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5 March 1993

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International Affairs

Article Anticipates Closer Indo-U.S. Defense Ties

*BK2001120193 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English
7 Jan 93 p 6*

[By Pravin Sawhney]

[Text] New Delhi—Under the aegis of Indo-US army steering committee, a significant step forward in Indo-US defence cooperation will be achieved with the holding of the seventeenth Pacific Armies Management Seminar (PAM-17) here from January 21 to 30.

Co-sponsored by India and the United States, 35 countries of the Pacific-Asia region and Britain, France (both for the first time) and Canada of NATO organisation, will deliberate in Delhi at levels of brigadiers and colonels on "Peace-Keeping operations under United Nations." The keynote addresses will be delivered by Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit and US Ambassador Thomas Pickering.

The PAM cell, consisting of a brigadier and seven officers, under the army vice-chief (who is the co-chairman along with Lt. Gen. Jonnie Corns, commander US Army Pacific USARPAC, of the year-old joint army steering committee) will then utilise the professional experiences obtained through PAM-17 seminars and syndicate discussions, to evolve and adjust, in a cooperative mode, future peace-keeping concepts for the Indian army. These will include policy, operational and logistics plannings and futuristic studies for the army out-of-area peace-keeping roles, in the same way as USARPAC located in Hawaii provides trained, equipped and ready armed forces to US commander-in-chief Pacific command (CINCPAC), besides being the resource management coordinator for all army forces in the theatre.

India, under US Pacific Command (PACCOM) area of responsibility, has been identified by the United States as one of the six emerging power centres in the new multipolar world. The other power centres being Europe, United States, Japan, Russia and China. This makes the Indian army a key US partner in the Pacific vision envisaged by the former USARPAC commander, Lt Gen Claude.M. Kicklighter. The Pacific vision proposes the integration of all US armies in the region and then improve inter-operability of the integrated US theatre army voice with countries in the region, to enhance peace and wartime cooperation.

For these reasons, India a late entrant to the US sponsored PAMs, is fast emerging as a strong US partner in the region. While former army vice-chief Lt Gen V.K. Sood was a special invitee at the 1989 Seoul PAM it was only in 1990 that the Indian delegation first participated at the Dhaka PAM, followed by PAM on "Low intensity conflicts" in Seoul in 1991 and 1992 Hawaii PAM on "Disaster relief due to natural calamities."

During the first Indo-US army steering committee meeting held in January 1992 in Delhi, Lt Gen Corns had, with Indian encouragement, suggested the creation of a permanent secretariat for the PAMs, based in Hawaii. The governing body, tasked with the conduct and evaluation of various PAMs was recommended to meet twice a year, once during the PAM itself and once in Hawaii, headquarters of USARPAC. The proposal is expected to come up soon for concretisation, according to sources.

With the scope of UN Peace-keeping forces now enlarged, as evinced in Somalia, the forthcoming PAM-17 subject assumes immediate importance for the Indian army on, at least, three counts. First, PAM countries Peace-Keeping role are no longer confined to their region. In Somalia, which comes under US Central Command (CENTCOM), Indian troops (under US PACCOM area of responsibility) and NATO forces have been deployed in both Peace-Making role (under US operation Rescue [as published] Hope) and Peace-Keeping role after January 20, when Rescue Hope is proposed to cease and UN operation UNOSOM [UN Operation in Somalia]-II commences. During the suggested transition period of 60 to 90 days, Indian troops will be initially operating in low key functioning under US command and later under UN aegis. This implies both a change of command and area of responsibility for the Indian troops.

This will be the second time in 40 years that Indian Peace-Keeping troops in Somalia will be working under US command. The earlier instance was in Korea in 1950, when Indian 60 para field ambulance, though grouped under commonwealth division, was actually under command US 8th army and not under UN command as was then purported.

Second, in the post-cold war dispensation, Gen Colin Powell, Chairman US joint chiefs of staff, has proposed restructuring of US forces and creation of a new command task to deal with regional conflicts. If created, this will affect the organisation and existing role of USARPAC committed for the entire Asia-Pacific region. Especially when there is also a move in the Pentagon to expand the planning role of US 1 corps at Fort Lewis, Washington, to support CINCPAC. Therefore, till the US troops, which have the underpinning role in PAM concepts is not sorted out, practical cooperative interaction evolved from PAM theorisation will remain uncertain.

And, while India remains in the PAM region, it is actually working at unit levels with Pakistan (which is in CENTCOM region) both in Cambodia and now Somalia, under UN aegis. "This is a unique experience where, otherwise hostile troops, will follow common drills and procedures under UN tasks, observed an officer. [no close quotation marks as published]

Russian Official Interviewed on Trade With India

93AS0452A Madras THE HINDU in English 1 Jan 93
p 6

[Article by Vladimir Radyuhin]

[Text] Moscow, Dec. 31—The First Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, Mr. Vladimir Shumeiko, says that despite the heavy economic crisis in Russia its trade with India is worth \$1.4 billion in the outgoing year. The 1992 trade protocol envisaged a turnover of \$2.2 billion. Mr. Shumeiko believes that a deeper slump has been avoided thanks to a switch from the rupee to dollar trade and also due to a \$285-million Indian technical credit. "We really ought to be grateful to India for the credit," he said.

Mr. Shumeiko, who earlier this month replaced Mr. Gennady Burbulis as Co-chairman of the Russian-Indian Commission for trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation, told THE HINDU here that Russia would be in a position to restore the old volumes of oil exports to India if and when the international trade embargo against Iraq was lifted.

In the past Russia used to export to India Iraqi oil which it received in repayment for Iraq's debts. According to Mr. Shumeiko, now that Russia has to ship oil from its own ports it cannot maintain its commitments to India because transportation costs have gone up sharply, while oil production in Russia has declined. "If the embargo against Iraq is lifted we will be able to export to India about the same amount of crude as before," he said. Until last year Russia supplied to India about 4.5 million tonnes of crude annually.

Commitment stands: Since the peak year of 1988, oil production in Russia has fallen by over 30 per cent and oil exports have dropped off to less than a half. However, Mr. Shumeiko confirmed that Russia was going to honour its obligation to ship one million tonnes of crude to India in accordance with contracts signed in November. "We are interested in these contracts ourselves as we need the money to pay for our imports of Indian tea, spices and raw materials that we cannot procure elsewhere." In 1992, Russia sold India only 60,000 tonnes of crude compared to four million tonnes provided for under the trade protocol.

Mr. Shumeiko hopes that the problem of the rupee-rouble exchange rate related to the evaluation of India's debt to the former Soviet Union can be resolved early, possibly by the time of Mr. Yeltsin's visit to India in the second half of January. "Talks are going on and I think they will bear success because there is goodwill on both sides." He said the issue would be taken up by the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Economic Relations, Mr. Vladimir Shibayev, during his visit to New Delhi around January 5. "Maybe the problem can be settled there and then," said Mr. Shumeiko.

Editorial Views Outcome of Yeltsin's Visit

BK0802114993 Delhi PATRIOT in English 30 Jan 93
p 4

[Editorial: "Renewal of bond of amity"]

[Text] President Boris Yeltsin's first state visit to India has dispersed fears about Russia's future attitude towards this country. Not to put a fine point on it, obstreperous persons of influence both in Moscow and Delhi had been asking for a sharp break with Russia's ties of friendship and close economic cooperation with India. Those in Moscow, who pejoratively described the former USSR's bonds with India as a "special relationship", argued that like a great deal else of the dissolved Soviet State Russia should jettison the stress on relations with India. The argument was a non-sequitur.

