice Verma's findings. He says in para 4 and I quote:

"The Government finds it difficult to share the perception of the Commission on the lapses attributed to the Central Government and the IB."

Now it is I must say, a little anomalous that after having appointed Justice Verma to precisely find out the lapses,

Justice Verma did the entire exercise in which all were parties, he issued notices to all and sundry, the entire world, saying, whosoever wants to assist me, he can come, file an affidavit, a statement of case, cross-examine the witness, submit the affidavits put up the documents and materials and assist the Commission in coming to a finding. After all that has been done, now the Home Minister say by one single word, "I do noting myself in a position to share the views of Justice Verma," It is so simple. Can the judicial verdict, can the judicial finding of an

apex Judge, Justice Verma of the Supreme Court, appointed by them, in a very solemn manner, after the demand was made, be thrown in the dustbin like that? He has thrown it in the dustbin by one sentence. Justice Verma had to go and travel. He had to examine, cross-examine, hear arguments. We have only a few hours of arguments here. Many of us were feeling that arguments were pretty lengthy. Our time is very precious. Now Justice Verma has spent about a year or so. He went many times to inspect the site. He went to the length of examining how the security was being managed in the meeting of Advaniji, how the security was being managed in the Prime Minister's meetings. And here, I must give all compliments to him that in about ten to fifteen pages he has mentioned what is being done, what was being done in Shri Narasimha Rao's meetings, what was being done in Adaniji's meetings and so on and so forth in order to give comparative statement. If that person, that jurist, that judge who is a genius among the jurists, if his report is thrown in the dustbin by the Home Minister, it is most contemptuous and most disrespectful. I am very much pained and shocked to see this one sentence which the hon. Home Minister has written so casually. I do not know whether he has written or he has just signed it after the officers have given their nothings, because IB would be interested in protecting them, Central Government officers would be interested in protecting them and nobody would like to have any sort of disciplinary action etc. Therefore, they would just say, "You kindly write, it is not acceptable and the matter ends there." What action can be taken when he himself says that the Central Government and IB are acquitted, they are absolved of all liabilities, they are given clean chit. After sometime, if it continues like this, they may be given Ashoka Chakra or some Padma Bhushan by the Home Minister for the great achievements of theirs. But posterity would not leave them. People would not leave them when they go amongst the people. If they go, they are avoiding it so far by postponing elections by issuing proclamations under Article 356 for six months more. How long will it be done? Let them

go around and people would ask them. They would put them in the dogs. When they would go to address the people, they would ask, right in the market places, on the streets and on the roads, what have they done for Rajiv Gandhi. You encashed him. This is what Justice Verma has said. They encashed him and they were more particular in encashing his presence resulting in all this disorder, in his murder. So, you are criminals, you are murderers, you are guilty. The assassination guilt lies with you, the Congress party, the Congress bosses and on all them. And, therefore, you are trying to usurp the entire matter, you are shelving it. Shri Aiyar. I do not know, whether he has read it or not, but in the report it is said that, "The Government finds it difficult to share the perception of the Commission on the lapses attributed to the Central Government and the IB." So, both are absolved and if you absolve both, then what for in paragraph 36, you have stated that you have sent to the State Government for necessary action? What action? If there was no lapse, no omission, no commission, no mistake, then what is to be improved, what is to be done?

I have got a serious reservation and objection to this finding of the Home Minister and I would request all the hon. Members and more so those who are really close to Rajiv Gandhi. I am not saying that who are only showing their closeness - to show their mettle, before this discussion concludes, that they must compel the Home Minister to withdraw this sentence from this and ask him to act and if he cannot act, to leave this august place which he is holding on account of Rajiv Gandhi. I do not mean anything personally, Sir, but it is a matter of institution. I have got no problem so far as Chavan Saheb is concerned.

Incidentally, Sir, whatever Shri Ram Vilas paswan wants to say, to that the reply comes from the Home Minister in this following sentence. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA (Madhubani):
How do you know what he wants to say?

SHRIGUMANMALLODHA: You know as much as I know. He cannot put Shri V.P. Singh in the dock here, whatever may happen inside the party.

SHRIBHOGENDRAJHA: If truth compels you to say all this, then why cannot him?

SHRIGUMANMALLODHA: Whatever may happen inside the party, here, he would certainly defend him. He has defended him earlier also.

Then, the report further says that:

"SPG cover provided to Shri Rajiv Gandhi, as Prime Minister, ceased to be available to him after he demitted the office as per the provision of the SPG Act, 1968, under which the SPG was then responsible to provide proximate security only to the Prime Minister and the members of his immediate family. The alternative security cover prescribed for Shri Rajiv Gandhi was comprehensive and adequate to meet the perceived high level of threat."

Now the Home Minister says, "It was comprehensive and adequate", and Shri Aiyar says, "The officer who was put on the Central Committee had zero knowledge of the entire thing."

It further says:

"It has been acknowledged by the Commission as well as admitted by Shri R.K. Raghavan, who was overall in-charge of the security arrangements at the Sriperumbudur meeting that if the prescribed security arrangements had been strictly enforced, the assassination could have been averted."

Sir, the Home Minister interprets it in another manner. The Commission says, "that it

could have been averted if the police force, the central government, State Government and Congress party could have acted properly." He uses this to his benefit. It says further:

"This makes it clear that the prescribed security arrangements were adequate and the assassination took place due to their faulty implementation on account of negligence on the part of the police personnel deployed at the said meeting."

Again, he says:

"That Government partially shares the view of the Commission regarding some increase in the responsibility of the Central Government during President's Rule in a State however, such increase in responsibility/interaction is confined to policy, Budget and Legislative matters."

This is a very broad subject; I would not enter into this question of whether it is only to Budget or not. Shri Aiyar and others would be able to say something on this. "The MHA is not involved in the day-to-day administration of which VIP security forms a part." I would leave this to them. "As regards the lapses attributed to the IB that it had failed to share the entire intelligence available to it including that from the RAW, it is found that IB had not withheld any intelligence." Again a clear hit, a testimony, a certificate and appreciation of the IB. "It is found that the IB had not withheld any intelligence which was available to it concerning Shri Rajiv Gandhi's security from the State Government police of Tamil Nadu. This lapse therefore is not borne out of facts. Justice Verma has all through laboured on facts, quoted evidence, annexures, documents and our Home Minister says, it is not based on facts."

In Para 7, the Commission has also observed that "the Congress - I Party workers and organizers at the venue of the meeting did not,

extend the required cooperation to the police and created impediments in making proper security, ensuring strictest control in his proximity." Kindly note the words used are "created impediments." The Congress-I party and organizers of VIP programmes creating impediments in security resulting in the assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi who are the murderers? The Commission has further held that "as these impediments could have been overcome by the police by a reasonable foresight and use of police power, they did not constitute a contributory lapse." About the responsibility of the Congress -I party and organizers of VIP programmes, the Government has accepted the recommendations of the Commission. Guidelines, code of discipline should be framed to be followed by party men and organizers. Now they say in future some guidelines must be given by the hon. prime Minister, who is also the party president to prevent such interference by the party workers leading to the assassination of the VIPs of the party. This is neither here nor there. The question is, what action he has taken. There is no question of any preventive measures now. It is the question of punitive action. What punitive action has he taken? After all the murder is over, Shri Rajiv Gandhi has passed away only on account of this. Repeatedly Justice Verma has said that Congress-I workers would not have interfered in the working of the police force.....

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: I am on a point of order Sir. I have great respect for Shri Lodha. He has made certain observations. Justice Verma Commission has made certain observations regarding the security and intelligence failure. The Congress-I party said clearly that there was some communication gap between the Congress-I party and the administration. But he should not abuse the Congress-I party like this. Congress-I party workers are not involved in this murder.

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA: I am not at all here to abuse the Congress party. That part is played by Kumari Mamata Banerjee very well

in West Bengal and outside. I am not required to do it. The Commission has already identified certain deficiencies.

Now I conclude. I am sorry, I have taken a little bit of time. I would not like to go into details taking the time of the hon. Members who want to participate. My conclusion is very short. It is for the Home Minister to give reply and the hon. Members of this august House to consider the relevance, the validity, the correctness and the propriety of these observations in conclusion. The entire country is watching. All this time, before this report came and before it is duly highlighted now, it was being thought that some persons who were there had assassinated Shri Rajiv Gandhi; and as far as the Congress (I) party is concerned, for them, it was a case where they said that Shri Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by the enemies and therefore people should take note of that. Now, the truth has come home and it has been established that Shri Chandra Shekhar Government which was supported by Congress(I) initially, whatever omissions and commissions are there, the responsibility lies with them, they being the partners, supported them and who brought them into power, have to do some introspection for this lapse. Tamilnadu Government being under the President's Rule, whatever omissions and commissions are there again, it leads to the something.

Lastly, the Congress (I) party's involvement by all these omissions and commissions which have been pointed out by Verma expressly. Clearly, specifically shows that the contributory responsibility is of Congress Party. Therefore, the country should know who are the murderers of Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Thank you very much.

20.22hrs.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM (Sivaganga): Mr. Speaker, Sir, my dear colleague Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar has expressed our sense of anguish and also our sense of anger. Neither

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anguish nor anger will bring back Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Nothing that we say here, nothing that we will do in the future will bring back Shri Rajiv Gandhi to life. I am therefore left with a sense of futility, almost helplessness; but if this debate will save at least future generations from the trauma of losing to an assassin a democratic leader, a leader of a political party, a leader of the country for five year and one who would have by all accounts become the leader of the country again, I think, this debate even at this late hour would have served some purpose.

Sir, I will be brief. I will be brief to the point of denying myself the opportunity to speak all that I wish to speak. I will be brief to the point; where I am sure, some of my colleagues will ask me, why did you not speak your heart out. There are reasons to be brief. In any event, there is not much that I can add to the account presented to this House by my colleague, Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar.

I find that unwittingly I have already stepped on the toes of the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs when I protested that a debate scheduled for 5 pm. should be relegated to had-past-six, in order to vote for ourselves. a hefty salary increase. I sincerely hope that the Home Minister will be me generous to me, if I do step on his toes. We are not here to investigate the circumstances under which Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. We are not sitting here as a tribunal or as a court. We have before us a report submitted by one of the most distinguished sitting Judges of the Supreme Court of India. He has investigated the facts. He has applied the highest standard of proof and he has given a report to the Government. Government has, as required under law, to place the report before parliament and to say what actions it has taken on that report. I do not believe that the Government or the Ministry of Home Affairs or the Home Minister are equipped to conduct another investigation or, in fact, they conducted another investi-

gation. I do not believe either the Government or the Ministry of Home Affairs or the Home Minister had other sources of information or other evidence before them to reject the findings of the Commission of Inquiry.

I do not believe that either the Government or the Ministry of Home Affairs or the Home Minister could substitute their findings for the findings of the Commission.

To be brief, all that the Commission wanted to say and all that it has said can be found in just a few paragraphs. These paragraphs point an accusatory finger at two authorities. The first for what the Commission calls the proximate cause of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination is the finger of accusation is pointed to the State Government. Let me read paragraph 5.16 of the Commission's report:

"It can be safely concluded that had the security arrangements ensured non-access of the explosive device within a certain area of 10-20 feet radius around Rajiv Gandhi by keeping it sterile, his assassination could have been averted."

There are other findings of the Commission, findings which support this conclusion. I do not wish to take the time of the House to read all the findings. But so far as it is germane, so far as it concerns the State Government, the Commission says:

"That assassination of Rajiv Gandhi was possible on account of the failure of the Tamil Nadu Police to provide the proximate security required by him and to prevent access of the bomb near Rajiv Gandhi and this was the proximate cause for the assassination."

