

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

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**DISCUSSION ON ETHNIC PROBLEM OF TAMILIANS IN SRI LANKA**

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now, we take up Agenda Item No. 13—Discussion under Rule 193. Shri Bhattam Sriramamurty will initiate the discussion.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY (Visakhapatnam) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the outset, I record my sense of protest against the way in which the militant Tamil leaders of Sri Lanka are treated in Tamilnadu by the State Government and at the instance of the Government of India.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur) : With the concurrence of the Centre...

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY : They are leaders of a freedom movement. They are fighting for their own home-land, They are fighting for right of self-determination. You may agree or not; they have put up not only a strong fight but also they have shown an unprecedented bravery, valour and they have undergone untold sufferings and hardships. They have made great sacrifices. These freedom fighters today are in a position to form the Government in the North of Sri Lanka. They can have their own civil administration. They can have their own Secretariat. They can set up their rural Courts. This is the position to which they have arrived at today. Those leaders are now treated in a shabby manner in the State of Tamilnadu, by arresting them; interrogating them; detaining them in their own houses just like ordinary criminals. This is unbecfitting. This is highly reprehensible.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU (Gobichettipalayam) : Sir, as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, we are treating them as guests, with dignity and honour.

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY : In any case, you are having your say. My

feeling is that you are all acting at the behest of the Government of India. Therefore, they are all arrested there.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Perhaps he means that hospitality is due to them; hostilities are due to the Centre.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY : This is unfortunate. This is unprecedented. This is detestable; reprehensible. Nothing more I can say about this. The main point is this. It is said that the Centre has nothing to do with this episode. It is only the Police action by the State Government. The Centre wants to absolve itself of all responsibilities for this. This is worse. Can anybody take this version for granted? The international community exercises its wisdom. Nobody is prepared to take this version of the Government of India for granted. In this connection I would like to read a news item which has appeared in the Times of India. They call it 'Operation Disarm'. This is not for any criminal act of anybody. This action is meant for disarming the militants. This is called 'Operation Disarm'. The paper has also said that the disarming operation of the militants has obviously taken place at the instance of the Centre. The Centre is very much in the picture. My friend Mr. Kolandaivelu may have said something. But they are acting on behalf of the Central Government. I am squarely blaming the Centre. The Government of Tamil Nadu are now acting as per the instructions of the Government of India. May I also refer to a Press report in the Hindu by no less a person than Shri G. K. Reddy, a veteran, seasoned and senior journalist? Having so much of access to the Prime Minister and to the highest circles of administration. He has stated :

"The Centre is understood to have directed the Tamil Nadu Government to place a number of Sri Lankan Tamil militant leaders under house arrest until the end of the Bangalore SAARC summit for security reasons."

Everybody is of the same opinion. It has been done obviously at the instance of the Government of India and perhaps in con-

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sultation with them; they had initiated action because of the Government of India. Not only that, it is also stated here :

"It was decided by them..."

That is, the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister during the latter's recent visit here :

"It was decided by them yesterday when they met in Delhi to confine these Tamil militants to their homes until the conclusion of the SAARC Conference."

What does it go to show ? Everybody is of the opinion that the Centre has everything to do. When you act you hold yourself responsible for your action. Why do you adopt this ostrich policy ? Why do you think that the whole world is also sleeping when you are asleep ? It is wide awake, with eyes wide open. They are able to understand what is what. Therefore, let not the Government adopt this kind of attitude. Let them take up a stand, strong, stiff, stern, definite, deliberate and bold and let them hold themselves responsible for that. We will appreciate that. Whether it is right or wrong, it does not matter. They must have the courage of conviction and take action. That is what is wanting from the beginning. That is how this issue has been dragging on for years together. It is very unfortunate. There is no Minister in the Ministry of External Affairs who is solely and mainly responsible and in charge of Sri Lanka issue. Number of Ministers may come and go. It is a different matter. After all, Cabinet is a pack of cards in the hands of the Prime Minister. He can shuffle and reshuffle it as he pleases. We cannot question it. He can do that. A number of Ministers in the Ministry of External Affairs may come and go. What I want is, exclusively for dealing with this question of the problem of Tamils in Sri Lanka, let there be a Minister, devoted entirely, fully and solely to this problem and let him be made responsible for that. Otherwise, it will be difficult for anybody to show results.

There is a very unfortunate situation where the leaders of the Tamil Movement

are arrested. It has a demoralising effect. It will certainly hamper the progress of the negotiations and everything else. Without these militant leaders, you will not be able to continue negotiations and achieve a lasting solution. It is impossible. You must realise that. The TULF leaders have done their very best. I congratulate them and I thank them for that. They have helped the Government of India, they have cooperated with them; whenever they wanted them, they participated in the discussions and negotiations either in Thimpu or in Colombo even at the cost of losing their own goodwill among the people; some of the militant leaders of Sri Lanka did it. But what is happening today ? What has happened to them ? They have now gone to the background. Unless the militant leaders also take part in the negotiations, no solution is possible. Not only this Government but the Government of Sri Lanka also realised this. Therefore, they must be made a party to the negotiations. Without their participation, no lasting solution is possible. Under these circumstances, I question : this is the treatment which you want to give to them. That is why I call it unfortunate, it is reprehensible. The point is this. As a matter of fact, the Centre may have two objectives. One may be that in the coming SAARC meeting, the Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi may hold discussions with Mr. Jayewardene to pave the way for further negotiations, discussions and things like that. He wanted to placate Mr. Jayewardene. That may be one reason possibly. The other reason is that the Centre may want to force the militant Tamil leaders to agree to go to the negotiation table.

Let me examine the first one namely, Mr. Jayewardene's attitude and the possible outcome of future negotiations at the SAARC summit at Bangalore. Sir, I have no hope whatsoever that anything worthwhile will come out of this because of the attitude of Sri Lanka which is very clear. Sri Lankans are following a particular pattern. They want military action and military solution first and later a political solution. If you don't want this, they want to combine both military action and political solution simultaneously. They want to conduct operations against the Sri Lankan Tamils, use violence, kill as many

as possible, do whatever they want and then request them to come to the negotiation table. That is the pattern that is being followed by them.

In the Bangalore SAARC meeting possibly what I visualise is that, please mark my words Mr. Minister, Mr. Jayewardene will have a word of advice from the Prime Minister of India. He has already said that "he is like my grand-son". He would say that "you have already done enough, you have already made a beginning, you have now to mount pressure against the militants and dismantle their camps further in order to achieve more. Then only there will be a lasting peace." Mr. Jayewardene may tender similar advice.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BAPULAL MALVIYA (Shajapur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Member aware of the facts or is it something imaginary? Is this the way?

(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI BHATTAM SRIRAMA MURTY: The men and materials are moving towards the north. The troop movement is already towards Jaffna. Therefore, soon after SAARC meeting is over, the bombardment will take place, people will be destroyed, villages will be ravaged and totally destroyed. That will happen. That will be the outcome of the SAARC so far as I could understand.

May be, it is a flight of imagination as my friend would like to put it. Let me see how the future events will turn out to be. After all, it is a question of trends of history with the help of which we may be able to see what is going to happen in future. This is the trend which is already available. The portents are obvious.

May I now say for the benefit of the Minister that on 1st June 1985 when President Jayewardene was here in Delhi for negotiations, for discussion with our Prime Minister, at that time what happened in Sri Lanka? Hundreds of villages were demolished and destroyed. They were all out to annihilate the Tamil population of

Sri Lanka. One of my friends whom I had occasion to meet recently said that 56 members of his family—all relations were done to death in the course of two hours. Men and women were mercilessly massacred. Nobody could help. When all that was done, Mr. Jayewardene was here at Delhi to participate in negotiations. On June 18th, after completing all the demolition operations, he said "ceasefire". That was cleared. What is the use? Please see what had happened. The same thing will be repeated again after SAARC meeting. That is my apprehension. I can't say much more. Probably I cannot read more. I am not a seer, I am not a prophet. I cannot foresee what is going to happen; but the course of history shows the trends and it is for us to read from them.

So for as militants are concerned what is the position? Government of India may try to coerce them to bring them to the conference table. If so, this is not the way to achieve this objective. I would like to differ. My own feeling is that they may like rather to pack up, lock stock and barrel and leave this land and go to the shores of their own country, shed their blood and die, if necessary, rather than being humiliated in this country. You please do not throw self-respecting leaders to that sense of desperation. I hope this will not happen. It should not happen too. I want them to come to the negotiating table. I want a lasting solution to be achieved through discussions and negotiations.

Mr. Chander Hasan and his friends are on a relay fast. Their counter-parts are wedded to something different. So what is the alternative for them? If they want to go on in a peaceful fashion conducting negotiations will it result in something substantial? Therefore, we cannot say what is correct and what is not correct or what is good and what is not good. I can only recall at this moment what Mahatma Gandhi had once said. He was an exponent of the creed of non-violence. Even then he had said that he preferred violence to cowardice. He had said if you do not kill somebody at least get killed for a cause. Therefore, they are left with no option. The militants are there. They are in the focus because of the action of the Government of India. The arrest of militants in

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Tamil Nadu is traced to law and order problem. Is it a mere law and order problem? If it is a law and order problem then those people guilty on an offence may be put behind the bars and action taken against them. But that is not what has happened there. All the leaders of the four militant organisations were simultaneously arrested and their offices raided and their arms and weapons seized. All of them were arrested. I am told they are under house arrest. This is what has happened at Chingleput, Tiruchirapalli, Thanjavur, Salem, Ramanathapuram, etc. This is a concerted, deliberate and pre-planned action. In the process my apprehension is that we are exposed. Government of India is exposed. All along we had held the view and told other countries that there is no militant camp here in this country. We are not harbouring them. There are no Tamil militants stationed in this country. They are not operating from here. But now what do the press reports say? The press reports say that a large quantity of arms and ammunition seized which included SAM missiles, rocket launchers, AK 47 automatic and semi-automatic guns, two inch mortars, hand grenades and rifles. That means you are harbouring them. In this process we are exposed. With what face you will put forth any proposal before Shri Jayawardene who is coming to attend the SAARC meeting? My point is if you wanted to do that you could have done it in a silent manner. This is not the way to do things. I do not know why Government has lost the sense of proportion and sense of understanding of the dynamics of international politics. What reflection does it cast? Is the world not aware of what is happening here and what conclusion the other countries would draw from this? If the Government of India thinks that Sri Lankan Government will be satisfied with this, you are mistaken, you will be surely disappointed. Athulathmudali, the National Security Minister has come forward with a statement that the militant leaders were just arrested and released after a few hours. He is not satisfied with this. He says: "My view point was vindicated; my version was proved." Now, you want to strengthen the hands of the Sri Lankan Government. It is a very sorry picture that you are presenting to the world.

Apart from this, what do the Human Rights Commission say? As late as October 3, a large number of Tamil civilians were massacred and thousands rendered homeless by Sri Lankan army in the coastal belt of Trincovallee. What does the report in the Hindu say? It says:

"Over a thousand army and navel personnel launched a combined attack from land, sea and air on civilian targets destroying hundreds of houses, schools, and temples. The troops indulged in a frenzy of arson, loot and rape. Innocent people were rounded up and slaughtered. Air Force planes started bombing villages in a search and destroy mission."

Can you stop this? This has been happening mercilessly and continuously.

Apart from the need for your coming to the rescue of the unfortunate Tamil brethren in Sri Lanka, I would like to ask what you have done for the fishermen of this country?

Could you get compensation for them? Did you insist for that? No compensation has been paid to Indian citizens who suffered losses and damage in Sri Lanka in 1983. Nothing has been done for them so far.

Then, the London based Amnesty International, which is the 1977 Noble Prize winner, charged that the Sri Lankan Government was not taking any action to clarify the fate of more than 300 Tamils who are alleged to have been abducted. The Human Rights Organization in a letter to Athulathmudali, Minister of National Security said that Colombo should now consider inviting 'UN Working Group on Disappearances' to examine these cases, but it had no response. The Amnesty International said that the Sri Lankan Government have not taken any action to clarify 272 cases. This is continuing and will continue. There is no other go. You have to put up with this. Can the Government stop this rampage? Can they do anything?

What do the Tamil leaders want? They want the women, children and others should not be done to death, they want that their

womenfolk should not be abducted and raped; they want protection for their own life. Do they want anything more? Can you do this much? You cannot do that. In that case, is it a futile exercise that you have been doing all the time? Shri Natwar Singh has had a long stay in the Ministry of External Affairs. He is a good man and I wish that he may be able to do something. It is not a question of dealing with Sri Lanka alone. Britain, China, Italy, South Africa and United States of America have been supplying Sri Lanka with various kinds of arms and equipment which has been used to oppress Tamilians. Israel has also provided army experts; Britain's channel islands are supplying the Colombo regime with mercenaries. Sri Lankan troops are trained in Pakistan. Israel sent a fleet of naval craft. Now Sri Lanka wants warships! On top of all this, comes the news that the US State Department has decided to include Sri Lanka in the list of countries entitled for aid to deal with terrorists. Most of the military aid to the extent of several billions go to Ceylon already.

So Sir, it is time that India takes it up with the United States of America in all seriousness. America should be told that any military assistance to Jayewardene will have the effect of unleashing a reign of terror on Tamils and it would be considered an unfriendly act and it will sour our Indo-US relations.

Jayewardene now says that he will stop food supply, electricity supply and so on. He insists that the Government of India should pledge itself to cooperate fully with the Sri Lankan Government with a view to bring about a rapprochement or settlement and bring the militants to their feet. What is all this? How absurd this proposition is! Unless there is total ceasefire, unless there is complete unanimity as far as ceasefire is concerned, it is impossible. What is it that the Friends of EEAAM are fasting here for? What is their demand? They want that the indiscriminate arrest of Tamils should be stopped. They want that the indefinite and endless incarceration of Tamils should be stopped. They want that the torture of Tamils should be stopped. They also want that destruction of Tamil villages and places of worship should be stopped and they want

that summary killings and rape should be stopped. This is their demand and they want nothing more than this.