India-USSR friendship and cooperation served well the national interests of both. These by no means had been fashioned by ideological affinities. Geopolitical and economic interests of nations do not alter overnight, regardless of domestic policies and ideological preferences the governments of the day of the neighbouring countries may espouse from time to time. Seeing India-Russia relations in this light, President Yeltsin appears to have opted for the sagacious course. He has decided to enrich the substance of the bilateral relationship, forsaking those aspects that are no more relevant to the two.

The new India-Russia treaty provides the juridical base for strengthening the relations between the two countries in the changed international circumstances. The treaty commits both countries to the security of each other's territorial integrity and prohibits them from taking any action which may affect either country's interests. The absence in this treaty of the so-called security clauses of the 1971 Indo-Soviet treaty makes no difference. The 1971 treaty was born in a world different from the present one. It was, above all else, a confirmation of the friendship and cooperation which had developed between the two since India's independence.

Taking cognizance of the 1971 treaty, the new treaty in its preamble affirms legitimacy and relevance of the concerns that animated the so-called security clauses of the previous treaty.

This ought to dispel somewhat Indian anxiety about the Russian stand on issues having a bearing on India's security. Such issues may concern Kashmir, Pakistan-sponsored terrorism and Pakistan's move to stoke Islamic bigotry in the region. On Kashmir, Mr. Yeltsin has taken a reasonably clear position. He has reaffirmed the known stand that the State is a part of India. He has said in public that "we will use all available channels in the Security Council to help India solve the Kashmir issue." The implications of this pronouncement is not altogether explicit. And, also, the Indians must know that Russia, a multiparty democracy, is subject like other democracies to changeable policy orientations.

Russia, President Yeltsin has said, will help India uphold its sovereignty and integrity. Logically, implicit in this is a pledge that Russia would honour the ongoing contracts of supplies for India's defence forces. The Defence Ministers of Russia and India signed a protocol to ensure these supplies. Thus Mr. Yeltsin has removed lingering doubts that Russia may renege on the contract to sell the cryogenic engine and technology—to be completed by 1995 to 1997, for India's space programme.

The Russian President obviously had US pressures in mind when he told Prime Minister Narasimha Rao that neither side should renege from an agreement signed by them because of third party intervention. This was reassuring. Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev was among the ministers accompanying Mr. Yeltsin. This is important because he is believed in his country to be an "Americanist" who wants Russia to toe the US line on India.

In Delhi, Mr. Yeltsin tried to remove the impression that Russia, wanting to be in the rich West, has turned its back on Asia. He repeatedly referred to the Eurasian geography of his country. In the early months in office, he had to look to the West to pull him out of the difficulties in which his country found itself. This was necessary to facilitate the transition of a command economy into a free market economy.

But he cannot ignore the compulsions of geography. He has turned attention to some of the Asian neighbours. India would welcome the CIS countries' backing for democratisation of the United Nations. Equality of all sovereign states should be the basis of reform of the UN. The United States seems keen on converting the Security Council into an expanded G-7 of rich nations. If the United States has its way, the only two of the rich nations that are not in the Security Council, Germany and Japan, are to be inducted in it on a permanent basis, ignoring the demands of the developing nations for expansion of the Security Council to include one or two of the under-represented new nations as permanent members of the Council.

Delhi hopes that all CIS countries would be forthcoming on this issue. If India's relations with them develop along the expected lines, Russia too will be strengthened. The vast Eurasian region as a whole would benefit from the growth of India-Russia cooperation.

Paper on New Indo-Russian Treaty of Friendship

*BK0602091993 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English
30 Jan 93 p 8*

[Editorial: Boost To Asian Detente"]

[Text] India's foreign-policy makers have good reason to be more at ease following the visits of the British and Russian Prime Ministers to New Delhi. The collapse of the Soviet Union had confronted India with a disturbing uncertainty about how best to safeguard its security interests in the new situation. Much of it related to the

future course the Kashmir issue in particular might take at the international level. This uncertainty no doubt became less worrisome following the welcome stress the United States started laying on the Simla agreement as the basis for serious Indo-Pakistani negotiations to settle the question. But Moscow's attitude gave cause for concern in view of equivocal statements on the subject which emanated from there in the last two years. While Mr. John Major's visit has served to underline unqualified British agreement with the new American stand on Kashmir, Mr. Boris Yeltsin's firm commitment to the continuation of the old Soviet policy on Kashmir is even more reassuring.

The new Indo-Russian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation is in essence the same as its predecessor. The only change is the deletion of the security clause of the old treaty. This is a natural sequel to the end of the cold war. So is the irrelevance of the old card game. India, China, the Soviet Union and the US-led West were the active players of the game. The end of the ideological conflict will mean that diabolism in diplomacy will be much less in evidence. Power politics will, of course, continue but it will be far less deadly than before and will be dominated by the pursuit of economic interests. When Mr. Yeltsin says that the Indo-Russian Treaty will not be directed against a third country, he seems to have in mind Pakistan in particular. But Islamabad will note with dismay his statement that the treaty is aimed at protecting the integrity of India.

It will be prudent for New Delhi to ensure that reaffirmation of Indo-Russian friendship does not reduce the importance of continuing to improve Sino-Indian relations. China's preoccupation with large-scale economic modernisation is clearly a credible guarantee, against any renewal of its interest in the foreseeable future in supporting terrorist and secessionist movements against other Asian countries. From New Delhi's point of view what is of special significance is China's seeming disinclination to encourage Pakistan to change the status quo in Kashmir through war. This is why India needs to pursue more vigorously the aim of arriving at a reasonable settlement of the border dispute with China as early as practicable. India now has greater latitude to embark on purposeful diplomacy with this end in view. The absence of a serious territorial dispute between these two countries is an essential prerequisite to abiding stability in Asia.

Editorial Hails Positive Outcome of Yeltsin's Visit

*BK1102094093 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
in English 30 Jan 93 p 13*

[Editorial: "Boris Yeltsin Strikes a Positive Note"]

[Text] Mr. Boris Yeltsin's mission to India has proved a success of greater significance than may have been anticipated. The first visit of a top Russian leader after the collapse of the Soviet Union, with which this country had a special relationship for a long stretch of time, was

a notable event on that count alone. Not widely predicted, however, was its outcome that promises to restore particularly close ties between Moscow and New Delhi. The most telling proof of the attempt at reviving the rapport is provided by Mr. Yeltsin's pronouncements on the Kashmir problem. Supporting India's position that Kashmir is its integral part and pledging to stand by it in the UN Security Council, the Russian President has held out the hope of a Soviet-type counter to Pakistan's renewed efforts to internationalise the issue. He has reiterated the point by making it specifically clear that Russia will not seek to improve relations with Pakistan at India's cost. He has emphasised the importance he attaches to the friendship by his affirmation of Russia's commitment to cooperation in space programmes—including supply of cryogenic engines—regardless of opposition from any quarters. The message is underscored by his assurance that Moscow will not be averse to backing the demand for a permanent Security Council seat for this country. The way to a reformed relationship has been paved with a resolution of problems that have remained as relics of Indo-Soviet interaction. The newly signed document, replacing the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation of 1971, while conspicuously omitting the strategic security clause, clearly envisages continuing Indo-Russian partnership in several areas of common interest and concern. The uncertainty over Russian supply of spare parts for Indian defence forces has been fully and finally allayed. And, the agreement on the rupee-ruble rates of exchange has removed an "unnecessary irritant" in the trade relations. The result of negotiations in this regard may not fully satisfy either side, but do reflect a sound give-and-take spirit warranted by a shared appreciation of the importance of the larger relationship at stake.

