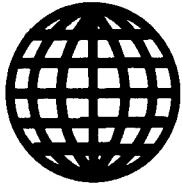


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3 March 1993



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Near East & South Asia

INDIA

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International Affairs

Bhatia Meets With Indian, OIC Ambassadors

OIC Ambassadors

93AS0455A Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English
25 Dec 92 p 9

[Article: "India Registers Protests With OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference) Envoys"]

[Excerpt]

Remarks on Ayodhya

New Delhi, Dec. 24—The Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. R.L. Bhatia, today told the Ambassadors of countries belonging to the Organization of Islamic Conference [OIC] that sweeping generalizations and brazenly critical formulations on the Babari Masjid issues in resolutions passed in a forum such as the OIC would not only impinge upon India's sovereignty but also encourage reverse communalism.

At a meeting with the Ambassadors, Mr. Bhatia gave the background to the Ayodhya incidents and also the action taken by the Government to tackle the situation. He said the Indian Government was committed to meet the challenge of communal elements which were threatening secularism and even judiciary and parliamentary system.

Mr. Bhatia noted that the outbreak of violence in Pakistan and Bangladesh resulting in the damaging and destruction of a large number of temples, gurdwaras and churches would not help the process of return to normality and instead fuel communal flames.

The Ambassadors who spoke at the meeting said that while the incident itself had been condemned worldwide and throughout India itself, they appreciated the quick and strong action taken by the Indian Government in tackling the situation.

Those who attended the meeting were the chief representative of the Arab League and the Ambassadors of Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Uganda, Malaysia, Senegal, Brunei, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Palestine, Turkmenistan and Yemen.

In another significant statement, India today said that comments such as the one made by the Gulf Cooperation Council in regard to the Ayodhya incidents, however, well-meaning, were not helpful in meeting the challenge posed by communal elements.

A spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry referred to the mention made to the Ayodhya incident in the joint communique of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] yesterday and said that the Government of India was fully conscious of its responsibilities in protecting holy places of all faiths. It was also aware of the rights of all Indians irrespective of their ethnic, linguistic, religious backgrounds and convictions. [passage omitted]

Indian Envoys

93AS0455B New Delhi *PATRIOT* in English 10 Dec 92
p 2

[Article: "Envoys Told To Reaffirm India's Stand on Secularism"]

[Text] Indian envoys abroad have been told to convey to their host governments that the Indian Government was committed to democracy, secularism and the rights of all communities, reports UNI.

This was underlined by the Centre's action in dismissing the Government in Uttar Pradesh and arrest of leaders whose actions had contributed to the crisis.

The advice was given by Minister of State for External Affairs R.L. Bhatia in a briefing on Tuesday to about 40 heads of missions gathered in the Capital for an orientation course. The other Minister of State in the Ministry, Mr. Eduardo Faleiro, and adviser on Ayodhya in the Prime Minister's Office Naresh Chandra were also present.

An Official press release said it was pointed out to the envoys that the Government's reaction to the Ayodhya crisis had been swift, resolute and comprehensive.

The crisis created by the failure of the State Government which, in India's polity, had the responsibility of maintaining law and order—had been addressed squarely by the Government.

The release said the charge of a weak Government at the Centre stood countered by the quick and effective action by the Government and a declaration of total support and confidence in the Prime Minister by the Congress Parliamentary Party.

The envoys were told that a first set of measures had already been announced by the Government under which communal organisations will be banned, the strongest possible action under the law would be taken to bring to book the culprits connected with the demolition of Masjid structure and disciplinary action would be initiated against various authorities.

It was also decided that the Government would see to it that the demolished structure was rebuilt and appropriate steps would be taken regarding a new Ram temple after December 11 when a court judgment attracted in the matter will be issued.

The envoys were told that while the matter will be issued.

The envoys were told that while the matter was an internal one and one for India's sovereign government to deal with, it was necessary to counter the flood of speculation and disinformation in some quarters with correct facts.

It was pointed out that India's total commitment to secularism and democracy was dramatically underlined not only by the condemnation of the recent event in Ayodhya by every political party but also by media opinion across the board.

Outcome of Visit to Central Asian Republics

93AS0385A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 8 Dec 92 p 14

[Article by Sagarika Ghose; quotation marks as published]

[TEXT] New Delhi, December 7. Indian businessmen have begun operations in the Central Asian republics and are continuing to go there 'in a big way'.

According to an official in the ministry of external affairs during the October visit to the Central Asian republics by the minister of state for external affairs, Mr. R.L. Bhatia, a number of representatives of Indian businesses accompanied the minister and since then several proposals have been activated.

Larsen and Toubro have decided to set up a chain of hotels in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan. The Oberoi group are reportedly starting schemes to do the same. In addition, the official said that Shaw Wallace, Torrent Pharmaceuticals, Shri Ram Engineering and the Birlas are starting up businesses there.

Torrent Pharmaceuticals have started factories in Tashkent in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The Birlas are considering setting up cement processing plants. The government is also considering starting tea-packaging plants in the republics, by which Indian tea would be cheaply and more efficiently packaged in the republics.

The major problem with doing business in the republics is the lack of banking facilities. The government has therefore set up a joint commission on banking with the republics and is offering courses in banking here.

In addition, the government has started a scheme to train diplomats and managers from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kirghizstan. Thirteen representatives are already undergoing training in the Civil Services Academy. Last year the government trained 53 people in different fields from the republics. Ten slots each for the six republics in various fields are being offered by India.

Tank Trials Planned, Israel Offers Help

93AS0477A Bombay THE SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA
in English 20 Dec 92 p 21

[Article by Dinesh Kumar: "Trial of Main Battle Tank in January"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, December 19. The crucial integrated trials on the pre-production series of the Main Battle Tank (MBT), Arjun, will be conducted in the middle of next month following rectification of previous defects, it is reliably learnt. The trials are scheduled to be completed within January itself.

Much significance is being attached to the scheduled integrated trials of the 20-year-old project which is being regarded as the final test for its launch. Should the trials be successful, free flow production should start by the middle of next year in order to ensure formal induction of the MBT by early 1995.

The integrated trials will involve complete testing of the tank. "Basically we will be testing the tank for everything that it is supposed to do," said a senior official in the defence ministry. Sources said that integrated trials will be carried out on six MBT's manufactured after rectifying defects observed in all previous trials. Although a total of 15 tanks are envisaged for integrated trials in the pre-production phase, it may not be necessary to build the remaining nine if the trials are successful on six MBT's earmarked for the trials.

The sources also revealed that Israel had made a concrete offer to help India on its MBT project. Some of the areas on which Israel had expressed willingness to help was with regard to sensors and fire and gun control systems. "The Israelis are willingly coming out to help us and are even prepared not to put their brand name on items they are willing to supply for the MBT," said a senior official while adding that any possible co-operation in the future requires a political decision.

Previous trials had revealed defects in firing, ammunition, tank stability and mobility apart from on track links. Expenditure incurred on the project has already exceeded Rs [Rupees] 225 crores and it is expected that another Rs 85 crores would have been spent before the production phase commences which again depends on the success of next month's integrated trials. However, the tank prototype has some impressive achievements to boast about. It has done 11,000 km in desert, done 500 km in 48 hour long non-stop runs, achieved a speed of 30 km in the first eight seconds, while the hydropneumatic suspension unit (HSU) has functioned 2,000 km without failure. The weight to power ratio of 1:24 has compared well with the best tanks of the world.

The 58 tonne 'Arjun' which has a four member crew has a 1,400 horse power German MTU engine. In fact the entire "power pack" comprising the engine, moving gear, gear box, cooling systems etc. are German. The sighting system is from Oldelft, a Dutch firm. However, experts scoff at criticism that the MBT is a half foreign tank. The truth of the matter is that making a tank for Indian conditions which includes desert areas and mountain terrain is extremely difficult. It is not feasible therefore to make an authentic tank without inducting advanced and tried technology from outside.

The pre-production phase of the MBT had commenced in 1990 after completion of trials on the 12 prototypes which had started in 1989. A series of trials have been regularly conducted on the MBT since 1984 when the MBT first started taking shape after a series of initial delays. Although the decision to make our own MBT had been taken in 1972, the project was finally conceived and launched in 1974.

Cooperation in Space Discussed With PRC

93AS0382A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 8 Dec 92 p 4

[TEXT] Bangalore, December 7 (PTI). Undertaking of several cooperative projects in the area of peaceful use of

space technology and setting up of a joint committee to pursue mutual space cooperation on long-term basis figured in the talks held between Indian and Chinese officials in Beijing recently.

An Indian delegation, led by Prof U.R. Rao, chairman, Space Commission, held wideranging discussions with Chinese officials, led by Mr. Liu Jiyuan, vice minister, Ministry of aerospace, in the area of space technology and applications, according to a press release issued by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) here.

The visit was in pursuance to the memorandum of understanding signed here in December last, the release said.

During a workshop, attended by about 70 members from 15 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, India played a key role in initiating multilateral cooperation in the region in the area of space technology and applications, the release said.

Internal Affairs

Advani Calls Government 'Pseudo-Secular'

93AS0358G Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
3 Dec 92 p 9

[Article by Ganesh Swaminathan: "Advani Warns of 'Dire Consequences'"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Mau—The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] leader, Mr. L.K. Advani, on Wednesday warned the Central Government that "consequences would be dire" if it stops his yatra to Ayodhya or attempts to stop the kar seva scheduled to begin on the 2.77 acre area in Ayodhya on Dec. 6.

"Everyone knows what happened to V.P. Singh and Mulayam Singh Yadav after my rath yatra was stopped in 1990. It is the people's wish that kar seva take place and the BJP wants it to be a peaceful one," Mr. Advani said, while addressing huge gatherings at Jaunpur, Azamgarh and Mau on the second day of his yatra. The BJP leader linked the Ayodhya movement to "fight against pseudo-secularism being practised by all other parties."

"The pseudo-secularists oppose our Ayodhya movement, call for scrapping Article 370, call for Human Rights Commission and a uniform civil code." Mr. Advani said his rath yatra was undertaken to expose the pseudo-secularists.

"I knew when the rath yatra was stopped something would happen. Even now, I will say the same thing. If my yatra is stopped, I know something else will happen. It is my earnest hope that the Centre will not attempt any such thing," he said.

Mr. Advani said the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] gave the Rao Government three months time in June. "It squandered away the time. It tried to split the saints. It tried to resort to legalities to stall us.

"Now, kar seva will begin on Dec. 6. All kar sevaks will perform physical activity on the 2.77 acre in Ayodhya,

and not merely sing bhajans. What form the kar seva will take would be decided by the VHP at Ayodhya on Dec. 4 (Friday)," he said.

The Kalyan Singh Government has been given a mandate to remove all obstacles in the way of building of the temple, and therefore, it will not stop any sevak from entering Ayodhya or use force, Mr. Advani said.

Assailing those who branded the BJP as communal, he said the best proof that it is not is the fact that in the 16 month rule of BJP in UP [Uttar Pradesh], there has not been a single communal riot, barring a minor one in Varanasi.

At all the three meetings, Mr. Advani brought up the "Vande Mataram" issue also and said the issue has exposed all the pseudo-secularists. "It is the Centre which has built up a force on communal lines, the 'Rapid Action Force.' It is a dangerous trend," he said.

"The mandir issue is not one between Hindus and Muslims. It is not a mandir-masjid issue also. The site is sacred to the Hindus and the structure to Muslims. We will help shifting of the structure 5 km away and in building a grand mosque," he said.

Mr. Advani said the kar sevaks will be totally peaceful. "If anyone creates trouble, he has to be an agent. I will put the responsibility on the Centre if anything happens in Ayodhya," he said.

Rao Calls for Joint Front of Secular Forces

93AS0422B Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 10 Dec 92 p 7

[Text] New Delhi, Dec 9 (UNI)—Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao today called for the formation of joint front of all forces in favour of secular "modes of thought and action" to deal with the crisis following the untoward developments in Ayodhya.

Talking to a group of Editors here, Mr. Rao said he had discussions today with Left Front members of Parliament on the question of a broader support to the government in its immediate task of restoring normalcy in the country.

Describing the demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya as "a case of extreme perfidy" by a State Government constitutionally responsible for the protection of the structure, the Prime Minister said, "the whole truth" of the happenings there would be made known to the people in two or three days.

The Prime Minister said the government would come out later with more facts, such as what the motivation was and how these things happened.

Mr. Narasimha Rao noted that in a plethora of affidavits from the UP [Uttar Pradesh] Government, solemn assurances had been given to the government, the people and the Supreme Court that the structure would be protected under all circumstances. At the last moment,

even the symbolic kar seva was allowed by the Supreme Court. "After all this, a different story unfolding there was utter perfidy."

The Prime Minister said that a ban on communal organisations would be imposed soon and the question of its implementation by BJP-ruled [Bharatiya Janata Party] States would certainly be sorted out.

"The answer lies with them," Mr. Rao replied when asked if the future of three State Governments run by BJP—Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh—was involved in this.

Asked if the government would refer the Ayodhya issue to the Supreme Court, the Prime Minister replied, "all possibilities are there. I can't say just now. Let us wait till normalcy is restored."

Would the government knock down the structure that has been raised at the site of the demolished mosque, he was asked.

Mr. Rao replied, "I guarantee you that an answer will come to all questions. But don't ask now."

He shared the view expressed by one of the editors that majority of Hindu community was not with those who had demolished the mosque at Ayodhya.

He told a questioner that world opinion would be taken care of after all the facts were placed before the international community.

Replying to criticism that the Central Government had failed to take action in time, Mr. Narasimha Rao said "my only failure is that I did not overstep the Constitution."

He defended the dismissal of the Kalyan Singh Government and the arrest of BJP and VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] leaders saying they were the government's most "spontaneous response" to meet the situation. The decisions were well considered and were to "take us forward." Asserting that the Central Government had conformed to every guideline of the Constitution in dealing with the issue, Mr. Narasimha Rao said that he and Home Minister S.B. Chavan had kept on telling the Kalyan Singh Government that Central forces were at their disposal to deal with any eventuality they had even accepted the suggestion that the Central forces could go to the Terai region and the State forces blocked there could be deployed in Ayodhya. As many as 192 companies of CRPF [Central Reserve Police Force] were sent to aid the State outfit, but they were kept at a distance of 10 km from Ayodhya.

Mr. Narasimha Rao said he had gone out of the way to meet the sadhus in July and gave a time frame with the intention of resolving the issue without bloodshed. The sadhus had told him that they would try to help in this, but were evidently not allowed to do so.

Asked whether his moral authority had not been eroded by the recent developments, he replied "not mine, but of BJP."

Reiterating that the need of the hour was peace and normalcy for the survival of the country, the Prime

Minister said he had implicit faith in the people. India is a very peaceful country and its soul is peace and it is dependable.

He denied that he had acted on his own on the issue. Stating that he had been a minister for three decades, he said he knew how Cabinet decisions were taken even though some ministers may say that they had not been consulted.

Asked how a new structure had come up at Ayodhya after Central rule had been imposed in the State, the Prime Minister said there had been a delay in the induction of the Presidential administration. After the Presidential proclamation was signed at 9 p.m. on December 6, the two advisers to the State Governor were sent by plane to Lucknow.

They, however, had to return to Delhi because of thick fog and could reach Lucknow only the next morning. Large crowds still being there, the Central forces could not take over the complex during the day time. An element of surprise was essential for clearing the area and so they had to wait until the night. Then they acted and everything stopped.

Replying to a question of the future of the BJP governments of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh, the Prime Minister said the "answer is with them."

Need for Strategy Stressed

93AS0409A Madras DINAMANI in Tamil 15 Dec 92
p 6

[Editorial: "A New Strategy Required for Communal Unity"; italicized words as published]

[Text] India, after gaining independence, has achieved substantial progress on various fronts. But still whenever there is some communal disturbance in any remote corner, it spreads to many other states like wildfire. It has become customary for the concerned state governments and the Central Government and political leaders to speak of the importance of unity among the various communities. If religious processions occur during the festival seasons without any clashes, use of tear gas, or shooting, everybody, the common man as well as state and Central governments, sigh with relief. The communal disturbances paralyze the government, which has to attend to so many pressing problems of the day. People's normal daily life is seriously affected. In some states, certain areas are always under high tension, so that even a mere sneeze may start a big disturbance.

Now that communal clashes and communal politics have become dominant problems, it is time that the Central Government should lose no time in vigorously developing a suitable strategy to face and act efficiently in any kind of situation. Political parties and their leaders should meet, consider, and arrive at suitable decisions in this regard. Bringing communal factors into politics has

been fetching a lot of votes these days. To put an end to this trend, political parties and their leaders should consider ways and means of separating religion from politics and also examine the feasibility of the Election Commission's declaring that communal parties are not eligible to contest any elections.

Arresting leaders of parties that mix religion with politics and banning of certain organizations will not accomplish the desired effect. On the contrary, this line of action will certainly gain sympathy for the party from among the general public and will not help the cause of secularism. This may give room for so many complaints—some saying the action is one-sided and discriminatory, and some questioning whether the action is just to satisfy certain foreign countries or whether it was taken under duress.

The Ayodhya events have taken a heavy toll of more than a thousand lives; about five thousand were wounded; a lot of property was destroyed. A large number of requests for relief have been pouring in. This problem has existed for quite a long time—from the time when Advani undertook his *ratha yatra* (pilgrimage by chariot), and yet no action has been taken to solve the problem. A huge loss of life and property because of the Ayodhya events will give rise to questions about the Rao government's handling of the situation. Bharatiya Janata Party leader Advani said that in the Congress Party there has been a strong difference of opinion that may affect the Rao cabinet, and that in a month's time, a situation will emerge when Narasimha Rao will have to give up his prime ministership.

It is the duty of the Congress Party, with its rich democratic traditions, to examine how the Rao government handled the Ayodhya events and problems and dispel the doubts and apprehensions in the minds of the people at large.

Secular Parties Combining Against BJP

93AS0437K Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
20 Dec 92 p 1

[Article: "11 Parties Form Secular Front To Fight BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party)"; boldface words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, Dec. 19: For the first time, eleven secular parties, barring Congress, came together today to form a National Campaign Committee to carry out a month-long nationwide campaign against communal forces.

The committee also comprises leaders of 30 mass organisations, as well as writers and artists.

The decision to form such a committee was taken at a meeting organised here by the four Left parties and which was attended by leaders of the Janata Dal, Samajwadi Janata Party, Samajwadi Party, Janata Dal (Ajit Singh), Telegu Desam, National Conference and Indian Peoples' Front.

In a significant move to counter the BJP-VHP-RSS [Bharatiya Janata Party-Vashwa Hindu Parishad-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] combine, the Janata Dal leader, Mr. V.P. Singh, announced that he was ready to

join hands with Mr. Mulayam Singh to preserve the "unity and heritage of the country."

Leaders like Mr. V.P. Singh, Mr. Devi Lal, Mr. Ajit Singh and Mr. Janeshwar Misra shared the same platform. Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, who could not attend the meeting, had sent a message welcoming the alliance.

The apex committee will set up state and district level branches to carry out a mass campaign to counter the BJP propaganda.

The committee is the first step towards the formation of a secular front. The leaders, however, said the question of an electoral alliance does not arise at the moment.

With regard to Congress participation in the campaign, Mr. B. Bardhan of the CPI [Communist Party of India] said, "We have launched a joint campaign. If the Congress wants, let it activate itself."

The first stage of the time-bound campaign will last from January 1 to 15 with a focus on door-to-door campaigns. In the second phase, between January 15 and 30, rallies will be held at 18 centres throughout the country.

Special campaigns will be organised on days of national importance beginning with January 4 (60th anniversary of the civil disobedience movement) and ending on January 30 (Mahatma Gandhi's martyrdom anniversary).

The draft of the joint appeal had to incorporate, at the suggestion of Mr. M. Padmanabhan of the Telegu Desam, harsher criticism of the Congress. According to Mr. Harkishan Singh Surjeet, general secretary of the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist], the objection was that "criticism against the government was not stringent enough."

The draft without the amendment states, "The inaction on the part of the Central government in firmly meeting the challenge of these disruptive forces enabled them to carry out this black deed."

Undelivered Rao Speech Reviews Ayodhya

93AS0451A Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
11 Dec 92 p 9

[Document: "People Must Halt This Mad Rush To Destruction"; italicized words as published]

[Text]

This is an edited version of the statement of prime minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, intended for the Parliament. The statement could not, however, be made.

On December 3, 1992, statements had been made in both the houses of Parliament on the general situation in Ayodhya in the context of the proposed *kar seva*. Since then, the developments have taken at a fast pace.

The honourable members are aware of the unsparing efforts made by the Central government to help in finding an amicable settlement of the contentious Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute. After my statement in Parliament on July 27, 1992, I had held wide-ranging consultations with large members of individuals and groups. These included discussions with representatives of the two sides, leaders of political parties, representatives from the media, religious leaders, and others. Even after the resumed negotiations were jeopardised by the unilateral and unfortunate call for the resumption of *kar seva*, I made every effort to convince the leaders of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP] and allied organisations of the unreasonableness of their stand and tried to make them agree to some acceptable solution. However, a very intransigent stand was taken by the VHP and allied organisations, and instead of cancelling or postponing the *kar seva*, preparations were started for it.

As the house is aware, the honourable Supreme Court has also been seized of this matter. The Central government was called by the Supreme Court to indicate the manner in which it could assist in the enforcement of its earlier orders. During the hearing, the Central government had assured the court that it would be prepared to give to the state government whatever assistance is required in furtherance of the direction of the court. We had also conveyed that the Central government will take such action as may be directed by the honourable court to secure the enforcement of its order. The government of Uttar Pradesh had to give an assurance and undertaking to the court that no construction activity, either permanent or temporary, will take place or will be carried out on the acquired land and no construction machinery or construction material will move into the acquired land as long as the interim order of the high court is in force in the writ petitions pending before it. The state government further submitted *kar seva* would be a symbolic occasion for carrying on certain religious activities and will not be allowed to be exploited for any construction activities, symbolic or otherwise. The Supreme Court also directed the state government, as also the Central government, to give due publicity to the fact that the proposed *kar seva* would not involve any construction activity or moving of any building material into the acquired land so that all *kar sevaks* get properly informed in this regard.

Even outside the court, the government of India repeatedly took up the matter with the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh requesting him to take measures to ensure that no activity is allowed that is contrary to the court orders.

The home minister had suggested to the chief minister that a comprehensive review of the security plan of the structure may be carried out in which the representatives of Central organisations should also be associated. However, this suggestion was not accepted by the state government despite repeated requests from our side. We had also informed the chief minister that according to our assessment the forces deployed by the state government for security purposes at Ayodhya would not be

sufficient to meet the security requirement, especially if any untoward development takes place, or if in the environment of religious frenzy, violence breaks out. The Central government also brought the inadequacy of security arrangements to the notice of the Supreme Court on November 30, 1992 when the Supreme Court asked the state government to give its constructive consideration to the suggestions made by the government of India. The home minister also wrote to the chief minister that reportedly arrangements such as food, water supply, sanitary facilities, etc. were not adequate to meet the large assembly of *kar sevaks* and, therefore, measures should be taken to ensure this does not give rise to any health hazard or outbreak of epidemic.