Even under the Terrorists Act, four categories of people are kept in prison. Their cases were reviewed and re-examined by experts, for instance by the Attorney General and the Advisory Board. Those people recommended that they may be let off because there was no reason and their imprisonment was unwarranted. So their continued imprisonment is baseless and meaningless, and they have been advised by their own authorities that these people may be released. Even then, they do not release them and about 1050 persons are still there and about 4500 people are now rotting in jails. Can you do anything for them? Can you help them in any manner? If you will not be able to do anything for them, then nothing else can be done.

So far as the stand of the militants is concerned, they have got valid reasons. They visualise certain difficulties after the package of proposals are out forward. Now our friend, the young Minister Shri Chidambaram did very well. He went to Colombo at a time when we all felt that it was a dead end and there was a stalemate. At that time he went there and he had a round of discussions and certain formulations were proposed. This was followed by two rounds of discussions. We hoped that further discussions also might follow. So, now the question is a matter of debate and discussion.

The main thing is that the proposal provides for separate councils for Northern and Eastern provinces. The militants wanted that the two provinces may be combined. Earlier they said about only one. Now they have stated that two of them should be combined. This is the point. They feel that there is contiguity and there is majority of Tamil people in these two provinces and since these two are knit together by bonds of friendship, kinship and friendly relations and in every manner, they feel that the two provinces should be combined together. According to the present formulation, the Centre has the right to dispose of land for irrigation and land development programmes. In this regard they had some bitter experience in

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the past. With a view to reduce Tamil majority in certain pockets, they will forcefully settle some Sinhalese Persons in those areas. This is the practice. Therefore, they said that this would not do. This question of land settlement, development and selling of land should vest with the State Government only, *i.e.* the provincial Government. This is what they have said.

Then, again, the Parliament there has got powers to legislate on subjects within the jurisdiction of provinces. This again is not acceptable to them.

The President has got the sweeping emergency powers. In the name of law and order, the Centre has got over-riding powers. Therefore, Sir, they say, the proposals are inadequate. They fail to meet the basic aspirations of the people. Therefore, they have totally rejected, the premises on which the proposals are made. They have inalienable right for their own homeland. They should have a right of self-determination—the devolution of powers—as in the case of India. It does not hold good in respect of Sri Lanka because that happens to be racist regime. It is merciless and ruthless in its dealings with Tamils. So, that being the case, there is some point in that and that has got to be debated, discussed and thrashed out further, in whatever manner possible. Therefore, you strengthen the hands of those people and do not break their backbone, you do not break their morale and you do not shatter the hopes of the people by resorting to unfortunate methods. What has happened to the people, who are now taking refuge in other lands? Sir, people have taken refuge in European countries—Sri Lankan, Tamils. What is happening to them? They are everywhere told that they are unwelcome. In country after country, they are being sent out. They are not even given the status of refugees. It is very unfortunate. Are you doing anything about this? Can you help them? Can you at least help confer on them the status of refugee? That is also not done. Thousands of young Tamils from Sri Lanka have been arriving in Europe—50,000 of them are there. They just came in from East Germany—and most of them are in the age group of 18 to 35 years. West

Germany has the highest number—22,000. They start from Colombo. Through East Germany, they have arrived in Western Europe with no money, with no luggage but with a lot of courage. Sweden is sending the Tamils away from its borders. Switzerland, traditionally, the home for the refugees is exceptionally harsh towards Tamils. The homeless are given tokens instead of money in certain shops. They are kept out of the main stream. They are treated like *pariahs*—They are asked to leave the country.

Sir, in West Germany, Netherlands, Sweden and Belgium, they are not granted refugee status. In Netherlands, there was a Parliamentary debate on the Tamil problems. 3500 Tamils were told that they are at the end of their holiday and they should leave now. This is the position. Therefore we should help them. That being the case of the refugees in other parts of the world, do you want the same situation to obtain in this country also? You will have to stop this. This cannot go on.

[Translation]

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV (Varanasi) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the way Shri Bhattam initiated the discussion on this issue, it appeared that he did not want to realise the gravity of the situation in the right perspective. He objected to the searches made of the refugees in Tamil Nadu but he himself said that arms had been recovered from them and he was speaking against it. I am of the view that it is basically a question of law and order which Tamil Nadu Government has tried to solve in its own way, which to my mind is the correct one. We are aware that the conditions in Sri Lanka are quite difficult and also how a state of confrontation developed between the people of Tamil origin and the Sinhalese. I will come to that subject later on but it is true that the situation in Sri Lanka is quite grim and about 1,50,000 people have migrated to India and are living in Tamil Nadu. We can very well imagine the burden which has fallen on the Tamil Nadu Government or Government of India, but this will have to be conceded that the foreigners who flee to India, either due to some crisis or as a result of atrocities committed on them, have some

responsibility. They should see that they do not disturb the peace and law and order of the country in which they take refuge and do not pose any challenge to the administration. We have been observing infighting among their different factions resulting in murder of one person. Keeping this in view, I think there was no other alternative before the Tamil Nadu Government but to take stern action to maintain the law and order. Action taken by it has been praised by everyone but it in no way means that anyone in this country supports the action of the Sri Lankan Government. It is true that ever since we got independence say since 1950 differences between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority have been surfacing and there have been clashes between the two communities. Later on, in 1956 with the declaration of the Sinhalese as the official language there, we are aware how the Tamil speaking people were discriminated against. All this resulted in riots which after 2 years assumed serious proportions resulting in heavy loss of life and property. In addition to the language issue, Tamils' grievance regarding discrimination in the matter of jobs is also genuine. Even in areas like East and North provinces which are pre-dominantly Tamil areas, efforts were made to settle Sinhalese there gradually so that with the passage of time their minority may be converted into majority. No one could have accepted such a situation. With the same end in view, the Buddhists of other provinces, who are in majority, were given a special status and were also given preference in the matter of education and jobs. From this it was felt that Tamils were being neglected in every field and were also being deprived of their rights. It was natural for the Tamils to harbour a sense of insecurity and apprehension. Sri Lankan Government should have tried to resolve the issue. But what we see is that the steps taken by the Government of that country to resolve the issue had adverse effect and the problem, instead of being solved, became aggravated. Terrible carnage took place there and the attention of the world was drawn towards them. It was universally condemned and in our country also, widespread resentment was expressed against it because these Tamils were of Indian origin. May be they had gone there hundred years ago or in certain parts even thousand years ago but their

language and culture is common with us. Therefore, it was natural that there was a widespread resentment in our country and the people pressurised the Government to take initiative in this matter. The Government of India played a prominent role in resolving the Tamil problem and the results have been very encouraging. These have made a good impact. We know that Sri Lankan Government wanted that the disturbances should be quelled with police force and by use of arms and they used the force so brutally that not only in our country but also in the entire world there was outcry against it and the people condemned it. Now a lot of progress has been made in meeting the demands of the Tamils. Tamil organisations want to establish their own State-Eelam, under Sri Lankan Government. The Sri Lankan Government was not at all ready to concede it. But ever since the Government of India started taking interest and talks were held, the results seem to be quite encouraging.

In the beginning Sri Lankan Government was not at all ready to hold talks, to come to the negotiating table because it wanted a military solution and not a political solution of the problem. But the efforts made by Government of India to solve the problem broke the deadlock and a dialogue was started. Our Prime Minister had said in the very beginning that they do not want to jeopardise the sovereignty and unity of the country and want a settlement with the above thing in mind. It was a test of our diplomacy to bring round different Tamil factions as well as Sri Lankan Government. The Government of India gave a good account of itself by taking interest in the negotiations with both the parties.

Sir, as I had said earlier, Tamils want an autonomous province of their own in Sri Lanka. Talks were held in Thimpu in June 1985 and later on in Delhi. These talks did not make much headway. Subsequently, our Minister of State Shri Chidambaram went to Sri Lanka in a situation when both the sides had almost closed the doors for talks. But after his visit and efforts, the negotiations have started again and now Sri Lankan President, Shri Jayawardene has submitted a proposal which shows that he is ready for decentralisation of power. They want to set up councils

[Shri Shyam Lal Yadav]

there and want to hold elections in the provinces on the basis of proportional representation in which the majority party will form the Government with its leader as the Chief Minister. What powers should be given to the Regional Council or the Provincial Council, that is still under dispute.

Shri Jayewardene has also talked of giving some limited law and order powers as well as land rights but he does not want to give any right about the crown land. The Central Government or the Unitary Government there wants to keep many rights about this land with itself. Similarly, they do not want to give all the rights of law and order to the Tamils. I think talks can be held on these issues also.

The differences between the two sides are only about the formation of the Government. Shri Jayewardene wants that for the purposes of elections, Northern and Eastern Provinces should be treated as separate units and that separate council should be established for each province whereas the Tamil organisations want that these should not be separated but should be treated as a single unit because the Tamils are in overwhelming majority in the Northern Province and in the Eastern Province Sinhalese as well as Muslim population is also there. That is why Shri Jayewardene wants to keep them as separate units but the main demand of the Tamils is that the Northern and the Eastern Provinces should be merged into one. This is the fundamental difference between the two sides that has emerged. I think there is sufficient possibility of a solution of the problem and the way our Government is carrying on the talks, I think the results will be encouraging.

We should keep this thing in mind that at present there are about 5 Tamil factions involved in the negotiations and they may be having some differences. Some of them may be willing to consider this proposal while others do not agree with it or rather are against it. So what is required is to discuss this proposal further to decide the devolution of power *i.e.* what should be the extent of regional autonomy and in what way local and regional public bodies should be constituted and with what powers? The

Tamils have apprehensions that in future they can be suppressed by the Government, their rights can be trampled and they can be discriminated against. If they are not provided with the required protection, then how can these apprehensions be allayed? Can these apprehensions be allayed? For this we shall have to see that the decisions taken, the changes made in the constitution by Sri Lankan Government or the Government orders issued in this direction are so worded that the apprehensions of Tamils are completely allayed.

This is the need of the hour. The Tamils were incarcerated in larger number and butchered by branding them as terrorits. But it is no use repeating these incidents as it would serve only to inflame their feelings but would not be helpful in finding a satisfactory solution to any problem.

Therefore, whatever happened was unfortunate and improper which we shall have to forget. We shall have to create circumstances which may be conducive for finding a solution to the present situation.

My colleague, Shri Bhattam has said that this action was taken in Tamil Nadu in view of the impending talks with Shri Jayewardene who is scheduled to visit the country. To my mind, this is a wrong assessment of the situation and he is not doing justice to the problem. This was only a question of law and order there and I think the Government of India has nothing to do with it. They have not given any such information on the basis of which he has reached this conclusion.

The hon. Minister would clarify it while replying but *prima facie* there seems to be no truth in it. The Tamil Nadu Government has also clarified this thing. They are fighting with each other; what can the Government do in this regard? What else could they have done in this regard? Therefore, he has raised this point just to make political capital out of it or to criticise the Government. He also said that a Minister should be its incharge which I think is not justified. The Prime Minister formulates the foreign policy of the nation and lays down its guidelines. The Minister incharge implements that policy. Therefore, there has never been any uncertainty or

instability at any place. There has not been any lack of vision or initiative. Whatever the situation, best efforts were made to find a solution to the problem.

We should keep it in our mind that peace in our neighbouring country is necessary because if there are disturbances there, the foreign powers would fish in troubled waters. We have to be very careful in this respect lest any action by us should result in a situation which may be exploited by the foreign powers, who are inimical to us. These foreign would also like to instigate the neighbouring country against us. To my mind, Shri Jayewardene also realises that due to the initiative taken by Shri Rajiv Gandhi to solve this problem, various Tamil factions have negotiated with the Sri Lankan Government, which has yielded good results and we have also received some constructive suggestion in this regard. Therefore, this problem is being solved through negotiations. To my mind, various factions have discussed it. The leader of T.U.L.F. and other groups have accepted it but there are some militant groups whose attitude in this respect is not clear. We must persuade them that they should take advantage of the opportunity offered to them and try to solve their problem.

We do not want that what is happening in Sri Lanka should happen in our country. To my mind, whatever steps have been taken by the Government of India in this regard, clearly show that she wants a political solution of this problem. We have warned the Jayewardene Government that a military solution of the problem is not the right step. If there is unrest, it would not be possible to find a solution to the problem. We have succeeded in convincing them and it is as a result of that only that the Government of Sri Lanka has come forward to negotiate in this regard and they have submitted a number of proposals.

We must bear in mind that the Government of Sri Lanka is a unitary type of Government and it is not federal like our Government where the States have been vested with exclusive powers. It is evident from their proposal that they want to maintain their unitary character of Govern-

ment and also want to give some powers to the provinces." The matters which can be dealt with by both of them, come under concurrent list. But their proposal cannot conform to the provisions of the Indian Constitution; it may have the same spirit but in a modified form. The councils of the provinces will be vested with full powers to deal with the subjects or departments assigned to them. If this scheme is implemented on trial basis by both the sides, it is my belief that any lacuna or shortcomings experienced in the course of its implementation can be resolved through mutual discussion. I think Shri Jayewardene also feels, although he does not say it, that without solving this problem of Sri Lanka, he cannot run his Government for long. Therefore, it is also in his interest that he should find a peaceful solution and not a military solution to this problem of Tamils. He should win the confidence of the Tamils and honour their feelings and find a solution which is acceptable to all. The cooperation and the initiatives of the Government of India will go a long way in making that solution acceptable. Our present Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Shri Natwar Singh has the experience of running this department and he will try to solve this problem according to the principles and wishes of the hon. Prime Minister. In this way the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka would be solved in an honourable way.

15.00 hrs.