The reinvigoration of the relationship is a reaffirmation, among other things, of its geopolitical rationale that lay behind the growth of the Indo-Soviet friendship as well. No mere corollary to the logic of the Cold War, it continues to be valid despite the latter's end. Deserving of note and endorsement in this connection, is Mr. Yeltsin's repeated declaration that the relationship is not directed against any third country. More specifically, the Indo-Russian friendship poses no threat to the ties of either country with the United States and the West—and is all the more a valuable and viable asset to both for that reason.

Paper Lauds British Antiterrorism Cooperation
BK2001110993 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English
6 Jan 93 p 8

[Editorial: "Significant Cooperation"]

[Text] It is heartening that India and the United Kingdom have evinced an interest in continuing their close cooperation in combating international terrorism. They took the first significant step for this purpose by signing two treaties last September, one providing for extradition of wanted persons involved in terrorism and

the other enabling confiscation of their properties. Lacunae are often discovered in most pieces of legislation even if their enactment follows detailed debates in parliament. Likewise, since the signing of the two treaties, it has seemed to India that there are some infirmities in them and it is only natural that these were discussed at the meeting held in New Delhi between the British Home Secretary, Mr. Kenneth Clarke, and his Indian counterpart, Mr. S.B. Chavan.

One continuing problem relates to the illegal flow of funds from Britain to India for financing acts of terrorism in this country. This actually is a part, and a relatively small one, of the extensive racket of "havalas" [illegal transfer of money] transactions which has existed since long before the Indian patrons in Britain of violent political activities in Punjab and Kashmir started funding these on a large scale. Despite constant efforts to plug the loopholes in the relevant foreign exchange regulations, this problem not only remains but has apparently assumed greater proportions in recent years. Since that is so, it would be unrealistic to expect a total stop to the receipt of money from abroad by terrorist groups in India in the immediate future. Besides, the responsibility of the Indian authorities in effectively enforcing the law against illegal transfer of funds is no less, than that of the British official agencies involved in combating this menace. Even so, Mr. Chavan did well to point out some practical difficulties in checking the flow of funds to the Indian terrorist groups. It is now up to Mr. Clarke to decide if any modifications are called for in the anti-terrorism treaties signed earlier. Perhaps the mutually agreed purpose can be served simply by new methods of detecting the crime in Britain in the light of what Mr. Chavan told Mr. Clarke. The important thing is that there should be no let-up in the war on terrorists just because the ones in Punjab seem to have been driven to the wall.

As far as the Kashmir conflict is concerned, India is naturally happy to note that the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Douglas Hurd, has unequivocally reiterated his support for its resolution on the basis of the Simla Agreement. The forthright stand he took on this issue during his recent visit to Pakistan was particularly noteworthy. This is all the more reason why the Indian Government should not be unduly irritated by frequent criticism in Britain of the human rights record in Kashmir. Rather, it should, on the one hand, do everything to come down hard on clear cases of misuse of authority by the security agencies and, on the other, try hard to enlighten the British public opinion on the true ramifications of Pakistani interference in Kashmir.

Daily Notes 'Upbeat Mood' Marking Indian-British Ties

BK2101141393 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
in English 7 Jan 93 p 11

[Editorial: "Working Together"]

[Text] British Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke's visit to India should strengthen the recent trend that marks greater understanding between the two countries on key issues like extra-territorial support to terrorist activities and drug-related crimes. India has been at the receiving end on both counts. The liberal British laws in regard to political asylum and the Western definition of human rights had made it possible for a large number of misguided Punjab and Kashmir militants and their supporters to work for subversive activities designed to harm India. It is encouraging to see that India's patient diplomacy has begun to bear fruits. A major and concrete sign of success was the signing of the extradition treaty between the two countries. The treaty is yet to be ratified by parliaments of India and Britain. But considering the upbeat mood that marks Indo-British relations this seems a mere formality. The high point that these ties have reached is evident in the scheduled presence of Prime Minister John Major at this year's Republic Day parade. For some time now there appears to be a greater understanding in Britain, as elsewhere in the West, of India's genuine efforts to evolve a cohesive and secular polity despite the negative pressure generated by social conflicts. The worst point in this process was reached after what happened on December 6 at Ayodhya. But there are signs to assume that India's own shock at the outrage and its determination not to succumb to obscurantist forces has been ringing a sympathetic chord. This was evident in the statement the European Community issued on the Ayodhya issue at a time when Britain held its presidency.

Mr. Clarke, in the midst of what appeared to be a fact-finding mission in South Asia, said before departing for Pakistan that he would urge Islamabad not to extend support to terrorists in India. He said the right thing, but it has not been one's experience to see Pakistan responding to sane counsel in these matters. If Islamabad sees the folly of continuing to extend support to Kashmir and Punjab militants it would be dictated more by ground realities than exhortations by British dignitaries. It is the effective use of the extradition treaty and some Western diplomatic pressure that could make a difference to Pakistan's attitude—perhaps.

Undoubtedly, the Western discouragement of transterritorial assistance to terrorist activities needs to be coordinated. Washington is already in line, with Pakistan having been put on notice to prove why it should not be branded a terrorist State. However, Western understanding should not be taken for granted. Mr. Clarke has given enough hint that India's human rights record need to be unblemished. The best way to ensure that is by creating confidence among the Western nations and by initiating the political process in Kashmir, as has been done in Punjab. India should use the current Western goodwill to prove that India would neither let the terrorists dictate nor block a political solution of the Kashmir question.

Regional Affairs

Army Commander on Siachen, Kashmir Situations

BK2001102993 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English
5 Jan 93 p 3

[Text] Udhampur—There is a need for an honourable solution to the Siachen dispute between India and Pakistan, Lt. Gen. Sahni general officer commanding-in-chief [GOC-in-C] of the northern command, said here on Sunday. He was talking to a group of visiting newsmen at the northern command headquarters.

Lt. Gen. Sahni said that ever since the Pakistani attempt to capture an Indian post was foiled in July—the enemy suffered heavy casualties—the highest battlefield in the world was “quieter and colder”. “There are fewer skirmishes and since both the sides have been using small fire arms, the overall level of engagements has decreased”, he added.

The army commander, who has been supervising operations in the Siachen glacier as well as in the troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir, said, “our troops are sitting pretty, but the other side also wants some face saving on the issue”.

Lt. Gen. Sahni, however, said there is no tension or problem on the Chinese border in the Ladakh region.

Talking about militancy in the Kashmir Valley, he said that the situation had changed remarkably, with the people as well as the militants getting disillusioned with Pakistan's gun culture and machinisation.

Asked to comment on the statement of the State Governor, Mr. G.C. Saxena, that the fear of the gun still held sway, the Army commander said that there were still 7000 to 8000 heavily armed militants in the valley.

He said the problem in the Valley would continue. “Peace is a far cry unless there is a change of heart or any political initiative is taken”, he said. He claimed that the Army, with its three-tier system of border sealing had stopped infiltration or exfiltration, frustrating the designs of Pakistan to foment trouble by sending trained youths and arms.

