

16.59 hrs.

**\*RAIDS BY DACOITS FROM  
PAKISTAN**

Mr. Chairman: Now, the House will take up the half-an-hour discussion. Shri Harish Chandra Mathur.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur (Pall): Mr. Chairman, Sir, this half-an-hour discussion arises out of the unsatisfactory answers given by the Ministry of External Affairs to my question regarding the border raids on Rajasthan on the 3rd April, which I asked. When the hon. Parliamentary Secretary replied, he said that certain dacoit, who was getting a refuge in Pakistan along with certain Pakistani accomplices entered our territory.....and came right into...

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Mr. Chairman: The concerned Minister is not here.

The Minister of Revenue and Civil Expenditure (Dr. B. Gopala Reddi): I am here; he is coming. The hon. Member may go on.

Mr. Chairman: I thought the Finance Minister had gone.

Dr. B. Gopala Reddi: The Home Ministry is going to reply for the External Affairs Ministry.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: I could appreciate some arrangement between the Home Ministry and the External Affairs Ministry so far as border incidents are concerned.

Dr. B. Gopala Reddi: Finance is also concerned.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: I am very glad that Finance is also taking a little interest in the matter.

Then I asked the Parliamentary Secretary, how is it that the dacoits came so much into the interior as to reach the Jodhpur district, because

Jodhpur district is not a border district. I could understand if it was Barmer or Jaisalmer district. Jodhpur is not a border district. I asked, could he explain how the dacoits came so much into the interior and reached Jodhpur district and kidnaped persons like that. He had no answer to give. My further questions also, whether they had any policy in this matter, and whether the Centre accepted any responsibility in the matter, he failed to answer. Then I asked, has the Centre fixed up any arrangement and whether they have come to any agreement with the State Government in setting up proper enforcement divisions. He said, he did not know. He wanted notice to that also. I asked a third question as to what happened about the scheme which had been submitted by the State Government of Rajasthan to enforce border arrangements. Also to that question, he had no answer to give. There were further supplementaries asked whether they had taken the villagers living in the border into confidence and whether they had been armed. That question was dodged. He stated that it was a larger question and cannot be answered in the ordinary course of a question. This raises very serious doubts in our mind.

The unsatisfactory nature of the State of affairs will be gauged by you when you know that these border incidents are growing every day. Even the Ministry of External Affairs, in their annual report, have found it expedient to make a mention of the deterioration in the situation because of the border incidents. They have stated that if we can take care or if Pakistan paid better attention to these border incidents, if there was better response from that side, the other relations would improve, and border trade might develop—what is going on today is just smuggling, not border trade—and better understanding could develop, and all that sort of thing. What is our Government doing about it at all?

\*Half an hour discussion.

[Shri Harish Chandra Mathur]

This is such a large question. I will not take advantage of this to cover the whole ground. I shall restrict my remarks only to the border incidents between Rajasthan and Pakistan. The situation has deteriorated very considerably. I might submit that even during the last four months, there have been as many as 62 such incidents. That is, on every alternate day, there is one incident or the other, only on the Pakistan-Rajasthan border, confined to that area. I am leaving out the eastern border altogether. The situation has deteriorated to this extent. Almost every alternate day, there is an incident. Only the other day or day before, answering a question, the External Affairs Ministry have given us figures. What are the reasons? Why is it that the situation has deteriorated to this extent? May I know what steps have been taken by the Government in this matter? Even the President of Pakistan has, during the recent few days, given expression to very strong feelings. He desires that there should be friendly relations between the two countries. Whatever our differences with the Pakistan Government may be, it could be said to the credit of that Government that the present regime has injected a certain amount of efficiency and integrity into the administration.

The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shrimati Lakshmi Menon): Is that the reason why there are so many more dacoities now?