A trained judicial mind naturally goes on to say:

"Accordingly, the lapse or dereliction of duty of the Tamil Nadu Police force is beyond doubt. This leads to the logical consequence of rendering the Government of Tamil Nadu responsible for the lapse of its Police personnel."

Sir, I have great respect for Shri Lodha. I am sure there are other shortfalls. I am sure there were other failings; failings on the part of the Congress people, failings on the part of the organisers of the function and failings on the part of many others but please Shri Lodha, the proximate cause for the assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi was the failure of the Tamil Nadu police to keep the area sterile to ensure non-access of a human bomb. If I go back to the jargon of the police, the proximate cause was the inadequacy of the proximate security provided to Shri Rajiv Gandhi.

Sir, I ask the Home Minister most humbly to tell us what is the action taken by the Tamil Nadu Government. I ask him to tell us what has the Central Government done to ask the Tamil Nadu Government to tell us what it has done in the matter. To the best of my knowledge, Sir, the Tamil Nadu Government had in the aftermath of the assassination suspended a number of officers. Of these officers two were reinstated in December, 1991. Justice Verma submitted his Report in June, 1992. The Tamil Nadu Government reacted by reinstating all but one in July, 1992 and on the 1st of April, 1993 the reinstated the last officer.

I tried to find out if anyone had been suspended or remains under suspension in Tamil Nadu. The answer is 'no'. Has anyone been charge-sheeted in Tamil Nadu? The answer is 'no'. Has anyone accepted moral or constructive responsibility for what happened on 21st May, 1991? The answer is 'no'. Has anyone been punished in Tamil Nadu? The answer is 'no'. Has anyone accepted political responsibility for what happened in Tamil Nadu? The answer is 'no'.

Sir, when an adventurous pilot, I recall his name was Martin Rust encroached on Moscow's Airspace, a few years ago the Defence Minister of the Soviet Union and the Chief of Air staff resigned.

I will say no more. I go to the second accusatory finger pointed by Justice Verma Commission. Why did the proximate security for Shri Rajiv Gandhi fail? My friend Mani has given a graphic account of the events leading to the failure of the proximate security. Sir, SPG was my baby. On the 5th of October, 1986 Rajivji asked me to join him in Pune, three days after an attempted assassination at Raj Ghat. I was the Minister of State for personnel and I had temporarily taken over as the Minister of State for Internal Security because Shri Arun Nehru was ill. Rajivji, Soniaji and I were in the jeep. We travelled together from the Airport to the institute in Pune. We talked about many things and he said, "fly back with me". For the next two days we virtually locked ourselves in 7 Race Course Road to discuss the security arrangements for Rajivji. Against my wish, against my advice, he said, you will be in charge of my security from this moment. A few days thereafter he passed a special order, placing SPG under my jurisdiction. That day, we began a long climb to make SPG one of the most efficient and envied personal security forces in the world. Sir, I cannot share much of what we did during that period. All that I know is at the end of three years, that is 2nd of December, 1989, when Shri Rajiv Gandhi demitted office, when the new Government took over, SPG was rated as one of the top our personal security forces for a Head of State or Head of Government. Many countries sent their officers to study the working of the SPG. SPG was built on two principles. One was proximate security, the other was the entire support arrangement which includes what Mani described as advance liaison. Sir, there was no officer, no police officer in the whole of India who was feared more for the authority that he wielded, than an officer whom we designated as AD (Functions), a very non-descript name Assistant Director (Functions). He had the authority

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to over-rule any one in India, including the Chief Minister of a State. We gave him that authority. I wrote the charter of SPG; every line of which I drafted; I drafted the Bill for SPG. Why did I give SPG that authority? We realised that a Prime Minister, a Head of the Government who faced threats from so many quarters, sikh militants, LTTE militants, many militant organisations in the North-East, communal elements, Naxalite groups in Andhra Pradesh and more than that deviant individuals required to be protected by a force which exercised and which possessed over-riding authority.

Sir, security is not a matter on which you can have consensus; security is not a matter on which you can have a debate; security is not a matter on which you can make compromises. Every assassin in human history had the advantage of choosing the date, the place and the time. He can afford to fail not once, not twice, not thrice, he can afford to fail a thousand times as long as he is not discovered or appended. A security force can afford to fail even once. Only, this month and last month, we have seen in a neighbouring country, how a President had been assassinated because the security failed once; how a Leader of the opposition had been assassinated because his security failed just once.

So, why did proximate security for Rajiv Gandhi fail in Sriperumpudur? We have got to go back to what mani described as the root cause, what I call the fundamental reason and Justice Verma's Commission points the second accusatory finger at the Central Government of the day for the fundamental reasons!

Shri Rajiv Gandhi demitted office on the 2nd December, 1989. Quite rightly, on the 4th December, 1989, a high level security review group which had been set up in October 1989, met and decided - and this is at Annexure XXI to the Report of the Verma Commission - that Shri Rajiv Gandhi, ex-Prime Minister should be provided the same level of security. The group

also decided that the security for the family will be maintained at the same level and called for fresh threat assessments from the IB and RAW.

The group's recommendations, I believe, were placed before the Prime Minister a few days thereafter. That is part of the Verma Commission Report. The Prime Minister, I believe, directed that the matter be placed before the Cabinet. That is not part of the Verma Commission Report. From my old records, I have gathered that the Cabinet, at that time, met on two days - 30th of January, 1990 and the First of February 1990. When all this was going on, a security note was sent to the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister directed it to be placed before the Cabinet; and the Cabinet solemnly met on the 30th of January 1990 and again on the First of February 1990.

An individual, a high placed individual occupying the office of the Cabinet Secretary wrote a note. And since we are wedded to parliamentary democracy, since we are wedded to a system under which the elected representatives of the people will be the final authority in the matter of civil government, it is, I believe, most important that the whole of this whole letter goes on record. I shall read the note dated 30.1.90. I would urge most humbly the Leader of the House, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, Shri Lal K Advani and all other leaders to pay the closest attention to the language in which this note is written. "On the verbal instructions of Shri T N Seshan" and inaccuracy which was pointed out and exposed by Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, because Shri T N Seshan did not issue any verbal instructions; he did not issue any oral instructions. The Security Review Group formally recorded its decision on the 4th of December 1989; it was formally sent to the Prime Minister on the 14th of December, 1989. But I leave aside that for the time being. Let me read this so that the whole of this goes on record. it reads as follows:

"On the instructions of Shri Seshan the first then Cabinet Secretary the

SPG was asked to continue providing security to Shri Rajiv Gandhi. This was purely temporary and adhoc arrangement. According to the SPG Act, this force is meant only for the security of the Prime Minister and his family members. Its charter cannot be extended to cover the ex-Prime Minister or any one else even by an executive order. The security of SPG provided to Shri Rajiv Gandhi continues to be as in the Past. Thus, as many 25,000 SPG personnel and 24,000 SPG personnel (CRPF) are on duty with him at present....."

"...It is not possible to spare such a big manpower out of the existing strength of SPG on a continuous basis. The security arrangements of the Prime Minister are suffering adversely due to extra commitment on the part of the SPG. This has been adversely commented by the security agencies. Such a large deployment of SPG also gives a high profile visibility and is attracting criticism even from the State Governments..."

Then comes the crucial paragraph.

"....Shri Rajiv Gandhi has now started touring outside Delhi. Since it is not possible for SPG to spare personnel to cover his tours outside Delhi, I have approved that his security arrangements outside Delhi should be left to the State Governments. As regard Delhi, a Cabinet paper is under submission. The responsibility of providing protection to Shri Rajiv Gandhi and his family should vest in the State Governments and Union Territory Administration and the MHA should issue proper instructions, thus. PM may kindly see for approval."

Sir, a Cabinet Secretary is indeed a high officer, he holds a high office. He has vast powers but this is a new constitutional doctrine. "I have approved that Rajiv Gandhi's security

outside Delhi should be left to the State Governments" Regardless of the fact that State Governments may not be equipped to take on Rajiv Gandhi's security ; regardless of the fact that they may not have trained personnel; regardless of the fact that they may not have bullet proof cars; regardless of the fact that they may not have proper bomb detection squads or dog squads; regardless of any fact; regardless of the fact that on the 4th of December 1989, the security Review Group said, the SPG should continue to provide security for Rajiv Gandhi and his family; regardless of the fact that IB and RAW had been asked to spare fresh threat assessments, the highest Civil Servant of India arrogates to himself absolute authority and says "I have approved that the security arrangements outside Delhi should be left to the State Governments," Sir, if I may say, as more of an after thought he says "PM may kindly see for approval."

This note which is published at page 242 is not a xerox copy. It bears the legend 'PM' here. We do not know if this was approved by the PM or not.

Will the Home Minister be so kind as to tell this august House whether the Prime Minister approved this note and if so what were the orders passed on this note? Will the Home Minister kindly tell this House and the nation if any decision was taken at the cabinet Meeting on 30 January 1990? If so what was the decision? And when was that decision minuted and communicated to the others who are responsible to implement that decision? Will the Home Minister kindly tell this House and the nation. if any decision was taken at the cabinet meeting on the First of February 1990? If so what was the decision and when and how it was communicated to others?

Sir, I have reason to believe that the decision to withdraw SPG from Rajiv Gandhi and entrust his security arrangements to State Governments owes its origin and its sole origin to this note at page 242. If anything was done thereafter,

it was a pretence and a formality.

Sir Justice Verma shares my conclusion, or rather I, from my own sources, from my own information have reason to believe that Justice Verma is right when he holds that the decision to withdraw security was taken on 30th January, 1990 by the Cabinet Secretary of the day. Anything that happened thereafter was only a formality. The basic decision, the fundamental decision was taken on 30-1-1990.

Let us, as elected Members decided once for all, who is the authority in this country, who is the civilian authority in this country. Is it the prime Minister of India and his Ministers or is it the Cabinet Secretary and other civil servants? The fundamental reason why proximate security for Shri Rajiv Gandhi failed in Sriperumbudur was this decision taken on 30th January 1990.

Let me read to you a few conclusions from Justice Verma's report:

"... the decision of the Central Government on 30-1-1990 to withdraw the S.P.G. cover to Rajiv Gandhi without provision for suitable alternative for his proximate security which was not as a result of fresh assessment of threat justifying reduction in his security; and the consequent withdrawal of the S.P.G. cover reducing the level of protection to Rajiv Gandhi without any reduction of the threat to him was contrary to Central Government's own earlier decision as well as his security requirement and was unjustified."

This is a complex sentence. But I want you to kindly allow me to break it into parts and tell you the source for each of these conclusions:

"That decision of the Central Government on 30-1-1990 to withdraw SPG

that is, the office note on page 242 written by the cabinet Secretary.

"Without provision for a suitable alternative for proximate security"

This note makes no provision for alternative security, but relegates it to the state Government.

"which was not as a result of fresh assessment of threat..."

A fresh assessment of threat had been formally called on the 4th of December, 1989, but a fresh threat assessment was either not made or submitted to the Cabinet Secretary.

"justifying reduction in his security and the consequent withdrawal of the SPG cover was contrary to the Central Government's own earlier decision."

This—"the own earlier decision" being the decision taken on the 4th December, 1989 and contained in the note of the 14th December, 1989 which was sent to the Prime Minister.

Sir, I ask the home Minister to tell us what action the Central Government has taken on this finding. Yes, Sir, on the 23rd of December, 1992 on Christmas eve, when, I believe, this House was adjourning after the Winter Session the Home Minister made a statement in this House. Few took notice of that statement at that time and Shri Gurman Mal Lodha has done a signal service by reading that statement here.