On the situation on the Line of Control (LOC), Lt. Gen. Sahni replied that the situation there is “as good and as bad as always”. He said that at some flashpoints like Poonch, Rajouri, Naushera and Kargil sectors, there has been constant trouble ever since 1947.

The effective sealing of the Line of Control (LOC) has resulted in the frustration amongst the 2000 to 4000 trained youths stranded in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and their mentors, the Pakistani intelligence outfit, ISI [Interservices Intelligence], he said.

Of late, the ISI has been trying to push in huge quantities of arms and ammunition just across the LOC in Poonch, Rajouri and Taghdhar areas, but the consignments were intercepted .

Lt. Gen. Sahni appreciated the role of the local people of Poonch and Rajouri sectors in frustrating the designs of the anti-national elements by having an excellent "rapport and communication" with the Army.

He said that with the killing of more than 2100 militants, including the top brass of various outfits and the arrest of thousand others, the militants are totally demoralised .

The Army, which has been working with utmost restraint, has been able to totally free the rural areas from the menace of militants, whose writ no longer runs there, he claimed.

Asked about the alienation of the common people from the security forces, the Army commander admitted that such an abnormal situation does bring inconvenience and irritation.

"Care is taken to ensure that the common citizens are not put to harassment with civil officials and lady constables assisting the Army, in search-and-cordon operations".

He said the role of the Army could be gauged from the fact that there are more and more tip-offs about the militants from common man.

He said that Army, which was always assisting the civil administration in the welfare of the people of this border state had launched "Operation Goodwill 11" to win the hearts and minds of the people by embarking upon an ambitious civic action programme during the month.

"This has unnerved the already demoralised militants and their mentors, who have instructed them to carry out false propoganda of torture, harassment, rape and arson after every operation to malign the the force," he said.

The Pakistanis are spending \$ one billion to carry out propaganda on Kashmir at the international level, he added.

The GOC-in-C said that utmost restraint was used and no compromise was made as far as discipline was concerned.

About the rise in militancy in Doda distnct of Jammu region, the Army commander said that it needs careful handling as the situation there is related to the events in Kashmir as well as Jammu due to both geographical and demographic aspects.

He said there are approximately 200 militants in Doda, half of them armed. Many of the very young boys caught while trying to exfiltrate to PoK [Pakistan-occupied Kashmir] were from Doda. "But they said that they were forced to go to the other side to get arms training," he said.

Earlier, Maj. Gen. K.S. Sethi, of the northern command told newsmen that most of the militant groups were looting and abducting people for ransom, apart from raping innocent killings.

He said that due to criminalisation of their activities, the militants have lost credibility. "They are using religious places and hospitals for their nefarious activities," he said.

Maj. Gen. Sethi said that during the past two months there were 20 encounters, in which several militants were killed. He, however, hoped that the great values of tolerance and secularism would be restored, but hastened to add that the Army alone could not do it.

Increasing Islamization of Bangladesh Regretted

93AS0438C Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 14 Jan 93 p 8

[Article by Aabha Dixit: "Mullahs at Dhaka's Gates"; italicized words as published]

[Text]

Islam is slowly overwhelming Bangladesh's fledgling nationalism.

The persistence of violence in Bangladesh so long after the demolition of the Babri Masjid is unexpected. Retributive justice is associated more with Pakistan than with India's eastern neighbour. Further, the intensity of the violence makes one wonder whether the mosque issue alone could sustain mob hysteria for so long. Even after the embers of hatred have died down in most parts of India, the fires continue to burn in minority localities across the border in a nation that for almost 21 years was perhaps the only Muslim majority country to have officially declared itself secular.

During two decades of independence secularism in Bangladesh has lost ground to growing Islamic fundamentalism. In Pakistan the growth of this fundamentalism has been widely publicised. All politicians have exploited the issue to prolong their rule. The Islamic movement gained strength with the agitation committing itself to usher in the *Nizam-e-Mustafa*—the rule of the Prophet. This shook the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto government to its roots, allowing the president's "butler," General Zia ul Haq, to grab power.

To stay in power Zia emphasised his mission of the Islamisation of Pakistan. However, his piecemeal efforts to introduce the necessary legislation revealed his reluctance to create the Islamic society the rightwing parties demanded. This demand and the hopes Zia would deliver the goods formed the basis of their support in his uncertain early days as martial law administrator. Zia could and would never allow the clerics to assume supreme power.

Islamisation was merely meant to keep his political opponents off balance. But its impact was a growing

religious intolerance among the masses. To the hoodlum in the streets, Islamisation had only one connotation—minority bashing. Attacks on the minority community grew with the imposition of martial rule. Between 1984 and 1992 rarely has a communal incident in India passed without “revenge” being extracted out of the microscopic minority population in Pakistan.

In Bangladesh Islamisation, though less publicised, has been faster. Under General Zia ur Rahman it aggressively wooed wealthier Islamic nations for economic aid. Oil rich Muslim countries like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia insisted on amendments in the secular constitution framed by the Mujibur Rahman government. Pushing ahead with Islamisation helped the general steal the trumpcard of the rightwing parties.

Zia ur Rahman’s successor, General Ershad, followed the same policy, encouraging and attracting foreign investment from Islamic nations. The constitution was changed further and the 10 per cent minority population were increasingly politically marginalised, though they could still contest general seats, unlike in Pakistan. Minority representation in government dropped sharply through the Eighties. Nor did the armed forces, which had Major General Dutta in the Seventies, have any more Hindus of comparative rank.

The elections following the overthrow of General Ershad revealed exactly to what extent Bangladesh had been Islamised. Begum Khaleda Zia did not win on any sympathy wave over the assassination of her husband, nor because of her struggle against Ershad’s dictatorial rule. She won simply because she had successfully portrayed the Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP] as more Islamic and, therefore, more anti-India than the Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina. Even the Bangabandhu’s daughter had to bow to electoral calculations and move away from the politics of secularism that her father had tried to instil in a newly independent state. However, Sheikh Hasina has been the most forthright in her denunciation of the recent communal violence.

Today Bangladesh is a curious amalgam of the worst of Pakistani rule and an incessant search for a new identity. It is the land of Rabindranath Tagore and the culture the great sage sought to represent. At the same time Islam continues to be used for political ends as it was before independence. The recent riots reflect a logical extension of this use of religion.

The presence of the rightwing Jamiat in all three countries—Pakistan, India and Bangladesh—has been politics in Dhaka traverse an altogether different route. The Jamiat in Bangladesh represents those forces that continue to believe the dismemberment in 1971 was a fatal mistake. Complicating the issue further has been the Jamiat’s philosophy by using street power to ensure the Razakars who fought beside the Pakistani army in 1970-71 are not isolated or persecuted against. The leader of the Jamiat is a Pakistani nation, Mr. Golam Azam,

charged with illegal residence in Bangladesh, sentenced to a term in jail or deportation.

The demolition of a mosque came at an opportune moment. The party was able to use the issue of Muslim insecurity in India to whip up communal passions that would allow it to negotiate for its chief’s release. The party took a hardline stand demanding the Muslim world boycott India economically till such time the Babri Masjid was rebuilt. The Jamiat’s secretary general, Mr. Matiur Rahman Nizami, criticising the Narasimha Rao government’s ban on the Indian Jamiat said “Islamic organisations would not shoulder the responsibility for what the Hindu militants did.”

