

have information about it at the moment. I shall order an inquiry if the hon. Member furnishes some information in this regard.

[English]

#### Assam-Nagaland Border Clashes

\*22. †SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA :  
SHRI S.G. GHOLAP :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the serious border clashes between armed police forces of Assam and Nagaland in the Merapani area in Assam in the first week of June this year; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the step being taken by Union Government to settle the dispute permanently?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S.B. CHAVAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Exchange of fire between police forces of the two states started in the Merapani area along Assam-Nagaland border on the afternoon of 4th June, 1985 and continued intermittently till the evening of 6th June. In this firing, 28 Assam Police personnel, 6 Nagaland Armed Police personnel and 13 civilians were killed.

Ceasefire and dis-engagement of forces was effected through discussions between the two State Governments, at the official as well as at the level of Chief Ministers. Consultations are being carried out with the two State Governments on the steps to be taken to settle the dispute on a permanent basis.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : There are various types of border disputes and these are not new in this country. Even now there are some pending disputes for example between Punjab and Haryana, between Karnataka and Maharashtra and so on. I would like to know from the Minister how long these disputes between Assam and Nagaland in certain border areas were continuing? Is it not a fact that these disputes are continuing for several years? If so, why did the Government of India not act earlier in order to get the dispute settled so that the agreed

border could be defined and delineated on the ground also? Why was this not done? Why was this situation allowed to develop to a stage where it led to this kind of an armed clash? Does it not also show that so far as the Centre is concerned, there was a total failure of intelligence, either political intelligence or security intelligence, or even inner—party intelligence, because they all belong to the same party, and Chief Minister are coming to Delhi frequently for consultations? If all types of intelligence which feed the Centre which feed the Centre with information and the possibility of any new development taking place, have all failed, is that the reason why the Centre did not act and was taken by surprise?

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN : So far as the intelligence part of this incident is concerned we had the full information about it right from 26th of May. As soon as the Centre got the information I have sent wireless messages to both the Chief Ministers and repeated the same to the Governors requesting them to review the situation because we had the information that tension was building up and it was very necessary that the Chief Ministers of both the States should intervene in the matter to defuse the whole situation.

So, there is no question of any failure of Intelligence in this respect. It is true that there are a few border disputes among different States, and in this particular case of Assam and Nagaland, it has been there for some time and Mr. Sundaram was appointed as the Advisor to assist the Home Ministry in this matter. Mr. Sundaram had gone to both Nagaland and Assam, discussed the entire issue with them. On one side one State Government was prepared to accept the recommendations of the Sundaram Committee while the other State Government was not prepared to accept it and that position still continues. And that is why it has become necessary now that we have to persuade both the State Governments to agree to a particular person who will be acceptable to both and whose decision both the parties will be prepared to accept.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : The Minister did not specifically tell us from how many years this dispute has been pend-

ing. This is not just a matter of a couple of years. Any way, I think it is known to everybody from the press reports.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : From 1971.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : It has been going on for the last 14 years.

SHRI G. G. SWELL : Even before.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Even before, and even after a separate State of Nagaland was formed—from that time. That is why I had asked why this Government did not act earlier. Any way, we have heard the reply.

The second question which I want to put is that when two States—it is not only that they are neighbouring States, but they are border States in very sensitive areas on our border when two such States both of which are administered by the same political party which is also ruling at the Centre, when two such States indulge in this kind of behaviour which, I should say, is destructive of national unity, then does the Minister not think that it is necessary to take any stronger action against whoever was responsible for this instead of simply to appoint an officer or arbitrator or somebody and leave it at that? Or is it only because they all belong to your Party that you are not prepared to take action?

PROF. N.G. RANGA : There is need for a democratic approach.

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN : So far as the disputes are concerned, I think they cross the party lines and irrespective of the party affiliations people from particular areas take a definite point of view which is totally opposed to the point of view taken by the other State. So, it has nothing to do with the party affairs. There are two Commissions that we have in view. One is about the Fact Finding Commission, and I am in full agreement with the hon. Member that we will have to take some kind of a deterrent action. After getting the Report of the Fact Finding Commission, the Government would like to know as to who were responsible; at whose orders these firings were resorted to and if it was not the competent authority, at whose orders the firing was undertaken. Then it would have different implications. So, we will be appointing

this Commission very soon and we hope to get the report within about three to four months time and thereafter, about those who were responsible, we propose to take a very firm action against those who will be held responsible.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : At what level ?