The Home Minister has made partial amends on the 28th April, 1993 by amending paragraph 4 that statement. It is not too late to make ample and full amends for that statement of 23-12-1992. I believe, that statement of 23-12-1992 was an unfortunate statement. To the extent that it exonerates completely the Central

Government and the agencies of the Central Government, it is an unacceptable statement. To the extent to the Home Minister has made partial amends, amending paragraph 4 we are grateful; but there is much more to be done.

Sir, I asked the Government: "Is any one in the Central Government today under suspensions?" The answer was, "No". Is anyone under a charge-sheet? The answer is 'no'. Has anyone been punished? The answer is 'no'. Has an inquiry been instituted against anyone? The answer is 'no'. From Delhi to Madras, the answer to everyone of our questions is 'no'. That is why, I say, I am filled with a sense of hopelessness, a sense of futility.

Why do I speak today then? What is the purpose of participating in this debate? Two of the last four Prime Minister of India have been assassinated. Both belonged to the Party to which I belong. Both belonged to a most distinguished family in India, which we all love. If a love of the family is a crime, let us be branded as criminals.

Sir, I have attended some functions which the Prime Minister attends today. I am deeply disturbed. I am not happy about the way his protection has been organised today. And if anyone at the political level can speak with some measure of authority on protection, I believe I can.

From 5th of October 1986 to the 2nd of December 1989 barring one day, when Shri Rajiv Gandhi went out of our formal jurisdiction to Colombo, we did not allow a scratch on his body. If he had listened to me, he would not have gone to Colombo. Shri Seshan and I barged into a Cabinet meeting, and the Prime Minister will remember that meeting which took place in Parliament House, virtually put our for down and said: "You shall not go to Colombo tomorrow." But unusually he overruled us. My understanding with Shri Rajiv Gandhi was that I can overrule anyone on security and he can overrule me. But if he overruled me thrice I

would resign. That was the first and the last time he overruled me on security. Shri Seshan and the Director of SPG rushed to Colombo in a special plane. From Colombo they told us: "This is not the time to visit Colombo. Ask Rajiv to stay away." But Rajiv was Rajiv. Any Prime Minister, Sir, in India has to remain above fear. I believe, Shri V.P. Singh was fearless despite threats to him. I believe, Shri Chandra Shekari was fearless despite threats to him. I believe, the Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao is fearless despite threats to him. You cannot be a Prime Minister and live in fear. One has to rise above one's sense of apprehension, fear and trepidation and dive among the people, walk among the people, move among the people and accept whatever comes. Rajiv knew that his life was always in danger, he lived dangerously, and he died under circumstances which could have been averted.

My concern today is that, whoever is Prime Minister to day, tomorrow, five years from today, ten years from today, should be protected. Why? Because that is the principle on which this democracy is founded. We elected a Prime Minister by the ballot. We cannot lose a Prime Minister to the bullet. The ballot must make a Prime Minister. The ballot must unmake a Prime Minister. The bullet cannot make a prime Minister and the bullet cannot unmake a Prime Minister.

21.00hrs.

I am unhappy with the kind of security that I see around the Prime Minister. I am unhappy with the kind of intelligence that is apparently flowing into the security review group meetings. I am unhappy with the number of things I see touching upon security. But, that we should reserve for another day. When SPG Act was first amended, it did not provide protection to all ex-Prime Ministers and Shri Advaniji will remember, we met somewhere there, expressed his unhappiness and I shared his unhappiness. I said this was an error and will speak to the Home Minister and I will express my view

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forcefully that if you are extending it to one ex-Prime Ministers, you shall extend it to all ex-Prime Ministers.

A question was asked here, why did you not make an act to cover ex-Prime Ministers. Shri Morarji Desai was not under any kind of threat and to the best of my knowledge, Choudhary Charan Singh was not under any kind of threat. If we had made a provision then for ex-Prime Ministers, we would have been charged of making a provision for Shri Rajiv Gandhi in the event of his losing office. The Government which took over from Rajiv Gandhi ought to have made that provision on the first day, that was the recommendation on 4.12.1989. That Government extended protection for a period of two months and withdrew that protection on 30th January, 1990 on the authority of a civil servant.

Sir, there is no end to dwell any further on the subject. As I have said, there is futility and hopelessness about this whole exercise. But, maybe I am wrong I wish I am proved wrong when I hear the hon. Home Minister reply to the debate.

I want to know and I believe, we want to know whether the Government stands by its statement of 23rd December, 1992 or whether it has since reconsidered its decision. If it has, what action will it take on the authorities of the Central Government who took the decision on the 30th of January, 1990 to withdraw SPG cover for Shri Rajiv Gandhi and relegate that responsibility to the State Governments. These two causes - the decision of 30th January, 1990 leading to the failure of proximate security in Sriperumbudur on 21 May, 1991 are in sum and substance what Justice Verma says led to the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, which could have been averted.

I would humbly appeal to the hon. Home Minister to please set at rest our fears, to assuage our feelings; to help us to come to terms with the diverse emotions which are raging in

our hearts; to bring some peace and solace to us and to assert the might and the majesty and the authority of the Central Government to punish those who are guilty and to ensure that such lapses do not occur in the future. I shall wait with hope mixed with helplessness until tomorrow to hear the hon. Home Minister's reply.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN (Rosera) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, today we are discussing an issue which is heart-rending for the treasury benches as well as for the opposition. Be it the assassination of Shri Rajivji or that of the Mrs Indira Gandhi, we are all like family members. We may have political differences but that too is a part of parliamentary democracy. But the death or any injury caused to any hon. Member whether he is in the opposition or in the ruling party, is an attack on all hon. Members. This is the reason that whenever any hon. Member, either of the opposition or that of the ruling party, is attacked or hospitalised, we all rush to see him. When Shri Dinesh Singh was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, it was none but myself to visit him first. When the former Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Sh. Antulay was admitted to hospital and we received the information, I was the first to go there.

We may have political difference. We will fight in politics, but if for those 'differences'. Somebody goes after anybody's life, it will be the most hateful outlook. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have told that we may play politics throughout our life, but we should not do so on the basis of somebody's death and the day we are involved in acts of making allegations and counter-allegations to this extent, will be the most unfortunate day for the country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I hold S/Shri Mani Shanker Aiyar and Chidambaram in high esteem. But the manner in which he has pointed the needle in a particular direction is not proper. I thought that after Shri Lodhaji had revealed the facts the needle will be in the neutral position. But even

after that the needle is being pointed to only one direction, i.e. towards S.P.G. It means those who do not have a security cover of S.P.G., their lives are not secure. Our police and the entire forces have become ineffective. I am very much astonished to hear that those who do not have the S.P.G. Security Cover cannot face any sort of risk.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to submit that none of us—either from the Opposition of the treasury benches should drag politics at least into such issues. Just now both of our colleagues expressed the same views which have been replied by the hon. Minister of Home Affairs himself, that the S.P.G. was raised neither by Shri V.P. Singh nor by Shri Chanda Shekhar nor by Shrimati Indira Gandhi. The S.P.G. was raised by Shri Rajiv Gandhi himself in 1988. Our hon. colleague was stating that some people were after his life but why the S.P.G. was provided for the former Prime Minister? Today it is said that the former Prime Minister had no threat to his life. Shrimati Indira Gandhi was assassinated. After her assassination, it was either leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party of Chaudhari Charan Singh but not the people of the Congress who spoke and Shri Charan Singh was the first person to suggest that army should be sent to the Golden Temple and thereafter it can be understood that she had threat to her life. It will not be proper at all to or assess or add anything.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, somebody might be having this idea that if he is a Prime Minister today, he may be removed one day, but he is not prepared to remain as an ex-Prime Minister, and such a person wishes to remain Prime Minister for ever. Therefore, while framing this law such a man might be wishing that these forces should remain with him for ever. So, it should be accepted. We must accept our mistakes, if we have committed any. All the forces of the country are incompetent today and only the S.P.G. is an exception which can protect the V.V.I.Ps. Therefore, I think that you should not have stated so.

Now so far as Shri V.P. Singh is concerned. I am not understanding till date why he is being dragged in this issue.

There are three factors - One is the Report of the Commission, second is the reply of the Government of India and the third is the statement of the hon. Minister of Home Affairs. All these three are contradictory. The Commission has stated that the Intelligence Bureau has totally failed in forwarding the information available with it and the information received from the Cabinet Secretariat to the State Governments. It has also been stated that after withdrawing S.P.G. from the security of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the Central Government also failed to provide alternate security cover for him and this was improper. The Government contradicts it and it does not agree with the flaws pointed out by the Commission against the Central Government and the Intelligence Bureau. The S.P.G. coverage provided for Shri Rajiv Gandhi in his capacity as the Prime Minister, was withdrawn under the provision of the S.P.G. Act, 1988 after he relinquished his post. It is correct because at that time under this Act the S.P.G. was responsible for providing security cover for the prime Minister and the members of his family only. On the one hand the Government has expressed such views and on the other hand, two hon. Members are shedding crocodile tears that they are under distress.

They say that Shri V.P. Singh has committed atrocity. Yes, Shri V.P. Singh had committed an error. He should be punished because even after the expiry of the period violating the rules he extended the services of the S.P.G. for three months more. The S.P.G. has been given special powers. If it shoots somebody it cannot be sued. Other forces are sued for such acts. It was time and again asked as to how S.P.G. will respond if it opened fire at some one and the man was killed. According to law, Shri V.P. Singh should have withdrawn the S.P.G. at that time, but he withdrew it after three months.

Whether adequate security arrangements

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were there for Shri Rajiv Gandhi thereafter? On the one hand the commission States that the arrangements were not adequate, on the other hand the Government of India claims that there were adequate security arrangements. The Government of India replies that alternate security arrangements were adequate enough to face any possible danger. But in his reply given on the 28th April, 1993 the hon. Minister of Home Affairs States that in view of the facts mentioned in the Notification, the Government is of the opinion that the decision of the then Government regarding the nature and scale of security which was made available to late Shri Rajiv Gandhi from February 1990 proved to be inadequate to meet the requirements.

[English]

"Keeping in view the aforesaid recommendations of the Intelligence Bureau, the Government is of the view that the decision of the Government regarding the nature and scale of security which was made available to late Shri Rajiv Gandhi from February 1990 proved to be politically in -adequate to meet the requirements."

[Translation]

On the 28th April he says that the security arrangement were inadequate. The Commission alleges that after the withdrawal of the withdrawals of the S.P.G. the alternative arrangement did not prove adequate. But the Government of India state that it is wrong to say that the alternative security cover for Shri Rajiv Gandhi was adequate enough to promptly meet any possible danger.

When the Government was ready to face the impending danger as to how the hon. Home Minister mentioned that in his statement at that time? His message reached every part of the

country. He is Home Minister in the Government of India. He is not the Minister of a single party. We felt sorry at that time. The Government has taken only one part of the observations of Verma Commission and has left everything. The evaluation of impending danger to the life of Shri Rajiv Gandhi had to be done by the Intelligence Bureau. Again, it was necessary for the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Intelligence Bureau to provide extra security to Shri Rajiv Gandhi when he was out of office, deviating from the general norms fixed in this regard. But the Government failed to do so. Then the Commission has mentioned in its report about the role of the Party and Government of Tamilnadu. Tamilnadu Police Force failed to observe strictly the norms fixed for the security of Shri Rajiv Gandhi and particularly it failed miserably in ensuring his security in the public meeting as a result of which unauthorised persons succeeded entering in to the sensitive zone near Shri Rajiv Gandhi without any check up. Through them a human bomb reached very near to Shri Rajiv Gandhi and due to the explosion Shri Rajiv Gandhi was killed.