The Jatiya Jubo Command, a front organisation demanding the release of the Jamiat leader, upped the stakes by demanding “If India wanted to attend the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation [SAARC] summit in Bangladesh, it would have to apologise to the people of Bangladesh and make a commitment for the reconstruction of the Babri mosque.” The Jamiat’s exploitation of Islam forced Mrs. Zia to adopt a strong public posture. She met the Pakistani prime minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, who flew across India to make common cause over the Babri Masjid issue. A public statement was issued stating the demolition of the mosque had “usurped the religious rights of a large section of the population there.”

The rightwing parties have been in the forefront of accusing India of deliberately fomenting violence against Muslims in India and minorities in other countries of south Asia. The Jamiat through its Naib Amir Shamsur Rahman said “his party and the Islamic minded people had no connection with the damage and destruction of Hindu temples.” But this will find only the odd believer.

On the other hand, the Bengali daily AAJKER KAGAJ wrote, “We are not aware of the type of consultations held among the Jamiat Islami units in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, nor do we know what the Bangladeshi Jamiat Islami had discussed with the Bharatiya Janata Party. But there are similarities in the type of repercussion carried on by the fundamentalist forces on the minority communities in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh...”

The indefinite postponement of the seventh SAARC summit reveals the intensity of the reaction the Jamiat has been able to generate over the Babri Masjid issue. Internally, it may temporarily help the Khaleda Zia government, letting her control rightwing opponents by playing their game. In the long run it would give legitimacy to the introduction of a domestic issue on an international forum. This in turn would politicise SAARC, giving regional cooperation a major jolt.

It is ironic not just the country, but even the widow of the leader who claimed to give the idea of SAARC its impetus, should allow the organisation to be bogged down by politics. A South Asian Preferential Trade

Agreement, as suggested by the Khaleda Zia government, can never become a reality if SAARC meetings are held to ransom by domestic politics. The time has come for Mrs. Zia to reassess her style of politics.

Commentary Criticizes Bangladesh Parliament on Ayodhya

BK2301044093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 23 Jan 93

[Commentary on Indo-Bangladesh Relations]

[Text] Indo-Bangla relations of the flashing and ever nascent smile last year took a turn for the worse as the Bangladesh parliament adopted a resolution on Wednesday on the Ayodhya incident. Ironically enough, the resolution moved by the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP] failed to take note of the wanton desecration and destruction of hundreds of temples, and attack on minority households and property, and communal violence in Bangladesh in the aftermath of the Ayodhya incident.

The dichotomy of approach of the Bangladesh government came out in full glare when on the one hand they denounced the demolition of an ancient structure in India, but remained quite oblivious of similar happenings in their own country. According to the opposition MPs [members of Parliament] in Bangladesh, over 3,500 Hindu temples were razed to the ground, and about one lakh minority houses and business establishments were either destroyed or damaged during the December riots.

India took strong exception to the resolution, terming it as a totally unacceptable interference in India's internal affairs on matters in which Bangladesh has no locus standi. According to reports, the opposition Awami League and the ruling BNP in an effort to work out a common resolution had endorsed a proposal for a probe into the communal violence in Bangladesh, but the BNP later backed out after the discussions on the issue were introduced in the house. Turning down the proposal for an investigation, Bangladesh irrigation minister and acting leader of the house, Major General Majedul Haq, said that appropriate and prompt measures by the government and restraint shown by the people has set an example of communal harmony in the country. But the Indian external affairs spokesman said the attempt to present Bangladesh as a model of communal harmony cannot be taken seriously in the light of the untold suffering and deep insecurity caused by the reprehensible developments in that country since 7 December.

Unfortunately, the government resolution came even after the minister of state for external affairs, Mr. R.L. Bhatia, air dashed to Dhaka and had talks with the Bangladesh leaders on the postponement of the visit of the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, in the face of threats by Bangladesh fundamentalists. As a result, a conducive atmosphere for improved bilateral relations created after Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum

Khaleda Zia's visit to Delhi last year nose-dived with India taking a fresh look at the entire gamut of the relationship.

Internal Affairs

Rao Seen in Extremely Difficult Political Straights

93AS0526B Varanasi AJ in Hindi 14 Jan 93 p 6

[Article by Rampal Singh: "The Rao Administration's Gate is Encircled"]

[Text] The first phase of the tug-of-war that was going on within the high command of Congress Party leaders is finished, and Arjun Singh has been declared victor. The rajya sabhas and vidhan sabhas of Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan were dismissed. Interference by the Central Government in Uttar Pradesh can be justified. However, there are no clear moral or constitutional grounds for dismissing governments and legislative assemblies in the other three BJP-ruled states [Bharatiya Janata Party]. The Central Government's interference in these states has resulted from the power struggle between Arjun Singh and Narasimha Rao, and they are trying awkwardly to hide this behind the veil of the Constitution. The readers surely have not forgotten the incidents of Arjun Singh's starting a campaign to remove Chief Minister Patwa right in Patwa's home city, Kukureshwar, and Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's praising the good work of the Madhya Pradesh government in a public meeting held in Madhya Pradesh. He said that this government was going to achieve its goals within five years. The difference in their actions indicated the distance between Narasimha Rao and Arjun Singh.

Prime Minister Rao has been under heavy pressure during the last few days. Arjun Singh, minister for development and human resources, was gradually increasing pressure on him. After the Ayodhya incident, the prime minister was totally surrounded and was downed, his body pierced by arrows.

The decision to dismiss the governments and legislative assemblies of the three states was made in an informal meeting of the Cabinet's political affairs committee. Arjun Singh had presented a report prepared by Kunwar Mahmud Ali, governor of Madhya Pradesh, in this meeting and had proposed the dismissal of the Patwa government based on this report. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao did not agree. His point was that the governor had not recommended establishment of presidential rule in his report. Arjun Singh responded that Patwa had failed to control the situation and had not called the army either. The prime minister said that the law-and-order situation was out of control in the whole country, therefore, the Madhya Pradesh government could be dismissed if it was the only state with problems. He said that the law-and-order situation was the worst in Maharashtra.

Arjun Singh had to retreat a step in the informal meeting of the Cabinet's political affairs committee. However, he advanced two steps and attacked the prime minister. He demanded that the governments and legislative assemblies of the three remaining BJP-controlled states must be dismissed. In support of his proposal, Arjun Singh said that the chief ministers of these states had admitted to being members of the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] and, since the RSS was a banned organization, the persons associated with it could not remain as chief ministers.

Jyoti Basu and Harkishan Singh Surjeet, leaders of the Communist Party-Marxist, visited the prime minister in support of Arjun Singh's campaign. Both Marxist leaders told the prime minister that the incidents in Ayodhya had destroyed India's secular status and the prime minister was responsible for it; therefore, he should submit his resignation.

Jyoti Basu and Harkishan Singh Surjeet also told the prime minister that the Communist Party-Marxist did not want mid-term elections. They said that all they wanted was for Narasimha Rao to resign so that the Congress Party could elect a new leader. The Marxist leaders also supported Arjun Singh's demand to dismiss the three BJP governments in the remaining three states.

If the Marxists are against using Article 356 and talk about eliminating it from the Constitution, how could they ask to use Article 356 to dismiss the BJP governments? In answer to this question, Basu and Singh said that this could be justified since it was being used to dismiss communal governments.