The Central government had taken the precaution of stationing Central paramilitary forces at various places in Uttar Pradesh on November 24, 1992 itself in the proximity of Ayodhya so that these could be made available at short notices if and when required by the state government. As many as 195 companies of the Central paramilitary forces were stationed and they were equipped with every facility such as tear-gas, rubber bullets, plastic pellets, over 900 vehicles etc.

The force included Mahila Central Reserve Police Force companies, National Security Guard commandos, bomb disposal teams and sniffer dog squads. The intention was that this force would be utilised by the state government with minimum loss of time. The home minister urged the chief minister to consider deploying the force in connection with the security arrangements at Ayodhya.

However, instead of utilising the force, the chief minister criticised our action in stationing the force and demanded its withdrawal. He went to the extent of challenging the constitutional validity of the Central government's action. All that the state government accepted was the service of bomb detection squads and sniffer dogs and that too after the Central government brought to the state government's notice the threat by explosives to the disputed structure and urged the deployment of these squads. Despite the chief minister's strange and recalcitrant attitude, the Central paramilitary forces stationed near Ayodhya were kept on total alert so as to be made available to the state authorities if and when required. The Union home secretary reiterated this message to the Central paramilitary forces in the morning of December 6, 1992.

On December 6, 1992 the initial reports from Ayodhya indicated that the situation was peaceful. About 70,000 *kar sevaks* had assembled in the Ram Katha Kunj for a public meeting to be addressed by senior leaders of the *Sangh Parivar*. Five hundred sadhus and sants had gathered on the foundation terrace and preparations were made for the *pooja*. Between 11.45 am and 11.50 am, about 150 *kar sevaks* managed to break the cordon on the terrace and started pelting stones at the police personnel. About 1,000 *kar sevaks* broke into the RJB-BM [Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid] structure. About 80 *kar sevaks* had managed to climb on the domes of the structure and commenced damaging them. Meanwhile,

kar sevaks had damaged the outer boundary wall of the structure. By about 12.20 pm, about 25,000 kar sevaks gathered in the complex while large numbers were milling around outside. At 2.40 pm, a crowd of 75,000 was still surrounding the structure of whom many were engaged in demolishing it. By the late evening of December 6, 1992, the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid structure had been totally demolished. It is also understood that the Ram Lala idols from within the structure had been taken by the head priest, ostensibly for safe keeping; later, the idols were reportedly reinstalled and a tin shed erected over them.

According to available reports, no action by the local police to prevent the damage to the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid structure was noticed. The CRPF [Central Reserve Police Force] stationed in the isolation cordon of the structure could not take effective action for want of orders from the state government officers whose command it was placed. The movement of additional police forces to Ayodhya was blocked by kar sevaks by using iron poles, overturned trollies etc. All the railway crossings between Ayodhya and Darshan Nagar were locked by the kar sevaks.

Immediately on receipt of information regarding the attack by kar sevaks on the disputed structure, the Union home secretary contacted the state officers and suggested that in view of the situation which seemed to be getting out of control of the state authorities, they should use the Central paramilitary forces stationed at Faizabad and nearby places, who had already been instructed to be available to the state government without loss of time. Subsequently, the state authorities requested for three battalions of Central paramilitary forces which were made available. However, when the force was moving from Faizabad to Ayodhya it was sent back by local magistrates stating that their orders were that no use of force should be resorted to. Later the state government requested 50 companies of Central paramilitary forces and these were also made available. The Union home secretary and other senior officers in the home ministry kept in constant touch throughout the afternoon with the state authorities, drawing their attention to the developing situation in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid complex and repeatedly urged for immediate action for effective deployment of the paramilitary forces.

In the face of these developments, the Central government recommended to the president the imposition of president's rule in the state of Uttar Pradesh and the dissolution of the state legislative assembly. The proclamation in this regard was issued last (Sunday) night.

Alert messages were sent out by the home ministry to all the state governments and Union territories requesting them to take necessary measures to prevent communal disturbances in other places.

The developments at Ayodhya culminating in the tragic destruction of the disputed structure have brought shock and pain to all of us. It is hard to believe that any responsible state government could behave in this

manner. Ours is a federal structure and in recognition of this fact, we reposed a certain amount of trust in the commitments and assurances given repeatedly by the state government. I regret that the state government betrayed not only our trust but the trust of the whole nation. It also dishonoured the solemn pledges it gave before the highest court of the land as also before a body, such as the National Integration Council. I understand that even the honourable judges of the Supreme Court during the special hearing on December 6, 1992 evening, expressed shock and dismay over the total failure of the state government in abiding by its assurances given to the court.

Sir, the nation has been a witness to one of the most dastardly acts being committed since it achieved freedom, after making untold sacrifices. Those who had laid siege to the minds and conscience of the people of this country for some time mounted the final assault when they demolished the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. The ancient land of ours has within its boundaries from centuries past, symbols and faiths which have motivated countless people belonging to different faiths and persuasions. In fact, India is recognised by this underlying pluralism of faith, religion and conviction. Every temple is sacred, every mosque is sacrosanct, every gurdwara is a source of inspiration and every church is a place for communion with god. The communal forces represented in this instant case by the Bharatiya Janata Party-Vishwa Hindu Parishad-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [BJP-VHP-RSS] combine have thought fit to violate this sacred trust which every Indian holds dear and close to his heart. Every effort was made to halt this mad rush to destruction. Every political and constitutional initiative was set in motion so that we could with wisdom and tolerance and reconcile the irreconcilable. This is the only way a democratic and civilised nation can function. If any set of people choose to break out of this mould and arrogate to themselves the right to do what they want in pursuit of power at any cost, the nation will have to summon the courage to meet such a threat squarely and decisively.

Chandra Shekhar Meets Press, Comments on Ayodhya

93AS0384A Madras THE HINDU in English 10 Dec 92
p 4

[Quotation marks as published]

[TEXT] New Delhi, Dec 9. The Samajwadi Janata Party [SJP] president, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, today sought the resignation of the Prime Minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao. He said Mr. Rao was guilty of 'inaction' and "failed" to protect the Babri Masjid, but later "over reacted" by arresting leaders of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] and the Bajrang Dal.

Addressing a press conference, the former Prime Minister said Mr. Rao's explanation that he had been betrayed by the BJP and VHP leaders was 'unacceptable.'

It was Mr. Rao, who had betrayed the nation. As such he had no moral authority to continue in office. He failed to manage the crisis for six hours not knowing how to stop the demolition.

Pointing out that media and intelligence reports that had cautioned the Government about the coming events, Mr. Chandra Shekhar said it was lacking in "political will." The Prime Minister's inaction in the face of the 'support' assured by national Integration Council members except those belonging to the BJP was painful.

By arresting the leaders of the kar sevaks under simple IPC [Indian Penal Code] sections, Mr. Rao offered them the mantle of martyrs.

Mr. Chandra Shekhar was confident that a negotiated settlement of the issue could still be found with joint efforts by religious leaders and representatives of the communities. But there should be no political interference. He did not rule out the possibility of a political realignment to fight communal forces and said that he would not mind joining anybody in the crusade.

As for the proposed ban on communal organizations, he said that such steps in the past had proved counter-productive. If an outfit was to be banned, it should be done with an element of surprise. What would be achieved by banning an organization after publicity?

Earlier, at a separate press conference, the former Deputy Prime Minister and president of the SJP Parliamentary Board, Mr. Devi Lal described the demolition as a 'conspiracy' and attack on the secular fabric of the country. Both those who damaged the masjid and those who trusted the BJP were equally responsible. But Mr. Devi Lal did not support the demand for the resignation of Mr. Rao. A change of leadership at this critical juncture was not desirable, he said.

Pawar: Mosque To Be Restored in 12 Months

93AS0460A New Delhi PATRIOT in English 13 Dec 92
p 1

[Article: "Temple, Mosque in 12 Months: Pawar"]

[Text] Bombay, Dec 12 (UNI)—Defence Minister Sharad Pawar today said the Government will restore the status quo at Ayodhya by constructing a temple and mosque within 12 months.

Mr. Pawar, who earlier in the day visited the riot-hit areas of the metropolis, told reporters that he would be personally happy if the issue was resolved within a 12-month period and that was the general thinking in the Government.

He said the Congress and its Government at the Centre was committed to building the mosque and the temple at Ayodhya. The Prime Minister had time and again assured the people of the country on the issue, he said and added that the time had now come when the Government should no longer discuss the subject but simply take decisions and execute them.

Asked whether the temple would be built at the same site where it was sought to be built by the kar sevaks, Mr. Pawar said the site was not important. The immediate task before the Government was deal to heal the hurt caused to both the communities.

The temple would be built at Ayodhya and the government would finalise its plans with regard to the site and architecture after the court judgement was received.

Replying to another question he said the State Government and the Centre will have to fund the construction of the mosque and the temple.

Replying to another question Mr. Pawar said there was a feeling in the Congress that all secular and Left parties should come together to combat communal forces. The Left parties too have realised the need for such a cooperation to combat religious fundamentalism, which is the main problem confronted by the country.

Denying press reports about Government move to ban the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] he said the Government was not thinking of such action against any political party as they were recognised by the Election Commission and received certain percentage of votes in the election.

He gave a similar reply when asked why Shiv Sena was spared, stating that it was a political party.

Mr. Pawar justified the ban on the Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP], the Bajrang Dal, Jamaat-e-Islami and the Islamic Sevak Sangh (ISS), saying they were communal organisations.

Mr. Pawar said during his visit to the riot hit areas, people generally complained against the police and the Shiv Sena. They also wanted additional troops of Army deployment.

While praising the police and the State Government which he said had done their best and had brought the situation quickly under control, he, however, agreed that the gap in the police credibility was needed to be plugged.

Mr. Pawar said the Army would be withdrawn from the riot-hit areas as early as possible.

Mr. Pawar, who turned 53 today, donated blood for riot victims at the Sion Hospital and appealed to all people and secular forces in particular to help the Government in its efforts to restore early normalisation in the State and other parts of the country.

Masjid Leader Leaves National Integration Council

93AS0456A Madras THE HINDU in English 15 Dec 92
p 11

[Article: "Babri Masjid Panel Leader Quits NIC (National Integration Council)"]

[Text] New Delhi, Dec. 14—The All-India Babri, Masjid Action Committee (AIBMAC) leader, Mr. Jawed Hameed, has resigned from the National Integration Council [NIC]

and said that the Government and national political leaders owed an apology for their betrayal of trust and promise at Ayodhya on December 6.

Mr. Habeeb said here today that he had expected the President, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet to resign following the "macabre dance of destruction" that took place and the carnage in the country afterwards. The leaders of the Opposition parties should also have resigned because they completely failed to prevent the worst.

Mr. Habeeb has demanded that the Government in its white paper on Ayodhya, should detail the events since December 1949, when the idols were first placed inside the Babri mosque, explain how the mosque came to be unlocked and subsequent talks were deadlocked. If this was not done, he said, he would come out with a "black paper" on the Ayodhya dispute. He demanded that the mosque be rebuilt on the site before January 26.

Although it was the political leaders who had failed, and he himself was powerless and without any authority, he was resigning from NIC in response to "my conscience."

Mr. Habeeb was one of the moderates in AIBMAC and had been to a great deal responsible for the Committee's non-confrontationist and cooperative posture during the negotiations on Ayodhya, saying repeatedly that the Ayodhya issue was not a mandir-masjid issue but a national debate on the secular Constitution and place of the minorities.

Parliament Resolution Condemns Masjid Destruction

93AS0461A Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
17 Dec 92 p 4

[Article: "The Resolution"; boldface words as published]

[Text] **The following is the text of the resolution passed in both Houses of Parliament today:**

"This House strongly and unequivocally condemns the desecration and demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya by and at the instigation of forces represented among others by the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad], RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] and the Bajrang Dal, which has caused communal violence in the country. Such act of vandalism was carried out not only in violation of the orders of the Supreme Court but amounted to an attack on the secular foundations of our country."

"This House expresses its anguish at the happening and wishes to reiterate its resolve that it will ceaselessly endeavour to uphold the secular and democratic traditions of our country and for the maintenance of the rule of law."

"This House conveys its sympathies and condolences to all victims of the tragic incidents which have been caused consequent upon the sacrilege at Ayodhya and demands from the government all necessary steps to rehabilitate the affected people. It appeals to the people of the country to maintain peace and communal harmony."

Analyst Contemplates Effects of Communal Groups' Ban

93AS0394A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 13 Dec 92
p 7

[Article by K. K. Katyal in New Delhi: "How Effective Will the Ban Be?"]

[Text] The Centre's response to the sensitive issues, thrown up by the Ayodhya vandalism, is discernible—but only in part—from the official announcements, the statements of the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao and his senior colleagues and the "first set of measures." A clear idea will be possible only after the full picture emerges. Of course, the stage for the final judgment will be reached when the implementation process is over.

Stung by the "extreme perfidy" of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] Government with the law, the Constitution, the Supreme Court and the Centre, the Prime Minister has in mind a package of measures, covering both the immediate and long-term objectives in the administrative and political fields. The immediate package has already been unfolded. It includes the ban on the "communal organisations," the arrest of the leaders of the BJP and others in the Sangh Parivar, "strongest action possible under the law" against the perpetrators of various offences and the fixing of the responsibility of different authorities.

The gap of three days between the announcement of the decision on the ban and the actual implementation gave rise to speculation on the reasons for the delay. The ban covered the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh], and two other organisations of the "Sangh Parivar"—the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP] and Bajrang Dal—and two Muslim parties, the Jamaat-e-Islami [JI] and the Islamic Sevak Sang [ISS]. Was it because of the differences among the top leaders of the Government and its various wings on the desirability of the step and its implications? Perhaps they wanted to be clear about the practical and political problems that could arise from the drastic step—the actual enforcement of the embargo which could entail additional work load for the already over-burdened administrative machinery, the impact on the fortunes of the Congress(I) of the backlash from the supporters of the banned organisations, the possibility of fresh problems for the Government and the ruling party. The other explanation seemed more convincing—that the Centre sought to prepare itself for the consequences of the ban in relation to the BJP Governments in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. True, the BJP was not to be touched but the three Chief Ministers and most members of the three Cabinets either formally belonged to the RSS or had close informal connections with it. As such, they could not be expected to proceed against it or carry out the instructions from the Centre on issues arising from the ban. The possibility of consequent pressures, the untenability of the position

of the three State Governments and their take-over by the Centre were, thus, clearly anticipated. This required a log of contingency planning—and hence the time gap. Also, the administration wanted to make a fool-proof case against the five organisations, so that confirmation of the decision by the tribunals, envisaged under the Unlawful Activities Act (under which the can was imposed) causes no problem.

Significant in the long term context are the ideas mooted, but not yet given a final shape, to change the rules of the electoral game. This may be done by amending the election law, the Representation of the People's Act, so as to bar the participation in the poll process of the parties, with platforms based on a religious appeal. Even the law, in its present form, does not allow the "promotion of, or attempt to promote, feelings of enmity or hatred between the different classes of the citizens of India on grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language" by a candidate or his agent. This is one of the "corrupt practices" which is a valid ground for the setting aside of the election through a petition later. This, it is felt, is not an effective deterrent and, in any case, the remedies are applied long after the mischief is done because of the time-consuming legal processes.

What is intended now is an extension of this bar, so as to make it operative before the election rather than after it and to make it applicable to parties rather than individuals. This is considered necessary to remove what are described as distortions introduced in the electoral process by the participation of the non-secular parties. At the Tirupati Congress(I) plenary, Mr. Rao made a case for a public debate on this issue. "It is only logical to expect," he said then, "that a secular democracy should be run with the participation of secular political parties. Non-secular parties should have no place in the conduct of a secular democratic State." There was no follow-up but the idea is sought to be pursued now in view of the new realities where, to use the Prime Minister's words "the creature of the Constitution destroyed it" or "the child stabbed the mother." This was how the Kalyan Singh Government's action was termed by Mr. Rao the other day.

It will not be easy to translate the new concept into practice. In the past, the definition of a "religious organisation" proved elusive, with the result that recourse had to be taken to a code of conduct, a platitudinous set of do's and don'ts for political parties, that proved ineffective because of the absence of sanctions. The issue engaged the attention of the national Integration Council from the time of its inception in 1961, when it proclaimed that "no party should indulge in any activity which would aggravate the existing differences or create mutual hatred or cause tension between different castes and communities, religious or linguistic." Subsequent exercises to define a "communal organisation" did not succeed. The Minorities Commission attempted one but others differed with it. This is what the Commission said: "A communal organisation is one intended to facilitate the pursuit of or actually pursuing the object of exploiting a difference of caste, community,

religion, race, language, culture, or region for the purpose of obtaining unfair advantages at the expense of other communities or propagating hatred or hostility against others not sharing the same organisational basis; and, any activity pursuant to such an object will constitute an "objectionable activity."

Now, it is not merely a question of definition but of sanctions.

Papers Report, Review RSS Activities

Reaction to Ayodhya

93AS0454A Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
17 Dec 92 p 7

[Article: "RSS Alleges RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) Hand in Demolition"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Bombay, Dec. 16—The RSS [Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh] here alleged that "agent provocateurs" sent by and under instructions from the Union Government demolished the disputed structure in Ayodhya on December 6. In a new twist to the tale, the RSS claimed that "kar sevaks had nothing to do with it" since those who climbed atop the domes and demolished them "have not been identified as kar sevaks."

In its first assessment since December 6, the RSS leadership accused the Narasimha Rao Government of "sending RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) officials disguised as kar sevaks who first ran towards the structure and began demolishing it."

The leadership held that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the first pseudo-secularist in India and the root cause of the entire Ayodhya problem.

At the RSS headquarters here, Mr. Shrikant Joshi, member of the National executive, put forth the Sangh's point of view hours before the police sealed the Sangh office. The Sangh's 78-year-old ailing leader, Mr. Bala-saheb Deoras steadfastly refused to address any question but his aide Mr. Joshi spoke at length.

'Not Identified'

The 56-year-old former organizer for north-east stoutly maintained that the "kar sevaks who demolished the structure" have not been identified as belonging to either the RSS, the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] or the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], though leaders of these organizations have commended their workers for the demolition. Mr. Joshi told THE STATESMAN that the "agent provocateur" charge has not been made without basis. The Government of India, especially the Congress-I politicians, have proved themselves capable of this in the 1967 anti-cow slaughter movement launched by the RSS and affiliate organizations.

The RSS leader said that it was "a mystery how the tools and implements used in the demolition came there. In

fact, the group which rushed to the domes was not from the crowd of kar sevaks listening to Mr. Advani's speech: that group came from the other side." Asked about the near impossibility of infiltration given the repeated and strict screening by the RSS, VHP and BJP, Mr. Joshi said "We have the RAW which is capable of anything."

In a renewed bid to deflect attention and accusations away from the RSS and the BJP, Mr. Joshi stated that Defence Minister Mr. Sharad Pawar "had managed to infiltrate some of his supporters into the kar sevak community in July this year. We found it out later but they had done it," Mr. Joshi said.

'No Rebuilding'

Though Mr. Deoras and other RSS veterans here described the demolition as "unfortunate," the Sangh parivar categorically ruled out making good the damage.

"Even if we accept that it was an accident on our part, there is no question of rebuilding the structure. There are some accidents that cannot be redeemed," Mr. Joshi asserted.

The RSS leadership here held that Mahatma Gandhi was the only true secularist in this country. "He had no reservations to say that he was a Hindu, that's why we think he was the true secularist, the leadership stated." "But pandit Nehru was the first pseudo-secularist here." He said it was an accident that he was a Hindu and in his approach lies the root cause of the Ayodhya problem.

The RSS parivar here claimed that there is no threat of a "Jihad following the Ayodhya crisis." If the Islamic countries dare to wage a Jihad a development in Pakistan reported on BBC yesterday, they will get the answer they got from the Jews, declared Mr. Joshi. "Last time, in 1947, we surrendered to them mainly because there was a third power in between. This time the Hindus are more awakened and organized, there will be no surrender" he said.

Judiciary Blamed

The RSS has charged the judiciary with "playing into the hands of the Government and Congress politicians" on the Ayodhya issue. The Sangh parivar believes that the Allahabad Bench of the Lucknow High Court, "played mischief" regarding the judgment on the 2.77 acres issue. Usually an interim order is followed by the final order within six weeks. Here that is not the case and there are contradictions in the two judgments. This was done purposely. From the beginning, the Government of India and the All-India Babari Masjid Action Committee have been delaying the issue. The Government wants to show the world that VHP and BJP do not have faith in court judgments, Mr. Joshi declared.

General Secretary Interviewed

93AS0454B Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
19 Dec 92 p 4

[Article by Rajeev Deshpande: "Rao Had Agreed to Temple: RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh)"]

[Text] New Delhi, Dec. 18: The Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, and the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] had reached a broad understanding that the "preliminary construction" of a Ram temple would be permitted on the 2.77 acres of land acquired by the Kalyan Singh government, the organisation's joint general secretary, Prof. Rajendra Singh, said.

Speaking to THE TELEGRAPH, Prof. Singh said, "In our discussions we reached an understanding that work could begin on this (acquired) land and the government would then try and resolve the main dispute." The RSS had found this proposal acceptable although the government had changed its stand from time to time.

The RSS leader said the Prime Minister had agreed to this solution in the final meetings he had held with the now banned organisation's leaders. This was after the government's public statement saying it was keen to link the land acquisition to the main dispute. "The Prime Minister said if we went on with construction for a year or two on the acquired land, he would try and find a solution. We asked him for a time frame, but on this he would not commit himself."

The RSS leader said he saw the Prime Minister as a "well meaning, sweet talking man, with no airs about him. But he did not seem to be an effective decision maker. The Prime Minister has been acting under pressure. I am sure he would not take the present hard line without being under pressure from within. And when you take decisions under pressure, you make mistakes."

Prof. Singh felt the government had committed a serious mistake by dismissing the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] state governments without any valid reason. "The government kept saying it would not dismiss the Kalyan Singh government because it was a democratic, elected government. But now the Centre has dismissed three governments on flimsy grounds," Prof. Singh said.

The RSS leader said he was also deeply disappointed with the judiciary as "the judges seem to function as if they have nothing to do with the rest of society. If the courts had delivered a judgment before December 6, a lot of damage would have been avoided." The courts had to realise the responsibility vested in them.

Saying the destruction of the disputed shrine was unplanned, Prof. Singh said two things were clear. "There is no question of a masjid being built. No one will allow that. But, more importantly, we have been saying that an excavation at the site will prove the existence of a Hindu structure."