*(Interruptions).*

SHRI S.G. GHOLAP : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is admitted that there is a dispute between the two States. What is the area of the dispute and what is the population of the area ?

*(Interruptions).*

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN : Sir, I have the information with me. Irrespective of the area and the population involved, the fact of the matter still remains that this dispute has taken such and ugly turn and we propose to deal with it ..

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : The area is within the range of the bullets !

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN : I believe the total area will be about 5,000 square kilometres or square miles. I would not be very exact about it.

SHRI G. G. SWELL : Sir, the Home Minister, I think, will recall that in the last Session in another context the trouble between Nagaland and Manipur, I did try to raise, sotto voce, I did try to put this question in a larger perspective. Today it is Nagaland and Assam, tomorrow it may be Assam and Meghalaya.

The next day, it may be Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The boundary dispute in the whole of Northeastern India are endemic and the question is political. I did try to put across this to you and say, it would be good if you had an informal group of highly respected and impartial leaders in this country to go there and talk to the leaders, the people and the Governments of all the States concerned and see if some kind of a consensus could be reached to iron out the differences. I thought, at that time you did not think it so very important. I had said that if you allowed this question to fester, it

would break out to a more serious trouble. I wish I had not been as prophetic.

Now, Sir, I would like to ask this question. (*Interruptions.*) I never take much time. I don't think a single sentence of mine is out of context or out of place. Yesterday, the hon. Minister said that he would appoint an enquiry committee to find out who was responsible and who was not responsible. It is all right. But that is not going to solve the problem. As far as I can see, it would only further aggravate the problem because people will take a formal attitude and in that way, the problem cannot be solved.

You have the Sundaram Commission. It worked for four years and produced the report.. I come from that area. I speak with a little knowledge. The Sundaram Commission produced a report which was totally rejected by Nagaland on the ground that it had been too much in favour of Assam. I tell you that even today, I say this with grief, that there is a feeling of grievance among the people and the Government of Nagaland. Your Minister of State for Home Affairs went there. I do not know what she could do and what she could not do. But I know that she had not been to Nagaland although she had been to Assam. She had not talked to the Nagaland Chief Minister and with the people of Nagaland. Naturally, the Nagaland people have some kind of a hard feeling. (*Interruptions.*) Now I will put a question. Don't be in a hurry.

Now, in view of all this, are you going to take that line of action, trying to persuade all the people there to come to an understanding? As far as the Sundaram Commission's report was concerned, the Nagaland people did not agree to it. Well, the Naga people said even during the days of Panditji, before the creation of Nagaland that the question of forest land in this area should be taken up for transfer to Nagaland. It is still a pending question. What are you going to do in this? Appointing just an enquiry committee is not going to help. What more are you going to do? We would like you to share your view with us.

MR. SPEAKER : Are you satisfied with it ?

SHRI G. G. SWELL : I have more to say, Sir.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : The Minister will reply to the half-an-hour debate.

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN : I distinctly remember the hon. Member raising the discussion on this issue and advising the Government that some positive steps need to be taken at the earliest because tension might build up in that area and later on it might become very difficult. The hon. Member might perhaps recollect that I had specially gone to Shillong and invited all the Chief Ministers concerned and discussed with them. They have all agreed with me that they will not allow the situation to escalate and that they will see that the tension is reduced to the extent possible. But there should be a permanent solution to this problem. In fact, we are trying to persuade both of them to suggest some person who will be acceptable to both the parties and who will have enough influence on both the sections and enjoy the confidence of both the State Governments so that his report thereafter becomes almost binding on both the State Governments and we are in fact trying to persuade them to help us in finding such a solution.

#### Talks on ethnic problem of Sri Lanka

\*23. †SHRI B.N. REDDY:

SHRI VIJAY KUMAR YADAV:  
Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some talks were held recently between the Union Government and Government of Sri Lanka with a view to finding a solution to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka; and

(b) if so, the details and the outcome thereof?

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO PRIME MINISTER (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) Government have been in continuous contact with the Government of Sri Lanka and had offered India's good offices to Sri Lanka to facilitate a solution to the ethnic problem. The President of Sri Lanka