Ch. Ranbir Singh (Rohtak): That is a material point.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: The hon. Minister may be a little patient. If that efficiency and integrity is to be reflected in the sincerity, regarding the stopping of these border incidents, then there should be no border incidents. But it appears to me that in spite of this efficiency, the border incidents have increased. I wish the hon. Deputy Minister would understand my point. If the desire is

there to stop these border incidents, if there is the sincerity to stop these border incidents, have not the least doubt that the administration at the other end would be capable of stopping these incidents, but as it is, it only reflects that there is no desire on the part of the Government on the other side to call off these incidents. I wish it is pointedly brought to the notice of the administration in Pakistan. They are talking about the efficiency and integrity of their administration. I understand it is reflected in certain matters. But why is it that it is not reflected in the border incidents? Why is it that after this regime, the number of border incidents has increased so considerably? It is only natural that when the number of border incidents rises like this, and people are kidnapped and held to ransom, there is a deep concern on our part. It is not panic; I know the people in Rajasthan are steady and calm, and there is no panic on our side of the border. But, definitely, we do feel very much concerned that such things have been happening, and we have been very ineffective in our arrangements, and we have not been able to deal the situation as effectively as we ought to have done.

I wish, in the first instance, that we should appeal to the Government of Pakistan, we should approach them, and we should ask them to stop these border incidents, but if they are in no mood to be helpful in this matter, if they are in no mood to call off these incidents, if they are, on the contrary, in a mood to encourage these people, if they are only wanting to give refuge to these dacoits, if they permit these dacoits to go with the looted property and take no action against them, I think this Government owes a certain responsibility to the people in general and to those people who live in these border areas to give them proper protection. It may be said: 'What can this Government do?' The State Government are having

their police and their patrol'. My pointed complaint is that so far as the Rajasthan-Pakistan border is concerned, there are no proper arrangements from our side. The reason for my saying so is this.

Let the hon. Minister's attention be pointedly drawn to this fact that during these seven months or so, so far as the Punjab-Pakistan border is concerned, there have been only seven incidents; as against these seven incidents, during the same period, there have been as many as 62 incidents on the Rajasthan-Pakistan border. Why is that so? It clearly indicates, so far as I can see, that our arrangements on the Rajasthan-Pakistan border are not at all adequate. My complaint gets reinforced further when I know well that the Rajasthan Government have been asking for certain assistance from the Central Government; they have submitted already certain schemes, and they want that those schemes should be countenanced; and they want that something should be done to reinforce the arrangements on the Rajasthan-Pakistan border. I do not wish that the Centre and the State should not be able even to arrive at an agreement in such a minor matter. It is no good telling the Rajasthan Government that it is their responsibility, that police is their responsibility, that law and order is their responsibility, and the Centre cannot go beyond a particular rigid formula. Let us face facts, and the facts are that while on the Punjab-Pakistan border there have been only seven incidents during this period, there have been 62 incidents on the Rajasthan-Pakistan border, and almost every alternate day, as I have submitted already. I cannot over-emphasise this point: I have sufficiently pin-pointed the matter and I have underlined that the arrangements on our side are also not adequate and the Centre should understand their responsibility in this matter. They should be able to tell

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us what adequate steps they have taken, what the fate of the scheme submitted by the Rajasthan Government is, and why is it that they are not able to give them the necessary assistance?

**Ch. Rambr Singh:** It may be due to the efficiency of the Punjab Government and the inefficiency of the Rajasthan Government.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** It is a very pertinent question, that possibly the Rajasthan Government's police administration is not very efficient. I will give a fitting answer to that by saying that the Rajasthan Government has dealt with the dacoity situation in the entire State, except for a pocket in Dholpur, effectively. They have completely liquidated the dacoits. It was such an immense problem before, and during the last three or four years they have completely liquidated the dacoits and the situation is complete under their control, and we feel absolutely safe in moving from any place to any other place in the State.