The RSS said a team of archaeologists should be appointed to examine the site and give its findings on whether a "Hindu structure" existed. "Such a move will solve the dispute permanently."

Strategy To Counter Ban

93AS0454C *Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA*
in English 22 Dec 92 p 4

[Article by Rajdeep Sardesai: "Sangh Strategy To Counter Ban"]

[Text] Bombay, December 21. The sangh parivar has decided to embark on a low-key mass awareness programme to spread the message of Hindutva and explain the events at Ayodhya in a manner that will not be seen as violating the ban imposed on the Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh (RSS) the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal.

After a series of secret meetings held in Delhi, Nagpur and Bombay over the last week, the sangh parivar has hit upon a strategy that will involve all its members assuming a more open political role. "We are certain that this ban is just not going to work, but will only make the RSS and its front organisations even stronger," said a senior BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, who is also an RSS activist, and has been involved in the post-Ayodhya decision-making.

While the specifics of the strategy are still being worked out, the general guidelines have been decided upon. Firstly, the traditional drill which is held at the RSS shakhas every morning will be replaced by informal prayer meetings in various places. Party cadres are expected to meet regularly through satyanarayan pujas and gita pravachans (religious discourse).

"You can ban our organisation but you cannot stop us from praying together or reciting Vande Mataram," said an RSS leader.

Secondly, posters and pamphlets will be prepared explaining the sangh parivar's stand on the Ayodhya issue and other related questions. Two video cassettes, one on Ayodhya, the other on Kashmir, are to be made in Hindi and English. The publicity campaign will be handled by organisations which are not directly affected by the ban.

An initial set of 10 pamphlets has already been planned and is likely to be printed shortly. These pamphlets are likely to be issued in the name of the BJP Yuva Morcha. One of them questions why the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court did not give a judgement on the acquisition of land in Ayodhya before the kar seva deadline expired on December six.

Thirdly, the sangh parivar has planned a massive door-to-door campaign, apart from street rallies, to "educate the masses." While the BJP will play the leading role in such political activities, other outfits of the saffron brigade, which have hitherto chosen to remain in the background, will also be expected to join in.

For example, student activists from the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad are to be asked to get involved in direct political activity. Even a low-key organisation like the Rambhau Mhalgi Prabhodhini, which has been largely

involved in educational and socio-cultural activities, is expected to contribute to the door-to-door campaign.

RSS leaders claim that even traditional swayamsevaks, who have been suspicious of political activism in the past, are now willing to offer their services to the BJP. "The ban has convinced us that our dream of a Hindu rashtra can only be realised through greater political involvement," a RSS leader said, adding that a "whole army" of people would now be available to the BJP.

Fourthly, while some RSS-VHP top-level leaders have gone underground, other ordinary members have been asked to conduct small group meetings among friends at their residences. To get around the ban provisions, these meetings are to be held by persons in their individual capacity and not on any official RSS-VHP platform.

For example, in South Bombay, Mr. Ashok Chowgule, a VHP activist and prominent industrialist, has been inviting small groups of 15-20 persons almost every day since December six to explain the "factual position." Many of these invitees include leaders from the business community. "I am only trying to take the issue to a logical plane and explain the truth as to why such a mass mobilisation of kar sevaks took place in Ayodhya," he says.

Fifthly, the sangh parivar is also thinking in terms of forming a separate organisation to co-ordinate its entire strategy. RSS leaders are considering giving the new body the name of Ram Sevak Sangh. A group of lawyers is also examining whether this change of name would allow the party to ignore the ban on its regular activities.

According to Mr. Vasant Tambe, general secretary of the RSS city unit, the first priority for the organisation is to have the ban imposed on it revoked in a court of law. A petition to this effect is already pending before the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court. "Before we go any further, we would like to get our shakhas working again," he said.

There are more than 500 RSS shakhas in the city, which have been closed ever since the ban was imposed.

Anatomy of Organization

93AS0454D *Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA*
in English 18 Dec 92 p 11

[Article by Pankaj Vohra: "RSS (Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh) Survived Many Bans"; italicized words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, December 17. The recent ban on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has once again focussed attention on the organisation about which not much is known. The organisation has been banned on two previous occasions and survived both times.

The RSS works on a very old technique developed by its founder Dr. Kesav Baliram Hedgewar, which emphasizes that the *modus operandi* should always be in accordance with the needs of the situation. Therefore, it

is to be seen who the organisation copes with the ban even though its general secretary, Mr. H. V. Seshadri, has "suspended its activities." The announcement by the general secretary is principally to prepare the ground for a legal battle which is expected to follow.

Just prior to the ban there were about 30,000 RSS "shakhas" held in different parts of the country. In addition, there were about 10,000 bi-weekly gatherings. The RSS has its network throughout the country and has branches in about 15 lakh villages. Its active membership strength is around 12 lakhs. It has branches abroad and the number of its sympathisers is unknown.

A fact not well-known about the RSS is that its sympathisers have managed to systematically infiltrate various other political organisations other than the BJP and the bureaucracy. Significantly, a major factor which has contributed to strengthen the RSS has been its ability to infiltrate other outfits.

The RSS has several wings. The Bharatiya Kisan Sangh is active amongst farmers, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh amongst workers, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad among students and teacher and the Rashtriya Sevika Samithi among women. The BJP is also a part of the *sangh parivar* and its religious groups include the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Virat Hindu Samaj (VHS). The organisation brings out several publications, the most important being *The Organiser* and the *Panchajanya*. Other publications are in a different language like *Tarun Bharat* in Marathi, *Janmabhoomi* in Malayalam, *Vivek* in Kannada, *Alok* in Assamese, *Jagruthi* in Telugu and *Sadhna* in Tamil.

The RSS was founded in 1925 as its founder, Dr. Hedgewar, believed that building of a nation was a task beyond the capacity of political parties and politicians. He was of the view that the task of nation building could be done better if politicians were not involved and thus decided to build a cadre. After his death in June, 1940, Mr. Golwalkar, known as "Guruji," took over and the RSS became a multi-dimensional organisation. Mr. Golwalkar was only 34-years-old when he took over and remained the chief till his death in 1973. Mr. Balasaheb Deoras, the present head, took over then.

Mr. Deoras and his younger brother, Bhaurao Deoras, who passed away early this year, put a lot of emphasis on politics. It is during their tenure that the RSS became increasingly involved in political activity. The RSS chief has not been keeping good health lately but it is unlikely that whoever will succeed him is going to alter these programmes. Those who hold high positions in the organisation include Mr. Seshadri, Prof. Rajinder Singh, Mr. K. S. Sudershan and Mr. Moropant Pingle.

The RSS basically functions through the system of "shakhas" and "pracharakas." In the RSS terminology, a "shakha" is a gathering of active volunteers at a particular place under the saffron flag. The "shakha" is held daily and at a fixed time and its main aim is to bring together the volunteers. A person remains a "swayamsevak" as long as he continues to attend the "shakha" and

his membership ceases when he stops. The "shakhas" are also used by senior functionaries to give out the organisation line and to spread information suitable to the *sangh parivar* which functions collectively to operate as a pressure group in different fields.

A unique feature of the "shakhas" is that they are informal gatherings and no record or register is maintained anywhere. The place where the "shakha" is held is known as "samparkasthan." A "shakha" normally comprises "swayamsevaks" with a "gata nayak" as the leader of the group. The "shikshak" and the "mukhya shikshak" are above him and some "shakhas" also have a secretary known as "karyawaha."

The "swayamsevaks" are broadly divided into four categories according to their age group. And again depending on their age group, there are three types of "shakhas" that are held. The "proudha shakha" (40 years and above), "tarun shakha" (14 to 40) and "bal shakha" (14 and below).

There are three types of "shakhas" depending on what time they are held during the day or night. The "prabhat shakha," the "sayam shakha" and the "ratri shakha." The weekly "shakha" is known as "saptahik shakha." Each member is expected to be dressed in uniform.

The "shakha" meeting normally starts with the hosting of the flag and saluting it. This is followed by special prayers, physical exercises, singing of patriotic songs, intellectual discussions, singing of devotional songs and narration of patriotic quotations.

The "pracharaks" function on purely voluntary basis. No "pracharak" is paid any salary or honorarium. All the "pracharaks" are supposed to be single and do not live with their families. The "sarsangchalak" is the chief of the organisation and acts like the head of the family.

Text of Notifications on RSS, Other Suspensions

93AS0457A New Delhi PATRIOT in English 14 Dec 92
p 6

[Article: "Ministry of Home Affairs Notification"; quotation marks as published]

[Text]

New Delhi, the 10th December 1992

S.O.898(E).—Whereas Shri Sirajul Hasan, Amir of the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (hereinafter referred to as JEIH) declared in a meeting at Delhi held on the 27th May, 1990 that the separation of Kashmir from India was inevitable;

And whereas Shri Abdul Aziz, Naib-Amir of JEIH, addressing a meeting at Malerkotla on the 1st August, 1991, observed that the Government of India should hold plebiscite on Kashmir;

And whereas JEIH has been disclaiming and questioning the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India;

And whereas for all or any of the grounds set out in the preceding paragraphs, as also on the basis of other facts, and materials in its possession which the Central Government considers to be against the public interest to disclose, the Central Government is of the opinion that the JEIH is an unlawful association;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (37 of 1967)), the Central Government hereby declares the 'Jamaat-e-Islami Hindi' to be an unlawful association, and directs, in exercise of the powers conferred by the proviso to sub-section (3) of that section, that this notification shall, subject to any order that may be made under section 4 of the said Act, have effect from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

Notification

New Delhi, the 10th December, 1992

S.O.899(E).—Whereas Shri I.C.S. Abdul Nazar Madani, Chairman of the Islamic Sewak Sangh (hereinafter referred to as ISS) had been giving inflammatory speeches with a view to promoting, on grounds of religion, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different communities;

And whereas Shri I.C.S. Abdul Nazar Madania, in a public meeting at Poonthura, District Trivandrum on the 30th June, 1992, has stated that thousands of Muslims were killed and tortured in Kashmir and authorities were not taking effective steps and Muslim women were being raped by Hindus with the support of authorities;

And whereas Shri I.C.S. Abdul Nazar Madani, in a recorded speech for public circulation, has stated that Muslims cannot live as a Muslim in this country and Muslim brothers should be prepared to get organised as also question the right of the people to hoist national flag in Kashmir;

And whereas the following criminal cases have been registered against Shri I.C.S. Abdul Nazar Madani u/s 153A and 153B of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860);

(a) Karunagapally PS (District Kollam) Case No. 109/92 dated 20th March, 1992 u/s 153A;

(b) Kundara PS (District Kollam) Case No. 117/92 dated 28th March, 1992 u/s 153A;

(c) Kasba PS (District Calicut) Case No. 103/92 dated 21st May, 1992 u/s 153B;

And whereas the ISS has been encouraging and aiding its followers to undertake unlawful activities within the meaning of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (37 of 1967);

And whereas for all or any of the grounds set out in the preceding paragraphs, as also on the basis of other facts and materials in its possession which the Central Government considers to be against the public interest to disclose the Central Government is of the opinion that the ISS is an unlawful association;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (37 of 1967), the Central Government hereby declares the 'Islamic Sewak Sangh' to be an unlawful association, and direct, in exercise of the powers conferred by the proviso to sub-section (3) of that section, that this notification shall subject to any order that may be made under section 4 of the said Act have effect from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

Notification

New Delhi, the 10th December, 1992

S.O.900(E).—Whereas Shri Vishnu Hari Dalmia, President of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP], in a meeting held in Delhi on the 8th November, 1992, declared that the Ram Janma Bhoomi temple would be constructed in the same way it was demolished by Babar and that Kar Sewaks were pressurising the leadership that they should be called not to construct the Ram Janma Bhoomi temple but to demolish the Babri Masjid;

And whereas Shri Ashok Singhal, General Secretary of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, in a public meeting in Bilaspur on the 14th November, 1992, stated that Muslims would be taught the language of force in case they would fail to understand the language of reasoning;

And whereas Smt Vijaya Raje Scindia, Member of the Governing Council of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, in a press conference in Patna on the 23rd November, 1992, stated that Kar Sewa would be carried out with full determination, defying all restrictions, if require including even the Court orders. She also averred that the construction of the Ram temple was a matter of faith and it could not be confined to the jurisdiction of the judiciary. She also added that the temple would be constructed at all costs and for which the so-called the Babri Mosque will have to be demolished;

And whereas Acharya Giriraj Kishore, Joint General Secretary of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP], in a press conference in Delhi on the 28th November, 1992, warned that in case legal battle and the politics came in the way of temple renovation at Ayodhya, direct action in respect of all other mosques which were built, after demolition of temple cannot be ruled out;

And whereas the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has been similarly encouraging and aiding its followers to promote or attempt to promote, on grounds of religion, disharmony or feeling of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different communities;

And whereas the followers of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad had participated in the demolition of the structure commonly known as Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babri Masjid, situated in Ayodhya in the State of Uttar Pradesh, on the 6th December, 1992.

And whereas for all or any of the grounds set out in the preceding paragraphs, as also on the basis of other facts and materials in its possession which the Central Government considered to be against the public interest to disclose, the Central Government is of the opinion that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad is an unlawful association;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (37 of 1967), the Central Government hereby declares the "Vishwa Hindu Parishad" to be an unlawful association, and directs, in exercise of the powers conferred by the proviso to sub-section (3) of that section, that this notification shall, subject to any order that may be made under section 4 of the said Act, have effect from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

Notification

New Delhi, the 10th December, 1992

S.O.901(E)—Whereas the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (hereinafter referred to as RSS) has been encouraging and aiding its followers to promote or attempt to promote, on grounds of religion, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious communities;

And whereas the RSS has been making imputations and assertions that members of certain religious communities have alien religions and cannot, therefore, be considered nationals of India, thereby causing and likely to cause disharmony or feeling of enmity or hatred or ill-will between such members and other persons;

And whereas the RSS Swayamsewaks had participated in the demolition of the structure commonly known as Ram-Janma Bhoomi-Babri Masjid, situated in Ayodhya in the State of Uttar Pradesh, on the 6th December, 1992.

And whereas for all or any of the grounds set out in the preceding paragraphs, as also on the basis of other facts and materials in its possession which the Central Government considers to be against the public interest to disclose, the Central Government is of the opinion that the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh is an unlawful association;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967 (37 of 1967), the Central Government hereby declares the "Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh" to be an unlawful association, and directs, in exercise of the powers conferred by the proviso of sub-section (3) of that section, that this notification shall, subject to any order that may be made under section 4 of the said Act, have effect from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

Notification

New Delhi, the 10th December, 1992

SO.902(E)—Whereas the Bajrang Dal has been encouraging and aiding its followers to promote or attempt to

promote on grounds of religion, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious communities;

And whereas the Bajrang Dal has been organising exercises, drills or other similar activity intending that the participants in such activities shall use criminal force or violence or knowing it to be likely that the participants in such activity will use criminal force or violence against other religious communities;

And whereas the members of the Bajrang Dal had participated in the demolition of the structure commonly known as Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babri Masjid, situated in Ayodhya in the State of Uttar Pradesh, on the 6th December, 1992.

And whereas for all or any of the grounds set out in the preceding paragraphs, as also on the basis of other facts and materials in its possession which the Central Government considers to be against the public interest to disclose, the Central Government is of the opinion that the Bajrang Dal is an unlawful association;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (37 of 1967), the Central Government hereby declares the "Bajrang Dal" to be an unlawful association, and directs, in exercise of the powers conferred by the proviso to sub-section (3) of that section, that this notification shall, subject to any order that may be made under section 4 of the said Act, have effect from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

Effect of Ban on RSS, VHP

93AS0391B Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 12 Dec 92 p 9

[Article by Saibal Dasgupta: "Ban Will Not Affect RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) Plan"; italicized words as published]

[Text] Lucknow, December 11. With 22 different RSS-sponsored [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] organisations actively involved in the Janambhoomi stir, the ban on the RSS, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal will hardly suppress the next phase of the offensive that they have already set in motion.

Three other independent organisations which influence that course of the movement are the all-India sant samiti led by Acharya Vamdev, the Ram mukti yagna samiti led by Mahant Avaidyanath and the Raj Janambhoomi nyas which as Rs [Rupees] 6.39 crores in bank accounts alone.

A plan is already afoot to slip some of the hardliners of the banned organisations into the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and indeed highjacking it from within. Members of the VHP and the Bajrang Dal will hardly find it

difficult to come under banners like the Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad, the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh and the Bharatiya Majdoor Sangh.

The ban hardly matters to the sadhus' leadership whose organisations like the sant samiti and the dharma sansad have been left behind. Neither does the ban affect the effectiveness of the likes of Mr. M.M. Joshi, Mr. Vijay Katiyar and Ms. Uma Bharati because of their positions as BJP MPs [members of Parliament].

The propaganda work can continue in full steam under the aegis of the Vishwa Sambad kendra which has independent offices in Delhi, Lucknow and several state capitals. Most of these offices are well-equipped with communication facilities like fax, telephones and vehicles, besides copy-writers that include journalists.

The advocates of "Hindu rashtra" run a variety of both popular and in-house publications like the *Organisor*, *Rashtriya Dharma*, *Vishwa Samachar* in English and several Indian languages. As it is, the vishwa sambad kendra is in the midst of an ambitious book publishing programme.

Most of the organisations for championing a variety of causes were sponsored by the RSS after the ban imposed during the emergency. These organisations which will not form the outlets of RSS though and tactical operations on the ground include sainik parishad for ex-servicemen, rashtriya lekhak manch for writers and Itihash sankalan samiti for historians.

The moderate leaders like Mr. L.K. Advani will be forced to either accept the tough line advocated by the likes of Ms. Bharati, Mahant Avaidyanath and Mr. Katiyar or face ideological incarceration.

The other RSS-sponsored organisations are the vidya bharati which runs educational institutions, adhivakta sangh for lawyers, Durga Vahini which is the female counterpart of Bajrang Dal, Bharat vikas parishad, Hindu jagran manch, a welfare organisation called seva Bharati, a cultural body called sanskar bharti, seva samarpan sanstha, pustak prakashan, Bharatiya Janata yuva morcha, sahitya parasar, lok bharati, upbhokta sangh for consumerism and the rashtriya seva samiti.

Most of these organisations have not been able to make much headway in the respective fields. For the most part, historians writers, lawyers, industrial labour and social workers have refused to come under these banners. They are more or less manned and run by trained RSS activists.

For the first time after the emergency, all these organisations were asked to pull out of their respective fields.

Ban on RSS Claimed Ineffective

93AS0438G Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
15 Dec 92 p 7

[Article by Pranay Sharma and Rajeev Deshpande: "Ban on RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) Unlikely To Be Effective"; boldface words as published]

[Text]

Nagpur headquarters functioning normally.

New Delhi, Dec. 14: Four days after the government notified a ban on five communal outfits and two days after sealing the offices of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS], the organisation's joint general secretary, Prof. Rajendra Singh, continues to function from his office.

The phones at the Keshav Kunj office of the RSS at Jhandewalan here continue to be manned by the banned organisation's workers and inquiries by THE TELEGRAPH were answered with the reply that Prof. Singh or "Rajju Bhaiyya," as he is known to the swayamsevak, and his secretary, Mr. Shiv Prasad, were watching the news on television.

Despite the government's claim that a countrywide crackdown on the offices of the RSS and VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] was in progress, the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] office-bearers here said that the Nagpur headquarters of the RSS were functioning normally.

According to the BJP, the police had paid a prefunctionary visit to the Nagpur office and had stuck a notice on the door. However, activity with a regular stream of visitors was unabated.

Deoras under house-arrest:

According to reports, the RSS chief, Mr. Balasaheb Deoras, was put under house arrest this evening at Nagpur headquarters sealed by the police.

According to the Delhi police commissioner, Mr. M.B. Kaushal, eight persons were arrested and eight offices of the banned organisations sealed in the capital today, taking the total number of arrests since yesterday to 11 and a total of 12 offices sealed.

Those arrested included four office-bearers of the RSS and the Jamaat-e-Islami, two of the VHP and one of the Bajrang Dal. Mr. Kaushal said that the police sealed seven offices of the Bajrang Dal, three of Jamaat and one each of VHP and RSS.

Banks have also been informed to freeze the accounts of these organisations. An official spokesman said today that out of 953 arrested in UP [Uttar Pradesh] alone, 789 were from the RSS-VHP-Bajrang Dal combine. The rest were from the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and the Islamic Sewak Sangh.

In West Bengal, 128 arrests were made while 17 offices were sealed, while in Haryana, six offices were sealed.

The BJP-ruled states of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have reported that 29 offices have been sealed and 79 arrests made, while 20 bank accounts belonging to the VHP and RSS have been frozen.

In Delhi though a number of activists of the RSS-VHP-Bajrang Dal were rounded up by the police, they were granted bail within hours. The banned organisations have instructed their cadres to apply for bail in which they will be helped by legal experts.

The official spokesman said that various states will set up tribunals to examine the validity of arrests and seizure of property under the ban notification. Any of the banned organisation has the right to approach the tribunal.

The government's drive to identify and take action against RSS members who have "infiltrated" into offices has run into trouble. Home ministry sources pointed out that though the Central civil services rules provide for action against any employee taking part in political activity, the pinpointing of such behaviour is difficult.

Sources said that from time to time the government issued circulars to its employees reminding them of the specific rules which prohibit them from taking part in political activity. But now, it is likely to include the names of the five banned organisations.

Unlike what was the practice during the Emergency, the government will not launch a "witch-hunt," but will only attempt to "isolate" leaders. Sources said that short of encouraging informers, the possibility of gathering hard evidence in offices where the banned organisations have a stronghold would be very difficult.

Further, an organisation like the RSS, which has no formal registration of members, would be a stumbling block. Many government employees are just sympathisers and not full-time workers and it would not be easy to take action against them. Action under the rules can be undertaken on the specific complaint against an employee, but in the prevailing atmosphere officials are sceptical over how many persons would be willing to furnish such information.

Government rules: According to rules, "no government servant shall be a worker of or be otherwise associated with any political party or any organisation which take part in politics. Nor shall he or she take part in or subscribe in aid of or assist in any other manner any political movement."

Moreover, the government has clarified that participation of a government servant in the activities of the RSS and Jamaat would attract disciplinary action against the employee.

RSS Said Taking on New Identity

93AS0438H Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English 21 Dec 92 p 1

[Article by Jagdish Rattanani: "RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) To Take on a New Identity"]

[Text] Nagpur, Dec. 20: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) plans to function as the "Shree Ram Sevak Sangh," or "Shree RSS," as a name that abbreviates to its original and adds "Shree" as a honorific prefix in the service of lord Ram.

The new name was coined at the RSS headquarters here soon after the 68-year-old organisation was banned under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act following the demolition of the Babri Shrine in Ayodhya.