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao left the decision to the Congress working committee. A meeting of the Congress Party working committee was called and it passed Arjun Singh's proposal to dismiss the BJP governments. Exactly at that time a report on Chenna Reddy, Rasjanthan chief minister [sic], was also brought in. Virendra Verma, governor of Himachal Pradesh, continued to claim even to the last day that his government was functioning effectively. However, a Delhi representative arrived in Simla that evening and had the governor of the state write a report to dismiss the government.

The Central Government has used the Constitution at will and has hurt its integrity. At the same time, the actions of the Congress leaders greatly hurt the Congress Party's dignity. The BJP has taken an aggressive stand now and the Congressites are feeling that the tide has turned against them.

The Congress leaders were getting increasingly worried because the campaign to "remove the BJP" had changed into "remove Narasimha Rao." Arjun Singh said that the BJP alone could not be blamed for the incidents in Ayodhya, and that all of them were equally responsible. He suggested that they all must think about it.

The second chapter of strife within the Congress Party is beginning. Narasimha Rao appears to be standing alone

now. He put a noose around his neck by announcing his decision to rebuild the mosque. Recently, when Makhan Lal Fotedar, central health minister, was asked by newsmen about the plans to rebuild the mosque, he was infuriated. He said sharply and sardonically that they should ask the prime minister. Even Arjun Singh does not talk about rebuilding the mosque now.

Editorial Chastises Rao on 'Opportunistic Coalition'

93AS0506F Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
23 Jan 93 p 6

[Editorial: "Opportunist Coalition"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] The report that every senior Congress leader with a stake in politics in north India is opposed to the Congress forming a coalition government with the Janata Dal(A) at the Centre, should hardly surprise anyone. Their stand perhaps is not unconnected with their fear of a reduction in their own ministerial opportunities because of the need to accommodate Mr. Ajit Singh's supporters in the event of a coalition, or of the Janata Dal(A) then claiming the lion's share of the Lok Sabha seats from Uttar Pradesh [UP] in the next election. But whatever their calculations, the fact remains that such a coalition will be nothing short of an exercise in opportunism. The Congress and the Janata Dal(A), which was then a part of the Janata Dal, fought each other in the last election. Neither the party, which is virtually an inherited fief of Mr. Ajit Singh, nor Mr. Singh himself, has the kind of political reputation which will help to boost the soiled image of the Congress. If anything, it will undermine whatever little credibility the party still enjoys. One could have understood such a move if the party direly needed the support of the 21 Janata Dal(A) members in the Lok Sabha. It does not. As of now, the party has been surviving thanks to the support it receives from other parties on issue-to-issue basis.

If anything, a Congress-Janata Dal(A) coalition will undermine the cohesion of both parties. The problems of adjustment it will pose will give a sharper edge to the growing clamour in the Congress against Mr. Narasimha Rao's weak leadership. On the other hand, senior leaders of the Janata Dal(A) have questioned the wisdom of joining the Rao government at a time when its stock is at an all-time low. Their voices will become more strident if the Congress continues to lose ground or they are denied the rewards they expect from the coalition. A combination dogged by tensions between the two parties involved as well as within each of them, will hardly be able to cope with the severe challenge it faces from the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], the need to oppose which is cited as the primary rationale of their coming together.

Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao's statement that the possibility of a Congress-Janata Dal(A) coalition has featured in his thoughts, suggests that something is afoot; so does the

Congress spokesman, Mr. V. N. Gadgil's admission that there had been talks on the subject. Since the coalition will not be able to contain the BJP's challenge, one can only explain Mr. Rao's interest in it in terms of his effort to bolster his position, weakened by dissidence in his own party, with the help of outside support. Any such calculation, however, will go awry as the coalition will only aggravate the internal differences in both parties. The BJP's challenge can only be met by revitalising the Congress, which does not seem to be his urgent concern. It is a sad commentary on Mr. Rao's sense of priorities that he is thinking primarily of his own survival when his party and the country face serious challenges.

Confused State of Rao Government Elaborated On

93AS0506J Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
26 Jan 93 p 10

[Editorial: "Trouble at Home"]

[Text] Nothing illustrates better the true nature of Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao's Government than the continuing confusion over the allocation of work to the three junior ministers in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). A full week after Messrs. Rajesh Pilot, P.M. Sayeed and Ram Lal Rahi were drafted to assist Mr. S.B. Chavan, the latter has been unable to earmark their separate spheres of work. An order issued a couple of days after the reshuffle of the Union Ministry of January 17 was hastily withdrawn—presumably due to protest by Mr. Pilot who was sought to be given little of significance in his new assignment. Whether or not Mr. Pilot was supposed to be the new Minister of State for Internal Security, the fact is that he had hoped to play an important role in the MHA. And considering that he had independently headed the Ministry of Communications before his shift to the MHA, he was unlikely to be fobbed off by minor ministerial crumbs which Mr. Chavan flung his way through the stillborn work allocation order.

In any case, the wisdom of inducting Mr. Pilot in Mr. Chavan's ministry appeared suspect to all but the Prime Minister himself. For, it was all along known that Mr. Pilot had not exactly endeared himself to the somewhat stodgy Home Minister by constantly undertaking fire-fighting missions on his behalf but without his sanction. By allocating relatively minor duties to Mr. Pilot, Mr. Chavan was exercising his prerogative as a senior minister and in the process seeking to put paid to Mr. Pilot's vaulting ambitions. It is remarkable that at a time when the country is beset with major law and order problems, aggravated further by the December 6 demolition in Ayodhya and the violence thereafter, the Union Home Minister and the person meant to be his most important deputy should engage themselves in petty politicking, paralysing the all-important Home Ministry in the process. Given the mutual antipathy between Mr. Chavan and Mr. Pilot, it remains unclear whether the two will be able to at all work in harmony even if the latter is assigned important duties in the new order.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister needs to take serious note of Mr. Chavan's tendency to speak out of turn on all manner of issues. The latest faux pas by the Home Minister was his statement in Lucknow the other day suggesting that the Centre may ban Mr. Bal Thackeray's Shiv Sena. Just when Bombay was limping back to normalcy, Mr. Chavan's ill-considered remarks gave Mr. Thackeray another reason to spew fire against his supposed or real enemies. Even the Congress Chief Minister of Maharashtra was caught unawares by Mr. Chavan's statement. Significantly, a day later in Bombay his new Minister of State, Mr. Sayeed, disclaimed any knowledge to ban the Sena! The Union Home Minister will do well to let his actions rather than his words to speak for him. Meanwhile, can the Prime Minister still retain Mr. Chavan in the latter's crucial berth?

Chavan Speaks in Debate on Ayodhya

93AS0459A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 22 Dec 92
p 6

[Article: "Centre Kept in the Dark, Says Chavan"; boldface words as published]

[Excerpt] New Delhi, Dec. 21. The Union Home Minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, today said the December 6 incidents at Ayodhya were "preplanned" and the Government was kept in the dark.

"Under no circumstances will the Government believe that what has happened in Ayodhya was not preplanned" as stated by the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], he said while replying to the debate on his statement on Ayodhya and proclamation of President's rule in Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh [UP]. Mr. Chavan said the history of the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] was that it never backed out from its promises and till this incident behaved in a "disciplined manner."

This was the very reason that the Government "believed them, trusted them, but it had been betrayed," he said. The Home Minister said there were reports that the RSS and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP] had made "fool-proof" arrangements and none other than a kar sevak who established his identity, could enter the 2.77 acre land area.