When the hon. Home Minister paid a visit to Rajasthan, a complete account of the achievement of the State Government was given to him. The internal administration of Rajasthan was exceptionally good and the hon. Home Minister spent about 1½ hours distributing prizes to the people who had done an excellent job of work. So, I do not think that the Rajasthan Government could be accused of inefficiency so far as the police administration is concerned. It is only the border that is our trouble. Possibly they have not got the means, they are not being given a free hand. The policy is dictated, it may be a weak policy at the Centre. I do not know how the matter stands. It is for the hon. Minister to explain how it is that the Rajasthan Government which has been able to control the law and order situation so actively in the other sector has failed to take any effective steps so far as the border is concerned.

[Shri Harish Chandra Mathur]

and every day there is a border incident which is definitely a natural concern of all of us.

Shri Achar (Mangalore): On a point of order, Sir. Are we too entitled to discuss the police administration of Rajasthan or Punjab and compare the one with the other?

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Mover's complaint is that no proper arrangements are made for the Pakistan-Rajasthan border, and he wants the Central Government to make the necessary arrangements in that border. It is not about the internal administration. There is no point of order.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: Another very important factor is that the people are not taken into confidence. I do not know why it is so. I have a strong feeling that if the people of the border area are taken into confidence and if certain people are armed, they will be able to look after themselves very well.

I speak with a certain amount of personal experience in this matter. Immediately after independence we had certain trouble over the Jodhpur border which also runs over 300 miles. We had one incident, a second. The Jodhpur Government reported the matter to the Centre, notes were exchanged, nothing was coming out. But then the Jodhpur Government took certain measures, very strong measures, with the result that for six months there was not one single incident. I want the hon. Minister to check up from records whether it is not a fact that for six months not a single incident took place on the entire border of Jodhpur State with Pakistan which extends over 300 miles.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: And after that?

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: It is simply because we could take certain very strong administrative measures, and I might even go to the extent of saying now, after these ten years, that I absolutely ignored the policy and the feelings of the Centre in this matter, and I had made arrangements about it. I still feel that if the people are taken into confidence, this thing can be done. As a matter of fact, it is the weak policy of this Government which is responsible for this attitude. The Rajasthan Government also moves with a certain hesitation. The people do not go with any confidence, they have a certain hesitation. I think if you can take away that hesitation, the people will be able to do the needful in this matter.

As I submitted, I speak with a certain amount of confidence in this matter and with a certain amount of practical knowledge on this subject. Why is it that we have not been able to put an end to this state of affairs? Any weak policy does not help anybody. It is not appreciated in that area; it is not appreciated on the other side; it is not appreciated anywhere. Let us understand this. We may be very friendly, but friendliness does not mean tolerance of such a state of affairs. Let us give a feeling to the people on the other side that it is not paying to come and do all these things this side. This feeling must be created, that it is not advantageous to do all these things and that it is not a paying business. Only if we can create that sort of feeling, only if Government can create that sort of feeling or our people are permitted or encouraged to create that sort of feeling, that it is not a paying business, that it is not a proper thing and it is not to their advantage to cross the border and do all these things, that these things will come to a stop.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharyya (West Dinajpur): In this matter, I feel the opinion of Rajasthan ought to be ascertained. Why is it that that Government which has tackled dacoity

within the State so effectively is failing to control the situation on the border? The opinion of that Government itself ought to be ascertained. What do they think about it?

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** I presume he has done it.

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Shri Datar):** My hon. friend who wanted to raise this discussion is entitled to praise himself for his work while he was a Minister in Jodhpur...

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** I was not a Minister.

**Shri Datar:** I will say, 'while he was in an important position in a former Indian State'. He is also entitled to praise the efficiency and work of the Rajasthan Government. I would agree to a large extent with what he has said so far as the latter question is concerned. But I fail to understand why after praising himself and the Rajasthan Government, he has gone to the extent of criticising us without any justification at all. I would point out how in this particular case we are not responsible at all for whatever has unfortunately happened.

**Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur):** He was not praising the Rajasthan Government so much as the Jodhpur Administration.

**Mr. Chairman:** There is an element of truth in it.

**Shri Datar:** I accept the correction.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** I wish they learn something from it.