"A special body is to be formed to carry on our daily work in the name of Shree Ram Sevak Sangh," said Mr. Shrikant Joshi, a RSS "pracharak" who is the personal assistant to the ailing RSS chief, Mr. Balasaheb Deoras.

Mr. Joshi said the Shree RSS will start functioning "when it is suitable for us." He said the forming of the planned new body will take "sometime because the decision has to be conveyed across the country."

Asked if this would invite a ban on the proposed new body, Mr. Joshi said, "Let them ban it. We will then form another body. What is there?"

He said the RSS was "not a body but an ideology," and added, "you cannot suppress it. It will come out in different forms."

Mr. Joshi recalled how the RSS circumvented a ban way back in 1930, when the Maharaja of Kolhapur objected to its name.

"We formed a Raja Ram Seva Sangh in the name of the founder of Kolhapur State. The maharaja was his descendant and could not object," he explained.

Kashmir Declares RSS, Other Parties Illegal

93AS0453A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English 21 Dec 92 p 6

[Article by Dwarika Prasad Sharma; quotation marks as published]

[Text] The Times of India News Service, Jammu, December 20—Taking the cue from the countrywide action against the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh], the Jammu and Kashmir government has stated that there was an RSS hand in some of the recent bomb blasts in the Jammu region, including the one at a school here in October.

This official disclosure forms the centrepiece of the charges listed in the government notification of December 15 declaring the RSS, the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] and the Bajrang Dal, an unlawful organisation under the Jammu and Kashmir Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1983.

In the notification, it was stated that at a joint-meeting of the three organisations held at Geeta Bhavan here on December 9, workers of the three organisations showed bricks and other material as proof that the Babri mosque had been demolished, thereby giving rise to a feeling of enmity and hatred among different religious groups in the state.

A common feature of the separate orders against the three organisations is the assertion that the authorities have in their possession other facts and material which they consider to be against the public interest to disclose.

The recent spate of bomb blasts in the Jammu region had been variously attributed to Kashmir and Punjab militants and Pakistani agents, till the bomb blast at Shri Ranbir Higher secondary school here on October 26 in which one of the two Kashmiri Pandit students carrying

the time bomb was killed when it exploded before it could be planted. Their targets were students from the Valley brought here to take their examinations in secure conditions.

The surviving youth was interrogated while he was convalescing in the police hospital, but the findings were kept secret on the ground that any disclosure would hamper further investigation of the case.

The incident had caused dismay in Jammu. It had provided a new perspective on militancy-related incidents in the region and had even shocked the police who had till then ascribed all blasts to the militants. The Shiv Sena, which does not see eye to eye with the 'Sangh parivar', had even given a call to evict the pandit migrants as they were abusing Jammu's hospitality and went working to cause a communal rift here. As a result, the Pandit community had to spend a few anxious weeks.

The people also recall the bomb blast at Veer Bhavan, the RSS headquarters here, last year in which two Pandit youths were injured. While the RSS blamed it on militants, preliminary investigation indicated that a time bomb might have gone off while being assembled. The case had been mysteriously shelved till it was suggested after the school blast that there was a connection between the two.

Various political parties, like the Congress and the National Conference, had demanded that the investigation into the school blast be taken to its logical conclusion and the public be informed accordingly. But it took the Ayodhya incident and the steps taken by the Centre in its wake and the directive given to the states, which finally forced the state authorities to reveal a part of the story.

The three orders under the notification also charge the organisations with instigating their workers to demolish the Babri mosque to build a Ram temple in its place. The organisations and interested persons have been given a month to make representation against the orders.

Excerpts From Rao Speech on No-Confidence Motion

93AS0465A Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
23 Dec 92 p 4

[Article: "There Is Need To Make New History, says PM (Prime Minister)"; italicized words as published]

[Text] *Following are excerpts of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's speech to the Lok Sabha on Monday during the debate on the no-confidence motion:*

The inexorable logic of December 6 has started in right earnest. The logic started within whatever time is necessary to take action. Action after action after action has been taken. Yes, this is a change in direction because it was warranted by the worst tragedy we could imagine and the new direction has been accepted, the challenge has been accepted, the battle has been joined.

There is no need for us to go into history now. The need for us is to make new history and that is that. For the first

time after many many years the secular forces of the country have come together, the secular parties with all their internal differences have come together. I feel that this is the time ... (Interruption) *Yeh bahut zaroori tha.*

And we will forge ahead, we will see that the secular credentials of this country are re-established fully and what our great leaders, through the Constitution and through their own example, told us to do, we will do it to the hilt.

Sir, Mr. Inderjit has raised a very relevant point. In fact, I was going to read the same Resolution which he read from the Constituent Assembly. I had occasion to raise this in one of our party meetings. In a secular democracy, what is the place of non-secular parties or what should be the composition and the programme of parties participating in that democracy is a question which needs a national debate.

I want this debate, I want thinkers, I want leaders to come together because the time has come when we can easily see that there is irreconcilability in these forces. We tried to carry on for many many years. Now we find that there is a party which takes a religious issue as its main plant. I have nothing against a religious issue, I have nothing against religion, but a religious issue being brought into politics election after election after election cannot be accepted. This will have to be looked into and this will have to be effectively checked.

If there is a party which takes to arms, for instance, if the candidate of one party has an AK-47 and moves with it and the other candidate has nothing, it is an unequal fight. If a party takes Ram as the spokesman of the party and affects the minds and hearts of people day in and day out, whereas the other party does not even utter this because it is a secular party, does not want to make use of that as an issue, now it is again an unequal fight and the Constitution does not, in my view, allow unequal fights.

The field has to be even for both teams. Those who are participating in the elections would have to participate on the basis of certain guidelines, certain principles which are common to all and which are defined very clearly in the Constitution. This will have to be looked into. This is fair to both of us. Let Ram remain where he remains, let us fight on the basis of other issues which are much more important from the point of view of the people and that is the only way of making the Constitution work in its right spirit. I appeal to the other parties who are thinking perhaps that this is going to be a permanent asset to them, it will not be a permanent asset to them.

The people of India can see through this game very easily and very quickly; may be in one election or in the other election, the next election, they will see through it and perhaps you will be wasting five years for doing nothing except raising unnecessary slogans.

So, I would like this to be gone into. I thank Mr. Inderjit for having brought out that Resolution. We will have to act on it; we will have to think about it. I will come, if possible, to the House or to the leaders of the Opposition first, all leaders and perhaps for a general debate, a wider debate in the country, of how this aberration which has become rather menacing during the decade has to be set right.

It started in small beginnings, but then it has permeated, more or less, every party. Today, when I say that something which has happened will have to be undone, there are eyebrows going up in all parties. I do not want this at all to happen in any party. If we are secular, the vandal cannot be allowed to take advantage of the act of vandalism committed by him. It is quite clear to me. It has to be seen; how to see it, it is for all of us to consider. Everything is there for discussion. We will discuss all these things, find ways. As we were about to find the way, we will find a way once again.

I assure that to all of you. I would like to once again appeal that today, the day of balancing pluses and minuses is over, we will have to go ahead with a programme.

Papers Report Developments in BJP

Executive Committee Resolution

93AS0474A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 26 Dec 92 pp 1, 13

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, December 25. In order to raise the political temperature in the country, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] today announced a 12-point action plan to be implemented immediately in support of its demands, but held back a 'contingency plan' drawn up to counter any 'repressive' measures the Congress government might initiate.

The political resolution adopted by the party's national executive during its two-day meeting, and released today, alleged that the Congress, Communists and communalists had come together in a 'triple conspiracy' to keep the nation divided and directionless.

It said 1992 was not 1948 (when the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] was banned) and added that people were aware of what the Congress and its allies had done to the country by playing the politics of pandering to votes.

"We are confident of victory because today history has made the future of India synonymous with the future of the BJP, and the people of India know it in their bones," the resolution claimed.

The action plan includes party MPs [member of Parliament] and former legislators of the Uttar Pradesh assembly proceeding to Ayodhya in support of the demand of religious leaders to allow unrestricted 'darsan' of idols placed in the makeshift temple.

Details of an "unprecedented satyagraha" movement would be announced during the major demonstration planned for the first day of the budget session of parliament.

The nine-member committee to formulate the action plan has Mr. V.K. Malhotra as its convenor while its members are Mr. Pramod Mahajan, Mr. J.P. Nanda, Mr. Kailashpati Mishra, Mr. Anandi Ben Patel, Mr. Tapan Sikdar, Mr. Pyarelal Khandelwal, Mr. Kalraj Mishra and Mr. Venkaiah Naidu.

Five demands made in the resolution, and which would be reiterated during the demonstrations are: lifting of the ban on the RSS, the VNP [expansion not given], the Bajrang Dal; release of arrested leaders; holding of early elections to the dissolved state assemblies; dissolution of the present Lok Sabha and holding of mid-term elections; and, handing over of the site of Ram 'janmasthan' to the Hindus to "re-construct" the temple.

Among the other programmes chalked out are nationwide tours of senior party leaders and the four former BJP chief ministers, black flag demonstrations against Union ministers, a multi-media publicity campaign, protests before offices of All India Radio and Doordarshan, and a nation-wide signature campaign on a petition to the President to demand that only a temple be built at the site of Ram 'janmasthan'.

In order to enlist support of the intelligentsia, series of meetings have been planned with school/university teachers, advocates, doctors and writers.

The resolution said: "After the unfortunate incidents of December 6, the Congress and the Congress government at the Centre have launched a programme of repression and untruth against all nationalist forces. It is a condemnable attempt to replicate what was done after the foul murder of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948. This deliberate programme of mis-information and dis-information launched by the government will not succeed."

The party vice-president, Mr. S.S. Bhandari, made light of the action plan announced by the Central working committee of the Congress yesterday and claimed that there was a groundswell of public opinion in the BJP's favour after December 6.

He said the "intensity" of the action plan would be commensurate with that of the repressive measures of the government. The party's supporters, he said, were pressing the leadership to adopt a more hardline posture, but this was not agreed to.

The resolution reiterated the party's known positions on the various aspects of the planned 'kar seva' on December 6 and the reasons for the programme degenerating into demolition of the disputed structure.

"The national executive treats the many anti-democratic and lawless measures adopted by the Congress and the government as a declaration of political war on the BJP and all other like-minded organisations and crores of

citizens of this country. We will face this onslaught with courage and conviction... it is most unfortunate that the government is behaving as if it is caught between the pincers of internal party dissensions, discord within the cabinet and external pressures," the resolution alleged.

According to the party, the country would have been spared the protests and violence at home and abroad if the disputed structure was not constantly and wrongly been called a 'masjid'. To say that a mosque would be rebuilt was to betray not only total bankruptcy of thought but also an insensitivity to the present situation, the resolution said, and added that such a state of affairs was "beyond belief".

In the national executive's perception, the Congress government had always been more interested in keeping the Ayodhya issue unresolved, complicated and a source of tension, before December 6 as well as later. In view of the recent developments, the Muslims would recognise the sentiments of the majority community, the resolution hoped, and urged it not to identify itself with Muslim invaders, just because they happened to be Muslims.

Mr. Bhandari said some changes had been made in the draft resolution in view of the CWC [Congress Working Committee] resolution, but Mr. Malhotra, convenor of the committee on the party's action plan, said no changes were considered necessary after the Congress announced its ground level programmes against the BJP-VHP-RSS [Bharatiya Janata Party-Vishwa Hindu Parishad-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] combine.

JD, BJP Answer Congress-I

93AS0474B Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 27 Dec 92 pp 1, 10

[Quotation marks, boldface, italicized words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, Dec. 26: The 14-point solution suggested by the Congress-I Working Committee to solve the Ayodhya issue in the post-demolition scenario came in for strident criticism from the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] and the Janata Dal [JD].

While the Janata Dal termed it a '14-point confusion' and an 'exercise in futility', the BJP gave point-by-point reasons for rejecting the proposal.

The Janata Dal spokesman, Mr. Hari Kishore Singh, said the matter had come up for discussion at the party's political affairs committee earlier in the day and it was felt that even now, a lasting solution to the problem could come only from the Supreme Court. The government should consider making a reference to the apex court, he said.

The BJP described the Congress-I sponsored action plan to the Ayodhya issue as a 'mischievous scheme' and contested each point with a counter-point. The 2.77 acre land should not be transferred to the Ram Katha Park

and the disputed area should not be acquired by the Centre as suggested, but should remain with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP].

The Union Government had no mandate to change the status quo as it had lost the confidence of the people, the Ram Janmasthan Mandir project was with the VHP and the Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas and no one else had any locus standi in the matter. The temple would be built with its *garbha griha* at the site where the idols were placed. No mosque should be constructed within the *panchkoti parikrama* (roughly a two-km radius around the proposed temple), the BJP said in a statement released by the party vice-president, Mr. Sundar Singh Bhandari, at a press conference here on Saturday.

As for suggestions that the disputed site be handed over to archaeologists for excavations, the BJP said it was enough if the government showed the decency enough to accept the report of Dr. B.B. Lal, who surveyed the area in 1975-80. The dates for start of construction of mandir and mosque should not be decided by the 'secular' government, but should be left to the religious leaders of both communities.

The BJP statement also reacted sharply to the suggestion that the issue should be settled through an Act of Parliament and that there was no need to discuss it with "fundamentalist Hindus and Muslims". It said Parliament should restrict itself to removing the impediments in temple construction and not meddle in matters that are for men and women of religion.

Questioned on how the BJP itself fitted in this scheme of things in view of its claim to be a 'secular' party, Mr. Bhandari admitted that his party was more religious than secular.

BJP's Reply to 14 Points

The following was the party's response to each of the 14 points in the formula:

1. 2.77 acres of the disputed land should be acquired by the Centre by an Act of Parliament.

Response: The 2.77 acres of land and the Ram Katha Park had been leased by the U.P. Government to Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). This land must remain with the VHP. The Union Government which has forfeited the confidence of the people has no mandate to change that status quo.

2. An independent foundation on the line of Auroville (Pondicherry) Foundation should be created.

R: The Ram Janmasthan Mandir is the project of (VHP) and Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir Niyas. It shall remain with them.

3. Temple should be constructed at the site where *shilanyas* took place.

R: The temple shall be built as planned, with the *shilanyas* spot marking the Simha Dwar, and the site of idols, as Garba Griha.

4. The plan of the temple should be published and should not include the structure where idols have been kept. In the Congress manifesto also a temple without disturbing the mosque was promised.

R: The plan of the temple has been published for anybody to see and it shall include the Garbha Griha as indicated therein.

5. Mosque should be constructed nearby, but not at the same place.

R: The new mosque can be built anywhere outside the Panchkosi Parikrama of Ram Janmasthan.

6. Work for both the temple and the mosque should be started on the same day.

R: Work for Mandir and Mosque can begin on the day or days decided by Hindus and Muslims, and not by the "secular" government.

7. After the temple has been constructed, the idols should be shifted to the temple according to the "shas-tras" and "Pran Pratishtha," performed by renowned pandits.

R: The idols have been installed with due Pran Prathista ceremony since 1949. They can be shifted temporarily—as is being done in the case of Puri Jagannath—for the duration of construction/repair, and then reinstalled at the same spot.

8. After the idols have been shifted, the area where the Babri Masjid stood earlier, should be handed over to a team of Archaeological Survey of India. They should dig up the site. If the remains of earlier temple are found, the area should be included in the temple premises.

9. If the remains are not found, then the area should be included, in the mosque premises, or a monument or a hospital constructed on that piece of land. Opinion of the Muslims of Ayodhya should be taken.

R: Government can dig the site as wide and as deep as it likes. But the fact is that the people do not trust either the Sarkari historians or the Sarkari experts. On the advice of the then Education Minister, Mr. Nurul Hasan, the then Director General of Archaeological Survey of India, Dr. B.B. Lal has already surveyed the various Ramayan sites in 1975-80, and reported the existence of foundations for 80-100 pillars (obviously of a great temple) at the Ram Janmasthan site. Objectivity and decency demand that government accept this report and act on it.

10. All the temples demolished in Ayodhya by the former BJP government in U.P. Should be restored in Ram Katha Park.

R: The small personal temples on the Ram Katha Park were all illegal constructions. They were cleared with the consent of their respective occupants.

11. An institute for religious studies of all religions should be set up. It should be named after Sant Kabir.

R: We can have not one but many institutes for the study of all religions. Kabir is a most respected name. So are Tulsi, Sur, Mira and many others.

12. All disputes related to this issue should become infructuous after the act of Parliament.

R: Parliament should confine itself to removing the impediments in the way of constructing the Ram Janmasthan Mandir. For the rest, it should keep out of religion.

13. There is no need to discuss this issue with "fundamentalist Hindus and Muslims."

R: This is a matter for men and women of religion, both Hindus and Muslims. The "secularists" don't have to poke their nose either in temples or in mosques.

And 14. Time-frame of construction of temple and mosque should be one year.

R: Construction can begin immediately. It does not have to wait one long year.

Meanwhile, the national committee of 11 secular opposition political parties, christened as the Campaign for National Unity (CNU), on Saturday endorsed the December 19 decision of a 'secular opposition front' against communal forces and chalked out the plans for a nation-wide sustained mass campaign in different parts of the country.

While rallies will be organised in the first half of January in different parts of the country, a campaign to collect 50 million signatures would be undertaken in the second half, the CNU spokesman, Mr. Prakash Karat, said.

A mass pledge-taking campaign in the name of the country's unity and integrity would be organised all over the country at 11 a.m. on January 30, coinciding with the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Posters and stickers for the intensive campaign would be distributed on January 1, 1993, Mr. Karat said.

Prominent among those who attended the meeting were Mr. I.K. Gujral (Janata Dal), Mr. Karat (CPM) and Mr. A.B. Bardhan (CPI).

Mid-Term Polls Demanded

93AS0474C Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 28 Dec 92 p 1

[Italicized, boldface words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, December 27. Terming the P.V. Narasimha Rao government a "caretaker government," the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] today said any delay in holding mid-term elections would "dangerously expose India to a situation of uncertainty and instability in the economic, national and international spheres."

In a statement here, the party vice-president, Mr. K.L. Sharma, said the events in Ayodhya on December 6 and its aftermath had pushed the country into "an era of political and economic instability." The country was left

with no other option but to dissolve the current Lok Sabha and hold mid-term elections, he claimed.

"The JP [Janata Party] is determined to mobilise a strong public opinion to force an early mid-term election. We challenge the Congress and other parties to contest the elections on the single issue of positive secularism and pseudo-secularism, for which the Ayodhya issue has become a symbol... I hope the Congress and its allies will not run away from the field and accept the challenge thrown by the BJP", Mr. Sharma said.

According to him, the situation was such that assemblies of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and West Bengal should also be dissolved since the governments in these states had allegedly failed to prevent riots and protect life and property. All (former) BJP-ruled states and non-BJP ruled states should simultaneously go to the polls along with the mid-term general election, he demanded.

The country, Mr. Sharma said, now had two choices in the context of Ayodhya: a permanent confrontation or a permanent solution. The BJP, he said, had favoured construction of a Ram temple within the *panchkosi parikrama* and a mosque outside the area. In the interest of the country, he said an immediate and permanent solution to the dispute should be the only choice.

Urging Hindus and Muslims to realise that there was "game-plan" to divide them for which the Ayodhya dispute was being kept alive, he claimed that the BJP "strongly feels" that a stage had come when the issue needed to be solved permanently.

"I will also ask the Congress, other parties, film artistes and others claiming to be intellectuals to stop shedding crocodile tears on the recent painful events.... They must realise that the over-projection of such gimmicks on the electronic media is simply revoking antipathy. Why did these so-called peace crusaders fail to react when hundreds of temples were destroyed in Kashmir and [word illegible] of Hindus were made homeless. Also, why did they keep mum on the merciless killing of thousands of innocent people in Punjab and over 3,000 Sikhs in Delhi in 1984" Mr. Sharma said.

PTI adds from Bhubaneswar: The senior BJP leader, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, however, ruled out the possibility of party MPs [member of Parliament] in the Lok Sabha resigning to precipitate a situation for immediate mid-term elections in the country.

"Why should the MPs resign?" he countered a question by a reporter at the airport here saying. "We, however, want immediate dissolution of the Lok Sabha and holding of mid-term polls."

Position of Vajpayee

93AS0474D Madras THE HINDU in English 27 Dec 92
p 1

[Quotation marks, boldface words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, Dec. 26. One of the 'tallest' leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, was virtually censured by the recently concluded emergency meeting of the party's national executive committee for having gone beyond the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] brief in expressing regret over the December 6 demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya through several interviews to newspapers.

Party sources said today that the 'Sangh Parivar' does not take lightly criticism of the party and its programmes outside the party forum. This development is being seen by a very small minority in the party as a significant pointer to the discontent among the 'thinking' members of the party, which could explode into a demand for a full-fledged discussion on the BJP's relationship with the various organisations involved in the Ayodhya movement.

Mr. Sunder Singh Bhandari, Vice-President of the BJP, was asked today at a press conference to comment on speculation that Mr. Vajpayee had resigned. His answer was "Ask Mr. Vajpayee, he will be back from Gwalior in a couple of days." A member of the national executive committee said privately that he did not think Mr. Vajpayee would resign, but he could decide to stay aloof.

"Unacceptable" apology: On December 24, the concluding day of the emergency national executive meeting of the party, Mr. Vajpayee left the meeting several hours before it ended after he found not many takers for his viewpoint on the Ayodhya event. In fact, even while he was present there were some hardline RSS leaders who are reported to have done some plain talking and let it be known that Mr. Vajpayee's style of 'apology' was not acceptable and had done damage to the party.

Mr. Vajpayee's failure to address a widely advertised public meeting at the end of the national executive session was a direct outcome of these differences, party sources confirmed.

Officially, the party Vice-President, Mr. Sunder Singh Bhandari, a hardline RSS man, has stated that Mr. Vajpayee did not walk out of the meeting but had left early as he had to go to Gwalior to attend his birth anniversary celebrations planned by his family. The same reason was given for his failure to address the public meeting. This 'excuse' was hardly credible given the fact that the dates for the executive committee meeting had been fixed a week in advance. The public meeting had also been fixed several days earlier and it had been announced by Mr. Bhandari himself that Mr. Vajpayee would address it. Also, with Mr. L.K. Advani and the party president, Professor M.M. Joshi, under arrest, Mr. Vajpayee is the 'tallest' BJP leader around and it is inconceivable that he would leave the emergency national executive meeting mid-way to attend his own birthday party.

Warning to Advani: Well before the December 6 event it was widely acknowledged in BJP circles that Mr. Vajpayee, and at least two former Chief Ministers, Mr. Bhairon Singh Shekhawat and Mr. Kalyan Singh, were

opposed to the 'Ayodhya line' hammered out by the top leadership of the party. Mr. Vajpayee is on record as having said that he had warned Mr. Advani about the possible disastrous consequences of collecting a large crowd at Ayodhya.