In the end I would like to say there are two to three aspects of this problem. First, the whole country, be it, South, East, West or North is with the Tamils and condemns the atrocities, massacre of the Tamils and damage caused to their property. We also expect from the Government of Sri Lanka that it should not illtreat its own citizens with a vengeance as if it were fighting some aliens. She should not try to deport them; instead she should call them back and provide them a chance to live peacefully. Secondly, the problem must be solved in an amicable manner through negotiations with all the groups, whether they are militants, T.U.L.F. or any other group. Thirdly, it is evident that the Government of India and the people of

[Shri Shyam Lal Yadav]

India should feel the burden of the refugees but it should not act in the same manner as the Government of Tamil Nadu did. Therefore, I hope that everybody would participate in the talks with Shri Jayewardene which have been quite encouraging so far and would try to reach a solution to the problem. Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi will have to deal with this problem patiently. He will have to bear in mind the resentment within the country and he will also have to ensure that the integrity and national unity of the neighbouring country is not jeopardised. We derive confidence from the fact that he has successfully tackled all the problems and the violence which erupted in some of the States. I hope that very soon Shri Jayewardene is visiting this country and he would utilise the opportunity to find a solution to the problems of the Tamils.

With this, I conclude.

[English]

**SHRI SURESH KURUP (Kottayam) :** Respected Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have been discussing in this House again and again the atrocities that are being committed by the Sri Lankan military against the innocent Tamil people. I join the whole House in expressing our deep sympathy and regard for the oppressed Tamil brethren of Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan State is at war with its own people. An estimate shows that about 10,000 innocent Tamils are killed in the span of a few years. Lakhs have taken refuge in Tamil Nadu. The situation has deteriorated to such an extent that even the most ardent advocates of Jayewardene Government finds it difficult to justify atrocities committed by Sri Lankan military which has degenerated into one of the most indisciplined armed forces in the world. Next week our Prime Minister and President Jayewardene are meeting to discuss about this problem. President Jayewardene should understand that Sri Lankan economy has already been ruined and the whole Srilankan State itself can carry forward only by finding an amicable political solution to this ethnic problem. A solution can be found only in the frame

work of a united Srilanka. We believe that in the framework of a united Srilanka, with a good measure of self-administering opportunities to the Tamilians can help find a solution. A slogan of dividing Srilanka is not going to help the Tamilians. It will help only the American Imperialists interests. Already American imperialists are getting more and more involved in this ethnic crisis in Srilanka. President Jayewardene is relying heavily on the American military aid. The U. S. State Department has included Srilanka in the list of countries which qualify for aid for combating terrorism. In the name of combating terrorism U.S. imperialism is pouring in heavily to Srilanka. Srilanka U.S. Military axis has been long evident for quite some time. Report says that in this year alone eleven U.S. naval ships have visited Srilanka. Top military officers from U.S.A. are holding discussion with Srilankan leaders. American U.S. pilots are helping Srilankan air force and Srilankan Government has already given some land Voice of America. There is a threat of U.S. Military base in Srilanka. All this is posing serious threat to our internal security, as we all know. It is this aid, this imperialist aid that has given the false notion to President Jayewardene that military solution is possible or he can find out a military solution. I would like to know from the hon. Minister why is the Government of India not coming out openly against U.S. imperialists intervention in this area, in this ethnic crisis? It is posing a serious threat to our security.

Our country is faced with the problem of refugees.

**PROF. N.G. RANGA (Guntur) :** What about China?

**SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY (Katwa) :** We are telling them to drive U.S. out.

**PROF. N.G. RANGA :** Let us be frank.

**SHRI SURESH KURUP :** You are not concerned with U. S. imperialism.

**SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM (Salem) :** We are concerned with all forms of imperialism. (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI SURESH KURUP** : Sir, our country is faced with the problem of refugees and also with the threat to our vital national interests. So finding an amicable political settlement to this crisis is of paramount importance to our country. So, while denouncing the genocide that is going on in Sri Lanka and while using every tactic and pressure upon the Sri Lankan Government for putting an end to this crime, we must use all our good offices for finding a political solution to this problem. President Jayawardene and other Sri Lankan authorities should understand that military might and State terrorism can never suppress the collective will of the people. All Tamil groups should understand that a divided Sri Lanka would serve nobody's interest. I hope the entire Tamil leadership will demonstrate that they can respond to statesmanship.

With these words, Sir, I conclude.

**SHRI SHARAD DIGHE** (Bombay North Central) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are discussing a very delicate subject this afternoon. The subject has become further delicate because of the impending talks which would soon take place between our Prime Minister and President Jayawardene when he comes to Bangalore for the purpose of SAARC Conference. Therefore, as Members of Parliament we owe a duty not only to the country, but to this issue itself that we should not speak in this House in such a manner that any negotiated settlement would be damaged by our talks.

As far as this ethnic problem of Tamils is concerned, there is no other alternative but to have a negotiated settlement between the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Government itself. Unless that is done, this issue cannot be settled in this part of Asia at all.

As has been already stated just now, by one of the hon. Members that some other foreign countries are already trying to fish in the troubled waters. He is merely mentioning the reported decision of USA Department to include Sri Lanka in the list of countries which qualify for assistance in combating terrorism and that would add a new dimension. I would go on further and add that even Pakistan, China and Israel

too are involved in the sinister game of aiding the Sinhalese majority to repress the Tamils. Therefore, the issue is so delicate that we must see that for the negotiated settlement all the concerned parties come to the negotiating table. It is not only one group, namely, TULF that should negotiate, but we should succeed in bringing to the negotiating table the other militant groups also. There are several other militant groups, I would not give the list as every one of you already know. They are LTTE, ENLF, EROS, TELO, EPRLF, PLOTE etc. Unless all these militant groups along with TULF come to the negotiating table and have a negotiated settlement, as far as this issue is concerned, there will be difficulties in implementing the whole settlement. Therefore, India is trying its best and using its good offices in bringing everybody to the negotiating table so that, we will have some effective settlement which will ultimately put an end to this dispute and this problem. 10 years of war-fare has taken a heavy toll and much water has now flowed through the Jaffa Lagoon since Sri Lankan Government began a dialogue in June, 1985.

Now, another and final package deal has been proposed by Sri Lankan Government, as we read from the newspapers. In this, the provinces are to be formed with certain autonomy having separate subjects for their legislation and certain powers given as far as several matters including land dealings also are concerned. I would only urge from this august House upon the Sri Lankan Government also not to be very rigid as far as all these settlement talks are concerned but to have a spirit of give and take with an aim to put an end to this matter finally and ultimately.

Similarly, it is necessary also to have an atmosphere in Sri Lanka itself whereby these talks are not at all spoiled or damaged. We have been hearing and reading in the newspapers even in the month of October itself that some massacres had been going on and some innocent civilians were being massacred. So, this atmosphere has also to be changed and it is for the Sri Lankan Government to see that that atmosphere is kept in such a manner that negotiated settlement is easily possible.

Similarly the Sri Lankan Government should also keep away from all these foreign

[Shri Sharad Dighe]

interveners who want and desire, as I said, to fish in the troubled water so that Sri Lankan Government should directly negotiate with these militant groups and the other liberal groups by using or by making use of the best use of the good offices of the Indian Government. From this point of view, I think, if this is followed, then much progress can be made. I would also, at the same time, urge upon the different groups in Sri Lanka to have also a spirit of some what give and take and not to be very rigid in their stand, because, as I said earlier, negotiated settlement is the only way to get peace in this area and to have peace for all. Therefore, even from the point of view of powers regarding land dealings and other disputes also, they have to be solved with the spirit of give and take. They should not take the rigid and firm stand that unless these provinces are joined together, we shall not have the settlement. There can be several solutions which can be found out in order to meet the aspirations of the Sri Lankan Tamilians residing in North and East part of that country and from that point of view, all the Parties concerned should take the best advantage of the good offices which are being provided by our country, especially by our Prime Minister. I hope that with all this effort, this problem will be solved soon and that we shall have peace in this part of the world.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN (Kishanganj) : In real life, sometimes we are faced with the drama of the absurd in diplomacy as well as in common life. Here I am in the Opposition and I rise to express my sympathy for the Government of India. The Government of India, as I see it, is finding itself on the horns of dilemma. It is indeed facing a difficult situation.

PROF. N.G. RANGA : Why Government of India alone ?

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN : It is not of our own creation and my only comment is that, to some extent, if I may say so, the Government itself is responsible for reducing the area of manoeuvrability. I know it is under pressure on both sides, from the Tamils and also from the Government of a friendly neighbouring country. It also knows its limits. The diplomatic

limits are well-known. It cannot exert much pressure on the Tamils or on the Sri Lanka Government beyond a point. And yet, it has taken upon itself a task in which, by its maladroit performance, it is inevitably reducing the area of manoeuvre performance and of possible action. That is why I find fault with what happened in Tamilnadu a little while ago. I am not going into the merits of the situation. I am not saying that it was Centrally inspired or that it was state action. All I am saying is that this was not the time for letting happen what happened. I know that in Sri Lanka the main problem is that there is total breakdown of communication between the two ethnic communities and also between the Tamil community and the Sri Lanka Government. Their relations have passed through many phases. It has led to bitterness, distrust and suspicion and that is where the Government of India should have used its good offices in a more effective manner and tried to bring about mutual understanding and, if possible, reconciliation.

15.23 hrs.

[SHRI SOMNATH RATH *in the Chair*]

We all talk about domestic jurisdiction in international law. But here we are facing a situation in which we have to teach the law of compassion to the followers of the great Buddha, who enunciated the law of compassion, that you cannot rule by force, that you cannot win people by violence, you cannot threaten to massacre them and yet obtain their consent. It is impossible particularly in our times when so many submerged identities are surfacing all over the world even in much more homogenous societies, in much more developed countries. How can you suppress the urge of the Tamil people, to have a life of dignity, of equality, to a share in the running of their Government ? And yet this is happening. When I look at the story of Sri Lanka, I am amazed by the slow but steady retreat of the forces of liberalism. We had the 1948 Constitution which was in many ways cast in the liberal mould but then came the 1972 Constitution and that was a retrograde step. Essential principles enunciated in the 1948 Constitution were dropped. For example, under Section 29(1), Sinhala was declared to be the solenational language, mark the word 'Sole'. It has played havoc with politics also in our

own country. Buddhism was declared as the State religion against the lesson which they ought to have learnt from us, we are just next door to them, that you cannot impose in a multi-religious society a special status to a particular religion. Then came 1976 when Tulf raised the banner of protest and committed itself and the TULF committed itself—till then they were a constitutionally recognised group—to the idea of a separate Tamil State. President Jayawardene's Party in 1977 went to the electorate with a recognition of Tamil grievances. And their grievances are well-known. President Jayawardane's Party acknowledged that they exist and within the frame-work of Sri Lanka's law and Constitution a solution should be found. The manifesto spoke about the Tamil grievances in the field of education, in the field of steady colonisation by non-Tamils of the areas inhabited by the Tamils. Of the deliberate turn or deliberate change in the demographic profile of vast regions of the country. They had their grievances about the use of Tamil in Administration. They had a grievance about their place and share in public employment. All these were recognised and the people were promised a solution. Nothing has happened. They had, in 1978, a state of emergency. Here, we have a unitary State with a sole language and a State religion and that is the crux of the problem. We are not here to speak about what they have to do. But we do feel that as enlightened citizens of the 20th century, they ought to have learned an important lesson that times have gone for imposing a unitary State; time is past for imposing a sole language; times have passed for imposing a State Religion on a society which is multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious. So, we had the beginning of disturbances. One day the fuse blows up. When you cannot contain the discontent. That is inherent in the situation and they had disturbances. Here, I do not have the intention to apportion blame. Who is responsible? Who cast the first stone? It is impossible in the perspective of history to lay down blame and to say that the Government is responsible or the Tamils are responsible. All we can say here is that the situation was fraught with dangerous consequences for the future of Sri Lanka and for the powers that be in Sri Lanka, for the people who are supposed to be enlightened.

In fact, in many ways, they were supposed to be constitutionally and intellectually the most advanced among the peoples of the Sub-Continent. They did not think about the impending storm on the horizon, about the gathering clouds on the horizon. They continued on their path, colonising the Tamil areas and using armed forces and flexing their mighty muscles. On whom? The Police in Sri Lanka is 94 per cent non-Tamil. The Army in Sri Lanka is 98 per cent non-Tamil. When you use Sri Lankan Police and Sri Lankan Army in Tamil areas, they behave as if they are operating in a foreign country; they behave as if shooting against foreign people. They behave as if they have to occupy the area. After all, it is part of their own country. But they use force. Force will beget force. You have violence on both the sides. Naturally, you cannot silence their urge for freedom and people organise themselves. This is not just to take revenge. Some of them may have a revengeful spirit also here or there. But it is primarily to protect themselves; to defend themselves in their home-land; to defend their rights as citizens, as human beings.

We have, now, several terrorist groups. My friend Shri Yadav said that there are several Tamil Groups. Yes, there are several groups; they are there. In such a situation, there is always a competition bid for a place in the love and affection of the community. The more violent your language, the more force you promise, the more you can rise in the esteem of the people, who are discontented, disenchanted. This is a natural phenomenon. I am not bothered about it. What I am certain of is: if objectively a decent solution which guarantees life, dignity, equality for the Tamil people can be found then terrorism will die a natural death. Then, terrorism cannot sustain itself. We have to apply all the intellectual abilities that we can muster on this situation; in terms of advice to the Government of Sri Lanka; in terms of the good offices which the Government of India can provide. But certain things should be absolutely clear in our minds. I do not think that there is any dissenting note in this House. A solution must be found within the frame-work of the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. In fact that is an absolute condition about which we need

[Shri Syed Shahabuddin]

have no qualms in expressing our views before the world public opinion, before the people of India and Sri Lanka and communicating to the Government of Sri Lanka. Second, we are absolutely convinced and unanimous that there cannot be a military solution. The Tamils cannot impose their will on the non-Tamils, and the non-Tamils cannot blot out the facts of history, cannot blot out a whole race of people who have been there for thousands of years, even before the Sinhalese reached the island. Therefore, neither of these two groups can wish each other away. Violence can provide no solution. There can, therefore, be only a political solution. Thirdly today we are also concerned with another aspect. Search for a solution will take time because it calls for a high level of statesmanship, a high level of goodwill; the trust which has been destroyed has to be built; the communication has to be re-established. What happens in the meantime? Shall human rights go on being suppressed in the manner they are being done? Shall people go on being killed? Shall that go on before our eyes? There is the human Rights Commission. What have they done there? What has anybody done in regard to suppression of human rights? There is a persistent pattern of suppression of human rights. I may remind you, Mr. Chairman, about the international law on this point. If there is a persistent pattern of violation of human rights leading to killings, that amounts to a genocide. What is happening in Sri Lanka is of genocidal dimension. It is not just a simple violation of human rights. Therefore, we as human beings, we as Members of Parliament, we as citizens of the world, have got to stand up and take notice of this, and we have got to tell them: "Stop violence". There has to be a total ceasefire. Then only there can be a search for peace.