Not only this, the letter of DIG, CID is enclosed with it. In his letter written in March, 1991 he had written:

"To T.C. Headquarters, Madras. Kindly refer to a letter No. dated the 21st March, 1991 regarding the visit of former Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi to Tamilnadu." In the end it has been instructed that suspected Sikh terrorists made an attempt on the life of former Union Minister Shri Jagdish Tytler when he was addressing a meeting in New Delhi, in which he had a narrow escape while two persons were gunned down. So it is desirable for security purposes that a security zone of 45 feet should be set up around the stage. It should be done in consultation with local party leaders and alertness in the following manner should be observed during Shri Rajiv Gandhi's visits: "Nobody should be allowed to reach, near the protected person. It should be restricted. A ring of well trained security personnel should be made around him. Well trained security guards with attacking power

should be deployed in a row in front of him. Adequate vigil should be kept to check any sabotage during his visits. These instructions were issued on 19th March, 1991.

What does Central Vigilance Commission writes in this regard?....(Interruption) Intelligence department exercises its mind and if it thinks in one direction then it continues to adopt the same line of thinking., Sikh terrorists of Punjab were the sole target for the vigilance Department. Only one community is being defamed. Intelligence report was not considered in the right perspective by the persons whom it was sent as it is apparent from the statements of IGP. Shri R.P. Radhwan and J.G.P. Shri F.G.Sharma. They said that they had linked the latest message of Intelligence Bureau with the impending danger to the life of Shri Rajiv Gandhi by Sikh Terrorists in Tamilnadu.

My colleague Shri Chidambaran was speaking just now. He was Minister Incharge and in a very light mood he has said that he is so competent that he remained unhurt during his tenure. At that time, fortunately Shri Rajiv Gandhi escaped in Colombo otherwise that attempt on his life was not a minor one. At that time he was incharge. You point your fingers on others immediately....(Interruption) What does mean by "explained" ?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask whether Intelligence Bureau was not working there. Our Prime Minister visits a country where there can be danger to his life he is attached with gun butt. It was not a minor incident. There has been lapse on the part of Central Government, State Government and the Congress Party in the incident in which Shri Rajiv Gandhi was killed. They may go through what has been the role of the Party. It is written on page No. 87 "The workers of the Congress party including its candidates were of the view that maximum crowd should be mobilised in the least arrangements to take benefit of Shri Gandhi's visit for the better polling results. There were differences between Tamilnadu Congress Committee (I) and the can-

didate of the party over it and the candidate did not involve TNCC (I) in these arrangements. As a result of which support of the party workers could not be mobilised for the meeting. Again recommendation No. 3 states that the selection of temple land for meeting place was not suitable in comparison to the school land. It has been said that the Chief organiser Shri A.K. Das was not capable to control party activists who were creating disorder and confusion there. On the one hand D.I.G. (C.I.D.) writes about security arrangements that nobody should be allowed to enter in the periphery of 45 feet, fixes five guidelines on the other hand these guidelines are ignored. So when you go through this report you will come to know the role of party but the hon. Home Minister has forgotten it. He has not mentioned even once in his statements that there was any responsibility of Central Government, I.B. and Party activists. There line of thinking was revolving round S.P.G. and V.P. Singh. I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister that Shri V.P. Singh was not Prime Minister at that time. There was same danger for the life of Shri V.P. Singh for implementing the recommendations of the Mandal Commission as it was for other leaders. leave V.P. Singh, who is not aware that a bomb was thrown at me at Empiramganj. Acid was thrown on V.P. Singh in Bhopal and a bomb in Sitamarhi. A youth was killed in this incident. Shri V.P. Singh made special security arrangement for him and less for other former Prime Ministers, certainly he would be responsible for it. Today, when you reply the debate. I will ask whether Shri V P Singh was not a former Prime Minister at that time. At that time neither Shri V.P. Singh nor Shri Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister. Shri Candra Shekhar was the Prime Minister and it means that the Prime Minister belonged to the Congress, why could the Congress not make him to do such a petty thing, while Candra Shekhar Government lost the power on the issue of two constables. We did not read any letter from Shri Chidambaran or Shri Mani Shankar. Well they could not write letters to Shri V.P. Singh. They could write letters to Shri Chandra Shekhar that perhaps Shri V.P. Singh

[Sh. P. Chidambaram]

has not made any arrangement of S.P.G. for him, Now the Government is in power with the support of our party, kindly make that arrangement. You had never written to Shri Chandra Shekhar. Therefore, I think that it is not proper to politicise all things. At that time I was also a Minister. I remember when Shri V.P. Singh was speaking in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, he said that under rule he can't provide S.P.G. but Rajiv Ji may take whatever equivalent force he requires. Four bulletproof cars and 240 police personnel were provided to Shri Gandhi which involved an expenditure of Rs. one crore. I remember when Chidambaram or any other colleague of mine raised this point Shri V.P. Singh said that there is no limitation of 1 crore rupees if need be we are ready to provide Rs. 5 crore. Tell me, what more do you want? We are proud of that so long as our party was in power no harm was done to Shri Rajiv Gandhi, he was safe. I claim that if our party had been in power during the election and Shri V.P. Singh held the office of Prime Minister he would not have suffered any loss. You are deviating from your responsibility.

The new Government was formed after dismissing V.P. Singh Government which has the slogan-four years versus forty years and you were supporting that Government and you are raising finger on us. You doubt our intentions. You are pointing out towards the person, like Shri V.P. Singh that he is involved in Shri Rajiv Gandhi Assassination. Mr Speaker, Sir, I feel very bad. I was of the view that today this debate will be held at such a high level that finger will not be raised on an innocent person. Only one leader has not been assassinated in this country. The Father of Nation, Mahatma Gandhi and Shrimati Indira Gandhi have also been assassinated in this country. I would like to ask as to who was the Prime Minister at that time. Out of these three assassinations, two were in 1984 when your party was in power and one when the Government supported by your party was in power. You forget all these facts and raise fingers on us.

The hon. Home Minister should have made an impartial statement. The hon. Home Minister should have said as to what Verma Commission has observed about the Congress party and Government of Tamilnadu. Who is not aware of the fact that Tamilnadu was under President's rule at that time and during President rule the Government is all in all when there is no Chief Minister in the State. All of us are aware that the same person who was Governor at that time who is occupying the Chair of Governor even now. It means that the Central Government was not responsible for it, Shri V.P. Singh was solely responsible for it. Even now, I demand that if Shri V.P. Singh is guilty, put him behind bars. Neither you will become loyalist nor any law will be changed by levelling charges against Shri V.P. Singh. Law follows its own path. I will certainly point out as to what happened with the report of Verma Commission a couple of days ago in this very House.

I do not want to go into it, whether he gave a factual report or not but if you are inclined to take action on the report of that commission, then go ahead. You may take action against everybody, we are ready to accept it.

A few days ago it was said that the hon. Home Minister of Home Affairs would inform. The intelligence department had told the Tamilnadu Government that the venue and the date of the programme were not proper. When the venue was not appropriate which is proved by the report then why this programme was implemented Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will not take much time and only want to submit that if we really want to do something for our motherland then we should avoid making personal allegations and counter allegations. I want to submit that the present Prime Minister was Home Minister in 1984 when Indira Gandhi was murdered, my house was set on fire. At that time I was at my 12, Rajendra Prasad Road residence I kept telephoning but to no avail. I could neither save my house nor a Sikh youth, who was burnt alive. Rajiv ji was also murdered. Though I fight for good cause my name is not mentioned by media.

I do fight but that is limited within this House. While out of the House or when our Prime Minister or Home Minister visits some foreign country, we watch them speaking on T.V. The day, the level of our politics falls to such extent an it is better we, renounce politics. Therefore, I want to submit, through you, that we should not involve it in politics and rather find out a way so that our leaders are not murdered like the ones which have already been murdered. If we find out some solution sitting together which is above politics, then I feel we will be able to arrive at a conclusion and that will be a right conclusion. We know there are two groups within Congress. We are in the habit of fighting openly but a sort of inner current prevails there in the Congress. Your fight is different which we know very well. So under such political motives if you try to aim at us then Chidambaramji and Ayyar Saheb, I feel it will be neither just for us nor for yourselves, nor for the country or for Shri Rajiv ji. You are doing injustice to him. therefore, I demand that if you intend to take an action then be it your party worker or of any other party or even a Government employee you must take an action against him.

I, once again, will request the Home Minister, that being a Minister of the Union / Government you are not supposed to give a signal to the country like the one you have given on 28th April, this signal was entirely wrong.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS) AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MUKUL WASNIK): I just want to inform the hon. Members, members of the press, staff and the watch and ward, as we have decided to sit late for this discussion, we have made arrangements for dinner. I would request that the hon. members may kindly have their dinner. We have made arrangements in Room. Number 70. (Interruption)

[Translation]

KUMARI MAMTA BANERJEE (Calcutta South): I am grateful to you for providing me an opportunity at such a time. When I rise to speak with the mixed feelings of sorrow and seriousness. Today, I remember my leader Shri Rajiv ji, who was selected to Parliament before me. I have seen the affection and encouragement given by Shri Rajiv ji. He was closely associated with the young generation.

Sir, previously, I have seen in this House only one thing that questions were raised about Bofors daily a Question was being raised daily as to why security arrangements for Shri Rajiv have been tightened why such an amount was being spent on his security? Today, I once again want to raise this issue because Shri V.P. Singh is former Prime Minister and Shri Advani ji is the leader of the Opposition and Chief Ministers are there in states. At present, our party is in power but we can never say that there should be no security arrangement for Shri Advani, Shri V.P. Singh and Chief Minister of a state as the question of security is a sensitive one and it is not a personal matter. We can have political differences, party differences but can never have misunderstanding on the issue like security. The Chief Minister of various states are also in the hit list and their security arrangements are being intensified, but we have never raised our eye-brows as it is a serious matter.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, today when we make a mention of Shri Rajiv Gandhi and just now Shri Lodha ji and Paswan ji have urged to discuss it rising above political considerations, which is quite true. Findings of the report of the Verma Commission needs to be considered. It is true that we cannot make Mahatma Gandhi, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi alive but we can avoid recurrence of such incidents and no leader is assassinated in future Therefore all such points needs to be discussed. Why Shri V.P. Singh is being targeted because there are facts and findings. Shri Paswan ji is not present here, I wanted to inform him about it. Mr. Speaker, Sir,

[Kumari Mamta Banerjee]

a meeting was held on 4th December, 1989 when Shri Sheshan was Cabinet Secretary. Shri R. Vasudevan, special Secretary to P.M., V.K. Jain, V.G. Vaid, Vijay Karan, Devendra Singh and Ashok Darbari participated in this meeting. What was decided in this meeting.

[English]

I want to read that matter and I quote:

"SUBJECT: Security arrangements for ex-Prime Minister.

Kind reference is invited to the discussion held by Cabinet Secretary on 4.12.89 at 12 noon regarding security arrangements for Prime Minister and for ex-Prime Minister.

As directed, further discussions were held on 4.12.89 at 3.30 p.m. in the Office of Director SPG in the security arrangements for ex-Prime Minister; this discussion was attended by Director SPG, JD (IB) Additional Commissioner of Police (S&T) Delhi and Joint Secretary (Security) Cabinet Secretariat.