What these moderate elements in the party felt was that if the hardline confrontationist approach was followed to its logical conclusion, the party would have to contend with the criticism that was bound to be levelled at it that it is not a party fit to govern, that it is not responsible, that it has a one-point temple programme.

The rumblings in the party are yet too faint. The RSS masters are expected to wield the cane of discipline firmly. But as one important member of the party put it, sooner rather than later, the RSS and the BJP will have to take note of developments like the statement of the 'sants' yesterday rejecting the constitution and demanding obliteration of all signs of Mughal rule in India. If the BJP were to join hands in voicing similar demands, many others in the party may decide to part ways, or at least to stay aloof from party activities, as Mr. Vajpayee may have decided to do....

Rao's Interpretation of Constitution Questioned

93AS0503A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English 23 Dec 92 pp 1, 17

[Article by Arvind N. Das: "Use of Article 356: Review Call Intrigues Experts"; quotation marks, italicized words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, December 22. Political observers are intrigued by the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao's statement in the Lok Sabha, during the no-confidence motion yesterday, asking for strengthening of Article 356 of the Constitution to enable the Centre to take pre-emptive action against state governments.

They point out that even in the last few days, the Centre has used Article 356 differentially in the case of Uttar Pradesh [U.P.] on the one side, and Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh on the other.

In the case of U.P., the Prime Minister has tired to justify delaying the dismissal of Mr. Kalyan Singh's government till after he had resigned and well after the Babri Masjid was demolished, on the ground that the constitution did not allow for pre-emptive action and that, therefore, he had to hold his hand till the deed was actually done.

In the case of the other three states, however, Article 356 was used without any parallel unconstitutionality having been actually perpetrated.

Senior government functionaries, long associated with the examination of various provisions of the constitution, ridicule the government's weak arguments. "It is inconceivable", they say, "that legal hurdles should have prevented the government from acting in Ayodhya".

There was enough provision in law for the home secretary to bestow magisterial powers, for the high court to

be even telephonically informed about it and for even the induction of special non-official magistrates if such a need should arise, they said.

Besides, the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr.P.C.), the very basic law, empowers a police inspector to resort to firing if a magistrate is not available. "The excuses advanced by the government are therefore extremely lame," they felt.

Regarding the federal aspect of the problem, they say that even under much more federal constitutions like those of the U.S., Australia, Canada, Switzerland, etc., there are enough constitutional provisions for the central government to intervene in the affairs of the states.

In the United States, they point out, its President, Mr. John Fitzgerald Kennedy, was not deterred from using federal troops (National Guard) in Alabama to protect civil rights under the constitution, in spite of the express objection of the state's governor.

In fact there were many instances of such central intervention in the U.S., not the least important of which was the deployment and use of federal forces by President Abraham Lincoln against the confederate states in order to protect the American constitution.

Further it is pointed out that "strengthening" Article 356 of the Indian constitution, in the manner of reinforcing the stable locks after the horses had bolted, will not carry conviction, since the centre patently failed to use the provision of Article 355.

Under the title 'Duty of the Union to protect states against external aggression and internal disturbance', Article 355 states: 'It shall be the duty of the Union to protect every state against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of every state is carried on in accordance with the provisions of this constitution'.

Constitutional analysts point out that in its chapter on 'Emergency Provisions', and particularly in Annexure VI of that chapter, the report of the commission on Centre-state relations, presided over by Mr. Justice R.S. Sarkaria, deals exhaustively with the issue of federal supremacy and the onus on the Centre to protect the constitution.

The Sarkaria report clearly states under Article 355 (6.3.14) a whole range of action on the part of the Union is possible depending on the circumstances of the case, its nature, its timing and the gravity of the internal disturbance; (6.3.15) normally, a state would actively seek assistance of the Union to meet such a crisis.

However, as already noted above, the scope of Article 355 is wide enough to enable the Union to render all assistance, including deployment of its armed forces, notwithstanding the fact that the state government has made no specific request.

The Union will be entitled to do so, on its own motion, in discharge of its paramount responsibility under

Article 355. Action to be taken by the Union may include measures to prevent recurrence of such a crisis.

Hence, the constitutional experts point out, the talk of "strengthening" Article 356 is no more than "a smoke-screen to post facto cover a set of political acts of commission and omission."

In any event, only recently, the sub-committee of the inter-state council formed to study the Sarkaria report stressed the need to incorporate adequate safeguards in the constitution "against possible misuse of Article 356 relating to dismissal of state governments and imposition of President's rule".

In effect, the sub-committee, comprising the chief ministers of Orissa, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh [UP] and Gujarat and presided over by the Union home minister, recommended that the scope of Article 356 should be limited, rather than expanded as the Prime Minister now seems to be suggesting.

The position of various political parties and eminent jurists in this matter is also well-known and has been forcefully articulated: by and large, they are against giving more powers to the Centre *vis-a-vis* the states.

The stand of the CPM [Communist Party of India-Marxist] in this regard is particularly crucial in this context. While the party has endorsed the dismissal of the U.P. government through the use of Article 356 as an exigent case, the CPM has not given any indication that it has watered down its anti-Article 356 stand generally.

Indeed, speaking in the Lok Sabha, the CPM leader, Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, reiterated the demand of his party for repealing Article 356 from the constitution. As such, it would appear unlikely that the Prime Minister's suggestion of reviewing Article 356, to allow for a pre-emptive takeover of state governments by the Centre, will receive adequate parliamentary endorsement.

Political observers are convinced that in the coming days the issue of the roles of the Centre and the states respectively and Centre-state and even inter-state relations will occupy centre-stage.

The Prime Minister himself said, "The constitution of India and Article 356 now lie shattered." It was not only the Babri Masjid that was destroyed on December 6.

Janata Dal General Secretary Meets Press

93AS0377A Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 8 Dec 92 p 5

[Quotation marks as published]

[TEXT] Amanagallu, Dec 7: The Janata Dal [JD] general secretary and Rajya Sabha MP [member of Parliament], Mr. S. Jaipal Reddy, accused the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] of helping the ruling Congress-I in diverting the people's attention from the burning problems, especially faced by the farmers and agricultural labor by raising the Ayodhya controversy at a time when the Parliament was

in session. As a result, the people's day-to-day problems were sidelined from being discussed in the Parliament, he added.

The JD leader said that the BJP's fanaticism on 'unimportant' Ayodhya issue eclipsed the people's burning problems being discussed by the Parliament. The BJP action has certainly helped the Congress-I in diverting the people's attention. As a result, the opposition parties were deprived of a chance to expose the ruling party's failures and anti-people policies in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Reddy lamented.

He was talking to presspersons in Veldanda in Mahbubnagar district after inaugurating Sri Venkateswara Rice mill there on Friday. Mr. Jaipal Reddy said that while the prices of agricultural inputs like fertilizers shot up steeply, the prices of foodgrain produced by the farmers have fallen by 50 percent.

Referring to the Ayodhya controversy, the JD leader said that while all political parties in the country welcomed the proposal to construct a magnificent temple for Lord Sri Rama, the BJP plan to construct the temple on the ruins of the Masjid was tainted with malafides of that party.

Stating that the temple-masjid controversy had generated a lot of tension all over the country, Mr. Reddy reminded the people of the social reformer Gurajada Appa Rao's immortal song which said the country means not soil but people. He said that country meant not religion and asked the people to strive to uphold the secular credentials of the nation.

The JD leader criticized the State government for turning a Nelson's eye to the unprecedented drought conditions prevailed in Mahbubnagar district. Though the Chief Minister, Mr. K. Vijayabhaskara Reddy had toured the district twice, neither adequate assistance was announced nor the district was declared drought affected formally. He also demanded the government to put off the repayment of loans taken by the farmers. Mr. Reddy said that he had already tabled notices in the Rajya Sabha for a discussion on the cotton exports.

Claiming that the anti-attack agitation was spreading to all parts of the State rapidly, he appealed to all political parties to pledge support to the women's agitation for attack ban on moral grounds. He felt that if the agitation succeeded in the State, it could be launched throughout the country for the good of the society.

Press Briefed on CPI, CPI-M Leadership Meets

CPI-M Politburo

93AS0458A Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 16 Dec 92 p 9

[Article: "CPI(M) (Communist Party of India-Marxist) Not Interested in PM's (Prime Minister) Resignation"; boldface words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, Dec. 15: The Left parties have categorically ruled out all speculation about a mid-term poll,

triggered by the Babri Masjid debacle. "Any such demand will mean playing directly into the hands of those forces vitiating the atmosphere in the country and viciously attacking its unity and secularism," it said.

Addressing a press briefing on Tuesday on the politburo meeting of the party held on December 13-14, the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist] leader, Mr. Harkishen Singh Surjeet, lashing out strongly against the Congress(I) leadership, said "we have consistently been attacking the Congress' position of compromise. It has been a secular party that has made immeasurable compromises with communal forces to stay in power." However, he underlined that the resignation of the Prime Minister was not topmost on its agenda right now. "When dark forces are converging on the nation, this is not the central issue, though we have demanded the stepping down of the Prime Minister earlier," he said.

Strongly criticising the Congress(I), Mr. Surjeet accused the ruling party of "not realising the gravity of the situation even now." The ruling party's leadership, he emphasized, had yet to fully realize that "the future lies with the democratic movement, not with fundamentalism." During the meeting of some CPI(M) leaders with the Prime Minister on Monday, the Left leaders strongly urged the Prime Minister that he should now "take a firm position" on the events that occurred in Ayodhya, and the serious fallout on the country's unity, Mr. Surjeet said. "We have made it clear to the PM [Prime Minister] that it is not just the question of protecting a mosque—it is a challenge to the country's security: We have asked him to urgently suit action to his statements."

According to him, the Left leaders had "pin-pointed the responsibility of the Prime Minister in the events which were the culmination of all that was happening for years."

Severely criticising the Central Government for not resorting to any counter-propaganda, even through the media, Mr. Surjeet said "can there be any government which does not have a contingency plan to combat such threats to the unity and security of a nation, when nothing else works?" He pointed out that in July this year, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] had flagrantly violated the orders of the court in Ayodhya. The CPI(M) leader also underlined that the BJP itself had changed its tactics vis-a-vis the white paper on Ayodhya. "They're now saying—let them go ahead and present all the assurance and talks they had with us openly," Mr. Surjeet said.

The indications now are that fireworks are likely to go off in a big way with the opening of Parliament on Wednesday between the BJP and the Left parties. The CPI(M) leader underlined that the Left parties and the National front would demand that a resolution be passed by both Houses of Parliament unilaterally condemning the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on December 6, as well as the vicious attack on the secular fabric of the country.

"This will isolate those who stand with secularism from those against it. The forces barring Parliament from

functioning when the country is burning will be isolated and it will be clear who stands with the unity of the country and who does not," Mr. Surjeet said, adding "there are 20 million Muslims, 20 million Sikhs and 25 million Christians in the country. The forces propagating and advocating Hindutva have to understand that it will affect our collective future."

CPI Executive

93AS0458B Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
25 Dec 92 p 1

[Article: "CPI, CPI(M) Rule Out Alliance With Congress(I)"]

[Text] New Delhi, Dec. 24—While not being averse to a parallel campaign against the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], the Left parties today categorically ruled out any alliance with the Congress(I). The leaders of the CPI [Communist Party of India] and the CPI(M), after the two-day meeting of the Central Executive and the Central Committee respectively, said they were not prepared to give up the existing alliance with the National Front in order to align with the Congress(I).

The CPI general secretary, Mr. Indrajit Gupta, addressing a press conference after the conclusion of the Central Executive Committee meeting of the party, said, "There is no question of forming a front with the Congress(I).

The general secretary of the CPI(M), Mr. Harkishen Singh Surjeet, said, "There is no question of any political realignment."

Mr. Surjeet, when asked about the Prime Minister's call for "adjustments" with the secular and democratic parties, remarked, "He has not specified what he has meant by adjustments. If he means electoral adjustment or political adjustment there is scope for neither of them."

Mr. Gupta, commenting on the approach adopted by the Congress(I), said, "They are not serious about tackling the situation. They are relying more on administrative measures than on anything political."

Marxist CPM Government Called 'Hypocrite'

93AS0438I Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
18 Dec 92 p 8

[Article by Hiranmay Majumdar: "Pot Calling Kettle Black"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Sir—The CPI(M)'s [Communist Party of India-Marxist] assertion three state governments of the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] were "anti-people" is an exercise in chicanery. In all these states there was at least an honest attempt to bring change. The BJP's concerted drives against criminal groups, the prevention of mass copying in examinations, rural development, the instilling of discipline and work ethics among public officials and so on were highly laudatory.

On the other hand, Marxist rule in West Bengal is a total disaster. The CPI(M) is dominated by political gangsters, unscrupulous promoters and criminals. The administration has become politicised. Most state government employees do not work since they cannot be brought to book for any dereliction of duty. The result is incompetence, corruption and a dismal law and order record. To try and cite even a single instance of achievement to Mr. Jyoti Basu's credit is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

The communists' communal record is no less dismal. They supported the Muslim League during Partition. Their coalition ministries with the Muslim League are a matter of recent history. Vote bank politics has led them to systematically encourage Bangladeshi infiltrators to the detriment of West Bengal's stability and security. The Marxists must learn to be self-critical, otherwise they will bring about their own demise.

Yours faithfully,

Panel on Gandhi Assassination Reports

Reports Summarized

93AS0479A Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 24 Dec 92 pp 1, 9

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, December 23. (UNI): The Verma Commission, which inquired into the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, has indicted the Tamil Nadu and the Central Governments, as well as Congress-I workers, for the breakdown in security arrangements which led to his killing by a human bomb on May 21, 1991 at Sriperumbudur.

The one-man Commission, headed by Mr. Justice J.S. Verma, Supreme Court judge, said the Intelligence Bureau (IB) had failed to share fully the entire intelligence information available to it and give the required intelligence backup to the Tamil Nadu police for a more effective operation of the security requirements.

This and the Central Government's decision of January 30, 1990, to withdraw the Special Protection Group (SPG) cover to Mr. Gandhi without providing a suitable alternative were contributory lapses, the report said.

Along with the report, the Government also tabled in Parliament a memorandum of action taken on the Commission's recommendations as well as the reasons why it disagreed with some of its findings.

Listing the lapses or dereliction of duty of individuals responsible for Mr. Gandhi's security, the commission said the Tamil Nadu police had also failed to detect the explosive device concealed on the person of the human bomb, Dhanu, which it could have done by strict adherence to the security arrangements prescribed for Mr. Gandhi, known to it and required to be followed.

"This was the proximate cause leading to the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi," the Commission said in its findings.

It said the intelligence wing of the State police failed to keep an effective vigilance at the venue of the public meeting, where the assassination took place, which could have enabled it to locate suspicious persons, including the female assassin. "This was a contributory lapse," it said.

The intelligence wing also failed to sensitize the police force and provide the necessary intelligence back-up by collecting the available intelligence information.

The report said the Central Government's "lapse" in withdrawing SPG cover to Mr. Gandhi resulted in a reduction in the requisite security cover without a reduction in the threat to him.

The Commission said the Centre failed to discharge its obligation of greater interaction and direction to the Tamil Nadu Government during the President's rule in force in the State for Mr. Gandhi's security in spite of the very high threat to him in Tamil Nadu being known to it from its intelligence agencies and the cabinet secretariat. "This was a contributory lapse," it said.

According to the report, the Congress (I) party men at the venue and the party's Lok Sabha candidate from Sriperumbudur Maragatham Chadrsekhar exhibited by their behaviour throughout a "total lack of awareness of their obligation to co-operate with the police force and to facilitate them in their task of providing security to Mr. Gandhi."

It said their intrasigence created impediments in effective access control necessary for the former Prime Minister's security.

The report said the Congress (I) men did not exhibit the kind of discipline and behaviour which it was reasonable to expect from them in the interest of security of their party president when the high threat to him was known generally to everyone.

"This was a lapse of the Congress (I) party, even though by exercise of reasonable foresight and the power available to the police force, it could have effectively countered the same," the Commission observed.

The Commission was appointed by the Government under the Commissions of Inquiry Act of May 27, 1991, and its report was received by the Centre on June 15, 1992.

The report has already been examined by the Government. Under the Act, the report, along with the memorandum of action taken, is required to be tabled in Parliament within six months. The Government attributed the slight delay in doing so to the events relating to the Ayodhya incident.

The terms of reference of the Commission were: (A) whether the assassination of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi could have been averted and whether there were lapses of dereliction of duty in this regard on the part of any of the individuals responsible for his security.

(B) The deficiencies, if any, in the security system and arrangements as prescribed or operated in practice which might have contributed to the assassination, and

(C) To recommend the corrective remedies and measures that need to be taken for the future with respect to the matters specified in (b) above.

The Jain Commission of inquiry is separately enquiring into the question whether there was a conspiracy behind Mr. Gandhi's assassination.

"The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi was possible on account of the failure of the Tamil Nadu police to provide the proximate security required by him and to prevent access of the human bomb near him. This was the proximate cause for the assassination," the Verma Commission concluded.

It blamed the state police for failure to strictly adhere to and enforce the prescribed standards of security for Mr. Gandhi at Sriperumbudur, more particularly the requirement of strict access control for his proximate security at the venue.

This, according to the report, enabled the entry of unauthorised persons and their free movement without security check in the area proximate to Mr. Gandhi.

It said proper performance of its duties by the intelligence wing of the State police could have enabled location and spotting of suspects, including the human bomb, since she and her accomplices, if any, must have been present there for sufficient time to keep a watch over the activities at the venue to plan the assassination and its foolproof execution.

It held the State police for failing to deal firmly with Congress (I) workers and organisers of the meeting in matters related to security arrangements, over which the police had exclusive authority and control.

"The police force appears to have succumbed to every whim of the Congress Party men and organisers even when they committed breaches of the security arrangements....," it said.

The report noted that there was a continuing high threat to Mr. Gandhi even after he ceased to be Prime Minister and that the decision to withdraw SPG cover was not on the basis of a fresh assessment of the threat.

The reasons for the decision given by the Cabinet Secretariat's note dated January 30, 1990, were mainly the lack of power under the SPG Act and inadequacy of the strength of SPG, apart from a high profile visibility inviting criticism.

"None of these reasons was considered an insurmountable hurdle to give SPG cover to the former Prime Ministers also from September, 1991, after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. There appears to be no reason why this could not be done earlier for him as ex-Prime Minister when the assessment of threat to him was much higher and, therefore, the need was greater," it observed.

"It appears that the Central Government's decision on January 30, 1990, was prompted more by lack of proper perception or the requisite will than the stated difficulties," the report said.

The Commission holds the Centre responsible for failure to provide Mr. Gandhi a suitable alternative cover for his proximate security after this decision inspite of a felt need evident from the proposals of IB [Intelligence Bureau] from time to time to provide ex-SPG personnel or National Security Guard (NSG) escorts to him.

This culminated in a fruitless proposal of IB on May 20, 1991, (one day before the assassination), to provide him NSG escort. This was after the announcement of general elections, which accentuated the threat to him. Media reports projecting him as the prospective Prime Minister resulted in a further aggravation of that threat, it said.

The report said the only explanations offered by the Tamil Nadu police for its failure to provide the needed proximate security to Mr. Gandhi were not proved to be probable.

"Even otherwise they are insufficient to explain the event without the negligence and failure of Tamil Nadu police: and in addition, they are such which could have been easily foreseen and provided for," the report said.

It also blamed the Tamil Nadu police for failure to establish the required liaison with a senior Cong-I functionary ensure proper coordination and the required arrangements.

The report has also come down heavily on the Centre, saying its responsibility for the security of Mr. Gandhi during his visit to Tamil Nadu during President's rule required greater interaction with the State Government, particularly in view of the serious threat posed to him by the Tamil militants, according to the information gathered by the IB and conveyed to it by the Cabinet Secretariat.

In particular, it said the decision to withdraw SPG cover for Mr. Gandhi was 'unjustified' and contrary to its own earlier decision as well as his security requirements. It said the stated reasons for the decision were 'tenuous'.

—In respect of high dignitaries to whom security is provided in national interest, the security personnel will have the authority to overrule than in matters of security without any risk to their future prospects. In case VIPs do not abide by security guidelines at certain times, a signed certificate should be obtained from them to absolve the security personnel of their responsibility.

A video recordings of the visits of VVIPs should be made to detect the flaws in the security arrangements for improvements in future.

The report noted that there was a continuing high threat to Mr. Gandhi even after he ceased to be Prime Minister and that the decision to withdraw SPG cover was not on the basis of a fresh assessment of the threat.

Intelligence Bureau's Assessment

93AS0479B Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
24 Dec 92 p 4

[Text] According to the Verma Commission report, the Intelligence Bureau's [IB] assessment of the threat perception to Rajiv Gandhi was: "The opinion was that the threat to Rajiv Gandhi remained undiminished even after he ceased to be the Prime Minister from the forces inimical towards him.

"K.N. Thakur's (joint director of the IB) affidavit says that the IB was aware that Rajiv Gandhi was the prime target of various terrorist groups like Sikh extremists, Ulfa [United Liberation Front of Assam], J&K [Jammu and Kashmir] militants and the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] was also hostile and inimical towards him.

"Prior to the imposition of President's rule in Tamil Nadu on 30.1.1991, the LTTE had infiltrated in Tamil Nadu on a largescale and spread its network; an LTTE hit squad comprising three persons had come to Tamil Nadu in February 1991 in a bid to eliminate its opponents.

"Rajiv Gandhi was exposed to grave personal risk from all these extremist forces, including the LTTE in Tamil Nadu, where the executive and the law enforcement agencies and the LTTE militants had been in collusion which had led to the imposition of President's rule; and that the IB was aware of the intense apathy of the LTTE towards the Congress (I), and in particular Rajiv Gandhi, and the serious concern of LTTE, as also a section of Tamilians, at the possible return to power of Rajiv Gandhi in those elections.

"K.N. Thakur has stated that this threat perception for Rajiv Gandhi and the assessment that the greatest threat to VIP security during those elections arose from the use of explosives which needed effective corrective measures was duly communicated to all state governments, the DGPs [Director General of Police] and IGs [Inspector General] (Intelligence).

"The IB's perception as a result of the assassination of the Sri Lankan defence minister in March 1991 in a bomb explosion and the greater danger to Rajiv Gandhi apprehended after the attacks on Jagdish Tytler and Sajjan Kumar in public meetings on May 17 and 19, 1991, were also communicated to all states by the IB.

"Not only this, the IB, on 20.5.1991, also wrote to the ministry of home affairs to provide NSG [National Security Guard] cover to Rajiv Gandhi to beef up his proximate security. Ever since the SPG cover for Rajiv Gandhi was withdrawn on his demitting the office of Prime Minister, there was constant discussion to provide him a suitable alternative to the SPG cover in view of the threat to him remaining undiminished.