One thing is also clear. If there is to be a political solution, the outlines are there visible. There cannot be separation, partition and there cannot be a unitary State. There has to be autonomy for the Tamil-speaking area, there has to be a devolution of power, there has to be decentralisation, call it a 'delegation' or use whatever constitutional terminology you wish

to use; but there has to be real autonomy for the Tamils where they form the majority of their population to run their own affairs, to manage their own life. Therefore, there has to be a constitutional restructuring almost of a federal pattern. And the use of the forces of law and order has to be subjected to some degree of control by the local authorities. Otherwise, the people there in the areas which are to be granted autonomy shall never be free of fear. On this point, if I may say one more thing, again taking from our experience, there has to be a parity and reciprocity in the use of these two languages. I am not talking of a bi-national State or a bi-lingual State. All I am saying is that, if a substantial proportion of the people of Sri Lanka have Tamil as their mother-tongue and if Tamil is spoken by a vast majority of the people in certain specified regions of the country, then there is no escape from giving equality and equal rights and equal status to Tamil as a language in administration.

We have got Mr. Jayewardene's assurances, I believe, to the Prime Minister. The only way I can explain what happened in Tamil Nadu—maybe, I am wrong—is that, perhaps, we have been told something in private which Mr. Jayewardene has not yet said in public. Maybe, he has got a card up his sleeve which he has already shown to our Prime Minister, but has not yet laid it on the Table. I do hope that the time will come when he will do it. We have played the trump card of good will in our hand. We have shown that we shall not accept pressure even from the Tamils and have chastised them. Alright, we have done that. Let Mr. Jayewardene now play his strump card as a statesman. We have shown our goodwill. Let him show his statesmanship. We are concerned because we are a neighbouring country; we are concerned because hundreds and thousands of people have taken refuge in our soil. We want them to go back to their motherland in honour, dignity and equality, and for that, a suitable condition has to be created. Therefore, we have an inherent stake in the solution of the problem.

I would like to finish by making one simple suggestion. There is an old proverb which says that too many cooks spoil the

broth. We had a succession of Ministers and Ministers of state in the Foreign Office. We had a succession of officials and even extra-constitutional centres of authority to play their role in this game. We had a foreign secretary who fancied himself as the Indian Kissinger and who became known as the flying secretary. Then, some Ministers suddenly out of the blue are introduced into the situation, I don't know to what end? We have, of course, the perpetually silent Buddha at the Foreign Office. We have an assorted lot of Ministers and Ministers of State who have come and gone. Please, for the sake of consistency, for the sake of effectiveness, for the sake of objectivity for finding a real, effective and permanent solution to this problem on our border, do not change horses in mid-stream.

Therefore Sir, my humble submission is to let the foreign office play a unified and consistent role with all the diplomatic skill that they have acquired over the last 40 years. I am sure they shall be able to get something for the Tamil people of Sri Lanka so that they can live in peace and dignity; but at the same time let us make sure, let us not close our eyes to the genocide that is happening in Sri Lanka. If Sri Lanka persists in its acts of genocide, I believe, it is our duty as a civilised State to raise this matter in the Council of Nations. Let us first make a call for the ceasefire and let the parties come to the table. I think everyone of us here in this House will join in this appeal that the parties must cease fires, sit down, and negotiate a position which would find an ultimate solution.

**SHRI P. JEEVARATHINAM** (Arakkonam): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very much thankful to you for giving me this opportunity of speaking a few words on the discussion on the ethnic problem of the Tamilians in Sri Lanka. In this connection, I would like to emphasise on one important point that when the talks between the Sri Lankan President, Shri Jayawardene and our hon. Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi are to be held in Bangalore during next week, anything harmful said in this august House may perhaps impede the peaceful negotiations that may be arrived at in the Bangalore talks. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that any such remarks

may perhaps be construed as the greatest offence against our own brethren.

Sir, the Tamils constitute more than 25% of the total population in Sri Lanka. They are mostly engaged in the plantation work in Sri Lanka. These Tamils are the main persons to develop Sri Lankan economy. If these Tamils had not gone there and worked hard, Sri Lanka would not have developed its economy and would not have attained the present position. Therefore, I would request the Sri Lankan Government and the people of Sri Lanka to accept these Tamils who are the main cause for their economic development, in the main stream of the country's administration by giving them all the rights as those enjoyed by the Sinhalese. If the Tamils have been treated on equal footing with the Sinhalese, the present burning situation would not have arisen. Therefore, I would, with all sincerity, request the Sri Lankan Government to accept the Tamils as their own countrymen and give them equal treatment.

But the sorry state of affairs is that the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka do not like the Tamils prospering in Sri Lanka. In those days when the Tamils went to Sri Lanka for plantation work, the Sinhalese were not at all doing any work for the development of the country, but with the sweat and hard labour the Tamils had developed the Island. Now, they do not like the Tamils because they are very industrious and hard working. Therefore, I would request that they should sit together with the Tamils at the negotiated Table and should find a solution to the ethnic problem. This is what I wanted to place before this august House.

Sir, both the sides must abhor violence to put an end to this grave situation. Under the circumstances; the whole House should welcome the appointment of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister as the Coordinator between the two parties. It is a welcome feature. The Sri Lankan Government, many times, overtly and covertly, alleged that India is harbouring and giving training to the Eelam Tamil extremists. Now, by appointing no less a person than the Chief Minister of a State to mediate between the parties, India has now pooh-poohed that allegation. I am sure the Sri Lankan Government will appreciate this position.

[Shri P. Jeevarathinam]

Recently, the Tamil Nadu Police have recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunitions from the Tamil extremists residing in Tamil Nadu. Besides the crack-down many of the Tamil Liberation Organisation leaders are being kept under close vigil of the authorities and their movements are also restricted. Sir, on 1st November 1986, there was an incident which occurred in Choolaimedu, a locality in Madras City where the Ealam Tamil Extremists fired 60 rounds at the local mob. There was some dispute between some Ealam Tamils and the general public there. I would request the Sri Lankan Government the Tamil Extremists to ponder over why this kind of situation is created in Tamil Nadu. Is it because the Indian people, particularly, the people of Tamil Nadu who have extended all help to the Sri Lankan refugees? The Tamil Nadu people have shown sympathy to them and with their large-heartedness they extended all the facilities like shelter and food to these people even at the cost of their own comfort. Now, this is the dangerous situation that has been created there.

Sir, I would like to pose a question before this august House as to how these extremists have got the automatic weapons and ammunitions. It is not known how they got these automatic weapons and ammunitions which are generally used by the army personnel. If these weapons are with them, then they may perhaps use these against the general public in Tamil Nadu, any time. Therefore, I welcome the action taken by the Tamil Nadu Government and the Central Government in recovering these arms and ammunitions from the extremists. Moreover, I would request the Centre and the State Governments to see that such a situation is not created in future. What I want to convey to the Sri Lankan Tamils is that they must repose their confidence and faith in the Indian Government, headed by the hon. Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi. I am sure that with his sagacious and intelligent approach, the hon. Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi who could solve the burning problem of Assam and Mizoram, would equally be of good help in solving the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka. Our-hard-won freedom was not due to battle and bloodshed but due to non-violence preached by

the father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. In this country, there is no place for the terrorists and extremists. I would therefore request the Sri Lankan Government and the Ealam Tamils to cooperate with the Government in solving this burning problem, so that in the forthcoming discussion that is to take place in Bangalore between the President Jayawardene and the hon. Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, peaceful settlement is arrived at. I am sure they will find a peaceful solution to this ethnic problem. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this subject.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Idukki) : Sir, the Sri Lanka issue has become a very delicate one. Our Prime Minister and the Sri Lanka President, Shri Jayawardene are going to meet in Bangalore during the SAARC meeting. We should not say anything which may complicate the issue further. We should be very careful.

Already much has been said in this House about this subject. We are not discussing this issue for the first time. We have discussed it on a number of times and a lot has been said on this subject. The need of the hour is to bring about a negotiated peaceful settlement of the issue. That settlement should be one which brings absolute peace in that region. That settlement should also allow the Tamilians to live in Sri Lanka with dignity, honour and peace. Only such a settlement can give lasting and durable peace in that area.

At the same time, it should be made very clear and our Prime Minister has already made it unequivocally clear that we do not want to dismember Sri Lanka, we do not want to disintegrate Sri Lanka, but instead we want a settlement preserving the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, that is within the united Sri Lanka.

I am sorry to say that some of my friends who spoke from the other side wanted to support an independent homeland for Tamilians. I do not think such an attitude would be helpful to the Tamilians in Sri Lanka. What is needed is that there should be a united Sri Lanka and within that Sri Lanka, Tamilians should have autonomy. Only such a solution will be a permanent solution and in the interest of the

region, in the interest of the Tamilians and also in the interest of Sri Lanka.

Sir, it goes to the credit of the Government of India and especially our Prime Minister that both the parties have now understood the need for a political settlement. When the crisis began, the attitude on the part of both the sides, not only the Sri Lankan Government, but also the militants, was not for a negotiated settlement. Now, both the sides have come round and agree that a political settlement only will give lasting peace.

Sir, we know that in the genocide that took place in Sri Lanka, thousands and thousands of innocent Tamilians were killed. The Sri Lankan military, one of the most indisciplined in the world, have been committing atrocities on the innocent people, killing innocent people, raping women and what not. Because of these atrocities, more than one and a half lakhs of Sri Lankan Tamilians have come to our land as refugees.

A mention was made about the arrest of some militants in Tamil Nadu. Some of the hon. Members on the other side strongly criticized the arrests of some militants. It has been made very clear that it was only a law and order problem and it has nothing to do with the ethnic issue. In fact, the Government of India has nothing to do with these arrests. It being a law and order problem, the State Government has dealt with it and they have taken the responsibility also.

It is not in our interest to link the matter of arrests with the Sri Lankan ethnic problem. As I said, it is a law and order problem and it is for the Tamil Nadu Government to solve it. If the Tamilians from Sri Lanka or the Tamilians of Tamil Nadu pose a law and order problem, the State Government has to take action and I think, there is nothing wrong with it.

Sir, because of the efforts by the Government of India, and our Prime Minister particularly, some proposals for solving the ethnic issue are already under discussion. Sometime we thought that the negotiations had reached a deadlock and Mr. Jayawardene started using his army against Tamils. At that time our hon. Minister Shri Chidam-

baram went to Sri Lanka and had discussions with Jayawardene and other leaders and they could formulate certain proposals. On the basis of that further discussions were held and I understand that the Sri Lankan Government have now come forward with certain concrete proposals. It is understood that those proposals contain certain substantial points which we should consider seriously. Shri Chidambaram himself has stated (I read it in the press) that these proposals could be a good basis for talks. Sir, there is provision for creating provincial councils with Chief Ministers elected on the basis of proportional representation and power is being devolved to the provincial councils in various fields. The militants have not agreed to these proposals because what they want is a homeland for the Tamils. They want to connect the Eastern and Northern regions, both of which are Tamil majority areas. They feel that such an area is identifiable and geographically contiguous and therefore it is possible to link the two regions. Even though that has not been accepted by the Sri Lankan Government, their coming forward with a proposal for provincial councils is a welcome step and it is indeed a step forward. And I feel that it should be appreciated. It is again stated that the militants feel that when powers with regard to land are vested in the Central Government, then there is a possibility of the Sinhalese people being injected into the Tamil majority areas, in order that the Tamil majority may be converted into Tamil-minority areas in future. I think that it is quite a reasonable and genuine fear on the part of the militants.

Then, regarding police and law and order aspect also, the militants feel that there should be more powers with the provincial councils. I do not want to go into details now. But whatever it may be, one thing is very clear. The Sri Lankan Government has come forward with certain concrete proposals and the militants have agreed to consider them seriously and give their reactions on that. I think they have already given their reactions to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and our hon. Minister may already be having those details which he may disclose here. Whatever they may be, it is a welcome step from both the sides. Therefore, our approach should be to see that the situation is not deteriorated

[Prof. P.J. Kurien]

any further. We should try to persuade and encourage both parties to come to a settlement. We should be able to persuade Jayewardene to modify his proposals to the extent possible, within the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, so as to meet the aspirations of the Tamil people. At the same time, we should also try to persuade and encourage the militants to unite themselves to study these proposals and to agree to them, provided they can live in honour, dignity and peace in the united Sri Lankan territory. It is for us to talk to both the sides and see that they come to a settlement. Our Government and our Prime Minister are very much on this issue and on the 15th, when Jayewardene will be coming to Bangalore to attend the SAARC meeting, our Prime Minister will be meeting Jayewardene and we all hope that a settlement which will be of benefit not only to the Tamils but also to Sri Lanka itself will emerge out of this meeting. The entire country is hoping for such a settlement.

Sir, if peaceful settlement is not reached then it is not only detrimental to the Tamils, but also, it is not in the interest of the Sri Lankan Government which has already gone bankrupt and which is being used by the imperialist powers as a tool to hatch their own machinations in this area.

Therefore, it is in the interest of the Sri Lankan Government itself, not to speak of Tamils and all countries of the region that this problem is solved once and for all in a peaceful manner by ensuring dignity, honour and peace to the Tamils there and creating a situation so that the refugees who are in this country can go back to Sri Lanka and live in peace.