JD (IB) stated that the threat perception in respect of the ex-Prime Minister has changed, since he is no longer the Head of the Government, he now faces danger arising out of personal vendetta. The security arrangements to be provided to him now will have to take this fact into account. IB will be sending a fresh threat assessment for the ex-PM very soon.

The instruction of the Government is that the ex-Prime Minister should be provided the same level of protection. In the context of the above the standard aspects of security relating to prime Minister have been listed in the enclosed broadsheet and the commonly agreed views of IB, SPG and Delhi Police regarding security to be provided to ex-PM have been indicated against each item of security arrange-

ment; the above indicates that while the arrangements for close protection and for guarding the residence will be the same as before, the arrangements for the Delhi functions and tours outside Delhi will have to be modified in view of the changed situation.

It was agreed that the security for the family will be maintained at the same level.

[Translation]

What happened after that? As referred to by Shri Chidambaram that Shri Sheshan was removed and Shri B.C Pandey was appointed as Cabinet Secretary. And about the verbal instructions issued by Shri Sheshan on 30.1.90 it has been stated that:

[English]

"On the Verbal instructions of Shri Sheshan, the then Cabinet Secretary, the SPG was asked to continue providing security to Shri Rajiv Gandhi. This was a purely temporary and ad hoc arrangement."

[Translation]

Therefore, the decision taken by the Cabinet Secretary shows that there was security problem for Shri Rajiv Gandhi because his name was in the hit list and earlier also two attempts were made on his life in Colombo and at Rajghat. Therefore, security risk was there though he was not Prime Minister at that time but was an important national leader and an opposition leader.

[English]

Rajivji was the important leader of this country. But, at that time, I do not know why, the Cabinet Secretary's order was violated. Shri V.P. Singh was the Prime Minister at that time and they had withdrawn this SPG cover.

[*Translation*]

It is true as pointed out by Shri Paswan, that the SPG Act was passed during the Prime Ministership of Shri Rajiv Gandhi. He said that there could not be SPG provision for a Prime Minister. But the Prime Minister himself cannot ask for providing SPG cover but some one else had to raise this issue because of his being a public figure. Shri Rajiv Gandhi, himself could not say that he should be provided with SPG cover.

[*English*]

Shri Chidambaram wrote letters to Shri V.P. Singh on 3rd February and on 9th February. Shri George, the Private Secretary to Shri Rajiv Gandhi had also written so many letters about it. They had requested the V.P. Singh Government to reconsider this decision.

[*Translation*]

But the V.P. Singh Government did nothing. They should have had reconsidered it. Shri Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated for political purposes and it was politically motivated and it was a deliberate attempt. The Government was responsible for it and the Verma Commission has proved the casual attitude of the Government and the Central Government and Tamilnadu Government were responsible for it. After the withdrawal of SPG, Shri Rajiv Gandhi was not provided adequate alternative security. In February he visited Manipur and at that time only one PSO was with him. I have seen it that during election period there was only one or two PSOs with Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Such thing should not happen with other leaders. We have lost Shri Rajiv Gandhi but in future such things should not happen with any other leader. The Verma Commission in its report has also mentioned about the Congress party. We do not want to hide the facts but you are hiding the facts and do not want to dwell on them. In this regard I would like to say that there was communication gap between the congress party and the administration. In every

election it happens that every Party worker want too invite party leader to his constituency but the worker cannot kill him. The opposition parties should think over this fact. No Congressman is responsible for the murder of Shri Rajiv Gandhi. It is a lapse on the part of administration. If there was some intelligence report about the assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi then why that fact was not brought into the notice of the Administration. I would like to ask the hon. Home Minister that when there was Intelligence reports that the venue was not safe to hold a meeting then why the Administration did not take responsibility. It should have taken the responsibility. How the party workers were responsible for that How they could think of arms, human bomb or any explosion. No party worker can commit such crime, only anti-social element can do it. It is the duty of the Administration to check such things. This happened because of Communication gap and that is why we are distressed over this incident. It is not correct that any congress worker was involved in it but it is true that the decision of the V.P. Singh Government to withdraw SPG cover was not right. The then Central Government and State Government of Tamilnadu were aware of the fact that Shri Rajiv Gandhi would become the Prime Minister and that is why he was made political victim. The Verma Commission has said that it was mentioned by the Cabinet Secretary Shri Pandaey that Shri Sheshan should not be called by the Commission. I would like to submit that after the completion of the discussion in the house, a J.P.C. should be constituted for a detailed discussion on it. A strong action should be taken against the persons who are guilty for that so that such thing may not happen in future. Family members of Shri Rajiv Gandhi also runs a risk, to his life, so proper security arrangements should be made for him. Proper security should be provided to the Prime Minister, opposition leaders, Chief Ministers and other VIPs.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: How do we go about now? How much time should we sit today?

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV (Azamgarh): Sir, I want to know one thing. Really speaking, this was not properly know, when the discussion would start.

MR. SPEAKER: No. It was given in the list itself. The time was also given. It was extended. That is all.

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV: I know that I am not talking about that. I am saying that whether it will not be proper to give opportunities to two former prime Ministers. Two former Prime Ministers' names have been dragged and this is a very sensitive issue; it is a very major issue. Everybody shares the same feeling, the same sadness. It is a national tragedy. But since two former Prime Ministers' names have been dragged in; allegations have been made which are on the records of the Parliament, may I know whether it will not be proper at least to give them opportunities, if they want to say something?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, definitely.

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV: Therefore, my request will be that since they are not present here—~~whoever~~ wants to speak today, let them—let them have their say tomorrow, if want to.

MR. SPEAKER: That will be done. Mr. Sudhir Ray, how much time do you want? Suppose there is something different you want to say it is all right.

DR. SUDHIR RAY (Burdwan): I will speak for 15 minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: But, you will not repeat the points.

DR SUDHIR RAY: Why? Everyone will give their points.

MR. SPEAKER: Because, that is the rule. I did not allow Kumari Banerjee to repeat the points.

Mr. Verma, how much time will you take?

SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA VERMA (Bhopal): About ten minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. P.G Narayanan, how much will you take?

SHRI P.G Narayanan (Sobichettipalayam): About 15 minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: I would rather have you, Mr. Narayanan speak first.

With in one hour or less than one hour, we will be rising today; and tomorrow, if necessary, we will give chance to other one or two Members; and the Home Minister may reply. Shri Narayanan.

2148 hours

SHRI P G NARAYANAN (Gobichettipalayam): Mr. Speaker, Sir the Verma Commission which inquired into the assassination of former prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has indicted the then Government of Tamilnadu, its officials, the Government of India, the intelligence Bureau and the Congress party workers who had organised the public meeting at Sriperumbudur on May 21, 1991, which had led to the killing in a human bomb blast.

The Verma Commission findings have three elements. They relate to the role and responsibility of the then Government of Tamilnadu for the assassination and of the Centre and the Congress Party which organised the meeting at Sriperumbudur which Rajiv Gandhi was to address.

The proximate cause of the assassination was the lapse of the police force at the venue of the meeting and failure to prevent human bomb access to the target. The then State Government failed to provide the proximate security and the lack of discipline and behavior of Congress

members in the interest of the security of their President was a contributory factor.

The Commission thought that the Tamilnadu police could still have countered this lapse of the Congress Party. Mr. Chidambaram stated, while he was speaking, that suspended police officers were reinstated in December, 1991. When the inquiry reveals that they are not responsible for the lapse, there is no option left with the State Government except to reinstate.

The Verma Commission has reserved its major indictment for the Centre. Tamil Nadu where the assassination took place was under president's Rule. Therefore, the Centre has a larger responsibility in the matter because VIPs targeted by terrorist groups have to be protected within India and abroad by the Centre. But the Centre's response in the context spelt out in the memorandum of action taken on the Verma Commission's report, is surprising in the least. The Centre only partially shares the Commission's view that it has a higher responsibility during President's Rule in a State but such enhanced responsibility/interaction is limited to policy, budget and legislative matters. The Ministry of Home Affairs had claimed that it is not involved in the day-to-day administration of which the VIP security forms a part.

The Centre has contended that the Intelligence Bureau has not withheld any intelligence which was available to it concerning Rajiv Gandhi's security from the Tamilnadu Government or police. One such report of the Cabinet Secretariat on 9th December 1989 had said that there was a continuing need to provide effective protection to Rajiv Gandhi and his family in view of the threat from Tamil militants and others. The Commission also inferred that the message from the Cabinet Secretariat's reports and other intelligence inputs admitted by the IB was that the attempt on Rajiv Gandhi in Tamil Nadu by Tamil militants was imminent. But the documents made available to the Commission establishes that the Center's perception of the threat to Rajiv Gandhi was defective. Earlier,

there was a report about LTTE threat to Congress and Janata Dal leaders hailing from the South and to protected persons from Tamil Nadu. There was not slightest anticipation of any threat to Rajiv Gandhi.

The Tamilnadu police, however, seemed to have a better anticipation. As soon as Rajiv Gandhi's programme to visit Tamil Nadu was announced, the security arrangements ordered by the DIG CID to the concerned Superintendents of Police referred to the threat the VIP faced as of high order. The IB at various times had altered the Tamil Nadu police that Rajiv Gandhi was at the top the hit list of LTTE and Punjab terrorists and he needed the maximum security umbrella, since the SPG cover had been withdrawn after his stepping down as prime Minister. However, necessary back-up measures, following the maximum alert, have not been taken by the IB and particularly by the Central Government, as Tamil Nadu was under the President's rule in May, 1991. But the Central Government had glossed over the failure on its part by saying that the procedures laid down in the Yellow Book were adequate but their faulty implementation led to the tragedy.

The Centre definitely has failed to discharge its obligation of greater interaction and direction to the Tamil Nadu Government during the President's Rule in force in the State for Shri Gandhi's security in spite of the very high threat to him in Tamil Nadu. This was made known to Tamil Nadu Government by its intelligence agencies and the Cabinet Secretariat. This was a contributory lapse.

If the Tamil Nadu Police had anticipated a threat to Rajiv Gandhi and taken every precaution, then what failed? It is not the withdrawal of the SPG cover for Shri Rajiv Gandhi or the failure to provide an alternative which the Centre has to account for instead of blaming the lapse on the Tamil Nadu Government—that has resulted in this incident. Such a cover could have helped against a frontal attack like from bullets or bombs or grenades aimed at the target.

What made Shri Rajiv's assassination possible was the method and the device used beyond all methods. The assassin's access to the target owes itself to a failure at the spot. The lapse is not entirely that of the Tamil Nadu police. It is partly the failure of the Congress organisers to regulate the behaviour of their members where security of their leaders are involved. Failure of the Congress workers to comply with the security requirements was all too obvious at Sriperumbudur.

Now, I would like to touch the role and responsibility on the part of the Congress Party and the observations of the Commission on the Congress functionaries in Tamil Nadu. It is evident from the observations of the Commission that the Congress Party workers and organisers at the venue of the meeting did not extend the required cooperation to the police and created impediments in making proper security arrangements for Shri Rajiv Gandhi, particularly, in ensuring strict control in his proximity. This is evident from the Report at page 53, para 11.07. I would like to quote the relevant portion to corroborate the other evidence to this effect. I quote:

"This is significant on account of the police officers' case that this announcement at about 10.00 p.m. had the consequence of persons rushing near the red carpet towards left of the rostrum from all sides since A.J. Doss announced that those who wanted to garland Shri Rajiv Gandhi should come to that side; and this confusion facilitated entry into that area of unauthorised persons including the human bomb without any security check."