"Apparently, this proposal of the IB made to the ministry of home affairs on 20.5.1991 was a similar step which remained unimplemented. This was the threat perception for Rajiv Gandhi made by the IB at the material time."

AIADMK General Council Resolutions Reported

93AS0501A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 27 Dec 92
p 6

[Quotation marks, boldface words as published]

[Text] Madras, Dec. 26. A demand for amending the Constitution to grant greater autonomy to State Governments and ensure a Centre-State relationship based on "neither dependent, nor independent but interdependent principle," has been made by the AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam].

A resolution adopted by the party's general council here today pointed out that Tamil Nadu and other States had been crying for a long time for such a constitutional change to stop the erosion in their powers and prevent disruptive forces from endangering the country's unity. However, the Centre, instead of taking steps to bring about the changes, was acting as a 'master' of States and behaving in an autocratic manner.

The resolution further stated that, if need be, a constituent assembly with equal representation for all the States could be set up to bring about the necessary changes in the Centre-State relationship and to ensure proper devolution of powers and financial resources.

Full authority to Jayalalitha: By another resolution the General Council gave the party's general secretary, Ms. Jayalalitha, the full authority to decide the question of alliance with any party for contesting by-elections as also any other election.

The General Council endorsed the Chief Minister, Ms. Jayalalitha's speech at the last meeting of the National Integration Council [NIC] on the Ayodhya issue suggesting that the mosque be preserved and the construction of Ram temple be allowed. The resolution on the subject said that if her suggestion had been implemented all the unfortunate developments which the country witnessed could have been averted. It pointed out that what Ms. Jayalalitha suggested at the NIC meeting was being repeated by the Central Government and others now.

Dismissals condemned: While supporting the dismissal of the Uttar Pradesh Government which the resolution said had flouted its own promise and failed to protect the mosque from demolition, the General Council strongly condemned the Centre's action in dismissing the State Governments of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh.

Emphasising the need for promoting communal harmony in the country, the meeting called upon the Central Government and all the State Governments to enact laws making it an offence for anyone to make remarks derogatory of the religious faith of others.

River water grid: The General Council wanted the Centre to declare all rivers as national resources and sought immediate steps to bring about a Peninsular River Water Grid linking Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery.

By another resolution the party urged the Centre to consult the State Governments before taking policy decisions on issues that directly affected the people. It cited matters such as effecting price rise on commodities like rice, fertilizer, kerosene, diesel, petrol and other essential things and their distribution policy.

Protest lodged: It considered as anti-democratic the despatch of a contingent of army to Tamil Nadu without the knowledge of the State Government and lodged its strong protest to the Centre for its action.

Taking exception to the allotment of more time for Hindi programmes in the TV and radio, the party urged greater period of timings for programmes of Tamil and other languages.

Resolutions thanking the Chief Minister for achieving a record poll victory, for organising a massive rally at Madurai and for putting the finances of the party on sound lines were passed. The Council endorsed the plan of Ms. Jayalalitha to have a massive party office in Madras and to house the party office in Pondicherry in its own building.

Among other resolutions was one appreciating the many achievements of the Chief Minister, the programmes she has launched for the upliftment of Adi Dravidars and for the development of women.

Excerpts From Interviews With Political Leaders

Janata Dal's Singh

93AS0480A Madras THE HINDU in English 28 Dec 92
p 8

[Interview with V.P. Singh, former Prime Minister and Janata Dal supremo by B. Muralidhar Reddy: "Hindu Militancy Will Lead to Bloodshed: V.P. Singh"; bold-face, italicized words as published]

[Text] *The former Prime Minister and Janata Dal [JD] supremo, Mr. V.P. Singh, is a disillusioned man today. The events of December 6 and the aftermath have clearly shattered him. Gone is the enthusiasm displayed in November 1990, after the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] conspired with the Congress(I) in pulling down the National Front Government, in taking the communal forces head on.*

His mood was amply reflected in the hour long interview with B. Muralidhar Reddy at his residence in New Delhi on December 23, 17 days after the demolition of the Babri Mosque. While his understanding of the Hindutva phenomenon is crystal clear he is extremely reluctant to talk about future political alignments to counter the same.

In a way the reluctance of Mr. Singh to speak about the likely shape of the realignments is understandable considering the flux in the polity in the wake of the Ayodhya tragedy. But ironically, the leader who took pride in

proclaiming that he was scripting the national agenda has been forced to take the back seat and wait for the events to unfold. Excerpts from the interview.

Question: Please elaborate on your recent observation that the ultimate aim of the demolition of the Babri Masjid is the establishment of a theocratic state?

Mr. V.P. Singh: We have to go back to the Independence movement. Gandhiji brought all sections of society together to fight the British. He even appealed to the sentiments of the liberals among the British. There was a section of people with a mindset who did not fight the British. This mindset was busy fighting the Muslim rather than the British. This mindset also led to the assassination of Gandhiji. Though it succeeded in his physical elimination, emotionally and mentally Gandhiji continued to be alive. So these forces could not gain respect.

Because of the involvement of various segments of the society in the freedom movement and the manner in which Independence was achieved, the institutions which are a product of Independence had to be secular. They never came in conflict with the Indian State in the last four and a half decades.

Over a period now the mindset which opted not to fight has gained ground and naturally it is coming in conflict with all institutions which are products of the Independence movement.

The instance of conflict is not Ayodhya alone. There is a campaign by these forces that Gandhiji should not be called the Father of the Nation. The national anthem should have a second place. Faith is above the courts. Parliamentary resolutions mean nothing. It is not religion but this historical process which was right from the beginning committed to Hindu domination.

All religions preach the oneness of truth. What these forces want is domination based on birth not on faith. It can be compared to the Nazi mindset. This phenomenon as far as these forces is concerned has to lead to a new set of institutions which are not a product of the freedom movement and are not secular. So ultimately it has to lead to a theocratic state.

You mean the 'mindset' is attempting to turn the system upside down?

Not really. After all when we say a Hindu Rashtra what we have today is a Hindu-dominated Rashtra. The only thing is, it is an upper caste dominated Hindu Rashtra. The ruling elite was quite comfortable with the Congress. For the first time it has become uncomfortable with the emergence of new forces. Lallu has come. Mandal has surfaced. There was a concerted campaign for a Dalit as a President.

All these factors which appear to upset the balance of power have alarmed the ruling elite. So the upper caste Hindu ruling elite has an option in the Bharatiya Janata Party. The logic is if Mr. Narasimha Rao fails to deliver

the goods, Mr. Advani is as good. After all the supreme concern of the elite is to retain power by hook or by crook.

I am not naming even my party despite its professed pursuit of the agenda of social justice in the last three years. The point is if pressures of social justice and the downtrodden continue to mount and in case even the BJP fails to contain the advance of these forces the ruling elite could also opt for the Army. The sense of self-preservation in the ruling elite is so strong that it could resort to any extreme measure. They may not be consciously driving the polity to such an end. It is simply in their interest. And from interest it would become an ideal. These dynamics could lead us to this path and this is the danger I apprehend.

In this context how do you look at the demolition of the Babri Masjid?

As I see the three domes of the polity have been shattered with the demolition of the Babri structure. One was the Supreme Court. Its dictum has been flouted. The second was the dome of the South Block under which the Prime Minister sits. On the Independence Day this year from the ramparts of the Red Fort the Prime Minister had vowed to protect the Babri structure and the authority of the Prime Minister stands demolished. The third was the dome of Parliament. Mr. Narasimha Rao as the Leader of the Lok Sabha and Mr. L.K. Advani as the Leader of the Opposition gave an assurance that the Masjid would not be demolished.

The bigger question today is where is the justice and authority of the Indian republic? This has led to the alienation of the minorities in the country. The danger is the trauma and the after-effects of what followed "Operation Bluestar."

Where will this alienation lead the nation?

If there is any trend towards minority militancy the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP] and the Bajrang Dal will seize the opportunity to build Hindu militancy. And the BJP will capitalise on this polarisation as the surest path to the Red Fort.

But imagine the bloodshed it will cause. We have the example of Yugoslavia. We are sadly mistaken. There are two aspects to the scenario. Can the country survive in such a situation? The security consideration is another aspect. The BJP should understand that there will be international intervention.

How do you explain the resurgence of the "mindset" which was not part of the freedom movement 45 years after Independence? Is it the failure of the political forces and products born out of the freedom movement?

Obviously, it is a failure. It is the conduct of the political forces in the last four and a half decades which has brought the country to the present situation. The authority has been eroded over the years. Corruption is one big issue. Nobody bothers. Today the politicians do not have credibility with the people. Even Ram for His

credibility banished Sita despite knowing that She was not at fault. Because He wanted to re-establish His credibility among the people as a ruler. And when He was not a ruler He fought a war for Sita.

So the time has come for the politicians for self-introspection?

I am not talking of the politicians alone. It is the credibility of the whole system which is in doubt. If the justice and the authority of the Indian Republic are at stake, what is left? You contrast the present situation vis-a-vis Ayodhya when the National Front was in power.

When it came to the question of the authority of the Republic we sacrificed our Government. Governments can come and go but the authority and justice of the Republic cannot be allowed to be scuttled. What has happened now is that the Government of the day has been saved but the authority and the justice of the Indian Republic have been endangered. The other point is that every one has been playing to communal sentiments this way or that.

What needs to be done now?

Nothing can be more shocking than what happened on December 6 and the events which followed. Even now if our conscience is not shaken there is no hope.

I basically think in public life we should avoid appealing to any communal sentiments. The economic struggles have to be sharpened because under communalism all economic contradictions are glossed over. It is convenient for the vested interests to play the communal card and ensure that the economic issues do not arise. The time has come to talk in terms of secular social forces besides political forces.

Lallu Yadav has demonstrated to the rest of India what the welding of social forces at the ground level could mean combating the communal forces. Bihar has undoubtedly been the best managed State in the last two weeks of strife the nation has witnessed. This is what makes the question of social justice very relevant.

We will have a more balanced power structure if we accommodate sections of society which have been denied their share of power. Broadbasing the power structure is the only guarantee against the communal forces. Ultimately it is the forces of social justice alone which can counter-balance the communal forces.

Does the response and conduct of the non-BJP parties in the last fortnight give you hope?

I have greater faith in the people. If these parties fail to live up to their expectations they will produce another party. Just four years ago the people of the country felt the need for a new party and the Janata Dal [JD] was born. The present list of parties is not the ultimate. If you total all the leaders in the parties they do not sum up to the people of the country.

Is the non-Congress non-BJP 13-party initiative to fight the communal forces a pointer to the future political alignments?

That is electoral. We should not get into this issue. It is a trap. I refuse to go into it. It is a wrong way of looking at things.

We are too busy making and unmaking Governments with no time left for the nation. Everything is election and getting elected is the ultimate success. For this anything and everything could be sacrificed. This is what has brought the country to the present state. This attitude has to change. We must fight this ethos.

How do we fight this ethos?

First by accepting in the minds. In a democracy nothing is more powerful than the minds of the people.

But if a mid-term election is thrust can one skirt the issue of electoral politics and alignments? There is this apprehension even among the people that a snap poll is in the offing.

How does it matter? First the country has to be saved. If the country itself is not there where will all the political parties go? Governments have come and gone. Has it helped matters?

Coming to the Narasimha Rao Government, how do you assess its handling of the pre and post-December 6 situation?

This Government has demolished the Indian Republic. It is thoroughly discredited. Mr. Rao is not heading a Government but a company. He is no longer the Prime Minister of the country but chairman of a company.

Mr. Rao has compromised with the dignity and authority of the office he holds. There are certain immediate responsibilities flowing out of the office and the Prime Minister has failed miserably in discharging his duties.

You are on record that it will be in the interest of the very survival of the Congress(I) to ensure the resignation of Mr. Narasimha Rao? Since it has not happened what do you think is wrong with the Congress(I)?

My demand for the resignation of Mr. Narasimha Rao has no political connotations. We have asked for the resignation of the Prime Minister as an act of national repentance for December 6. We could go out and say that there was a blunder by our Prime Minister and the nation has acknowledged the same. After all the Prime Minister represents the nation. To assume that without him the country will not run is a sad mistake. Mr. Narasimha Rao is trapped.

That does not answer the question about the future of the Congress?

We certainly do not wish the end of the party. But the moot point is the writing on the wall and the response of a political party. We all know today the relevance of the political parties in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

Can any one explain why the mainstream political forces have evaporated in these States?

Extending the same argument I would like to know the impact of the political parties in the Naxal-dominated areas of the country. Let us not make gods out of political parties. We must get out of this trap.

Looking back, do you think it was a mistake on your part to have fought the 1989 elections with seat adjustments with the BJP and thus legitimise its politics?

Why blame me and hold me alone responsible for the electoral equations of 1989? After all, the feeling to oust the Congress(I) was shared by all Opposition leaders and we did succeed in our goal. The idea was to bring all centrist parties under one umbrella and forge an alliance with the regional parties. Thus were born the Janata Dal and the National Front.

The objective behind seat adjustments of the Front with the BJP was limited to the consolidation of the Opposition votes. In the course of the campaign I refused to share the platform with the BJP. At least at three places the election meetings were held up as I refused to speak unless the BJP flags were removed from the stage. We were very clear that there was no support to the BJP and the whole exercise was to ensure that there was no split in the Opposition votes.

Subsequently for 11 months during the period of the National Front Government even though the BJP was supporting the Government from outside I refused to share a platform with the party. Our goal was to oust the Congress(I) and we succeeded in that. It is very clear. To oust Hitler if Roosevelt and Stalin come together it does not mean capitalism and communism are the same.

In Parliament we were very firm. When issues like Article 370 came up we stuck to our guns. The final test came on the Ayodhya issue itself. We chose to honour the Supreme Court and uphold the Republic. Never did we compromise.

How do you react to the allegations that as the Prime Minister you had pandered to the sentiments of the minority community? Time and again the BJP leaders have referred to the declaration of Prophet Mohammad's birthday as holiday in your Independence Day speech in substantiation of their charge.

Did I not take the name of Krishna in the very speech? So far as holidays are concerned I was not the inventor. Right since Independence, Jawaharlal Nehru and others have declared holidays on various religious occasions. Did it amount to pandering to communal sentiments?

The Prime Minister of the country has to address every section of the society. There is nothing communal about it unless those who comment about it have a communal bias. With one stroke of the pen Rajiv Gandhi created 52 additional holidays by making it a five-day week but there was no hue and cry about it. Criticism about the declaration of Prophet Mohammad's birthday as a holiday shows the communal bias of the critic.

There is also the charge that you held parleys with Muslim religious leaders like the Shahi Imam before the Janata Dal decided on candidates for some of the constituencies in the 1989 elections.

I deny the charge. There are religious leaders among the Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs and Hindus. Why should parleys with these leaders be considered communal? I am dubbed as communal the moment I talk to the Muslim religious leaders. This only shows the communal bias of the critic. If you talk to a Hindu religious leader it is fine but not otherwise. This is the brand of secularism they want to preach and practise.

Chandra Shekhar

93AS0480B Madras *THE HINDU* in English 25 Dec 92
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[Interview with Chandra Shekhar, former Prime Minister, by Anand K. Sahay: "Rao Has Lost All Credibility—Chandra Shekhar"; boldface, italicized words as published]

[Text] *The former Prime Minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, believes that Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao has lost all credibility as the leader of the Government after the Ayodhya fiasco, and should resign. In an interview with Anand K. Sahay, Mr. Chandra Shekhar also criticises the basic quest of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] through the use of "fanatical" slogans which he regards as being dangerous to the country.*

But the former "Young Turk" does not think a "war cry" against the BJP or a politics of "confrontation" toward it is the answer. Excerpts from the interview:

Question: Chandra Shekharji, what does the demolition of the mosque in Ayodhya on December 6 mean for our social life and the country?

Mr. Chandra Shekhar: This is one of the most tragic incidents in our national history, if I may say so. It is not only the demolition of a monument that was more than 400 years old, but the event has put a question mark on the very culture, tradition, and ethos of India's national heritage.

This is the first time in the history of India that the majority community is being blamed for taking an action out of a spirit of vengeance which has put a blot on the glorious heritage of this country.

The other shocking thing, which is tragic, is that a section of the people feel alienated. They may be led to desperation and extreme frustration which always breeds violence, terrorism, underground activities.

Do you think it is the majority community as such which is to be blamed, or a certain political tendency in our national life?

I am confident that the majority community is still being guided by the spirit of our culture. It is a determined group of people who want to lead the country along a

particular line in the hope that they would be playing on emotive issues before the people. I think they are not going to succeed in this.

If immediately the political situation becomes somewhat unstable, and a snap poll is forced in the next few months, do you not think that a party like the BJP can reap some immediate electoral benefits?

Maybe. But I don't think a snap poll would be essential at this moment. People believe there should be some cooling off period before they go for elections. After two or three months I do not know if people will hold the same views they seem to be having today.

Do you think the BJP and organisations allied to it may take active steps outside the parliamentary forum to push the political order into elections by creating disturbances on the ground, or resorting to wide scale agitations on the issue of their democratic rights having been curtailed through measures such as dismissal of their State Governments and the like?

That may be one of their planks but I don't think they will succeed because the conscious public opinion will not support such steps, and the BJP will not like to do anything by which it loses the so-called gains. So, I doubt if the BJP will indulge in actions to force elections upon the country.

Do you believe, like many do, that there was a conspiracy involved in the demolition of the Babri Masjid?

There was nothing like a conspiracy because many leaders of this combine were talking in quite clear terms about their aim.

If we are not ready to respond to their militancy by taking at least restraining measures, we should not blame them for conspiracy. I don't know where the conspiracy is. Even a sober person like Mr. Advani had made it very clear that for kar seva you do not need bhajan and kirtan. So, I don't think there is any valid rationale to say that trust has been betrayed.

So, you were expecting that something like this will happen, and the mosque might fall?

I was not expecting it. I was very clear in my mind that this will happen. This I told the BJP leaders, and this is what I told the Prime Minister. I said whatever their good intentions might be, the BJP leadership was not in a position to control the crowds of hundreds of thousands of people who are motivated by slogans that are not based on any logical premise, but on fanaticism and fundamentalism.

I told the Prime Minister and other leaders in the Government that they should prepare for the worst and take preventive measures. Everyone present in the National Integration Council (November 23) was of the same view. I do not know how this excuse is now being taken resort to by the Prime Minister and his colleagues. I do not think there is any validity in what the Government circles are trying to plead.

If you had been the Prime Minister on that fateful day of December 6, what pre-emptive steps could you have taken, or what was possible?

Anybody who occupies that position should have known this was going to happen. If I had been the Prime Minister nothing like this could have even been threatened. That fateful day would not have arrived. The BJP-VHP [Bharatiya Janata Party-Vishwa Hindu Parishad] combine would not have dared to take the country to this position.

The NIC [expansion not given] had authorised the Prime Minister to take all necessary steps to deal with the situation. Did this, in your view, include the imposition of President's rule.

Yes, it did. But the point is why should have the situation been allowed to escalate to a situation where President's rule becomes necessary. Even earlier the BJP and the VHP could have been told in clear, unambiguous terms, what the Government intends to do. They would not then have done what they did. I am quite sure the BJP was not itching for a confrontation. But by a weak-kneed policy they were instigated in a way, or encouraged to go to such an extreme.

I know there are reasonable persons in the BJP and the VHP also. If they had known the clear intentions of the Government, it would have acted as a restraining influence. But what did we do instead? We went on succumbing to all their pressures and all their extreme talk. The result was they were encouraged to go to this extent. Why should President's rule have been essential?

If they had not agreed to the suggestions of the Government of India, there was always the possibility of using the power option, and this should have been resorted to.

You think these organisations could have been threatened with coercive measures like ban in advance of December 6?

No. I never conceive of putting certain organisations under a ban. That does not work. No, I did not mean a threat. Instead, the Government should (have) laid down the parameters—that beyond this we cannot go because there are certain limits within which everyone must function: The Government of India, or the State Governments, or the Supreme Court.

So the U.P. [Uttar Pradesh] State Government, and the BJP and the VHP leaders should have been told these are the limits beyond which you cannot go. Underlining this reality would not have been a threat.

Would you elaborate this with an example?

OK. Suppose, it had been explained clearly that whatever the disputed nature of the shrine, it is a place which is more than 400 years old, that this is a monument, and its destruction would not be allowed at any cost. Whatever the price, it would be protected.

Then, a clear message would have gone home. Also, if the Government wanted to have negotiations, the VHP

should have been told that negotiations and the language of threat cannot go together. They were negotiating and every day threatening statements were being issued. The day they first threatened, the Government should have stopped negotiations with those persons who were indulging in threats, whether it was a sant or a mahant, a political leader or anybody else. The language of threat and the method of negotiations cannot go together.

Subsequently you have criticised the arrest of Mr. Advani and others who were in the kar seva area on December 6 but did nothing to restrain those who went for the mosque. What are the reasons for your criticism? Don't you think they should pay a price?

They should pay a price. But on the 6th was the demolition, and on the 7th the BJP was apologetic. That party was not able to say a word. The arrest provided the BJP with an alibi to go for protest actions.

I think Mr. Advani should have been given a chance to give an explanation to Parliament, and to the people of this country and the whole world why he assured everyone that nothing would happen to the old structure, and why when four to five hundred people were engaging in demolition were hundred and fifty thousand people listening to him silently (nearby).

Why did not Mr. Advani ask these hundred and fifty thousand people to stop the few hundreds from demolition work? He should have been made to explain this. And under what section has he been arrested? It is a bailable offence. If Mr. Advani really wanted to keep out of jail, it was simple for him. He could have furnished a personal bond and the magistrate would have let him off. So, actually you are not restraining Mr. Advani, but keeping him from putting forward a case that was indefensible.

What punitive steps do you think should have been taken against the BJP instead of what has been done?

No punitive steps now. To be wiser after the event does not lead us anywhere. Any punitive step you take will go in their favour. The only thing is to find out who the real culprits were and chargesheet them under the law of the land, and try to punish them.

But the Government had to come with some response, otherwise it would be said that it did not move even after the event?

When the response was needed, they did not respond. So, this type of response, this type of afterthought, does not give any credit to the Government. Nor does it help the situation which can only get aggravated with punitive steps. Appropriate steps were required at the right time. Any steps of a provocative nature, or which are face-saving devices, will complicate the picture even more.

Many political parties now believe that it is imperative to do intensive ideological, political work against communalism by secular parties, and secular individuals and personalities. In this connection the Leftist parties had invited many people, including yourself, to a convention

last Saturday, which apparently you could not attend, or chose not to. I'd like your comment on this.

I got the information very late, but Devi Lalji was there to attend the convention. I am all for attending conventions but these kinds of rituals are not going to fight communalism. In order to fight communalism you should have a clear perspective, a clear vision.