Let us all hope for that. Let us all support our Prime Minister. And the entire country is with the Prime Minister in his efforts to bring about lasting peace in this region.

**SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU** (Gobichettipalayam): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Sri Lankan problem is not new to the House here. We have been discussing this problem for years together when Madam Gandhi was here and again when our hon. Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi

took charge as Prime Minister. This is the fourth time that we are discussing this problem in the last two years.

Sir one hon. Member Syed Shaha-buddin was saying that so many Ministers have been changed as far as the Ministry of External Affairs is concerned. But I can tell this House that even though Ministers might have been changed, but the policies of the Government have never changed. That is the main thing which we want. The Policy of the Central Government and the State Government of Tamil Nadu have never changed. We are here in order to find out a political solution to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. I have to appreciate and congratulate the Central Government and the State Government of Tamil Nadu for having taken so many steps in order to find out a political solution.

Sir, we have been seeing, that lot of efforts were and being made to unite the Tamil militants. There are so many groups among the Tamil militants themselves. I can name them also. They are as follows. (1) TULF, (2) EROS, (3) EPRLF, (4) LTTE, (5) PLOT, (6) TELO and PROTEG.

First of all, even I had requested the Tamil militants to unite themselves. They must come as one hand in order to find out a solution. Then only the problem can be solved. Some of the militant groups say that they want a separate Eelam. And some of the militant groups say, they want North and the Eastern provinces must be merged. Some of the militant groups say, they don't want any settlement at all. How to settle the issue? That is why we are taking some steps in order to find out the solution. It should not be allowed to deteriorate further. I request hon. Members, who are here, not to strengthen the hands of the Sri Lankan President, Shri Jayewardene. We are here to find out a better solution for the ethnic problem there. One hon. Member, Shri Bhattam Srirama Murthy was all along accusing the Central Government and the State Government for having taken some action. He had also said that some people were put on house arrest. What does that mean? Supposing, if any action is being taken against Tamil militants, Sir, it is for the welfare of the

Tamil militants. Even among the Tamil militants, those who reside in Madras, are shooting each other, they have gone to the extent of shooting the civilians thereby, one Thirunavukarasu, who is aged about 26 years and a Post Graduate, was shot dead by the Tamil militants. Is it correct? Some of the Tamil militants have been taken under custody for offences committed under Sections, 302, 147 and 148. These militants were possessing arms. They have surrendered their arms. Is it not correct, on the part of the Tamil Nadu Government to ask the Tamil militants, who are possessing arms without any license to surrender them to the Government?

16.00 hrs.

That is the action that we have taken. It is for the welfare of the Tamil militants; we have done something for them; it is not as if we want to strengthen the hands of Jayewardene. Even Mr. Athulathmudali has said that there is a sanctuary in Tamilnadu which is not correct at all. We are not running any camp, training camp; here we are not in that position.

Actually, our hon. Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, has made so many attempts to settle this issue. Every day he is devoting time in order to settle this issue. I know it fully well. Our hon. Chief Minister is coming here, staying 3-4 days together just to find out a solution for this. So, we should not say that just because some action has been taken against Tamil militants, just because some militants have been arrested, that we are strengthening the hands of Jayewardene, May I ask one question from Mr. Bhattam Srirama Murthy? He may be knowing very well. This problem started in 1972 when Karunanidhi was the then Chief Minister; he was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Karunanidhi was asked by the press people recently with regard to the arrests made by the Tamilnadu Police about the militants. He said, "No comments". What does it mean? Does it not show that the action taken against Tamil militants is correct? Does it not mean that the so-called savior of Tamils is keeping quiet? He knows fully well that there is no unity among the Tamil militants; that is why he is keeping quite. But here is a government which

wants to settle this issue. Our hon. Prime Minister has come forward to settle this issue. I request the hon. External Affairs Minister, Shri Natwar Singh and Shri P. Chidambaram to solve some of the problems, irritating problems. About 4,500 persons are there for the last more than two years. They have been detained unlawfully, illegally in the prisons of Ceylon. Why have they been detained? There is a Prevention of Terrorism Act in Ceylon. Under that Act, so many people have been detained; but even under the Act, one cannot detain people for more than 18 months, but they have been detained for more than two years. For what purpose? They have been detained unlawfully and illegally without having any trial and they have not been produced before any court of law for any offence. There is an Advisory Committee. That Committee advised the government to release about 300 prisoners, those who had been detained for more than two years. But Jayewardene is not taking any action over that Committee's Report nor does he release prisoners. The Attorney-General is there in Sri Lanka, He also advised the government to release about 500 prisoners, those who had been detained unlawfully without having committed any offence at all; they were not released. Army camps and the police station people have locked up so many persons. No charges have been levelled against them; no offence has been proved against them. So, I request the hon. Ministers to come to the rescue of the prisoners, who have been detained unlawfully and illegally; they have to be released once for all.

There should a ceasefire. Ceasefire violation is taking place often. Jayewardene is playing double role. On the one hand, he shows himself as if he is a Buddha; on the other hand, he shows himself as if he is another Zia. We must come to a conclusion. There is a SAARC meeting which is taking place on 15th of this month at Bangalore; and as a precautionary measures, some of the militants might have been taken into custody only for the purpose of maintaining law and order over there. In Tamilnadu, these steps have been taken. It is for the welfare of the militants; it is for the welfare of the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

16.05 hrs.

[SHRI N. VENKATA RATNAM  
in the Chair]

[Translation]

SHRI NARESH CHANDRA CHATURVEDI (Kanpur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the issue which is being discussed in the House is very sensitive and crucial for our country. However, I feel that Shri Bhattam Srirama Murty, who has raised the issue has not placed it in the right perspective. He has presented his point as if the relation between Shri Rajiv Gandhi and the Sri Lanka Government was not the relation between two countries but between two colonies. He has forgotten that Sri Lanka is our neighbouring country. India is a great country and in spite of its size, its Government as also the Prime Minister want, as a matter of policy, that every nation in this world, howsoever small it may be, must exist with full dignity and honour and be free to pursue its own policies and to defend itself. Wherever the issue of human rights has been raised, India has always come forward to support it. During the struggle between the Tamils and the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, India's position was made clear from the very outset. But so far as the treatment of the Tamils by Sri Lankan Government is concerned, there are two facets to it. On the one hand, the Sri Lankan Government is strongly criticised for its treatment of the Tamils and on the other hand, there are certain Tamil factions which indulge in terrorism and other objectionable activities and must be equally condemned. Today, out of them, nearly 1,50,000 people are living as refugees in our small State of Tamil Nadu. If they create law and order problems over there, and if the Government of Tamil Nadu takes the needed measures against them, then we should not censure but praise the Government for it because their action was desirable and thereby they upheld the national honour. I do not think it is proper to censure or criticise the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for it, because he heads the Government of an Indian State. If certain terrorist groups indulge in any undesirable or anti-national activities, the State Government will have to take such steps which though may not be liked by

some people, but are essential for the smooth running of the administration. If we start condemning the steps taken on the basis that some people are close to us and others are not, then it would not yield any results. A Government cannot function properly if it is swayed by emotions, it must take hard facts into account. India and Sri Lanka have not built up a good relationship merely because of the Tamil people residing there; if we feel emotionally attached to the Tamils, then we should feel equally close to the Sinhalese as we share the same religion, culture, philosophy heritage, historical background and this relationship is thousands of years old. We are entitled to intervene in the internal matters of other countries only to the extent it is necessary for the protection of human rights. Our friend, Shri Syed Shahabuddin has mentioned several such points in the form of sugar coated pills in his speech which can lead to disintegration. Is there any country in this world where minority communities do not exist; but if the minorities begin to assert themselves by ignoring the majority community then which country can remain integrated? If we accept this principle for country with a population of 750 million and propagate the same for Sri Lanka, then it would lead to anarchy. In India itself at least 150 new nations will come into existence. Leave aside India, there is no other country in the world, be it USSR, USA, China, Britain or France, where minority communities do not exist and where multiple linguistic groups, religions, regions, races and castes do not exist. If we accept all that he has said then nowhere in the world will there be unity any more, and the concept of nationalism will cease to hold any meaning. Sri Lanka is a small country. If the Tamils want a separate State comprising Jaffna and other 4-5 districts where they are in majority, then we cannot support it. But everyone would agree to the suggestion that the Tamils in Sri Lanka should be treated at par with the Sinhalese and should enjoy equal rights—whether economic, social or administrative—equal status in the development of Sri Lanka and should receive equal facilities. In this connection, whatever assistance could be rendered by the Indian Government, is being regularly given by our

hon. Prime Minister. On the one hand, we expect our Prime Minister to intervene and he did so, and he not only sent his emissaries to Sri Lanka but also, he had talks with President Jayewardene, and whenever any argument did not appeal to him, he stepped aside. Now, if our Prime Minister discusses some issue with President Jayewardene wherein some proposals are advanced, and if after discussion on these proposals they are rejected by TULF and some other terrorist organisations, then it becomes clear that there are extremist elements in the organisation, because of whom those proposals were rejected. I want to ask you as to how can we arrive at an agreement with such an organisation. If you want the Indian Prime Minister to mediate and if Shri Jayewardene accepts certain suggestions of our Prime Minister as a gesture of goodwill, then should not the extremist and terrorist elements of the Tamils be compelled to accept that agreement? If the Tamil extremist do not heed the advice of our Prime Minister, how can they expect President Jayewardene to listen to him. I want to make it clear to those friends who advocate the cause of Tamil extremists of Sri Lanka that the efforts of the Indian Prime Minister will prove to be effective only when the Tamils accept the proposals to which the Government of Sri Lanka is persuaded to agree to. Or they may authorise the Prime Minister that whatever agreement is reached by him it will not be opposed by any group. If this is done, then we can understand. How can two contrary things work? Today you say one thing, tomorrow you reject it; similarly, if today one group advances a proposal and the other group rejects it, then under such circumstances, how can we come to an understanding? No country can really afford to spoil its relationship with its neighbour. In my opinion no problem can be solved if India or any other country for that matter, become a party to a dispute with its neighbours. Then any attempt to link the problem with SAARC will be prejudicial to national interest. It is very surprising that whenever one of our friends from the opposition speaks, he does not miss any opportunity of criticising the Prime Minister. In fact, they are always in search of an occasion to attack the Prime Minister and at times

their accusations do not even make any sense. How can the Tamil problem be linked with SAARC. If the Tamil Nadu Government takes certain steps against the Tamil refugees, because they have created law and order problems, how can the SAARC be linked with it? They are the citizens of Sri Lanka and if steps are taken against them for creating law and order problems there, it is surprising how it can be discussed in our Parliament. They are not Indian citizens, and we can discuss about them, from the point of view of human rights, anywhere in the world, but if we discuss their rights in this House then it will not be justified. After all, our Prime Minister is not attending a SAARC meeting for the first time, nor is he going to have talks with President Jayewardene for the first time; he has been trying to find a solution to this problems for years. He not only involved many of the Sri Lankan leaders in it, but also leaders of other nations, which are connected with them in some way, and he had several rounds of talks with them and made an honest effort to persuade the Sri Lankan Government to the extent possible. But now sometime in certain quarters suggestions are made that India should send its troops to Sri Lanka...would it be proper for India to take such a step or should the Prime Minister have mentioned it? It is not proper to give such suggestion.

Last time, while speaking on SAARC, I had told them to make judicious comments in their speeches. We are always saying that Sri Lanka is an independent country and a sovereign state. Under such circumstances, how can one country attack another and how can it be proper when it is contrary to our foreign policy fundamentally? But these people seem to forget that.

I do not consider it an ethnic problem although the newspapers are portraying it as such, but I do not accept it. The Tamil problem is purely a Sri Lankan national problem. Many people here have tried to poison the atmosphere by calling it an ethnic problem. Our friend Shri Syed Shahabuddin is also of the same opinion. I do not agree with him. It is comments of such nature which resulted in the partition of India and Pakistan. We have

[Shri Naresh Chandra Chaturvedi]

already experienced how a venomous atmosphere can be created in the name of minority. Pakistan and India were divided on this basis only. In those days also, it was said that the country must be partitioned to protect the minority community. The result was the partition of the country and now the situation is that there is neither peace in Pakistan nor in India. Today, the struggle is taking new turns.

The Soviet Union is one nation, in spite of the fact that there are 23 languages and 23 provinces in it and yet no tension is visible there unlike our country. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would, therefore, submit to the House, through you, that such comments and the protection which is being given to the anti-national elements cannot be tolerated.

Our Indian Government follows a definite policy. I remember very well, that once late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru while speaking on the foreign policy of the country had stated—wherever any section of humanity is subjected to atrocities or injustice, this country will come forward and intervene but we shall never do anything which may affect the unity, integrity and goodwill of any nation and we shall never be aggressors. Hon. Shri Rajiv Gandhi is still following the same policy. And for this reason he has the support of the whole country and its people.

With these words, while supporting him, I oppose the views expressed by Shri Bhattam Srirama Murty.

[English]

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY (Midnapore) : Sir, actually the situation obtaining in Sri Lanka is a matter of grave concern for the entire nation. The matter concerns not only those Tamil militants or that Tamil population which is facing annihilation in Sri Lanka, but actually it is a matter of concern for the entire nation.

Today in Sri Lanka we find several forces operating. It is not only the government of Jayewardene which is having genocide on our Tamilian brothers whosoever they may be, they may be from

India or they may be Tamilians from Sri Lanka. Actually, it is a war going on against the people whose language is Tamil. It is a war, declared or undeclared. Even the Air Force is being used to bombard the villages. So, it is a matter of concern. But I would like to draw the attention of the entire House and also of the Government as to what are the forces that are operating in Sri Lanka. Is it not a fact that from Israel to Pakistan, from USA to UK, all these forces are converging in Sri Lanka and the game is not only to annihilate the Tamils but also to destabilise my country, India, to destabilise its unity and integrity? Who does not know that the entire game of U.S. imperialism is to turn Indian Ocean into a zone of war, not into a zone of peace? This game of attack on the Tamil people in Sri Lanka is a part of that entire game. This is a part of the global game of U.S. imperialism and this could not be forgotten by the Government and this should be taken note of by the Government.