Referring to some reports the Home Minister said even journalists found it difficult to enter the place without necessary certificates and authorisations.

Mr. Chavan said the incident had shaken the foundation of the Indian polity and everyone today was concerned about the country's future.

Unilateral decision: He said the Government had tried all the methods to sort out the controversy and in fact had succeeded to some extent to persuade the groups to give up the path of confrontation. Two meetings were held and the third scheduled, but The VHP suddenly announced its unilateral decision to begin kar seva on

December 6. This was brought to the notice of the U.P. Government. The then Chief Minister, Mr. Kalyan Singh had categorically assured the Centre that the structure would not be touched and the Supreme Court had only allowed symbolic kar seva.

The Government had no reason to disbelieve the affidavits and the assurances given by the Kalyan Singh Government, Mr. Chavan said.

Stressing the need for an introspection, Mr. Chavan said there was some kind of polarisation in body politic. Important issues like poverty and development of the backward regions, had been overshadowed by the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy. The house could not take any other business but this controversy so far.

The Home Minister said the decision to begin kar seva on December 6 was taken at Ujjain deliberately to send Mandal issue into the background and bring into focus the non-issue like the Ayodhya issue.

He said it would be the greatest disservice to the poor if a forum like Parliament ignored their problems and took up other matters.

He appealed to all political parties to have a rethinking on the issues and have consensus on how the country should be taken on the path of progress.

The Government was today warned in the Rajya Sabha that the developments in Ayodhya would spell doom for the country if immediate efforts were not taken to mobilise people against the dangers of communalism. [passage omitted]

Ayodhya Called Acid Test of India's Secularism

93AS0423C Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
27 Dec 92 p 8

[Article by Nitish Chakravarty in New Delhi]

[Text] The remorseless march of time will not grind to a halt when church bells chime at the stroke of the midnight hour on Thursday. It will mark neither a break with the past nor a beginning on a clean slate.

The dawn of January 1, 1993 will be gloomy and cheerless for millions across the world. But the advent of the New Year is always an occasion for reflection and resolution.

Measured on any scale, 1992, which will lapse into eternity four days hence, has been a watershed year for India. If ethnic riots and trigger-happy warlords have taken a heavy toll of lives in Europe and Africa, religious intolerance has shaken India to the foundations. It has claimed many victims and made mincemeat of India's much touted commitment to secularism. It has also thrown haywire the nation's high priority agenda of economic and social progress.

The Ayodhya tragedy stands out as the most traumatic development of the decade. Ayodhya was an acid test of India's commitment to secular values, and it is bound to haunt the nation for a long time to come.

Overwhelmed by a chain of incidents, the Narasimha Rao Government has been preoccupied all the time in dousing fires. It has hardly had a breather to sit back and deal with priority issues. It is not so much the lack of a parliamentary majority that has hamstrung the Government but its congenital inertia.

The Prime Minister has shown little initiative and has been busy chasing events rather than taking them by the forelock. His proverbial drift has been compounded by scandals eroding the credibility of the Government. It has been denied the dynamism it badly needs to cope with crises.

Mr. Madhavsinh Solanki's unexplained role in the Bofors cover-up plan put a question mark on the Narasimha Rao Government's probity even before it had established its credentials. The disclosure of Mr. P. Chidambaram's entente with scam-stained brokers, the slapping of criminal charges on Mr. V. Krishnamurthy, a Padma Bhushan to boot, and the suspected link of several other Cabinet members with black money tycoons have all damaged the Government's image.

The impact of events has been so overwhelming that after 18 months in office Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao has not been able to reorganise his Cabinet and find suitable persons to fill key vacant positions. Mr. Narasimha Rao as the Congress (I) President has made short shift of elections in the party because of a threat perception and is showing an increasing tendency to arrogate to himself all decision making powers, including the selection of chief ministers.

The demolition of the Babri Masjid has proved that the so-called commitment to secularism is little more than an elitist concept unconnected with ground realities. It is now time for introspection. India and Indians must come to terms with reality and make up their minds about the kind of society they want to build. Cliches of a single thread binding the nation together seem to have been overstretched.

Growing economic disparities coupled with a new awakening about individual identities have sharpened differences between regions and communities. The unitary state in a pluralistic society is under increasing pressure. The constitutional set-up framed for a multi-racial country like India has outlived its utility.

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's call for a fresh look at Article 356 is not only an admission that the existing provisions of the Constitution are inadequate to deal with the complexities of the emerging Indian scenario but also an acknowledgement that Centre-State relations need a thorough overhaul.

Changes worldwide have naturally had their impact on India. Whoever is in power in this country has got to come to terms with the reality that the secessionist cry in Punjab and Kashmir is not an isolated phenomenon but part of the global phenomenon of assertive individual identities.

The Soviet Union has been torn asunder not just because of economic disparities but also because of the refusal of smaller nationalities to subordinate their identities to Russian hegemonism. Ethnic upheavals worldwide have had their impact on the attempts of the tribal communities in India's central and north-eastern regions to assert their individual ethnic identity. The contagion is bound to spread elsewhere.

Mr. Narasimha Rao likes to believe that come what may Indians will stick together. Once when I told him of my fear that fissiparous tendencies might get the better of cohesive forces, he flared up and said: "If you have a diary you can note down that rivers of blood will flow, prime ministers will be assassinated but India will remain united. There is no question of further dismemberment of India."

Complacency is no answer for harsh realities. The plaster of unity is peeling off before Mr. Narasimha Rao's very eyes.

Decision makers in this country have got to come to terms with the reality that the bayonet cannot curb the aspirations of small minorities. Even as the religious and ethnic divide has brought the nation to the edge of a precipice, a plethora of other problems continue to plague it.

While the Bofors investigation got more and more entangled in the quagmire of litigation, and the long sought identity of the beneficiaries of the kickbacks remained hidden in secret Swiss bank lockers, fresh revelations of a new scandal on the stock market pushed the process of economic recovery back. The scam not only sent the stock market on a spin, but shook the people's confidence in the Government. The disclosure that one of its ministers—Mr. Chidambaram—was a beneficiary of the scam gave the Government a fresh jolt. A member of the Planning Commission had to make an ignominious exit.

Even as the Ayodhya tragedy has helped bridge party differences on measures to tackle it, the Government's economic policies have come under increasing fire. Mr. Narasimha Rao's own credibility is at a discount, and the non-Congress(I) parties have begun insisting on a quid pro quo for their co-operation in resisting the onward march of communalism. The price they want is a drastic revision of the economic policy package the Narasimha Rao Government has unfolded.

The Opposition is at war with almost every aspect of the economic policy—from what it perceives as a sell-out to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to the dismantling of the public sector and the exit policy for workers in the organised sector.

Excessive demands have been made on the higher judiciary, and it has often been required to pull the Government's chestnuts out of the fire. The Supreme Court judgment on the Mandal Commission's formula on reservations for socially and economically backward sections of the community has given a new impetus to the nation's fight against inequity.

Accounts of Ayodhya Destruction Published

Witness's Account

93AS0464A Madras THE HINDU in English 30 Dec 92
p 6

[Article: "Blow-By-Blow Account of Demolition"; bold-face, italicized words as published]

[Text] Bombay, Dec. 29. Doordarshan reportedly has a videotape on the events in Ayodhya on December 6. What the Newstrack team filed is not allowed to be included in the news cassette. And what Mr. Sharad Pawar, Defence Minister, has with him has been screened for journalists in Delhi but it is full of long shots. News accounts have not been able to give a full appreciation either.