One could infer from the Report that Congressmen and the Party's Lok Sabha candidate from Sriperumbudur Maragatham Chandrasekhar, exhibited a total lack of aware-

ness of their obligation to cooperate with the police force and to facilitate them in their task of providing security to Shri Gandhi. The Congressmen did not even exhibit the kind of discipline and behavior it was reasonable to expect from them.

in the interest of the security of their party President when the high thereat to him was known generally to everyone. The Commission itself observed that this was a lapse on the part of the Congress functionaries in Tamil Nadu even though by exercise of reasonable foresight and the power available to the police force, it could have effectively countered to some. The Congress candidate from the constituency who did not think that it was necessary to associate with the Tamil Nadu Congress Chief Shri Ramamurthy and the volunteers at his disposal in all respects. This will be clearly evident from the findings of the Commission. Here I would like to quote the relevant portions from the Commission's findings to show how they were non-cooperative to each other:

I quote from page 77, para 15.02:

".....It appears from the evidence and is not disputed that there was not involvement of TNCC(I) President K. Ramamurthy or any of its office-bearers in the arrangements Damodaran, a nominee of TNCC(I) President, appears to have gone to Sriperumbudur." ".....A.J. Doss was appointed by Shrimati M. Chandrasekhar as the Chief Organiser. Damodaran being unwelcome at Sriperumbudur, returned to apprise the TNCC(I) President and mentioned the unsuitability of the venue of the meeting chosen by the candidate."

".....Apparently, K. Ramamurthy did not hesitate to take necessary action and firmly overruled M. Chandrasekhar in respect of a part of the arrangements made by her. However, apart from this

action by the TNCC(I) President, he did not involve himself in any part of the arrangement in spite of being told that the arrangements for the meeting were unsatisfactory"

It has been observed further that K. Ramamurthy, the TNCC(I) President being himself highly threatened is a protected person of 'Z' category. It is reasonable to assume that he had knowledge and awareness of the security risk of Rajiv Gandhi generally if not in minute detail. It was, therefore, his primary responsibility for making the arrangement in the meetings of Rajiv Gandhi in Tamil Nadu. This discloses lack of awareness and proper perception in the TNCC(I) President K. Ramamurthy about the need of stringent security for Rajiv Gandhi. It was also his duty to see that the partymen behave in an orderly manner and facilitate observance of security norms which they failed to do so.

Sir, there are certain other facts which emerge from the evidence are:

(1) Lack of coordination between the candidate and the TNCC(I) President K. Ramamurthy;

The Congressmen's main concern was only to encash Rajiv Gandhi's visit to improve the election prospects, not bothering about his security needs.

(2) No senior Congress(I) leader other than the candidate visited the site and the candidate was concerned primarily with the gathering at the meeting alone;

(3) One of the main failures which contributed to ineffective access was erection of single barricades and that too inadequate in front of the rostrum and no barricades behind the rostrum. For the erection of barricades, it was learnt that sufficient materials and the manpower were not available at the state. When local prominent leaders, including AIADMK Party Member Mr. Murthy came forward to erect double barricade

and ready to provide materials, the Congress(I) Leaders refused to accept the same.

This has created general disorder throughout. It is therefore necessary that some guidelines/code of discipline should be framed to be followed by partymen/organisers on such occasions where VIPs are to Participate.

As regards the SPG cover, one of the excuses given to the Verma Commission for the withdrawal of SPG cover was "inadequacy of strength of SPG". Then why is it that in April 1990 so many SPG officers who had worked with Rajiv Gandhi were posted out of the cadre to join in far-flung parts of India. And how was it then suddenly possible after the assassination for the SPG to provide protection not just to one ex-Prime Minister but to two and their proximate families, as well as to Rajiv's family?

The Commission's conclusions on Pages 80 to 85, especially paras dealing with the SPG are clear proof that once SPG cover was withdrawn on 30 January, 1990 against the protests of the Congress Party and overturning a decision of 4th December, 1989 to continue the cover, it was very clear from that there was failure of the Central Government to provide to Rajiv a suitable alternative cover even after announcement of general elections accentuating the threat to him.

Rajiv Gandhi was the most threatened person in the country as Prime Minister and this threat to him remained unreduced till his assassination. We have learnt a lesson from this tragedy. Even after this, the SPG cover was denied to him and his family members. Providing security for persons who are highly threatened by virtue to their official functions performed with dedication would be coterminous with their occupancy of the office they hold in this age of growing terrorism and would be a disincentive to many to work with devotion which is not conducive to the nation's welfare and progress.

[Sh. P. G. Narayanan]

Lessons of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination are not learnt properly even thereafter which indicates absence of mechanism to ensure learning from the experience of past mistakes. In fact, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Dr. Puratchithalaivi is waging a war against the LTTE to wipe them out completely in spite of her being in the top hit list of LTTE militants. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things, necessary to strengthen the security measures including the aerial security. I hope and trust that the Government of India must cooperate in her attempt to wipe out LTTE completely and see that VIPs who are on the hit list of terrorists are given proper security so that tragedies like Sriperumbudur cannot recur.

DR. SUDHIR RAY (Burdwan) : It is with deep sense of sorrow that I participate in this debate. I fully sympathise with Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar and Shri P Chidambaram whose speeches were full of high emotions. But they have overlooked the finding of the Verma Commission and they are insisting only on one aspect that is withdrawal of the SPG. The Verma Commission has submitted their report. He said that this assassination would be avoided if the Tamil Nadu Government and the Government of India fulfilled their duty.

He indicted the Tamil Nadu Government for its role and dereliction of duty. The Tamil Nadu Government should have been alive to this security problem because Tamil Nadu became a safe heaven for the LTTE elements.

As you all know that LTTE received patronage and blessings of both AIADMK and the Congress Party. But after the Rajiv-Jayavardane pact, LTTE became very much dissatisfied with our Prime Minister and they took every opportunity to discredit him and to malign him. Therefore, it was the duty of the Tamil Nadu Administration and the Tamil Nadu Police to give him proper security cover. But they did not do that.

There were lacunae in the arrangements because the area was not properly guarded and people were coming and going. There was complete chaos and anarchy in the meeting place:

The Government of India also had a share of guilt because the Government of India, especially the Intelligence Bureau, the Ministry of Home Affairs did not properly interact with the State Administration. They did not give all the news to the State Administration. In this connection, I should say, as Shri Guman Mal Lodha and Shri Ram Vilas Paswan said, that the Government at that time was not of Shri VP Singh's Government but it was the Government of Shri Chandra Shekhar who was brought up by the Congress Party. It was a proxy Government of the Congress Party. It is known to everyone that Congress Party assured him of at least one year's tenure therefore, if there was any security lapse or any lapse on the part of the Central Government, they cannot blame Shri V.P. Singh because it was a proxy Government of the Congress party.

Mr. Justice Verma blamed the Congress party. We all know this and whenever we tell this, the Congress party says that their party is like River Ganga, everyone comes through it. It is like a Kumbh Mela. But what was the situation in that meeting.

My other friends read from the report, so I need not report those arguments. But anyway there was no discipline. There was complete chaos there in the meeting. I hope the Home Minister would answer my points.

I am told that Shri Rajiv Gandhi was to hold his meetings at Moradabad, Bareilly and Rampur on the 21st of May. Why those meetings were canceled? Why did he go to Tamil Nadu? When there was a high security risk, when there was extreme risk to his person, why the Administration, the Police force, the Intelligence Bureau allowed, at the last moment, his engagements to be canceled and he was rushed to Tamil Nadu? The Congressmen behaved in a most

indisciplined way and I must say when this sad assassination took place, what was the record of the Congress party. In various States, in the name of protest meetings they set fire to opposition houses. They threatened many opposition leaders. In my State a Congress journalist published an article accusing Shri Jyoti Basu and Shri V.P. Singh for hatching a conspiracy for the Rajiv Gandhi's murder. This is actually the case.

MR. SPEAKER : Why do you bring Shri Jyoti basu's name? It is not mentioned in the report, not in the Commission's report. (*Inter-ruption*)

DR. SUDHIR ROY : A Congress journalist had said so. Therefore, I would request the Home Minister to arrange security, to arrange security measures in a leakproof way. Not only that, the forces of destabilisation are very much strong in India now. Every where they are raising their ugly heads. Only a few days ago there were some incidents in Manipur and Kashmir is burning. Pakistan is raising a low proxy war.

Therefore, we want that we must be alive to the situation. Our Congress friends have a lot of respect for Shri Chidambaram and Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar. They only stressed on one point, that is, the withdrawal of SPG cover.

MR. SPEAKER : All these points have already been covered. it is not necessary to repeat them.

DR. SUDHIR ROY : I am just reading from the report of the Verma Commission, page 107, paragraph 2:

" (2) Whether the assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi could have been averted and whether there were lapses or dereliction of duty in this regard on the part of any of the individuals responsible for his security.

Answer: Yes. The assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi could have been

averted but for the lapses or dereliction of duty of the Tamil Nadu police force which constituted the prominent cause.

There were lapses and dereliction of duty of the Tamil Nadu police force and consequently of the Government of Tamil Nadu; of the I.B., M.H.A.,

MR. SPEAKER : It is not necessary to read these things because it is laid on the Table. You just say that that paragraph may be referred to.

DR. SUDHIR RAY : Paragraph 16, summarising the conclusions is relevant, mentioning that the Congress party organisers of the meeting had specifically failed.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA VERMA (Bhopal) : The august house has listened to the speeches of two hon. Members Shri Aiyar and Shri Chidambaram. They have mentioned that how laboriously they have prepared the draft of NSG Act. They have had closed door deliberations for three days to formulate this Act. Sometimes, it also appears from their speeches that perhaps they have also done some field work to assess the implementation of their scheme. It is one aspect of the picture that recently they have formulated a scheme and have also seen the successful implementation of that scheme. For that they deserve all praise. But there is other side of the picture also and that relates to those persons who are practically involved in maintaining law and order and making security arrangements.

I have got an opportunity to make security arrangement for four times when pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru was the prime Minister. It was a coincidence that when I was District Collector, pt. Nehru visited my district for four times. People like me who have practical experience of security arrangements know the pulls and pressures

[Sh. Sushil Chandra Verma]

and burden of responsibility faced by the District magistrates. Before I dwell upon the Special force, I would like to tell you about my own experience in this regard. I would like to tell you about the coming time in the eyes of an Administrator.

It is being said by the Congress party that at the time of Tamilnadu visit of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, they emphasised on proper security arrangement but that could not be done. But there is practical difficulty in it. I, myself, realise it when I was Collector in Raipur in 1962 and Pt. Nehru came on a visit to Raipur. I was responsible for the security arrangements. Dr. Kailash Nath Katju was our Chief Minister. When I was making arrangements for dias etc., Congress workers objected to it and said that it was their election meeting and they would do whatever they like and asked me not to interfere in their matters otherwise they would make allegations against me for working against the party interest. Anyhow, I did not have much experience by that time because it was my first charge so I could not act so strictly as I should have. As a result of it, disorder prevailed there. When Pt. Nehru came down from the dias he was surrounded by the people and the Chief Minister Dr. Kailash Nath Katju anyhow reached to his car but lost his glasses in the crowd. I was very much ashamed of the mismanagement and wrote a letter to the Chief Secretary that I could not make arrangements for the Prime Minister according to the blue book and hence if he desired he could transfer me. He had full faith in me and did not transfer me from there. After one year Pt. Nehru again visited Raipur at the time of Chinese aggression. At that time I did not listen to anyone and our arrangement was excellent.