Our Communist Party in Sri Lanka has given a statement. It has pointed out on many occasions—

“The USA is trying to destabilise India counting on internal subversive separatist elements on a spread of religious, communal discord and on fanning hostility for New Delhi in neighbouring State. Sri Lanka is not by-passing by this geopolitical game led by the U.S. terrorists who want to turn the Indian ocean into a sphere of U.S. vital interests.”

This thing cannot be forgotten. This is the main thing. That cannot be forgotten by our leaders and by our country. What we say, what is needed is a peaceful solution. Only by declaration that we want peaceful solution, we are not going to get it. Despite all our attempts we have secured almost nothing. Our Government knows this just as the U.K. and U.S.A. in the matter of South Africa. Despite many attempts the game of U.S. is continuing in the Middle East. What we want is—that the Government of India whose leader is Shri Rajiv Gandhi move more seriously to gather world opinion in favour of our proposals that only peaceful solution around the table

is the only way out of the present crisis in Sri Lanka. Neither our party nor the Government wants, I do not think anybody here wants Cyprus like situation in Sri Lanka. No Cypressisation of Sri Lanka is, allowed. That is very clear. It has been made clear by all parties and all groups in Parliament.

A section of Tamil militants want a separate State in Sri Lanka. It should be made very clear that we cannot support this demand. We can never be a party to it.

In our country a section of sikh militants are fighting for a homeland for sikhs. We oppose it in principle. In this form we say it shall never come. Gorkha land will never come. Punjab shall remain part of India.

There are important demands of the people of Tamil origin in Sri Lanka. Whether be they from India or Ceylon we want to make it clear that this Government and Parliament shall never be a party to divide Sri Lanka to bring it like a condition in Cyprus. It is a fact that a solution of militants have given a call for homeland, a separate State. We do not support that. But it should be understood that such demands have come after many years of struggle and frustration. Many of the genuine demands have been stressed. They are treated as a second class citizens in Sri Lanka. Tamil people have done a lot for bringing the economy of Ceylone up, for the development of Ceylone. To-day they feel that they are second class citizens. Their culture is neglected. They are removed from service. They are put in jails. Out of frustration demand for separate homeland are coming though we do not support these. But it should be clearly understood that we are not with them. But then, this effects us directly. It not only effects Tamil population and Ceylone but it effects India also. That should be taken not of. Thousands and thousands of refugees have come to India. They have taken shelter. It is a matter of regret that Government of India or the Government of Tamilnadu have resently arrested them, disarmed them. I do not know what for? But there are thousands and thousands of refugees staying on the Indian soil. It is a problem for our

economy. It is also a problem for the economy of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's economy is not a very sound economy, Sri Lanka is a small country. To combat the so-called terrorism in Sri Lanka, more money is spent. The Sri Lankan Government spends nearly Rs. 2 crores every day to combat the so-called terrorism. Naturally, Sri Lanka's economy is going to dogs and Sri Lanka is depending more and more on imperialist countries. The more these things continue, the more they will be depending on American economy or British economy or foreign economy. That should be taken note of. In one way we also suffer. Not only our country is keeping several thousand refugees, I do not know how many lakhs are there I think two lakhs and more of people will be staying in India. So, the Indian economy suffers. Coastal fishermen on our side are Indians. They cannot go to the sea for fishing. No sooner they go than the Sri Lankan gunboats fire at them. I fail to understand that if these Sri Lankan gunboats can attack our fishermen on the Indian waters, why not we people take steps to protect our Indian fishermen from being attacked by Sri Lankan Navy? Why can't we make use of our forces to combat them? At least this thing can be done. I am not a man who will say, 'Come on, march and advance to Sri Lanka'. That is out of question. But how is it that our Indian fishermen are not allowed to fish in Indian water and we are unable to give protection to them? I think the Government will wake up to this situation and do the needful.

Sir, there are a large number of Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka. What about them? Some people say that it is an internal problem of Sri Lanka. Of course, it is an internal problem of Sri Lanka. But then I want to know one thing. There are many Indians who are there working as clerks, doctors, businessmen and so on. Do you know how they are being treated? So, sir, their interest should be safeguarded. I again believe that the only solution lies in talks, talks and talks. Both sides must come to a compromise. Definitely there are some elements in Sri Lanka, there are parties in Sri Lanka, who do not want any compromise. There is terrific Sinhalese chauvinism in Sri Lanka today. That Sinhalese national chauvinism is against the interests of not only the Tamils, but of Sri Lanka itself.

[Shri Narayan Choubey]

This must be very clear. We do not support their demand for an independent homeland. I request the Government of India to play their role as they have been playing their role on earlier occasions. I hope Mr. Jayawardene will come to his senses. I hope Mr. Jayawardene would not be influenced only by their nationalistic and chauvinistic tendencies and look up to the situation that is actually obtaining there. Whether they like or dislike, there are Tamils there. They are civilized people, they are educated people, they are good workers, good businessmen and efficient craftsmen. Many people say that they work harder than others for the development of Sri Lanka itself. In such a situation if the Government of Sri Lanka thinks that they can annihilate the forces of Tamil population and they will be coming to a solution only when the Tamil people there are battered thoroughly, they are thoroughly wrong. This thing should be made clear to Mr. Jayawardene that he cannot kill the Tamil people and Tamil militants in the name of this and that. At the same time, those Tamil boys asking for a homeland, it should be made clear to those Tamil militants that it is not the intention of the Government to support their cause for a separate homeland.

With these things, I say that the Government of India comes forward and takes appropriate steps so that situation in Sri Lanka is made normal. It is to our interest. By the continuance of war in Sri Lanka, Israel, Pakistan, U.S., U.K. gain and we lose.

With all these things, I again enjoin upon the Government to see that we can quickly come to a solution on Sri Lanka. With these things, I say that the Tamils interests shall be kept in mind and ultimately the Sri Lanka problems should be solved.

SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM (Salem): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka is a matter which, I understand, this House has been discussing not only during this Lok Sabha but also earlier many a time. The issue is not a new one and it is a very long pending issue. It cannot really be stated to be an internal problem of Sri Lanka.

The very fact that thousands of Tamils who are citizens of Sri Lanka—may be Tamils by ethnic origin, but for thousands of years have been living in Sri Lanka—who are people, who call themselves citizens of Sri Lanka have been killed not because they indulged in violence. They have been killed because it was their misfortune to have been born to Tamil parents, who are citizens of Sri Lanka and spoke the Tamil language. That was their misfortune and therefore, they were killed. In fact, when my friend, Syed Shahabuddin was speaking, he did really point out the fact that the Constitution in Sri Lanka from a mildly liberal Constitution moved on to becoming a semi-dictatorial Constitution, with the unitary State, a State religion and a State language. It was there where the real heart-burning started. The issue is not one which was unknown even during 1948. But at that stage, the people of Tamil origins in Sri Lanka were given promises by the various statesmen who led the freedom struggle that they would be given a place in Sri Lanka with dignity, with respect. Unfortunately, that promise was not kept up. Later the famous agreement known as the Bandaranaike agreement took place. It is very relevant, Mr. Chairman, at this stage to point out that this agreement has been given a go-by. It was given a go-by because of the famous march which was called the Kandy march and the person who led that march is now the President of Sri Lanka, Mr. Jayawardene. He led that march. Behind him were thousands and lakhs of Buddhist clergymen who under the banner of religious fanaticism opposed a very reasonable settlement which would have kept the dignity of Sri Lanka, the unity of Sri Lanka the independence of Sri Lanka and given Tamils the homeland to live with dignity. But that agreement was given a go-by.

One would have understood if the Government of Sri Lanka had given this proposal which has been placed today, before the Tamils two years ago. In this very House, almost soon after coming to this House. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I remember this issue came up. I spoke on the floor of this House. I recollect what I have said. There I have said very categorically that President Jayawardene must realise and understand

that if he does not come for a political settlement and thinks that a military settlement is an answer, the Tamil people of Sri Lanka will not tolerate it. They will fight. Military solution is no solution. Unfortunately, I would say that Jayewardene Government in Sri Lanka does not speak in one unified voice. We notice that while Shri Jayewardene talks in a placating tone, his Minister for Internal Security in his own Government, speaks in rabid, violent tones. He threatens and intimidates and goes violent and terrorises. Are these young boys who have been forced to leave college and school, whose mothers have been raped and whose sisters have been killed, terrorists or are those who were military uniform and massacre thousands of Tamils? Who are the terrorists? Is it not the concept of State terrorism? One blames these young boys who come out of their homeland out of fear, driven away by an army and by a State which hates them for their birth, not for their ideology. This is the situation. It is not a matter which can be looked at as an internal matter of Sri Lanka. Genocide has taken place, human rights questions have arisen, the matter is grave. Today one can say categorically that even though the President of Sri Lanka goes on record more than once to say that no Tamilian will be killed, and specifically he says this many a time. But his own forces under his control daily kill thousands of innocent Tamils, from helicopters, and strafing of villages takes place. Thousands of people die in their huts. They have no connection with the militants, no connection with any form of violence. All they want is to live peacefully. While this goes on one hand, talks take place on the other. The bread is offered in small crumbs, little by little. Even slices are not served to the negotiating table. In the first stage, an offer made. It was rejected outright. I understand that the present proposals have some sort of meaningful ability to start a dialogue. But we are all aware that even a moderate organisation like the Tulf, one cannot call the TULF militant under any circumstance, they are well into the range of conservative arena of politics, even that moderate organisation has rejected the proposals placed. What had the militants done? They have also rejected it. Yes, there

are a few forces which are talking of a separate State of Eelam but in reality we are all aware that the Tamil people of Sri Lanka are not thinking of Eelam as the only alternative. Their voice has been unified in saying that all they want is the right to live in dignity, in an area within Sri Lanka within the unitary set up, with dignity. That is all that they ask. A small homeland is what they seek. All of us who belong to various States in the Union of India, don't we also ask for a homeland of ours? That is all that they have done. They are not being given even that. They have been told "No, you consist of Tamils and the Muslim Tamils." This is the new language. They segregate the Tamils in Sri Lanka in the name of religion and they divide them; divide their hopes and aspirations. This shows their calibre. Thousands of graduates, millions of talented have youngsters been sacrificed.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, they do not just deserve sympathy. They deserve the support of this House. Their demands must be met. The situation is critical all around India. The imperialistic forces, it is a fact, have planned to encircle India—whether you talk of Diego Garcia, whether you talk of Pakistan. And now they talk of a base in Sri Lanka. But let me say this. If Mr. Jayewardene thinks that with the support of the imperialistic forces, he can find a military solution to this problem, he is making fool of himself. He is under an illusion. Not only will he no longer remain President, not only will these highly revisionist, fanatic communal elements take charge of his State directly, but Lanka also will face a turmoil which would it never have dreamt of.

The solution is, in fact, a negotiated solution within, of course, the unitary structure, within of course, the Sri Lankan Constitution. We are not claiming to advise Sri Lanka to change its political structure. It is not so. We are saying let them change it to the extent they find convenient. But all we say is: give this large ethnic population an honourable home-land, the right to rule within their limits, within devolution of powers. We do not ask for a sovereign State. We do not demand that. No one in this House has murmured on

[Shri P. R. Kumaramangalam]

that. But there is a small problem that has arisen recently. The problem is not new. For the last, two or three years we have seen that the *inter se* quarrels among the young militant/groups have caused many a law and order situation in our own land. But unfortunately, if I may go on record to say, there are certain regional forces which do not want unity of these forces; they do not want young militants come and unite. They are interested in keeping them divided because they think the Sri Lankan issue—the regional forces in Tamil Nadu think—is an issue which can be encashed upon for purposes of election. That is why, in this House, I appeal to all the political parties to help in uniting these boys so that these young militants could give up their *inter se* quarrels and live in peace and think of their home land, their problem of achieving a solution there. But, unfortunately, the instance of the first November is not the first incidents. There have been incidents after incidents. I am constrained to say that I have a criticism. The action that has been taken now, need not have been taken. If really right at the outset when the first *inter se* quarrel took place between these groups, stern action was taken to resolve the problem, if it was made clear to the young militants that violation of law and order would not be tolerated, it would have been much better. But, however, I would say “better late than never.” I only want to say on the floor of this House that the young militants must understand that the people of Tamil Nadu, the people of this country, sympathise with their cause. We support them. We wish them the best. We hope that they will go back to their land with dignity. But if they create law and order situation and disturb the peace and tranquility of our nation, it is impossible for any Government to keep quiet—especially a State Government like Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, may I take this opportunity to appeal to not only the young militants, to not only all the political parties and regional forces, but also to the Government of Tamil Nadu that what is to be impressed upon is an early solution to this problem. I understand quite well that the Government of Tamil Nadu has been

involved in finding a solution; in the negotiations their good offices have been of use. But in the situation of today, it is not sufficient to just push along. Critical situations have arisen not only in Sri Lanka but also in our country. We know, the regional forces will try to exploit the present situation. It is time that Mr. Jayewardene is made to understand that India can no longer just be a mediator, can no longer be just a country watching and hoping. We will have to take active interest to solve this problem. ‘Active interest’ does not mean sending our military. India has today a situation in the world, in the international politics, where it has the diplomatic ability, force and capability to ensure that, to such a serious international problem, a solution is found. Let us not forget—even though my friend, Mr. Narayan Choubey, ridiculed our South African effort—that the United States of America, one of the world forces, has followed our line and they have imposed limited sanctions, Let us not forget that...

AN HON. MEMBER : They were forced to.