If you try to fight it as a political gimmick I have nothing to say, but these kinds of conventions will help in creating an atmosphere in the country and everybody should cooperate with them. But the point, unfortunately, is that our credentials are not very clean. Some political parties have been extending support to the Government in actions that were totally undemocratic and were counter-productive in dealing with situations such as Punjab, the Emergency, or other things. So, the people do not have much faith.

You have called for the resignation of Mr. Narasimha Rao as Prime Minister, and said the Congress(I) can choose any other leader?

Do you think in any other parliamentary democracy a Prime Minister would have remained in power in this situation? I have been a student of political science. I know that my call is not going to force Mr. Narasimha Rao to resign as long as the Congress(I) is solidly behind him.

But in my opinion Mr. Rao has lost all credibility, and any step taken by him will not inspire any confidence or goodwill among the people who feel aggrieved over this issue. Any other leader of the Congress(I) (instead of Mr. Rao) would have started on a clean slate.

In the vote on the no-confidence motion in Parliament, do you think it was the better course to abstain or vote against the motion for those who were opposed to the BJP move?

I think it was the better course to abstain. So, I abstained.

How do you think the political scene in UP, perhaps the most significant State in political terms, will be transformed as a result of the recent Ayodhya developments, even if elections are not placed on the agenda immediately?

I cannot say, for I don't know how long the impact of the present will remain. But as of today, I think the people will be swept off by communal frenzy if elections are held, and this may lead to anything.

I do not say the BJP will surely gain a majority, but even if they are substantial in number, it will create a problem for the future, for once the BJP gets the support of the people on this communal slogan, they will be sticking to the slogan more and more as they have shown.

If this psychology persists in the BJP, it will be a sad day for the country because there are many in the BJP who could have been an asset in bringing the country to a saner path.

Such people are being slowly swept away to the other side. This is why I opposed Mr. Advani's arrest. A person like Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee was forced to defend what was indefensible in his own opinion, as was clear from

his statement to India Abroad News Service. That was the real Vajpayee. He could have had a sobering influence but his whole authority was eroded by the Government's actions (of the arrests, ban, and the dismissal of Governments).

It is being said that if Mr. Chandra Shekhar, Mr. Mulayam Singh, Mr. V.P. Singh, all combine, it may be difficult for the BJP to forge ahead in North India.

That may be true. But suppose we are able to stop them electorally for some time, will that end the communal frenzy? I think anybody talking in terms of a total confrontation is playing the game of the fanatical forces. Democratic functioning and confrontation do not go together.

Whatever may be the situation today, firm action is needed, but a war cry is not going to help us. I think that even at this stage, we should try to convince friends on the other side that even if they get some political mileage out of what has happened, ultimately it is going to destroy the nation. If the nation is destroyed, their survival too is out of the question. So, for temporary gains, don't destroy the old cultural heritage and the greatness of this nation.

Would you advocate the coming together of the secular parties with the Congress(I)?

I don't know. It will depend on how the Congress(I) behaves. In the Congress(I) there are many voices, so I cannot just answer the question. One cannot say which voice will prevail when. What Congress(I), Congress(I) represented by who, in what direction would they want to go? The Congress(I) has also to prove its bonafides on certain issues before a person like me makes a comment. For me opposing or supporting the Congress(I), or individuals in the Congress(I) is not a matter of personal convenience.

Do you think the Congress(I) has any other leader except the present Prime Minister?

This is their problem.

In the Lok Sabha, replying to the no-trust debate, the Prime Minister spoke of the inadequacy of Article 356, and said he would like a discussion with other parties and leaders?

A bad workman always fights with his tools. Article 356 has given all the requisite powers to the Government of India to deal with difficult situations, and there is no reason to think of revising Article 356 for gaining more powers for the Centre.

You also do believe, I suppose, that majority communalism or fanaticism can lead to fascism like we saw in Europe in the Thirties. Do you think if the political forces do not act wisely or appropriately, such a thing may happen here also?

Here I think it is a little more difficult. The Indian situation cannot be compared with any country in the world because of two reasons. The history and tradition of this country are imbued with tolerance and human compassion. No other nation can claim this. The religion of the majority, Hinduism, is the only faith in the world that has not resorted to violence to spread itself. So, the emergence of fascism may not be so easy here, but a temporary setback is on the cards.

And this is because of the ineptness of the Government and over-reaction of the people from both sides. This is what I told Atalji (Vajpayee). Incidentally, his first response to Ayodhya was very sound and healthy. But later he should not have been swept off his feet by the mere arrest of Mr. Advani. After all, Mr. Advani was not arrested for treason, or murder, but only under an ordinary section of the IPC. This should not have upset a man of Mr. Vajpayee's calibre to the extent that he changed not only his whole mood, but his whole political approach to this problem. This is something very sad. This does not augur well for the country, and it does not add to the prestige and dignity of a person of Atalji's stature for whom I have the highest regard.

Would you like to sum up the overall political situation? Do you think it is unstable? Where can it lead to?

I don't think it is unstable, as such. But the people do have many apprehensions, and these are well-laced because these are found in the inaction of the Government. However, I do not think the situation is such that we should consider it to be insurmountable, or that the crisis is going to engulf the whole nation.

Of course, we will be in some difficulty, but with firm and decisive action and certain amount of restraint, we can come out of this crisis. I think this is a temporary setback but there are certain things that will leave their mark for a long time.

I don't think a single Hindu will feel that he can just wish away 15 crore Muslims from this country. After all, they are very much part of our reality, and no one can say they have not contributed.

CPI-M's Surjeet

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[Interview with CPI(M) (Communist Party of India-Marxist) General Secretary Harkishen Singh Surjeet by Krishna Ananth: "Joint Front Should Involve All Secular Forces: Surjeet"; place and date not given; italicized, boldface words as published]

[Text] *Even while accusing the Congress(I) Government of inaction in confronting the sharpening of communal polarisation in the country and failing to resist the communal onslaught, the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist] does not intend to exclude the Congress(I) in a joint campaign against communalism. The mass base*

and appeal that the ruling party commands is inevitable in such a campaign according to Mr. Harkishen Singh Surjeet.

In an interview to Krishna Ananth, the CPI(M) General Secretary stresses that the Central Government should take certain administrative measures to prove its will to fight the communal forces. Notwithstanding the progress in this regard, the Left parties have decided to launch a campaign in a few days which will involve other secular Opposition parties.

The CPI(M) claims to have made considerable headway in this regard, by roping in the Janata Dal, the Samajwadi Party of the former U.P. [Uttar Pradesh] Chief Minister, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav apart from other Left parties. According to Mr. Surjeet, the Bahujan Samaj Party, led by Mr. Kanshi Ram, which commands considerable following in Uttar Pradesh and other parts of Northern India, is agreeable to such a joint campaign. The campaign is expected to begin with a national convention followed by similar programmes at State and district levels. The extraordinary situation will ensure the unity of various forces and political parties which have been fighting shy of coming together for reasons of electoral and other considerations. Excerpts from the interview.

Question: Will there be any political realignment in the wake of the Ayodhya incidents, say with the Congress(I)....?

Mr. Surjeet: See, political realignment is not such a thing that will emerge out of one issue. Political alignment requires a common outlook on various social and political issues, which does not exist now. With the divergence in the economic policy being pursued by the Central Government seen with the other socio-political actions being taken, the question does not arise as far as any alignment with the Congress(I) is concerned.

In view of the rise of communal forces, is there any possibility of a joint front against such forces, especially when you do realise that there are secular elements within the Congress(I) also?

In principle, the Communist Party has always realised that such a grave situation can be dealt with and met only by uniting all the secular forces. In fact the present situation is not an ordinary one. It is an extraordinary situation, which reminds us of the events in 1947 following the partition. Communal polarisation is taking place and there is a big challenge to the secular fabric of our society and our Constitution. The challenge comes from those forces which want to destroy the unity and integrity of the nation. This is being underestimated today by various forces including the ruling party.

Which are such forces, can you specify them?

The gravity is being underestimated by the different political forces in the sense that when the law and order machinery gets into operation and some easing of the trouble is achieved, then the situation is under control. But the reality is that in the past four or five years such poison has been supplied, and it has seriously affected

the mind of the common man. When communal polarisation was taking place, nobody tried to confront such forces except the Left. Even the media has been used by them more in pursuance of the communal ideology. Is the glorious history of the freedom movement being presented in the papers when the secular values are being attacked? Not even about the sacrifices and efforts Gandhiji made. Are the people being exhorted to inculcate the feeling of patriotism? Nothing has been done.

There is a feeling that the Left is also partially responsible for the kind of situation as it also did not fight the forces as effectively as it should have?

I strongly disagree because if some struggles have been taken up in the past four years, they have only been by the Left. In fact the Left can claim, whether it be the fight against the separatist or communal forces, it has always been in the forefront. We have sacrificed many lives in the struggle. One can say much more has to be done and one should not be satisfied because the gravity of the situation is such.

Do you think, in retrospect, that the Left parties joining hands with the BJP in supporting the Janata Dal Government was not correct?

No. We did not join hands with the BJP. In fact we had consistently stated that it will have very bad repercussions. Even at that time I had made clear the dangers involved in such a combination.

Did this strengthen the BJP, by giving it some sort of legitimacy?

It got strengthened. It made full use of its position. Even in the earlier occasion, during the Emergency and what followed, it made full use of its position in the Janata Party Government in the post-Emergency days by infiltrating into the administration. So many policemen, officials entered the administration.

Coming back to the idea of a secular front, what is the position now, especially after you and the West Bengal Chief Minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu met the Prime Minister? Do we take it that the idea is rejected?

No, I am not saying that it has been rejected. In fact that's why I have been saying that such a situation can be met by involving the mass of population under the influence of all secular forces.

Including the Congress(I)...

Yes, all should be involved. Unless they are involved, such a challenge cannot be made. But in today's situation the Congress(I) is just failing to act. Even the Government is failing to act. We pointed this out to the Prime Minister also in our meeting that he continued to rely on the BJP and the U.P. Chief Minister. The opinion of the secular Opposition parties was just not considered. If you go through the events from July, you will realise that all the secular Opposition parties lent their support to the Prime Minister to any action to defend the Constitution, law and judiciary. Nowhere earlier had the whole country rallied behind him to face the challenge. But

instead, he was trying to bargain with them, relying on their assurance that they will not destroy the mosque, but that happened. Even after this was done, the Government did not act. Even on December 6 night itself he could have banned the communal organisations. The whole situation would have been different today if he had cared to rouse the feelings of patriotism.

Do you think that the Congress(I) lacks the political will to fight the communal forces?

I am talking of the Government. The Congress(I) as a force is not seen in the picture even now. The CWC [expansion not given] has not as such, even after a week after the incidents and no steps are proposed to mobilise the people. In fact if the BJP has taken a line, all other political forces are looking at the issue on the basis of how it will affect their electoral prospects. The national interests are not at all placed in their proper priority by these forces.

What would you expect the Congress(I) and the Government to do before you accept the idea of a secular front?

We want to see the seriousness of their action, for instance, if certain actions were taken on the 6th itself, the situation would have been different. It could have inspired confidence among the minority community and unity could have emerged. Contrary to this, some of them were arrested on 8th and they were allowed to carry on the propaganda. Another three days were taken to ban those parties which had attacked the unity of the country. The explanation is some technicalities. I have not seen any Government that is not prepared with a contingency plan if an agreement does not work out. Then there is something wrong with the Government.

But this is something of the past and this has happened...

Yes, this has already happened. So now, to show the seriousness, there are certain administrative things that are to be done by the Government. What has been done is not sufficient. Secondly, let the Government come out with a White Paper on the events. The White Paper should go back to the events and issues beginning with July. It should cover all the areas. The second thing is, the ban should be made more effective. I know, our party was banned in the past and overnight, all over the country, the party offices were sealed and many arrested. But now, the Government is still not going about it firmly. Then comes the case of those who are defending the organisations that have been banned, especially their mouthpieces such as the *Organiser* and other papers. Then the question of the State Governments, run by the BJP. What moral right do these State Governments have to continue, when all the three Chief Ministers have said that they are RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] men? The RSS has been banned and what moral authority do they have to continue?

Do you want these Governments to be dismissed?

I am addressing them, the BJP Governments. The camps were held in Madhya Pradesh to train those who were involved in demolishing the mosque. They organised the

kar sevaks, received them and put them up. So they should not remain in Government after such a tragedy has happened.

Supposing they refuse to quit....

The Government should see as to how they implement the ban. It is the job of the Central Government to ensure this. Another important thing that the Centre should do is to take over the land that is under dispute. A lot of bungling has been done on this question. After taking over the entire area, a proper solution can be found in consultation with various forces, both for the construction of a temple and a mosque. But the immediate step required is to take over the land, because this will give some confidence to the minorities and others. Apart from this, necessary steps to cleanse the police and other administrative wings of the State should be taken up. The communal virus has entered this section and was reflected in the role of the police in attacking the minority communities in many parts of the country. Today the media should be used to expose the RSS and what it did to Mahatma Gandhi. Use should be made of radio and TV to arouse the patriotic sentiments of the people. There are so many writings by Nehru which can be identified today and propagated. The meaning of secularism—separation of religion from politics—even many congressmen do not understand this today. Unless this is done, we will not be able to fight the communal forces. We have to interpret religion and secularism instead of leaving it to the extremists of all religious shades. They (extremists) are interpreting religion in their own way where humanity is being massacred. Indian unity can be maintained only by separation of religion from politics.

So, do we take that you are willing to join hands with the Congress(I)?

The Congress(I) should take steps to gain the confidence of the minorities. What we are planning today is not to exclude anyone, not even the Congress(I). But let it come out first with certain actions that it is determined to fight communalism, without which it will be negating the past of the Congress party, which united the people and fought for the country's freedom. When that seriousness comes, naturally so, because without involving the mass base of the Congress(I), the battle cannot be fought.

Is the Left going to wait for the Congress(I) to come or will it do something now?

No. We are planning our own programmes by uniting the secular forces.

Which are these forces?

Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, Mr. Kanshi Ram and the Janata Dal are going to be part of this campaign. Apart from these, many individuals and personalities are there who are devoted to secularism.

Whom all have you met till now?

We met Mr. I.K. Gujral and Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav and they have agreed to join the campaign.

Do you think the possibilities are there for Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mr. V.P. Singh to come together now?

Yes, there should be no difficulty. I think so. We will be meeting Mr. V.P. Singh and hope to sort out things. Also, there is no other option left to protect the secular fabric of the society.

What will be the central slogan in this campaign?

The slogan will be to appeal to the secular, patriotic sentiments of the people. The campaign will concentrate on attacking and exposing the dark forces.

What about the other forces, such as the IPF [Indian People's Front]...?

We have not discussed all the details about the parties, but many individuals and secular forces...

What about individual Congressmen?

Yes, I am not excluding the Congress(I) as such. I repeat, the Congress mass base is important.

Is this the position of all the Left parties, that if the Congress(I) proves its bona fides, then there could be a joint campaign?

I will not put it that way. I would like them to take a stand. My aim today is to defend national unity and I would like all forces to come to show that they are serious in this matter. We have proved in the last four or five years that we are serious about the fight. We stood firm when the V.P. Singh Government was there and when the present Government came to power. As a matter of fact, we had objected to Mr. V.P. Singh joining hands with the BJP. We knew that it would lead to a disaster.

What concrete programmes are you planning from this joint platform?

We have started consultations with different parties and they are in agreement with us. First we are thinking of convening a convention in Delhi within a few days, from where we will give a call for action. Then, we will organise similar conventions at the State and district levels. Also along with it, we propose to organise relief operations in the areas affected by riots. In this, everybody is welcome, including the Congressmen. This is the priority. The political campaign, at all levels, will expose the role of the dark forces of communalism. We are expecting the Government to take action now.

Are you confident that the Congress(I) will act now?

Yes, because there is a growing realisation that once this communal virus spreads, then all forces, including the Congress(I) will be threatened. We feel that the Prime Minister is willing to act now. This is the impression that we got when Mr. Jyoti Basu and I met him. He said that he is seized of the situation.

How long are you planning to wait now for the Prime Minister to act?

I cannot say anything now because, given the experience till now, we have to wait and see. Still we expect some action in the next few days.

Your party had been accusing the Congress(I) of either resorting to authoritarian measures or compromising with the communal forces time and again. The Emergency, opening the locks of the disputed structure in 1986, facilitating the conduct of shilanyas in 1989... Even as late as November 20 and December 7. Given this, do you think, that the Congress(I) will come out with firm steps now?

They will do so because the country is at such a pass now. There is great unrest now, even among the Congressmen. Many of them are perturbed about the situation, even about their own future, especially in the North Indian States, where the Congress(I) had been defeated and power had gone into the hands of the BJP. Moreover, nobody wants to liquidate the country. The situation is such that the repercussions are felt not only in India but in the international arena also, where anti-India feelings are being raised.

Congress-I Panel Meets, Plans Action

Resolution, Other Matters

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[Text] New Delhi, Dec. 24. Meeting in the shadow of the recent Ayodhya tragedy in whose wake the Congress has invited trenchant criticism even by non-BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] parties, an extended meeting of the Congress Working Committee [CWC]—attended by 170 party leaders from throughout the country—today reiterated its “faith and confidence” in the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, and resolved to “confront” the forces of “disruption, fanaticism, sectarianism”, and “identify, expose and ultimately isolate” the “forces of communalism”.

The recent activities of the BJP-RSS [Bharatiya Janata Party-Rashtriya Swamsevak Sangh] and the rest of the Sangh parivar in Ayodhya was likened in the solution unanimously adopted at the end of the 10-hour meeting with “fascism” and “nazism”, suggesting that the ruling party intends to deploy political and administrative means at its disposal to confront the BJP full face.

The resolution notes, “The forces of fanaticism unleashed over the years are posing a serious threat to the secular democratic character of the nation. In this hour of national crisis, the nation as a whole will have to act unitedly with a purpose.”

It has also been pointed out that “in the recent past division among the secular forces gave an advantage to the communal forces to reassert themselves in Indian politics”.

The resolution has further observed that the Congress “cannot allow the nation to be misled into any acquiescence in dealing with the RSS and its fascist collaborators”.

It has recalled that the RSS and the BJP were given respectability “by some political parties in the name of

anti-Congressism”. This division among secular, democratic parties is seen as the “sole reason for the ascendancy of the BJP which, otherwise, was nothing more than minuscule in strength”.

In his brief concluding address, the Prime Minister and Congress president, Mr. Narasimha Rao observed, “There is no other party except the mighty Congress which alone can strengthen secularism.” He also said it was going to be a “long-drawn struggle.”

Action Plan

A comprehensive Action Plan incorporating organisational, political and administrative methods has been drawn up to gain the confidence of the people in the post-Ayodhya phase which is said to have created a deep communal divide in the country that may work to the BJP's advantage. It is to be launched nationwide on December 28, the 108th foundation day of the Congress.

The Plan envisages visits to every house at the ward/village level to explain the party's views to the people, besides operating relief work, organising public donations, setting up peace committees, holding sadbhavna(amity) marches, besides, rallies, public meetings and political conferences. All these are clearly aimed at dealing with the post-Ayodhya and post communal riots situation.

At the political level, it has been decided to “seek the cooperation of like-minded parties and patriotic forces in the campaign against communalism”. The mechanics of this is being worked out by the CWC, it was announced.

Traditional agit-prop methods on the Ram Janmabhoomi/Babri Masjid dispute, seminars and symposia have been decided. The purpose is to involve all sections of the society, especially the intelligentsia, down to the district level.

Panel for 4 States

It has also been decided to set up a committee to look after the problems of the four formerly BJP-run States of UP [Uttar Pradesh], MP [Madhya Pradesh], Rajasthan and Himachal now under President's rule. This is to be a high-level operation, as the Committee is to consist of a Cabinet minister, an AICC [All India Congress Committee] general secretary, the PCC [Pradesh Congress Committee] president, the CLP [Congress Legislature Party] leader, and also the political secretary to the Congress president. The clear message is that the Congress intends to work on these states with a view to winning popular mandate in about one year's time.

On the administrative side it has been decided to commence development activities in a “big way”, and to provide better administration to the former BJP states. Allotment of house sites, strengthening of the Public Distribution System, raids on hoarders, expeditious implementation of the 15-point programme for the

minorities, liberalising compensation for loss of property in communal riots, and issuing an up-to-date White Paper on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid [RJ/BM] issue with translations in local languages are the key features of the Action Plan on the administrative side, again suggesting the long-term view of future elections.

The CWC did not spell out what should be done at the site of the demolished Babri Masjid. The resolution only urged the Government to work out an "appropriate plan to resolve finally the RJ/BM [expansion not given] dispute as early as possible".

The Prime Minister is understood to have told the meeting that he wanted a "permanent solution" to the dispute, but needed time to find a solution based on the rule of law by which everyone could abide. Some tentative suggestions were made from the floor.

From all accounts the extended session of the CWC went off smoothly. Briefing newsmen, the Congress spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, said 47 persons spoke in all. Cabinet Ministers and AICC office-bearers did not speak. As the situation on the ground was to be discussed in detail, priority was accorded to State leaders, PCC chiefs, CLP leaders, Chief Ministers and some key senior leaders of the party.

Besides the leaders from the States, others to take the floor included Mr. A.R. Antulay, Mr. H.K.L. Bhagat, Mr. Shiv Shankar, Mrs. Krishna Sahi, Mr. G.R. Kar, Mr. Ramesh Chenithala, Mr. P.C. Chacko, Mr. J.B. Patnaik, Mrs. Mamta Banerjee, Mr. K.C. Pant, Mrs. Rajendra Kumari Bajpayee, Mr. Hidayatullah, Mr. Sunil Dutt, Mr. B.N. Pandey, Mrs. Mohsina Kidwai, Mr. B.R. Bhagat, Mr. Dinesh Singh, Mr. Jagannath Mishra, Mr. R.K. Dhawan and Mr. Buta Singh.

The mood, according to Mr. Gadgil, was "of unity and confidence to get over the crisis".

Responding to repeated questions on prospects of uniting with the Left on campaigning against the "communal" danger, the spokesman said the consensus was that this ought to happen at the national level. According to Mr. Gadgil, the response from the Left so far was reported to be "positive", but negotiations were still on.

However, as Mr. Gadgil candidly reported, some States pointed out difficulties in dealing with the Left in their States, while others reported that the Left did not have a presence in their States.

Plan Details Noted

93AS0478B Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 25 Dec 92 p 4

[Boldface words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, Dec. 24: The Congress Working Committee [CWC] today drew up a multi-pronged action plan in order to strengthen its organisational, administrative and party machinery to fight the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] with focus on the four states recently brought under President's rule.

The elaborate plan calls for setting up of relief and peace committees at the organisational level, consolidation of like-minded forces at the political level and speeding up development works, and social welfare programmes at the administrative level with special attention to the four erstwhile BJP-ruled states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh.

The plan will be executed from December 28, which coincides with the foundation day of the Congress Party. The day will be observed as "sadbhavana diwas" throughout the country.