What I want to say is that if the District Administration acts strictly, he face the pulls and pressures. The Verma Commission has also referred to the recent visit of our Prime Minister from Bhopal to Vidisha and there was also disorder because it was a party meeting and

the worker insisted that their Prime Minister was coming and it was their function so the administration should not interfere in it. All these things have to be understood. The party workers should make their political leaders aware of the possible risks but if it is expected from the district administration that it would face all threats at its own, that would be very difficult task.

District Administration do succeeds at some places in keeping the party workers at bay. From the assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi in South no lessons seems to have been learnt as is evident from the disturbing scenes witnessed during the visit of the Hon. Prime Minister this year or last year. Shri Chidambaram while dwelling on such incidents was clearly at pains in view of the security arrangements being made during such visit.

I would like to submit that from my own experience I have got every doubt whether raising of Special Force by the Centre to provide effective security cover to the Hon. Prime Minister or other persons will be a successful exercise. This sort of thinking is somewhat new in India and no such thing was ever witnessed in the past, not even during the rule of the Britishers. Four times I was in charge of the security arrangements for the visits of Nehru Ji, Mr. Handoo and later on Rustam ji, used to visit the districts just one or two days in advance and also used to give suggestions very humbly as follows

[English]

"May I suggest such and such things? Would you consider such and such change?"

[Translation]

They were not used to issuing direction to the District Magistrates. Shri Chidambaram informed us that an Assistant Director of NSG has been empowered to issue directions. It is nice that the said official did not visit my district during my service period otherwise he would

have been the first to be arrested by me. In my work nobody was allowed to intervene whether he belonged to any Central Force or any other organisation. Maintenance of law and order is the responsibility of the State Governments and the Central Government must understand that by raising the strength of the Central Forces effective security cover cannot be provided to the Prime Minister. This responsibility should be thrust on to the State Governments. For providing effective security cover to the prime Minister and other VIPs the State Governments must be trusted upon by the Centre.

Mr., Speaker, Sir., difficult times are ahead. There is a serious threat to the security of the Prime Minister other leaders and VIPs in the days to come. There are number of incidents of assassination in the history of world and that of India the World has witnessed many assassinations. Abraham Lincoln was assassinated for advocating the cause of slavery. Leavers in India also pursue some missions. If the people do not approve of their missions then they also might be assassinated. Martin Luther King was killed in USA for demanding equality of rights for all and ending exploitation. For many reasons such incidents do take place. Example of South Korea is before us. For vested interests Interior Minister of President Park shot from behind the President and his wife after inviting them to a dinner. Interior Minister shot the President to become President of South Korea due to internal power struggle in the party. This way criminalisation of politics is being witnessed. Liquidate the person who is not to the liking. Even in elections if defeat is not ensured then shoot the prospective candidate because defeat through ballot is not possible all the times. In the times to come India will face a grave situation.

Sir, I put in 33 years in IAS from Collector to Chief Secretary and for 4 years was posted in Delhi as Secretary and I also witnessed the security arrangements being made for all these years. On the basis of experience I can say that we must be on the alert. Microlight flights, as reported by the newspapers, are also a grave

threat. What will happen if through microlight aircrafts explosives are dropped on the houses of the VIPs. Everyday new weapons are being invented in the world. These weapons are being made available for 40 to 50 thousand rupees in the market. I read in the 'Time' magazine that all these weapons are being manufactured in Peshawar. After Afgan war when the arms manufacturers were asked about the future sales they answered that their arms will be in great demand in India. Shoulder missies can be fired through these missiles. Situation on the border is also a cause of worry. Old perspectives regarding defence of the country will not hold us in good stead and mere organisation of Armed Forces cannot win wars for India. Example of Gulf war is before all of us. We must think about state of the art technologies and latest weapons in new perspective, because on one side 250 persons are being killed and on the other side 2,50,000 persons are being killed. If old practices are done away with and NSC and Central Forces are being depended upon for the security of the Prime Minister then the State Governments will stop taking interest in the matter.

The State Government can definitely cooperate with the Centre. Otherwise it is quite possible that the State Government might turn hostile against the Centre. Alright deploy Central Forces and the States will withdraw their own Forces. Mere deployment of 300 to 400 security personnel sent by the Centre cannot provide effective security cover to the prime Minister. How can the Centre know the exact figure of security personnel deployed during the visits of the Prime Minister. I know the arrangements used to be made by the State when I was Chief Secretary and Collector. The Centre thinks that by merely sending 100 to 200 security personnel effective security cover can be provided to the Prime Minister. The State Governments have got whole of paraphernalia for the purpose only through this, effective Security cover can be provided. We must have a new approach regarding security. There is no need for deploying one or two shadow cover security personnel. If somebody vows to kill anyone then no power can

[Sh. Sushil Chandra Verma]

provide effective security cover. Why is the Government spending so much money on security? What is the use of deploying 100 personnel instead of one and spending? Can all this provide effective security cover?

Sir, this is the reason why I did not refer to the report in my submission and did only dwell on the background. I apprised the House of my experiences as an Administrator. I will feel obliged if the Home Ministry ponders over these things

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Well, I think we can rise now and meet tomorrow. Tomorrow the Home Minister may reply and if one or two Members, against whom something has been said, want to(Interruption)

SHRI A. CHARLES: Sir Give me five minutes please.....(Interruption) Sir, it will be unfair if we are not given five minutes.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you going to make any new points?

SHRI A. CHARLES: Yes, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: You do one thing, you write down on a piece of paper and give it to me. If there are any new points, I will give you the time.

SHRI A. CHARLES: I shall just mention points. Sir, I shall be making two points which have not been mentioned by anybody.

MR. SPEAKER: We do feel certain things. We have our emotions and this is a very sensitive issue. I can realise that. But let us not make it a ritual please.

SHRI A. CHARLES: Not at all, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: But if you have any new points give them to me in writing one, two three. I will just consider them and give you the time.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh): You fix the time limit, we will not cross that limit, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: If that is to be there, then I give you five minutes each.

SHRI A. CHARLES: Sir, it is with the greatest feeling of sorrow and agony that I stand to participate in this debate. There are moments in the life of a person when he find it extremely difficult to give vent to the feelings. In my life, this is one such occasion. The main conclusions and recommendations of the Commission have been very ably presented here. I am not going to refer to them. But one point not so far touched, I am trying to bring to the notice of this august House. Para 14.23 says and I quote:

It appears that the I.B. and also the M.H.A. did not feel comfortable at the withdrawal of S.P.G. cover to Rajiv Gandhi without provision to him of suitable alternative for proximate security, in spite of the threat to him continuing unreduced."

Para 14.24 says:.....(Interruption).

MR. SPEAKER: Please, Mr. Charles, it will take time. Please make your points.

SHRI A. CHARLES: Just one minute, Sir. This has not been mentioned by anybody. Para 14.24 says:

"The Commission is left with the impression that the DIB, M.K. Narayanan, was not satisfied with the security arrangements for Rajiv Gandhi and was apprehensive about his safety but for some undisclosed reason, he was ineffective and has chosen to maintain silence

[Sh. A. Charles]

even now. If this impression of the Commission be correct, such disability in the holder of a high office is disturbing and its cause needs to be discovered and eradicated for the health of the polity."

I feel that some sort of a conspiracy is being poised here. I shall plead with the Home Minister to look into this particular aspect as to why such an officer of high standing was unable to disclose whatever he knew, even before such a Commission.

One more point I shall just bring to your notice and I shall conclude. Rajiv Gandhi was not a person who was after any office. I quote the first sentence of Chapter I:

"Rajiv Gandhi was a reluctant entrant in politics on the sudden death in aircraft of his politician brother Sanjay Gandhi, at the behest of his mother, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in 1980."

Sir, at a time of one of the greatest crisis of the country, just to console his mother, just to give some sort of a security to his mother, just to give some sort of a security to this country, Rajiv Gandhi entered into politics and quite unfortunately, in so short a time, he lost his bellowed mother and there was no one to lead the country and he was chosen unanimously. All over the world he has been hailed as one of the most charming Prime Ministers of the world. That became one of his greatest handicaps.

It was not only the lapse of the security given to him, but it was the situation that has been created by the anti-Rajiv forces and anti-congress forces that contributed to the whole thing. Sir,

Rajiv was the most reluctant man to come to politics. He was a noble and innocent man, he was brought to politics, inhumanly disgraced

and brutally assassinated. I am sure history will not forgive these dark force. History is past politics and all the political exercise now is going to be the history of tomorrow. I am sure the dark forces that contributed to his assassination will not go unavenged. I do not want to give the name, I do not want to enter into controversy on such a very emotional issue. But whoever is responsible for his assassination will have to stand for judgement.

Rajivji is no more, but he is in our hearts. The light he had lit, I am sure, will lead the country for many more years. Unfortunately all those whom he believed had betrayed him, I still remember one of his dearest friends whom he totally believed and he betrayed him. It is these dark forces that created an atmosphere of insecurity wherein any harm could be done to him. I would request the Members on the other side to search their hearts and find out the circumstances that led to his cruel assassination and how far they themselves were responsible for it. Here I will just narrate a moving story. Ibycus was a lyrical poet of Greece and he was the most loved person in Greece. It was the time of Olympic games. He was supposed to inaugurate the Olympic games. In those days there were no vehicles and he had to pass through a wood walking. On the way he was waylaid by robbers and he was about to be killed. He pleaded with them that he was Ibycus and he should not be killed. But the robbers did not recognise him. Finally, when he was about to be killed, he saw a group of doves soaring in the sky. Since there was nobody else there, he just pleaded with the doves that they should take vengeance on the robbers.

The robbers killed him. Thereafter they went to the Olympic games. When they were watching the games, they saw the group of doves in the sky. One of the robbers incidentally made a remark "Lo! There the avengers of Ibycus." People who were waiting for Ibycus were embarrassed to hear this. They realised that there was something wrong. So, these persons were caught. They were questioned and the whole

[Sh. A. Charles]

incident was brought to light and the murderers were punished. The dark forces who were responsible for the assassination of an innocent person, I am sure, will not go scot free. They will have to stand for judgment one day and that will be the day when justice will be meted out.

With all the agony in my heart, I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

[Translation]

SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA (Madhubani): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had made up my mind that how I would speak tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: Every time you send a chit at the end of the discussion and therefore, I usually have to provide you time for speaking. Please express your views in brief.

SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are no two opinions about the sentiments expressed either in this august House or in the country on the assassination of the former Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi. So far as the issue of assassination is concerned, some of my colleagues have referred to certain acts of assassination. First Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated. I came out of jail on the 15th August, 1947 and soon after a few days I was again arrested. On the 20th January, 1948 a bomb was thrown on him by one Madan Lal and on the 30th January, he was assassinated. At that very time I thought that a new danger has emerged in the country. During the rule of the followers of Gandhi he was assassinated in Delhi. Thereafter I came out again from the walls of the jail along with a thought that the country is faced with a new danger.