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : Yes, they were forced to. That is even a bigger victory that the people of that country did. Let us not forget that : we were not approaching the Administration, we were approaching the people. And the same could be done here. May I take this opportunity to request the Government, the External Affairs Minister, Shri Natwar Singh, who has the diplomatic experience and abilities, that it is time, that just like in the case of Bangladesh we went round the world to develop opinion, we should go to the world and tell the political powers that are there in the world and the people of the world that today the problem in Sri Lanka is no longer an internal problem of Sri Lanka, it is a problem that has to be solved and that must be solved by a negotiated settlement. Let all the forces who are sneakingly giving assistance to the Sri Lankan Government in its bid of terrorism against the Tamils withdraw their support. The solution will be found. It is that tactic, the underhand support, that is really causing the problem to be alive. It is the hope that Mr. Jayewardene has got that the imperialist forces will

ultimately back him. Let that hope be withdrawn. Let Mr. Jayewardene be told by the imperialist forces: "No, our help will not be available". Let that telling come. The support of the people of those countries is very clear. They are for peace of mankind.

May I just say that today a situation has arisen where the Buddhist clergy dominance in the polity of Sri Lanka is increasing day by day? It is not a matter of joke to see these regional, fanatic, and religious forces raising their ugly head. We have also had a problem at home, but we are seeing another problem which is religious in a completely different nature. There, the religion does not speak of war, the religion speaks of compassion and the type of compassion that is shown from the barrel of gun by the Sri Lankan army, and striking from helicopters, is a shame. It is time that a solution is found. May I take this opportunity to appeal to my beloved leader, the Prime Minister, that it is time that he put his foot down and impressed upon Mr. Jayewardene that India will no longer remain just a mediator, India can be a very powerful diplomatic force. We can go around the world and develop world opinion, just like we have done in the case of South Africa, on Sri Lanka also if they continue with their ceaseless violence against Tamils. An echo is there in this House for ceasefire. No talks can be genuine, no negotiations can be from the heart, no hand would be extended for a settlement if there is really no ceasefire. Until the forces in Sri Lanka belonging to the Sri Lankan Government do not silence their guns, no real settlement is possible. That is the truth of the situation.

It is immediate and necessary that Sri Lanka directs its forces, if necessary at the threat of penal punishment, court martials, not to fire upon a single Tamil under any circumstances. That is the only way peace can be brought to that island, the only way a political solution can be found there. Unless there is peaceful atmosphere, there can be no political solution possible.

May I end by just saying that I am reasonably confident that my leader would be able to find a solution? But, however, he requires the genuine help and assistance

of the State Government. I think it is time for me to appeal to the State Government that mere cat and mouse game will not help, genuine assistance is required. (*Interruptions*) They have to come forward and participate in the efforts. It is no use their thinking that their political leverage by encouraging any single group of political young militants would support the cause. They should support in the search for a solution.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOO-WALIA (Sangrur) : Mr. Chairman Sir, the House has just heard just valuable suggestions of my worthy friends Chaubeji and Kumaramngalam Saheb.

Sir, this country is faced with hard realities regarding the occurrences in the neighbouring country. There, only 24% people of the total population are Tamilians—both Hindus and Muslims. It is also a hard reality that even the Sinhalese came afterwards and these Tamilians—both Hindus and Muslims—were the real inhabitants of that island.

Now the situation is that the share of the Tamilians in the army is 0.5% in public sector it is 1%; in employment it is 3% and investment in the five year plans over the predominantly Tamil areas is only 5%. So, there is gross economic discrimination against the Tamilians in that country.

Unlike India, Sri Lanka has no federal system. The whole of Sri Lanka is one country run by the Central Government, denying all the authority, power and right to the regional aspirations. Adding to it, there is a genocide of Tamilians. We are facing a situation in which when we talk of the ethnic problem of Tamilians in Sri Lanka, we talk of state terrorism and state hatred towards Tamilians in that country, our neighbouring island. So, Sir, I feel when genocide is going on and the Sri Lankan military is indiscriminately killing not only the militants but also moderates and innocent people we should take certain effective steps. I do not say we should intervene but according to U.N. Resolution of 1948 which gives the right to the people to intervene when genocide is going on we should take effective steps. The situation

[Shri Balwant Singh Ramoowalia]

is becoming very very serious. On the one hand genocide is going on and on the other hand certain militant persons have acted on the land of India. In Tamil Nadu one person was killed and certain persons were injured. Without going into the details as to what was done and what should be done I will through this House and through you, Sir, appeal to those friends who are fighting for their rights in that country and who are facing State terrorism and State hatred in Sri Lanka not to resort to any such action which is not in accordance with the policies and attitudes of the Government of India or people of this country. We completely believe in non-violence and peaceful means to achieve our goals. I know that they are locked in a serious situation in that country but I will appeal to those friends not to use our land to settle their score in their own way. I also will urge upon the State Government and the Central Government to handle the situation very cautiously and in a manner that it should not be counter-productive. I also appeal to the Government and Shri Natwar Singh ji who will be going to Bangalore to attend the SAARC meeting.

Sir, we are worried and concerned by two ways. First we are concerned that the Tamilians are being killed and secondly we are further concerned that China, USA, Israel, South Africa, Pakistan and U.K. are accumulating arms and putting their feet and strengthening their interests and institutions in Sri Lanka. So, Sir, I will humbly request the Government of India to take it up seriously with Shri Jayawardene during his visit to attend the SAARC meeting at Bangalore. We should tell Mr. Jayawardene in clear words that the reason of our not interfering is not because we are paralysed but because we have decided not to do so. We have the capacity. We have been the champions and we are the champions of keeping up the rights and aspirations of the people. We have fought for human rights. From the angle of fighting for human rights and supporting the people who are facing genocide, our country should keep up its old traditions and come to the help of the people of Tamil origin who are facing a lot of

hardships. I do not say that you should immediately intervene or send military, but we have many more options to support those people.

17.00 hrs.

With these few words, I conclude.

[*Translation*]

DR. G.S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, many views have been expressed about the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka and I do not want to repeat them. I want to draw your attention only towards two or three important issues. We wanted to discuss the Sri Lanka problem during the last session also but it could not be done because our negotiations with the Government of Sri Lanka were at a very crucial stage. Even now this problem is passing through a critical period. This problem has two facets. The first is whether the Government of Tamil Nadu should have harassed the Tamil militants and the second is when will the atrocities being perpetrated against Tamils in Sri Lanka be stopped. I do not want to go into the question whether the action taken by the Government of Tamil Nadu had the concurrence of the Central Government but in my opinion the action was right. The reason being that the situation had become intolerable. There was infighting among the Tamil militants and killings were taking place. I am saying all this on the basis of my first hand information. The Tamil militant leader who is directing this movement from outside, is one of my friends and now-a-days he is fasting at Rajghat. I do not think it proper to name him here. He broke down when he told me that some such elements had infiltrated into the movement who wanted to scuttle it and that they were killing each other. One person was killed and many injured in the clash that took place between them in Madras on 1st November. Then what is wrong if some persons were disarmed and some were arrested in this situation. One more facet of this problem is that earlier Sri Lanka used to blame us for running training camps for these militants in India but now the whole world knows the truth that there are no such camps in India. Here all the things have been handled in a

right way. Had there been any training camp in India, in that event we would not have arrested them. The whole world has welcomed our stand. There is another aspect of this problem. Pakistan had long been complaining of Indian help to Miss Benazir Bhutto but now the whole world knows that there is nothing like that. The press of this country has approved the disarming of the Tamil militants but this step does not lessen the gravity of the problem. However, we cannot overlook the atrocities being inflicted on the Tamils.

Amnesty International which is an impartial institution has said in no uncertain terms that what is happening in Sri Lanka is genocide and is no way less than what Hitler had done. The tale of the atrocities being perpetrated there has been repeated many a time here. The houses of the innocent people are destroyed by dropping bombs and innocent Tamils are made to stand in a line and then shot dead. This has not happened in any civilised society and nor will it ever happen. How the whole world is a mute spectator to this atrocity? Is it not our moral duty to raise our voice against these atrocities?

17.06 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Sir, I want to point out a very interesting thing. During the last SAARC conference, Shri Jayewardene had made a meaningful remark which the people have forgotten. He had said that the Sinhalese of Sri Lanka had migrated from Bihar and Bengal. He wanted to drive home the point that the Tamils there are from Tamil Nadu. So he wanted to single out some provinces. It is an irony that the Sinhalese who came from Bihar are perpetrating atrocities there. All this should not happen there. The Sinhalese there should be prevented from perpetrating atrocities.

Now Shri Jayewardene will attend the ensuing SAARC conference and our hopes are hinged on the talks between the Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi and Shri Jayewardene. The issue is somewhat getting resolved and the most important

thing is that the militants have agreed to take part in negotiations. The statement about Sri Lanka problem made by the Hon. Prime Minister in Australia was quite pertinent. We shall have to look into the practical aspect of this problem. The militants have made a demand that as the Tamils are in majority in the north and the east, this area may be granted independence. We do not support any such demand for independence but at the same time we do not approve of the killing of innocent persons. The newspapers as well as people say that the north and the east are not contiguous area as there is a Sinhalese populated area between the two provinces. The experts on this issue know it very well. What I want to say is that there should be devolution of power. They have to remain within Sri Lanka and they should be granted autonomy so that they are free to choose their own course of action. In the present times no race can be suppressed by the use of force. There cannot be a military solution of the Sri Lanka problem. I have studied the Sri Lanka problem from the very start. They are blowing hot and cold in the same breath. Sometimes Shri Jayewardene declares that the problem has been solved and then under some pressure he declares his displeasure with the stand taken by the militants. It becomes the moral duty of India to find some practical solution of this problem. The most important thing is that during the last discussion on Tamil problem in the House we had estimated the number of Tamil refugees to be 80,000 but now this number has increased to about 2 lakhs. This number of Tamilians continues to increase. Our country herself is a poor nation and for how long can we sustain such a large number of refugees. Some solution has got to be found.

Now the problem is not so simple as it seems. The American base in Sri Lanka has almost been established. Sri Lanka has granted permission for the setting up of the Voice of America. It will not be surprising if in near future some American base is established there. A nexus has been established between Sri Lanka, America and Pakistan. This nexus is going to trouble us sooner or later. The problem is not so simple as we consider it. So, we

[Dr. G. S. Rajhans]

shall welcome Shri Jayewardene in our country but shall tell him firmly that we are not going to tolerate the continuance of the present situation. The whole country supports the people of Sri Lanka and the atrocities on the Tamils will not be tolerated.

**SHRI ABDUL RASHID KABULI** (Srinagar) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to say this much about the Tamils of Sri Lanka that this issue has for long been worrying us. I think that inside this House as well as outside, our public, the intellectuals and politicians have evinced great interest in this issue. This issue is so important that the sooner it is resolved the better it will be.

The first thing is that the Tamils of Sri Lanka have cultural and emotional ties with the Indians and that cannot be overlooked. We have centuries old relations with them. Our cultural links with them have not been snapped and will never be served. So, the people of India are pained when atrocities are committed on the Tamils in Sri Lanka and they have been meted out injustice.

I think the freedom-loving people should be ashamed of the treatment being meted out to the 3 million Tamils in Sri Lanka. I think it is the people in South Africa, Palestine and Tamils in Sri Lanka who are being subjected to atrocities and whose houses have been destroyed. It is not a small problem. It is quite a big problem. It is a question of the very survival of the Tamils. The Government of India should try to solve this problem not only through negotiations but every possible action should be taken to achieve the objective and to get justice for the Tamils. I take this opportunity to declare in the House that our National Conference wants justice with the Tamils of Sri Lanka; we have reiterated it outside the House also. I think the Government of Sri Lanka has totally failed in achieving this goal. That Government is bent upon inflicting cruelty on the Tamils. The Sri Lanka Government wants to liquidate three million Tamils on the island, though they are continuously saying that they want to resolve this problem through dialogue with India. I

think the Tamils have never created any impediment in it. They have never demanded a separate State. They are an integral part of that country. We never want that Sri Lanka should be partitioned but the Tamils are being deprived of their rights and privileges. We are aware that in the pre-independence days, in Sri Lanka, Tamil community was highly educated and progressive in every respect but the Sinhalese were jealous of them and since then there have been continuous efforts to crush them and liquidate them. I feel that Tamils have been forced to take up arms because there was no other way to survive the genocide. To save their identity, their life and their independence they were forced into militancy. This has been thrust on them.

I was invited to an International Conference of Tamilians in New York. I noticed in the two day conference that they never spoke of disintegrating Sri Lanka. Even if the Sri Lankan Government disregards world opinion and India's intervention and puts an end to all negotiations, will the Tamilians there allow genocide? Even the Government of India will not like that 30 lakh Tamilians are liquidated, their property razed to the ground and their identity crushed. Our Government has raised its voice for the South African cause and it stands committed in this House that it will give all possible assistance to those who are fighting against the racist regime. Our Government is also committed to help the Palestinians in their war of independence against the Israelis. I think that in the Sri Lankan issue, our responsibility is much more, because after all it is the people of Indian origin who have settled there and their language, culture and outlook is the same as ours. So, when they are hurt it is the people of Tamil Nadu in India whose feelings hurt. I would like to tell the hon. Minister that the Sri Lankan problem does not concern Tamil Nadu alone; it is a matter of grave concern for the entire nation. The feelings of the people on this issue, irrespective of the area to which they belong, whether it is Andhra Pradesh, U.P., Bihar, Kashmir, Punjab or Madhya Pradesh is the same everywhere. Therefore, we want that this problem should be resolved at the earliest. As this is a matter of human rights and independence of a community which is

an integral part of our country, we should not be cowed down by any pressure tactics. Atrocities are being committed on Sri Lankan Tamils, but they will not have to bear them for long as our Government fully agrees with their views and is fighting for their cause at different world forums including the United Nations. I am sorry about the action taken by the Tamil Nadu Government in the state. The State Government is within its right to take whatever action it deems fit but the impression thus created boosted the morale of the Sinhalese Government. They were under the impression that military training was being imparted in India and now they will suppress and crush the Tamil militants with vengeance. I feel that things have to be dealt with great care in the south because they way the militant leaders were arrested and the way it was given wide publicity has tarnished the image of India. This has proved detrimental to the cause of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. I would like to submit, through you, Sir, that this is not only the cause of the Tamils but also of the whole of India and we should help in all possible ways to resolve this problem. We have noticed that the Sri Lankan Government has merely indulged in negotiations earlier but now they are committing atrocities and genocide and not making any practical efforts to find a political solution. Tamil women are being raped, their innocent children are being murdered, their houses are being burnt down and there is mass killing and genocide of the Tamil Community. How long will the Indian Government and Indian people remain a mute spectator to this sordid affair? Hon. Minister, Sir, this matter will not be solved in this manner, You will have to find a way out, lest it should be written in the annals of history that India betrayed the innocent Tamils of Sri Lanka who were looking up to us and our progeny may curse us for ever.