The specific 31-point action plan has been drawn up by the Congress Party to activate the workers at all levels and prepare them to fight the BJP on the anti-communal plank. All the frontal organisations have been handed over specific programmes of action so that they follow it up at their own level.

As part of the organisational effort, public meetings would be organised at district headquarters. All important state leaders of the party have been asked to address the meetings.

The state, district and block units of the party have been asked to complete their organisational set-up and appoint ad hoc committee wherever possible. The last date of the current membership drive has also been extended till March 31, 1993 to enroll more supporters.

MPs [members of Parliament] and senior party leaders from other states will be sent to the four states entrusted with the specific task of galvanising the party and analyse the situation up to the booth level. These leaders will submit reports to the party president from time to time.

General secretaries in charge of respective states will chalk out mass contact programmes throughout the states in consultation with Pradesh Congress committee presidents, frontal organisations and other state leaders by March 31 next year.

Senior party leaders have also been asked to get in touch with editors and correspondents of the local press and take them into confidence about the happenings in Ayodhya and explain the government's stand point.

Political steps: The action plan on the political front calls for seeking cooperation from like-minded parties and patriotic forces in the campaign against communalism.

The party will also immediately publish literature on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue and the present political situation. Besides preparing a host of literature on the subject, the party will also hold conferences, rallies, seminars, and symposiums with active involvement of people from weaker sections and intelligentsia.

A committee will be set up to look after the problems of the four states under President's rule. The party general secretary in charge of the state, a Cabinet minister (not belonging to the state), political secretary to the Congress president, PCC president, and leader of the Congress Legislative Party will be its members.

Administrative measures: The administration in the four states will be geared up with special emphasis on maintaining law and order and executing developmental activities.

As per the plan, all developmental activities promised in the Congress party manifestos will be immediately implemented. Besides, work on allotment of house sites, and surplus land to the poor will be executed expeditiously.

The public distribution system will be strengthened, shops will be opened in areas affected by communal riots, and administrative committees will be set up for each ration shop.

Subramaniam Swamy Appears in Madras Court

93AS0463A *Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English* 15 Dec 92 p 11

[Article: "Swamy Escapes Mob Attack"]

[Text] Madras, December 14. Dr. Subramaniam Swamy facing a defamation case filed on behalf of the chief minister, Ms. Jayalalitha, escaped a mob attack outside the court of the principal sessions judge, Mr. K. Pon-nusamy, today, some of his associates were injured.

Dr. Swamy took refuge in the judge's chamber for nearly 30 minutes before he was led to a waiting car under heavy police protection. The vehicle was damaged in stone-throwing.

The Janata Party president later alleged that the attack was instigated by some AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] men and that the police bandobast was not adequate although he had alerted the police commissioner about possible trouble. The principal sessions judge had to intervene and direct the police to ensure the safety of Dr. Swamy and his associates as they left the court.

Earlier, Dr. Swamy submitted in the court that the defamation case filed against him by the state government was not maintainable. In his preliminary objection filed last week Dr. Swamy said that the allegation that attracted the defamation charge pertained to Ms. Jayalalitha's conduct as an individual. He challenged her to file a criminal defamation case against him. Dr. Swamy reiterated his plea to cross-examine Ms. Jayalalitha.

The public prosecutor, Mr. C. Balasubramanian, was asked to file his counter to Dr. Swamy's affidavit by tomorrow and the case was posted to December 18 for further hearing.

The state government had filed the defamation case following Dr. Swamy's statement alleging that the acid attack on a former IAS [Indian Administrative Service] official, Ms. Chandralekha, in May last, was incited by Ms. Jayalalitha. Ms. Chandralekha, who quit the government service to join the Janata Party, was present in the court.

Among others who accompanied Dr. Swamy when he appeared in court, were members of the Jaya Hatao

Action Committee, including two former AIADMK ministers—Mr. Rajaram and Mr. S. Thirunavukarasu—and a former speaker, Mr. P. H. Pandian.

Speaking to newsmen Dr. Swamy called for dismissal of the Jayalalitha government, citing deterioration in the law and order situation. The Janata Party leader said today's incident came in the wake of a similar attack on the residences of Mr. Rajaram and Mr. Pandian. A Janata party leader Mr. Raj Kumar, was recently assaulted by some miscreants who raided his shops in the busy Mount Road area.

Subramaniam Swamy Meets Madras Newsmen

93AS0462A *Madras THE HINDU in English* 31 Dec 92 p 4

[Article: "Masjid Blown Up With Dynamite: Swamy"; boldface words and quotation marks as published]

[Text] Madras, Dec. 30—Dr. Subramaniam Swamy, President of the Janata Party, said here today that forensic experts had opined that the Masjid at Ayodhya was not pulled down by shovels and pick axes but blown up by dynamites.

The origin of the dynamites was traced to Tamil Nadu Industrial Explosives, a State Government undertaking, after examination of the fragments at the site, Dr. Swamy said addressing a press conference.

He said there was already a tug of war between the Tamil Nadu and Kerala Police, the latter accusing the former of supplying the explosives indiscriminately to unauthorised persons.

(When the matter was referred to the State Forensic Sciences department, an official said so far there had been no such reference to the department. A CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] spokesman in Delhi has stated that so far there is no evidence to suggest that explosives were actually used. A top police official when contacted said Tamil Nadu Industrial Explosives had dealers all over the country. If the dynamites from this particular undertaking were found elsewhere how could anyone blame the Tamil Nadu Government for that, he asked).

Granite Trade: Dr. Swamy described as a severe slap on the face of the Tamil Nadu Government the recent judgment of the Madras High Court striking down as unconstitutional a provision in the State Government order that all trade relating to granite shall be channelised through the Tamil Nadu Minerals Corporation (TAMIN).

Distributing to presspersons two xerox copies of letters addressed to him from two Italian companies dealing with granites, Dr. Swamy said both of them had complained that the Tamil Nadu Government order (struck down by the High Court) had gone against the interest of more than 70 companies in Italy which had widely developed Indian granites. They had also made it clear that the Government order only encouraged one Italian

company and that they did not wish to have any under-hand dealings with any of the exporters from India.

"TAMIN prefers to supply to that company and not any other company. This is not a good sign in the business. Though we tried our best to offer more rates. TAMIN is not willing to export this material to us," the letters stated.

Dr. Swamy said in response to a question tabled by him in the Rajya Sabha the Union Minister of State for Finance had said that the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister had filed her Income Tax and Wealth Tax returns for 1990-91 and 1991-1992 on November 20 and for 1992-93 on November 23. He said he tabled the question on November 4 but it was 'arbitrarily shifted' from November 24 (the due date for the answer) to December 8 to give the Chief Minister time to rush and file all her returns. There was a breach of privilege notice from him on this pending with the Chairman of the House, he said.

ECONOMIC

Papers Report on Problems in Nation's Economy

Infrastructure Lags

93AS0502A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 16 Dec 92 p 17

[Article by Kingshuk Nag: "Infrastructure Way Behind Target"]

[Text] New Delhi, December 15. There has been an all round deterioration in the performance of the infrastructure sector in the last six months (April-September) with targets not being achieved in most areas. This is revealed in a study by the department of programme implementation. The report has been forwarded to different ministries early this month for necessary action.

Overall power generation was 2 percent behind target and hydro generation was 6.9 percent below the actual performance in April-October 1991. Crude oil production was 3.4 percent less than the target and 10.5 percent less than the production in the corresponding period last year.

Coal production was 3 percent behind the target, though not as badly behind as phosphatic fertiliser which was short by 9.3 percent. This was 10.5 percent less than the actual production last year.

Freight traffic moved by the railways was below the target but cargo handled at major ports was 1.3 percent higher than expected. The only other area where the target was exceeded was in the production of telephone switching equipment where the targets were exceeded by a hefty 27.5 percent. But the production of telephone instruments lagged behind by 3 percent.

Strictly speaking, however, manufacture of telecom equipment cannot be put in the infrastructure sector but even if targets have been exceeded in switching equipment, it is mainly due to high production of small telephone exchanges. In large switches which form the backbone of a telephone system, production in the six

months was 20.3 percent behind the target and 8.4 percent less than the production in the corresponding period last year.

In some crucial areas like cement, data is not available. But the total target for cement was revised downwards from 60 million tons to 56 million tons.

No detailed insights are offered by the study for this all round deterioration, only simplistic answers. For instance, explaining lower thermal power generation it says: "Excessive detention of railway wagons for unloading of coal at various thermal power stations may be a reason for less supply of coal which resulted in shortfall in thermal power generation."

Rail Bhavan officials when queried as to why unloading was taking a longer time at thermal power stations said that it was their experience that the power stations just did not seem to be interested in taking the coal. Against a requirement of 12,000 wagons per day, power stations taken together were only offloading 10,274 wagons in the last six months. Nobody knows the reason for this though one of the explanations offered is the deteriorating quality of coal produced in the last six months with the content of ash, mud and boulders in the coal dispatched going up. But as Mr. T.K. Bhaumik, assistant secretary general of PHD Chambers of Commerce & Industry says: "The poor performance of the thermal power stations reflects the fall in productivity in the deteriorating economic and political situation and the general state of uncertainty other than anything else."

Nobody is willing to buy the line that the below target thermal generation reflects the stagnant demand for power from industry reflecting industry-wide recession, but recessionary conditions may account for poor performance of some sectors like steel where, according to the department of programme implementation study, "Capacity utilisation... requires further improvement given the imperatives of liberalised policies in the economy."

Analysts suggest that demand recession in steel is not the least due to reduction of Central government capital expenditure, as steel makers have not been able to get an export market to offset the demand shortfall domestically.

In the petroleum sector, fall in crude oil production even on a lower target set for the current year (except for Bombay High which benefited from vastly reduced targets, all other units of ONGC [Oil and Natural Gas Commission] and Oil India have seen shortfalls) is more a reflection of the deterioration in the sector in the last one and a half years, though localised factors are also responsible for disruptions in production in some units.

In fertilisers, demand recession induced by the hefty increase in the prices of phosphatic fertilisers, the bad state of the industry and the escalating cost of production are responsible for the poor showing.

If cargo handled at ports has gone up, it is due to removal of import curbs which has led to an increase in imports

in the last six months. But, analysts say, the growth is not adequate because exports have not grown commensurately.

Central Bank Reserves

93AS0502B Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
16 Dec 92 p 10

[Article by Arup Ratan Lala: "Central Bank of India Reserves Wiped Out"; boldface words as published]

[Text] Calcutta, Dec. 15: The Central Bank of India has taken a deep plunge into the red with its entire reserves and bad debt provisions being wiped out, according to the Reserve Bank's latest annual financial review (AFR) for the year ended March 31, 1991.

A confidential report on the review, a copy of which has been made available to **The Telegraph**, categorically states that about Rs 93.24 crores of the bank's Rs [Rupees] 132.99-crore paid-up capital has also eroded due to mismanagement.

Revealing that the overall financial position of the bank is far from being safe, the report says sticky advances increased from Rs 1,168.86 crores as on March 31, 1990 to Rs 1,470.18 crores, meaning 19.5 percent to 21.7 percent respectively of total advances.

Also, the loan losses increased from Rs 328.44 crores as on March 31, 1990 to Rs 375.30 crores as on March 31, 1991.

This, the report says, has "resulted in wiping out (of) the entire amount of reserves and provisions and a major portion of the paid-up capital.

"Against the estimated loan losses of Rs 375.30 crores on the basis of the present review, the bank holds only Rs 194.23 crores as provision for bad and doubtful debts."

Asked how the bank could show a profit in such circumstances, a highly placed bank official said: "Do I need to tell you how? Even a layman will be able to make out that it is just window-dressing."

According to the report, the bank has to depend heavily on market borrowings for maintaining the statutory liquidity ratio (SLR). This has resulted in a tremendous rise in its borrowing level.

The report also reveals that the bank board had not been informed of the situation in time and the agenda papers later put up before the board were grossly inadequate.

The RBI [Reserve Bank of India], in course of its review of the bank's performance, has squarely put the blame on the previous chairman and managing director, Mr. N. Mistry.

"The chief executive used his authority indiscriminately... Proposals sanctioned by the CMD [expansion not given] were not put up before the board till February, 1991," the report notes.

The weak spots detected by the RBI in the bank's functioning include unsatisfactory appraisal of credit proposals, allowing excesses or temporary overdrawals (TODs).

The report also criticises the ad hoc facilities enjoyed by branch managers and controlling offices, laxity in post-disbursement supervision and follow-up and careless examination of staff accountability while putting up write-off proposals.

The report says the system of health code classification of borrowal accounts is not efficient enough to present a correct picture of the quality of advances. Besides, the monitoring system for large borrowal accounts has not yet been stabilised.

The internal control systems of the bank also failed to function properly leading to delays and defaults in submission of control returns and their scrutiny and follow-up at all levels.

During the review period, the RBI had detected 70 fraud cases involving Rs [Rupees] 133.75 lakhs. Of this, the bank has been able to recover only Rs 12.16 lakhs.

The cumulative estimated loss on frauds is Rs 4.82 crores of which the bank's provision covers Rs 3.11 crores that includes Rs 2.90 crores provided for frauds in non-borrowal accounts.

However, the report says the bank has taken action in all the 21 cases where the RBI suspected staff involvement. Eleven instances of attempted fraud, involving Rs 9.97 lakhs, were also detected by the RBI.

But the report observes: "There was generally delay in reporting frauds to the RBI and in some cases the delay was as much as one year from the date of detection of frauds."

Correspondent Tells Details of World Bank Aid

93AS0476A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 20 Dec 92
p 6

[Article by R. Chakrapani: "Unique Aid Package"; boldface words as published]

[Text] Washington, Dec. 19. The decision of the World Bank and some bilateral donors yesterday to provide, in a co-financing arrangement, a total aid of \$906 millions to help India further carry out the reform programme is a unique programme of assistance to the country.

Borrowing a phrase from the Indian Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, the World Bank described the co-financing arrangement for the social safety net programme as the international community's support to India's efforts to pursue structural adjustment "with human face."

Of the \$906 millions approved by the World Bank Board on Thursday, \$500 millions will be from IDA [International Development Association] resources and will be virtually interest free and repayable on a long-term basis.

The balance of \$406 millions is to be advanced to India, in a co-financing arrangement by the Netherlands (100 million Guilders), the United States Agency for International Development (\$35 millions), Germany (DM 50 millions), the European Community (ECUS 150 millions) and the Asian Development Bank (\$100 millions).

Half of the World Bank's commitment of \$500 millions will be paid to India within a few days and the rest by the middle of the year.

The uniqueness of the agreement is that several traditional aid donors have joined in helping India in its efforts to liberalise its economy. The World Bank's chief of India division, Mr. Heinz Vergin, said the Netherlands had already signed the agreement and others were expected to do so soon.

The social safety net programme is part of any country embarking on economic reform. The safety net fund, already set-up by the Indian Cabinet, seeks to take care of the poorer sections of society that might be adversely affected during the reform process until their conditions improve. The safety net also aims at compensating employees ejected from uneconomic undertakings and providing new skills to those wanting to lead productive lives.

Satisfied with progress: Mr. Vergin disclosed that the Bank's Board took the occasion to review the progress of reforms made by India. It was generally satisfied with the progress and urged the Indian Government to increase the momentum of implementing its stabilisation and reform programme wherever it is possible. In some areas, the pace of implementation of the reform was slow, but the difficulties of a democratically-elected Government in building consensus was "appreciated" by the Board.

According to Mr. Vergin, the Board envisaged up to \$3 billions of assistance to India annually for the next two or three years. About a third of this would be for helping reform efforts and the balance will be earmarked for poverty eradication and environment effort provided good programmes are offered by the Indian Government. Recently, the Bank had turned down a programme for improving the finance of the National Thermal Corporation. Another was rejected in the agricultural sector.

Two projects: At its meeting on Thursday, the World Bank's Executive Board approved two projects of importance to India. It approved a loan of \$75 millions to the Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Ltd. based on the utilisation of bagasse.

An IDA loan of \$115 millions was extended to the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency to encourage new private enterprises in alternative sources of energy.

The Bank's loan to the newsprint venture will help in expanding the newsprint plant in Tamil Nadu and enhance the viability of bagasse-newsprint technology.

UNI reports:

Ayodhya developments: Mr. Vergin said though the Bank was watching with concern the situation in India arising out of the developments in Ayodhya "we are very much impressed with the way the Government had handled it."

"Moreover, these are not unusual developments for us. We have a number of borrowers (countries) in which there is more turmoil than India," he said. He recalled that Dr. Manmohan Singh had publicly promised that the economic reforms would go ahead with added vigour.

"The developments had happened so recently we cannot conjecture about its consequences," the official said.

Crude Oil Imported From Qatar, Others in Mideast

93AS0500 Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 20 Dec 92 p 14

[Text] New Delhi, Dec. 19—Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the country's sole canalising agency for import of oil, has finalised arrangements with Qatar for supply of 5 lakh tonnes of Qatar marine crude oil. This is the first time that India will be importing crude oil from Qatar. An agreement to this effect was signed when a delegation visited that country this week. The estimated value of crude oil supplies from Qatar is around 65 million dollars.

Middle-East countries have been traditional suppliers of crude oil and petroleum products to India. Besides Qatar, India already receives crude oil supplies from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran and U.A.E. [United Arab Emirates] on term contract basis.

Presently, all upliftments from Middle-East countries are being made as per schedule. For the current year, India is expected to import in all, about 29 million tonnes of crude oil and little over 10 million tonnes of petroleum products. So far, around 22 million tonnes of crude oil and 7 million tonnes of petroleum products have been imported. The recent contract with Qatar for crude oil supplies comes in the wake of India's attempts to diversify its sources so as to enlarge its basket of crudes.

Negotiators Pleased With Draft Dunkel Pact

93AS0481A Bombay THE SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA
in English 27 Dec 92 pp 1, 26

[Article by Priya Ranjan Dash: "Dunkel Draft Agreement: India Gets Major Concessions"]

[Text] New Delhi, December 26. India's worst fears about the Dunkel draft agreement on agriculture have virtually disappeared with the negotiating team securing a significant undertaking with major trading nations in the recent Geneva talks.

New Delhi is greatly relieved that its major trade partners—the European Community (EC) and the U.S.—

along with the CAIRNS [expansion not given] group of agricultural exporting countries have not only clearly appreciated India's main concerns regarding the draft agreement, but have also expressed their willingness to formally endorse the country's position on its food security and public distribution systems (PDS).

A clear understanding has been reached with these countries that the emerging multilateral trade agreement on agriculture would not in any way restrict India's policy options regarding the public distribution system PDS and food security. It has been specifically assured that the Food Corporation of India (FCI) can continue with its operations of food procurement stock and distribution unhindered.

In other words, these countries have shown their willingness to accommodate India in getting an exemption from any possible commitment to reduce subsidy on the PDS. Thus, the "subsidy" on PDS, as it is understood within the country, which is estimated to touch Rs [Rupees] 4,000 crores during the current financial year, would not be taken into account while calculating "domestic support" for the purpose of the Dunkel text and would, therefore, not impose a commitment on India to reduce it.

While the Dunkel draft itself provided an exemption, to certain domestic support measures, including public stockholding for food security purposes, India's misgivings in this area were because of the strict criteria prescribed for granting this exemption. These criteria were: expenditure in relation to the accumulation and holding of stocks of products should form an integral part of a food security programme identified in national legislation; the volume and accumulation of such stocks shall correspond to predetermined targets related solely to food security; and food purchases by the government shall be made at current prices.

The apprehension that India's independent policy options on food security and public distribution might be compromised in the event of the country entering into the proposed multilateral agreement was expressed before the group of ministers by a cross section of opinion leaders. In view of this, the government decided to hold consultations with major participants in the GATT to obtain an understanding confirming that India's policies in these key sectors would not fall foul of the proposed multilateral agreement.

Indian negotiators have also been able to get an assurance from the leading trading nations that the possibility of their seeking a minimum market access in India for farm products during the six-year operational period (1993-99) of the proposed agreement is most unlikely.

These countries have confirmed the position taken by India that under the proposed agreement, it would neither be obliged to switch over to price-based measures from quantitative restrictions on imports, nor would it undertake minimum market access commitment because of its balance of payment (BoP) crisis. These countries have acknowledged that while India is making an effort to correct its BoP, the challenging task of achieving a comfortable surplus balance may take much longer than six years as the experience of Asian countries such as Korea has shown. With a huge external debt that India has accumulated, these countries do not expect New Delhi to be in a position to grant minimum market access even in the years immediately following 1996.

An understanding has also been reached with major participants in GATT that the export "subsidies" such as income-tax exemption granted on exports profit in India would not form a part of export subsidies prescribed in the Dunkel text for reduction commitment.

On the other hand, these countries have positively viewed the demand made by India that under the proposed multilateral agreement, it should be possible for New Delhi to introduce internal and external freight concessions for its exports, which are not being granted now.

There has been a sympathetic appreciation of India's position that an overwhelming majority of the country's farmers could be classified as "low-income resource poor" farmers, who in turn would be eligible for getting farm input subsidies, in cash or in kind, and these payments would be outside the subsidy reduction commitments.

With the U.S., the EC and the CAIRNS group of countries expressing their willingness to accommodate India's point of view on a gamut of issues of critical concern to the country, officials feel confident of the government accepting the Dunkel draft on agriculture without substantial changes. The confidence is based on the fact that the proposed agreement on agriculture would be the "least bothersome" for India which would not be required to undertake any subsidy reduction commitment while it would stand to gain from farm exports under a liberalised global trade regime.

Light Combat Aircraft, Other Arms by 2005

93AS0466A *New Delhi PATRIOT in English 12 Dec 92*
p 5

[Article: "Light Combat Aircraft by 2005"]

[Text] Bangalore, Dec 11 (UNI)—The indigenously designed multi-role tactical fighter Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) will be delivered to the armed forces by 2003-2005, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, scientific adviser to the Defence Minister said today.

In his special address at the inaugural of 4th annual general meeting of the Aeronautical Society of India (ASI) here, he listed the CCA [expansion not given] project among one of the three crucial missions to be achieved before the dawn of the next century.

Handing over of various missiles developed under the Integrated Guided Missiles Development Programme (IGMP) to the armed forces for deployment and indigenous capabilities to launch communication satellites

from Indian soil, were the other missions he listed for fruition before the year 2000.

He said the aerospace industry must not depend on foreign technology and experts should develop self-confidence so that the indigenous programmes could forge ahead.

Inaugurating the annual general meeting of the ASI, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) chairman R. N. Sharma called for collective effort from all the wings of aeronautics to help the country thrive in the domain of aerospace.

He said the aeronautics industry and Research and Development (R and D) organisations would do well if they devoted some attention to areas such as civilian aircraft, technologies related to civil engines, air traffic control-related projects and alternative energy as one of the derivatives of aeronautical products.