In the light of the recurrence of killings, I would like to state only this much that the security arrangements for the prime Minister is satisfactory. Two former prime Ministers Shri

V.P. Singh and Shri Chandra Shekhar are present here. In the opinion of the Government their security arrangements are also satisfactory. Would the hon. Minister of Home Affairs like to reply whether security arrangements would be provided for them in future also? I want to submit one thing more in response to the discussion on assassinations. One of the hon. Ministers of the Cabinet of the Government of India Shri Lalit Narayan Mishra was assassinated on January 2, 1974. We were together in Patna jail in 1942. It was the conflict of ideas. Many people were killed at that time. His brother, then a State Minister was injured and a D.I.G. was also injured and an M.L.C. was killed. Till date the Government of India has not been able to clarify the facts before the country whether that was really a case of assassination and who was the assassinator or whether the assassination was committed by any sort of magic. The Government of India totally suppressed that news. The hon. Minister of Home Affairs should point out to the country whether its investigation is still going on, because people often ask me such questions. They are of the views that I, being a member of Parliament, should have the information about it. This must be revealed as to who was responsible for it or the Government should accept that the entire Intelligence Agency of the Government of India proved incompetent. That assassination was committed in a broad daylight whereas thousands of Congress workers wearing Gandhi caps were present there and moreover a lot of security personnel along with their rifles were also on duty at the spot. Even then Shri L.N. Mishra was killed. Not a single assassinator has been nabbed. His brother Dr. Jagannath Mishra became Chief Minister thrice in Bihar and yet he could not do anything in this regard. The Government should clarify the position in this connection because people are still under the cloud of doubts, I would like that the hon. Minister of Home Affairs should give reply to it.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Is it relevant?

SHRI CHANDRAJEET YADAV: It is a new point!

[Translation]

SHRI BHOGEN DRA JHA: I would like to repress my thanks for this report because the facts have been presented in a consolidated manner. There is the failure of the Central Government he has to reply to the issue mentioned by Shri Chindambaram. Whatever the intention he might have is immaterial or whatever note had been recorded on the report by the then Cabinet Secretary is also immaterial but the main issue is as to what action has been taken by the Government in response to that note is also in material, Shri Chandra Shekhar had formed the Government at that time with the support of the Congress party. But the support was later on withdrawn. It was the time of elections and nothing was said by the Central Government. The first reply of the hon. Minister of Home Affairs is disappointing. There is nothing as successful as success is and there is nothing failure as a failure is. When a life is lost, we can do nothing except having introspection..(Interruptions) Nobody is at fault. But the State Government should look into it and reveal the truth....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: We are listening you for quite a long and you are talking like this. if you do not have anything to speak you should not speak at all.

SHRI BHOGEN DRA JHA: At that time our entire publicity media and all the parties were unanimous that the 'LTTE' is our friend and singhalese are our foes.

At that time it was a false propoiganda made through out the country that the Singhalese were our enemies and the LTTE were our friends, and in the light of this false presumption whatever action has been taken by our Government was completely a sin which caused irreparable damage to the country. No God or Allaha can be blamed for this huge loss. We should keep in

mind that such blunders should not be repeated by us in future. The responsibility should be fixed on the then officials of the Government of India, C.B.I. Central Security Department as well as the officers of the Tamil nadu Govt.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: All those have been promoted.

SHRI BHOGEN DRA JHA: I do not refer to any individual. Now it has to be seen as to what action is being taken in the matter. The Government should take the country into confidence and internal squabbles, bickerings should be kept aside and security arrangements should be tightened. A statement should also made regarding the murder case of alit Narayan Mishra and what happened to the investigation report.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam): Mr. Speaker, Sir, today Shri Rajivji is no more with us and we have deep sorrow for it. There are crores of youth in our country who regarded Rajiv-ji as very promising and dynamic personality. They are utterly distressed. Justice Verma has submitted his report regarding the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. I would like to thank Shri Verma who has given a detailed account of the Rajiv murder case accurately enumerating the details of the reasons behind his assassination, the persons who were on duty at that time, ect. We have to think over the fact as to why 'terrorism' is flourishing all over the world and especially in the SAARC countries. As shri Chidanbarame explained that first the prime Minister and thereafter the President were assassinated in Sri Lanka. Terrorism is increasing in Pakistan too and our country is also the victim of it. We are discussing this report because we hope that some action would definitely be taken in this direction and such incidents would not occur in future so that our leaders may not face such horrible situation in coming time. Therefore, we have to think over it. But after all the fact remains the fact. The S.P.C. security cover provided for Rajivji was withdrawn. Alternative management was to be made, but that too could not be done, and in the mean-

[Sh. Ramesh Chennithala]

time this tragic incident took place. Some of our friends leveled allegations against the Congress Party. I want to submit that whenever any leader be it Shri Narasimha Rao, Shri Advani or Late Shrimati Gandhi goes for election campaigning, he is surrounded by people. All political leaders should sit together and ensure their safe participation in electioneering. Electioneering is taking place in some States even now. In time to come, it can create a problem for our Prime Minister or the leaders of other political parties also who visit all Constituencies particularly during election campaigning. This factor has been highlighted in the Verma Commission Report with reference to Election Campaigning. Shri Chidambaram has pointed out that the nature of working of our I. B. is purely an advisory and it depends upon the relations between the state Intelligence Agencies and I. B. Whatever our I. B. advises, State Intelligence Agencies follow the instructions; and whatever the information is collected by the State Agencies at grass root level, what action is taken on that by the State Agencies. Do they not apply their mind on it. The flaws in the police system should be removed. People ask us about the findings of the Commission. Today the world is marching ahead fastly. Today terrorism too has crossed the age of sophisticated weapons. The Government should implement properly the suggestions made in the Verma Report. Stringent action should be taken against those found guilty in this case. The Tamil nadu police need not be defended. What was it doing at that time? When people go to hear the speeches of any Congress leader or the Prime Minister what is the need of putting garland around his neck? Be it the I. B. or the RAM, the Police have been entrusted with the security arrangements for such people. They should be set right. They were responsible for laxity in the security arrangements for Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Action should be taken against them so that no other accident takes place in future.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL

(Chandigarh): Mr. Speaker, Sir, truth is at times bitter and unpalatable. But it requires a large heart to accept it and admit one's failings. Justice Verma Commission of Inquiry has recorded an unimpeachable finding that the decision of the Government of India to withdraw the SPG cover from Shri Rajiv Gandhi was prompted by a lack of proper perception and betrayed the Government's lack of requisite will and the reasons stated by the Government for such a withdrawal was unjustified. The fact that such acts of omission and commission snatched from the nation the true Bharat Ratna, that is, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, should have evoked a response of atonement from the leaders of the Government then. Unfortunately, when I heard our senior colleague Shri Ram Vilas Paswan speak on the subject, I do not know whether he really understood what Shri Chidambaram and Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar had said at all. But I was pained to hear him attribute to his leader things which were not said by us. Nobody has said that any senior leader had a hand in the assassination. With all the agony and pain, all that we wanted to say and still want to say is that proper care was not taken; it was really shameful for the then Government to withdraw the SPG cover.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: By whom?

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: By the then Government (*Interruptions*) You have not still heard me. That is the problem with you. It was shameful for the then Government which withdrew the SPG cover to Shri Rajiv Gandhi. It was shameful that nothing was done by the Government to save such a precious life. Sir man does not know how God judges or guides the man he creates. We never know what place in this world he had given to Shri Rajiv Gandhi. But we do know that both historians and analysts will find him fascinating and charming. They will find him a person fired by the zeal to wipe out the tear of every child in the country who may be a victim of poverty, disease, illiteracy, hunger or communal passion. We know certainly that it was Shri Rajiv Gandhi who worked relentlessly for the development of the country and acceler-

ated the pace of development of the country. We know that he earned the pride of a place in the international arena. That was the preciousness of that short life. The flower had yet to blossom. But it was our callousness, it was the fallings pointed out so tellingly by the Verma Commission which finally resulted in his death.

Sir, today, we find our friend from the Opposition criticising us. Instead of rising to the occasion to accept the report of the Verma Commission and say this is where they defaulted; this is where they lacked in showing wisdom to provide the necessary security over to Shri Rajiv Gandhi, they critics us. All that I want to say is that for Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the SPG cover was no staus symbol. The Government's own rperception was that his security was vulnerable. The SPG cover was no status symbol for him.

MR. SPEAKER: But nobody has said that

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: I heard Shri Ram Vilas Pawan saying that.

MR. SPEAKER: You can leave that.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Kindly permit me. I again heard him saying that nobody from amongst us ever wrote to the Government mentioning that that security was required for him.

In this context, Mr. Chidambaram did not make mention of his own letter. Only a word that Mr. Chidambaram wrote on the 9th of February, 1990, with the constraint of time, I would like to refer. It was not our.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Why not in 1991?

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: I will come to 1991 also. Let me just refer to 1990 because the genesis lie there. Vide letter Annexure 26 of the Report, Mr. Chidambaram had then written to Shri Bajpai, Secretary (Se-

curity) Cabinet Secretariat. I am quoting:

"I am not satisfied with the alternative arrangement proposed to meet the security requirements for Rajiv Gandhi and his family."

He goes on further to say:

"I am willing to continue the discussions with the Government. But pending such discussions, it is my earnest desire and advice that the present security arrangement provided by the SPG should be continued and no change be brought about unilaterally."

Shri Pawan wanted me to refer to something of 1991. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: The hon. Member is speaking every thing against our Government alone. I want to state that they had themselves supported Shri Chandra Shekhar and only with their support he could be able to form his Government. Why they did not make the Government to restore the S.P.G Since they had supported the Chandra Shekhar Government, they should have asked that Government to restore it. (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Bansalji, that point is quite forcefully made by previous speakers.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: He wanted me to refer to some correspondence of 1991. I would refer to just two lines. I would not even refer to all the factors. That letter was written by Shri V. George, Private Sceretary to Shri Rajiv Gandhi to the lieutenant Governor, Delhi pointing out as to the Report of I. B. about Shri Rajiv Gandhi' security There is another document is this Report in which the Government of Tamilnadu had written to the Cent

[Sh. Pawan Kumar Bansal]

Government about the security threats to Shri Rajiv Gandhi from different angles. That was the position in which we were placed. It is not that we are going for a witch-hunting today. It is not that we want any of the leaders to be hanged for what was done. But we do expect from the leaders to rise now to say, "yes, here we failed." and are guilty of this national shame'

To conclude I would refer once again to what Walt Whitman said on the death of Mr. Abraham Lincoln. It applies aptly to Rajiv Gandhi

"Oh Captain! my Captain! Our fearful trip is done,

The Ship has weather'ed every rack, the prize we sought is won....

The Ship is anchor'd safe and sound,....

But I with mournful tread

Walk the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead."

SHRI KIRIP CHALIHA (Guwahati): Sir, I want to make an appeal to you to remind the House that there is just one step from the grotesque to the horrible. The discussion on the assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, a discussion on the Inquiry Commission about the assassination of a former prime Minister and a national leader. I feel should not be a matter where interests clash. I do not think, that was the intent of the Mover of the Motion also. I do not believe when Shri Aiyar moved a motion, there was even the slightest hint in his assertion when

he was moving the motion that he was accusing somebody and that somebody else should reply. When certain fundamental questions have arisen, it should disturb all of us considering today's and future implications and those should be answered. Unfortunately, I am very sorry to say that it might go to such a level tomorrow when we are asking some others to give answers that it might become a clashing of interest, though the aim was not such as Shri Chidambaram said and it might and as 'an exercise in futility'.

My only humble appeal to you is to ponder over three important questions.

A former prime Minister was assassinated and nobody is punished. A former prime Minister was assassinated and if there are political authorities involved in the decision-making process which might have, even by the slightest doubt, led to the assassination, what can the polity do? What will the polity do? We should give an answer to this, not for today but for tomorrow. This answer has to be given by other political parties too.

And the third and most important point is that the former prime Minister and the leader of the nation cannot be "My Prime Minister" or "My friend". he must be everybody's friend and we must answer those questions from everybody's point of view with a kind of consensus and with a degree of sanity which is expected from all of us.

Thank you.

2300 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till
Eleven of the Clock on Friday, May 14, 1993/
Vaisakha 24, 1915 (Saka)*