Sri Lanka has been emphasizing time and again for a military solution to the problem. I would like to know what this military solution means. Is it not a fact that they are insisting that the military action taken by them is bearing fruit? What they have done is destruction of property and genocide of the Tamils and India has done practically nothing. We have done a lot on

the national as well as international level in this regard but Sri Lanka has turned a deaf ear to it and its Government has not budged an inch. I would like that our Government should categorically tell us as to what should be done and give us some concrete suggestions. Every Indian will cooperate with you whole-heartedly, but the Government should make it a point to save the life and honour of Sri Lankan Tamils and restore peace and tranquility in the region. With these words, I conclude.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have listened with great respect and attention to the hon. Members who have participated in this debate. On the whole, the debate has been constructive. It is an important, though delicate subject which is also very emotive, and, therefore, in my response I shall be as restrained as I possibly can and before I reply to the points made by hon. Members I would, Sir, with your permission make a brief statement so as to bring the House up to date about the status of the proposals that the Sri Lankan Government made recently.

It will be recalled that as a result of the efforts made by the Government the Sri Lankan Government came out in June 1986 with a package of proposals which we felt deserve the careful consideration of the Sri Lanka Tamils as a basis for negotiations towards the political solution of the ethnic crisis in Ceylon. The proposals received from the Government of Sri Lanka were transmitted to the Sri Lankan Tamil groups at the end of June, 1986.

On the basis of this package of proposals, the Tamil United Liberation Front agreed to reopen direct discussions with the Sri Lankan authorities. The TULF and the Sri Lanka Government held two rounds of discussions in July 1986 and August 1986 respectively. Based on these discussions the Sri Lankan Government sent new formulations and proposals. These proposals and formulations deal with the amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution to provide for the creation of provincial councils and devolution of powers to them; allocation of subjects

[Shri K. Natwar Singh]

between the provinces and the Central authorities and details of devolution in respect of law and order and land settlement.

The proposals and formulations discussed between the Sri Lanka Government and the TULF were further discussed by the TULF in meetings with legal experts and officials of the Government of India. On the basis of these discussions the TULF leaders have revised the draft formulations and the revised package has been conveyed to the other Tamil groups with a view to continuing the discussions towards finding a political solution. The process is continuing and Government is making every endeavour to ensure that the momentum of progress gained over the last few months is not dissipated.

Government are of the view that only a negotiated political settlement can resolve the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka in a manner which would ensure that the Sri Lankan Tamils obtain their legitimate rights within the framework of the unity and integrity of this neighbouring country. It is hoped that the process will indeed lead to a lasting settlement which would restore peace and normalcy to Sri Lanka and thus end the sufferings of the Tamil people in the northern and eastern provinces of that country.

The debate was launched by the hon. Member, Shri Bhattam Sriramamurthy and he, while speaking, used rather strong and harsh language with regard to the prevailing ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. Government share his anxiety. We are also aware of the extraordinary callous and brutal manner in which the Tamils have been dealt with by the Government of Sri Lanka.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur) : If you share his views, then why do you call it strong and harsh ?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : I have great respect for Prof, Madhu Dandavate's capacity for coining memorable phrases, but I am afraid, I do not have that high talent for irrelevant digression.

The hon. Member said that the militants had to be made a party to the negotiations.

They have been a party to the negotiations. We are in touch with them, as I said in my statement.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU : With all the members ?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : We are in touch with all the members. You ought to know this. (*Interruptions*)

Here I would like to just mention the helpful role played by the Government of Tamil Nadu. Several hon. Members spoke about the detention of some of the Tamil militants in Madras. My colleague, the Minister of State for Home Affairs, was with me. He had to go to the Vice-President. So, he is not here. But he has given me this information. No arrests were made; no cases were registered. They were taken for questioning and then were released. Leaders of the groups have been advised to be available for consultations in Madras. However, there are some members under detention in connection with the Diwali night firing and murder. This action of the Tamil Nadu Government became necessary because of the law and order problem and lot of heavy arms were discovered while these people were questioned last.

The distinguished opener of the debate also said that he did not expect very much to come out of the meeting between the Prime Minister and Mr. Jayewardene that is to take place in Bangalore on the 15th—possibly on 16th and 17th also they could meet. I would, with all respect, say that neither he nor I are prophets and it would be wrong on our part to prejudge the outcome of the discussions between the President of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of India. Prime Minister of India is fully aware of the situation in Sri Lanka. He is kept informed not only day to day but from hour to hour. It is his hope and desire and his endeavour that we find a peaceful, lasting, political solution to this very intractable and complex problem which is of concern to us as a neighbouring country to Sri Lanka. He also asked what we had done with regard to the number of people who were still in prison. In Sri Lanka, the numbers, according to me, ranges between 3,800 to 4,000 under the prevention of Terrorism Act of 1979 and about 150

were released in the autumn of 1985. We shall continue pressing for their release through our Mission in Colombo. So, I wanted to assure Shri Srirama Murty that the situation in Sri Lanka is very much before Government. Their matters could be raised before the Human Rights Commission. They have been raised. We have also seen the Amnesty International's Report. We are aware of the help from outside countries that is being given to Sri Lanka and we have drawn the attention to it. We are watching the situation very carefully because we do not want this area to become cockpit for outside agencies interfering in our area and putting on Sri Lanka the kind of influence which we consider undesirable.

I heard with great respect what Shri S.L. Yadav has said. He made a very helpful speech giving the background of the whole tragic situation that evolved itself in Sri Lanka in the past few years and to the plight of the Tamilians. He also pointed out that in the meeting that is to take place between the two leaders India and Sri Lanka, these questions would be discussed in depth and at length and some solution would be presenting itself to us. We sincerely hope that it will not be a too distant future.

Similarly, I welcome the intervention of Shri Suresh Kurup. He has also expressed his views with regard to the involvement of certain outside powers to which I have already made a reference that this is very much under the purview of the Government. He asked why the Government of India had not been more outspoken against the Government of United States. I precisely do not know what is meant by more outspoken, but the fact is that we have drawn the attention at the diplomatic level, at high level of the United States to the dangers their involvement would entail.

Also, Sir, very constructive contribution was made by Shri Sharad Dighe about the very delicate situation that we are facing in Sri Lanka. He also referred to the divisions among the militants. This is a matter which the militants have to work out themselves. It is very difficult for us except in broad lines to place before them the proposals that Sri Lankan Government had

to which I have referred in my statement. We can refer them to these and it is for them to decide. We would hope that they would be unanimous in their approach. If they are not unanimous it will only complicate the issue.

I heard naturally with special attention the intervention of my colleague Shri Shahabuddin. Had he made a right political choice he would have been sitting where I am. (*Interruptions*). He said "too many cooks spoil the broth".

As a distinguished leader of the AIDMK in Lok Sabha, Shri Kolandaivelu said, "Ministers come and go but the policy remains." The policy of the Government of India with regard to Sri Lanka, has followed a consistent path and I might add for the information of the House through you, say at one stage...

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN : Recipe remains the same but with every cook we get a different taste.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : At one stage Shri Shahabuddin was the... (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Instead of 'Pulao' (delicacy) it will become 'Khichri' (mess).

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : Sir, wait a minute 'Pulao' is going to be served.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Let the 'Pulao' be cooked first.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : Yes, it is being cooked.

[*English*]

Shri Shahabuddin was incharge of the Sri Lanka desk in the Ministry of External Affairs when he was still with the foreign service. So, he is very much familiar with the Sri Lankan situation and that is why he was able to appreciate the dilemma of the Government of India just as I am able to appreciate this dilemma.

[*Translation*]

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : We have already sensed its flavour.

[*English*]

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : Thank heaven for small mercies.

[*Translation*]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : It is no small mercy if he picks up the scent.

[*English*]

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : Shri Shahabuddin said in a country which is multi-lingual, multi-racial, multi-religious, one has to carry the people as one and you could not lay down hard and fast rules—that either you accept or break. That is not possible. This is what we have been trying to as gentle and diplomatic and as often as we can convey it to the Government of Sri Lanka that they have to carry the Tamil population with them. They are entitled to the same rights as other people and discrimination against them is totally unacceptable. As Shri Shahabuddin said in 1986—these anti diluvian ideas can only lead to avoidable tragedy. He also was good enough to mention that India's good offices had been useful and valuable and I am grateful to him. Like him we do not want military solution to a political solution.

He also mentioned—call for cease fire. We have on a number of occasions made a call for cease fire—once in June 1985, and then again in January 1986. But both times the cease fire appeals failed because the monitoring agencies of the Sri Lanka Government were not all that one would desire them to be. On that at least I would not say anything more.

We had interventions from Shri Jeevarathinam and Prof. Kurien.

Now the Leader of the Tamilnadu Party in Parliament Shri Kolandaivelu, I naturally heard what he said, with very great respect because the Government of Tamilnadu has a special role to play and they have also to deal with your political opponents in your

State who naturally want to embarrass your Government there. But we are not looking at it in a narrow manner, we are looking at it from the point of view of finding a solution to the problem and, as I said earlier, we appreciate the role that your Chief Minister in spite of his ill-health has played in this particular matter because the great burden of 120,000 or more refugees who came to India over the past two or three years falls on the Tamil Nadu Government not only in term of socio-economic problem, but also in terms of law and order.

We also had the interventions of Mr. Naresh Chaturvedi and Mr. Narayan Choubey. Here again I would like to assure the hon. Member Shri Choubey that we are fully aware of the situation in and around Sri Lanka in the context in which he mentioned it.

Then, Mr. Kumaramangalam spoke at length and with some passion about the Sri Lanka problem. I entirely agree with him that it is not an internal problem and it has not been treated as such. He also made some references to the President of Sri Lanka who if I may, is somebody 25 years older than him, so that it would be desirable to make more polite references to a Head of the State.

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : Advice taken.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Unless Kumaramangalam is polite !

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : We also heard from Mr. Ramoowalia and Dr. Raj Hans, and finally Mr. Kabuli, who all drew the attention of the House to the serious situation in Sri Lanka and emphasised that justice and fair play should be the lot of the people of the Sri Lankan Tamils. This is the view which the Government entirely shares and we have through our High Commission and through our Foreign Office here, at the Ministerial level and now Heads of the Government level—our Prime Minister met Mr. Jayawardene a number of times for these things. Our Prime Minister met the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka at Harare. So, this particular question is kept in front of the Government at the highest

level. I can only assure the House that whatever the hon. Members have said, we have taken note of it with all the earnestness and seriousness that it deserves and if at any other time when the occasion arises we would like to bring some facts before the House, we will do so, but at the moment I would say that it would be desirable and advisable and wise to await the outcome of the very important talks that are going to take place in Bangalore next week.

17.43 hrs.

**DELHI FIRE PREVENTION AND  
FIRE SAFETY BILL, 1986**

[English]

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** We shall now take up item No. 11 on the Agenda—Delhi Fire Prevention and Fire Safety Bill.

The Minister may now move the Bill for consideration.

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE  
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI  
CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI) :** Sir, I beg to move :

"That the Bill to make more effective provision for the fire prevention and fire safety measures in certain buildings and premises in the Union Territory of Delhi, be taken into consideration."

Sir, the fire in Gopala Towers, Rajendra Place, during June, 1983, greatly agitated the minds of the general public in Delhi and also our hon. Members.

Sir, this tragedy highlighted the inadequacy of fire safety and fire prevention arrangements in multi-storey buildings in the Union Territory of Delhi.

The building bye-laws were enacted and enforced from 23rd June 1983. Thereafter, it became necessary to obtain a No Objection Certificate from the Chief Fire Officer as well as to comply with the specific recommendations for installing

adequate fire safety precautions and means of escape. No Completion Certificate for any building could be issued without the no-objection certificate from the Chief Fire Officer.

**SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY (Alipurduara) :** On the first day itself, you are playing with fire !

**SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI :** Sir, regarding the completion certificate, this was not so in respect of building constructed before the enactment of those building bye laws, i.e. before June, 1983. Therefore, the position was reviewed in regard to equipping high rise buildings in Delhi with necessary fire-fighting equipments. It has been found after the review that out of the 220 high rise buildings, 194 continue to be deficient in respect of fire prevention and safety precautions. Therefore, inspections were carried out and major defects were pointed out by the Chief Fire Officer to the local bodies who sanction these plans. The owners were requested by the local bodies to remove deficiencies which were found and pointed out after the inspections by the Chief Fire Officer. But the local bodies reported that the owners and the builders did not respond to the request and had not attended to deficiencies. All these things were therefore taken into consideration.

It was felt that the problem cannot be tackled unless some stringent provisions exist for enforcement of fire safety measures so far as the Union Territory of Delhi is concerned.

Therefore, Sir, it has been found that the existing provisions in the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957 to enforce the fire safety measures, particularly in multi-storeyed buildings are most inadequate as they provide for imposition of maximum penalty of only Rs. 500 for the infringement of bye-laws and in case of continuing infringement, for an additional fine of Rs. 20 only per day. Therefore, it was felt that this Act should be amended and therefore this Bill has been brought forward before the House.

Sir, in the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill, we have laid down