**Shri Datar:** So far as this particular incident is concerned, I shall give the facts that we are there. But before I do so, may I point out to my hon. friend that he has highly exaggerated the situation there? The

whole thing has almost been over-coloured, perhaps unconsciously, but whatever he has said is, to a large extent, far from truth.

Take, for example, his statement that there have been such kidnappings or dacoities almost every alternate day. That statement is entirely inaccurate. May I point out to him that from the 1st of January, 1950 to the end of the March, 1950, that is, during the last three months, there had been only six cases of dacoity so far as this border is concerned: We have to take that fact into account. Otherwise, according to him, there ought to have been at least 45 or 50 cases of dacoity. That is not correct at all.

Now, we should take into account the circumstances in this particular case. What happened was that there is one village known as village Seedha, where the first case of kidnapping took place. One Shri Ramchander Mahajan was kidnapped. It is at a distance of 60 miles from the Indo-Pakistan border. That may be noted because he wanted to know the distance. After kidnapping this particular person in the afternoon of one day and while they were going back, they kidnapped another person on the way, in a jungle. That should be stated. That was near village Sevra, where one Shri Bhawan Singh was kidnapped, at a distance of 50—60 miles from the border.

Therefore, so far as both these cases of kidnapping are concerned, they were about 50 miles away from the border.

The next point is that so far as Rajasthan is concerned, we have a 700 mile border. That also is a circumstance which should be noted. Further, what happens is this. There are certain difficulties of terrain. There are about 50 to 150 miles of desert on both sides and there are no good roads also. All the same, may I point out that we maintain a large number of check posts? It would not be

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in public interests—and my hon. friend will also agree that I should not—mention the actual number of check posts so far as this border is concerned. We have got a number of check posts.

Then, the Rajasthan Government have maintained what is known as the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary. A number of these persons are all along the border. That also is a circumstance which should not be forgotten. Under these circumstances you will find that the Rajasthan Government have their own ordinary police machinery also in addition to this. These have been stationed at various important points along the border. This is the position so far as actual facts are concerned.

This is a law and order question and, ordinarily, under the Constitution, it is the duty of the State Government to maintain the police because the border is also a part of the State—the Rajasthan State. This is the constitutional position.

It may also be stated that this is not a border incident as such. There are dacoits on this side and there are dacoits on that side, and, generally, these dacoits collude together. In this particular case, we have an Indian dacoit accompanied by a West Pakistani dacoit. They colluded together and kidnapped these persons.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** They came from Pakistan and went back to Pakistan.

**Shrimati Lakshmi Menon:** Not from the border.

**Shri Datar:** I may tell the House that of the two persons kidnapped one has been released and come back.

**Shrimati Lakshmi Menon:** On paying a ransom of Rs. 5,000.

**Shri Datar:** That should not be forgotten.

Though the constitutional obligation in respect of avoiding all these incidents like dacoities and kidnapping or maintaining law and order, even along the border, is on the Rajasthan Government, may I point out here that the Government of India have been helping them very substantially, continuously from 1950 onwards. In public interests I cannot enumerate exactly the various types of assistance including monetary assistance that we have given to the State Government. Whenever the State Government had some difficulties, they have approached the Central Government and we have helped them.

Only recently, this question was taken up by the Rajasthan Government and there was a meeting. We discussed all these questions and a certain formula of further help to be extended to them, if necessary, is also being evolved. That is a point which should also be kindly noted.

Then, my hon. friend made an unfortunate and wrong allegation that people are not being taken into confidence. So far as the villages on or near the border are concerned, here has been a more or less free issue of fire-arms to the villagers. If this circumstance is noted, my hon. friend will agree that in this particular case there is nothing of which we can be afraid. There is nothing which would give cause for anxiety.

I am prepared to accept this position that the Rajasthan Government have a tough time so far as these questions are concerned. But, they are trying their best to handle these questions as efficiently as possible. I would agree with my hon. friend. They are trying their best for the solution of such questions and for the maintenance of law and order. As I have stated on a number of occasions the Government of India had to consider the request for financial grants so far as these matters were concerned. You are aware that we had a

Second Finance Commission. There also, when the requirement of the State Governments had to be fully ascertained, this particular point that they had a 700 mile long border with West Pakistan was also considered and their requirements were fully taken into account and then certain arrangements were evolved by the Second Finance Commission. This factor would show that the Government of India are anxious to help the State Government, even though—I may repeat—there is no constitutional obligation on our part to do so. After all Rajasthan is a State Government and it has to contend with a number of problems. There is this long border and therefore, the Government of India came into the picture and helped them in numerous ways including financial assistance. If all these circumstances are taken into account, you will agree that there is no reason for entertaining any misgivings, much less any panic in this respect. In general, the number of dacoities in Rajasthan are gradually coming down. In the year 1956, there were 91; in 1957 there were 61 and in 1958, there were 75. These are the cases of dacoities in respect of the whole of Rajasthan area. Let not my friend make exaggerated allegations...

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** You are worsening the situation.

**Shri Datar:** They are entirely wrong. I have got here figures even for the previous years. The number was not so much as the hon. Member would have this House to believe. If there are six cases of kidnapping, is it an abnormal circumstance, especially against 700 miles of border. May I point out that there is no substance in this particular contention and even in respect of this particular unhappy incident, one man has come back. So far as the other man is concerned, he is there. I may also say that whenever international gangs of dacoits operating in India and Pakistan do such things, in every case,

we have taken up this matter: first the officers of the corresponding localities or districts take this up. They often meet and come to certain conclusions. Secondly, we have taken this up on a diplomatic level also with the Pakistan Government through our High Commissioner at Karachi and we expect that would release such kidnaped persons. In the circumstances, I would inform the hon. Member through you that there is no substance in his contention that the situation is very bad and calls for an urgent enquiry and further help from the Government.

**Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (Hissar):** The hon. Minister told us that the villages were armed. May I know whether the village from which these two villagers were kidnapped was also armed?

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** Let him answer both questions together. I would like him to correct himself because this particular incident about which we have held the discussions is not a case of dacoity. It is an incident of kidnapping. Let him remember it. When I cited this incident, I gave the figures from the statement placed on the Table of the House only the day before and here is this statement in my hand which shows that during these four months, there have been 62 incidents on the border of Rajasthan. He has particularly chosen to say about the dacoities; it does not include all the instances. Here is a statement I have got and it gives figures. From nowhere else did I get these figures; it was placed on the Table of the House. There were 62 incidents during these four months. Seven incidents were mentioned in the Punjab border. I think it was not fair on the part of the hon. Minister to say that I had made a wrong statement. I have not stated that there had been 62 dacoity cases. The particular case which I am referring to is one of kidnapping... (Interruptions.)

**Shri Datar:** There are many more things. They need not be depended

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upon. He has brought in all the figures in respect of all possible offences committed on the border.

Shri Harish Chandra Mather: I may mention that I am referring to the statement placed by him on the Table of the House. What more specific proof does he want?

Shri Datar: So far as kidnapping is concerned, Sir, I may tell you that 21 persons were kidnapped during the year 1958 of whom 16 have been released. This is the correct position.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: The hon. Minister has been pleased to mention that as a matter of precaution they have armed these villages. I wanted to know whether this village has been armed.

Shri Datar: Sir, it should also be taken into account that this is an interior village. So far as border

villages are concerned, I have already stated that the Government of Rajasthan are following a liberal policy in the issue of firearms to villages on the border.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharyya: There is one point, Sir, in the hon. Minister's statement which evokes some curiosity. We heard him say that dacoits on both sides could agree among themselves to disturb the order of the State. How is it that the administration on both sides cannot agree to maintain the order?

Shri Datar: That is what we are trying our best to do. We are trying our best to agree, both at the district level and also at the national level.

17.22 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, April 30, 1959/Vaisakha 10, 1881 (Saka).*