A point of view that could be crucial—at worst, interesting—is not public yet. How did the dramatic scenes unfold with the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]-VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad]-RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh]-Bajrang Dal leadership on the dais, which was actually the terrace of a fairly tall but single-storeyed building? How did they—Mr. L.K. Advani and Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi of the BJP, Mr. Sheshadri of RSS, and Mr. Ashok Singhal and Mr. V.H. Dalmia of the VHP—react?

One man who has a fair idea about the whole thing is Mr. Pramod Mahajan, BJP MP who was right there on the platform with those top-rung leaders and was the first to go to the disputed structure and return after much of the damage was wrought in two hours.

Mr. Mahajan, who has been reticent about this so far, has now been prodded by this correspondent for a blow-by-blow account of the December 6 incidents, as seen by the people on the dais.

Partial view: After what was an inspection of the platform raised in July—second phase of the kar seva, the first being the one when the Kothari brothers had reached the domes in October 1990—on which kar sevaks were to pour water and sand fetched from the nearby Sarayu river, Mr. Advani, Mr. Mahajan, Mr. Singhal and others reached the dais on the building, from where only a partial view of the structure was available. The third dome—first to collapse—was screened by the central dome.

According to Mr. Mahajan's narration to THE HINDU on close questioning, they were on the dais with about two hours to go for the 12-15 p.m. *imuhurat* for the kar

seva of bringing sand and water to the platform. People had already lined up for this from the Sarayu and, to keep the people engaged, songs were sung and leaders introduced. Mr. Mahajan was then asked to speak by Mr. Vinay Katiyar, MP and Bajrang Dal chief.

That was 11-45 a.m. "I spoke a few sentences on how the mission started from Somnath and then noticed that the teeming audience was restless and not attentive. When I returned towards the structure to my left but quite far away, we could see some dust rising from a dome and a crowd of about 15 persons atop. A saffron flag was also aflutter. Everyone on the stage was shocked, Mr. Advani asked *kya ho raha hai?*"

Shock on dais: In a few minutes, the number had increased ten fold on the domes and the first reaction of the crowds appeared to be one of awe. Restlessness gave way to cheer, because it was seemingly like the re-enactment of the earlier October episode. There was no stampede among the audience, Mr. Mahajan said but there "was a wave of shock on the dais amongst the leaders." Mr. Advani took the mike and said in Hindi that what was being done was not good and urged them to get down.

The ten sentences he spoke showed despair at what was happening but the import was not yet clear. The idea was to control the situation with a nagging feeling taking hold that a problem was at its start. Were the kar sevaks showing their "heroics by climbing the domes?" asked Mr. Mahajan. None got down despite the appeal. Dr. Murlu Manohar Joshi took the mike. Then Mr. Sheshadri, the latter pointing out that the RSS believed in discipline and the people had better climb down.

Appeals in many languages: Those in the audience remained where they were, "at least 90 percent of them." Kavi Yogesh was asked to sing and the leaders moved to the rear of the stage when word reached that the people atop the domes were from Andhra Pradesh. How the word reached them is not clear but appeals were made in English, then Telugu and perhaps Kannada, then by some sadhus, who were rustled up, in Tamil and Malayalam. To no avail.

Mr. Advani then asked Mr. Vinay Katiyar to go and find out why there was no response. But he did not return. It was not known if he reached the structure at all. Then another VHP man, Acharya Dharmendra, was sent down to the structure to reach which he had to wade through throngs and then negotiate the ditch in its front. By then, Rajmata Scindia began to appeal with "Ram ki saugandh" and "someone felt perhaps the loudspeakers near the domes were not working or the voice not carried."

Rajmata's plea: The Rajmata then beseeched the audience to shout and relay the plea "Utar Jao" which went out "in waves," according to Mr. Mahajan. It was about 1.45 p.m. by then, Mr. Vaikuntlal Prem, MP from East Delhi, was asked by Mr. Advani to proceed to the structure and reason. He returned in "about 15 minutes,

and said they were not climbing down and are speaking Marathi." That prompted Mr. Advani to pick Mr. Mahajan, who is a Rajya Sabha MP from Maharashtra, to go down.

Mr. Moreswar Save, Shiv Sena MP, who was spotted, was asked to accompany Mr. Mahajan. They took about "15 minutes to negotiate the crowds" and when I crossed the trench what I saw shocked me. We had thought they were only on top of the domes. But the entire back wall of the structure was missing... demolished. The two sides of the Garbh Griha where the idols were kept was mostly damaged. Angled steel rods which were used to prop up the fence had been pulled out and used as crowbars. There were pick axes too.

In aggressive mood: There were about 400 men busy at the structure, pulling it down. Says Mr. Mahajan: "I caught a young man who had a crowbar in his hand and asked him in Marathi: What are you doing? He gaped at me and raised the crowbar against me. I snatched at a badge on his shirt and saw "Rajasthan" written on it. I asked in Hindi: did you not hear the Rajmata? Again, the response was: "what?" It was clear they were aggressive, in a frenzy. It was clear they were not Marathi-speaking people."

"I realised there was no point in persisting there because logic seemed to have left them. A lot of damage had been done already. As I turned back to rush to the dais where the leaders were, sitting, the people, cheered by about 6000 others around the trench, kept attacking the structure." Mr. Mahajan raced through the crowd, shouting and elbowing his way through to report to Mr. Advani and others on the dais.

"I must have been halfway to my objective when I sensed some relief in the crowd and when I heard Mr. Advani on the mike saying it was good that the people were climbing down. I turned and saw that it was indeed so but little did anyone realise why the people were clambering down. I reached the stage and asked Mr. Advani, Mr. Singhal and Mr. Dalmia to come aside to the rear and told them that the structure had been broken at the base."

Advani shellshocked: Mr. Advani, from what Mr. Mahajan says, appeared shellshocked. "He seemed at a loss to know how to respond. I had told him that I could see through the place where walls once stood. It can come down any moment. It was around 2-45 pm; we left the dais and went down to the room inside the building where a telephone was available. We huddled together trying to get a grip on the situation, the consequences."

Mr. Advani reached Mr. Kalyan Singh, Chief Minister in Lucknow, to convey what had happened. Instead, Mr. Singh told Mr. Advani that he had heard through the police network that the domes had been downed. "Our impression till that moment was that it was under way; we pointed out that the damage had been done. Mr. Singh told Mr. Advani that he was going to resign. He insisted that he be allowed to put in his papers."

By the time the leadership emerged from inside, the sun was setting, the throng was moving forward, taking a look and some tried to search for a brick to take back as a memento. Mr. Advani entered a car much later to try to catch the Lucknow-Delhi Mail to reach Parliament but a while later, told Mr. Mahajan of his intent to resign from the post of the Leader of the Opposition.

Defense Minister's Video

93AS0464B Bombay THE SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA in English 20 Dec 92 p 30

[Article by Subhash Kirpekar: "Ayodhya Events Explode RSS Myth"]

[Text] New Delhi, December 19. The visual evidence of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) volunteers actively participating in and supervising the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6 makes a tremendous impact. It explodes several myths, among them the RSS assertion that it tried to prevent the events of that black day from taking place.

The six-hour video film screened at the instance of Mr. Sharad Pawar, defence minister, shows the leading lights of the Sangh Parivar inspecting the site of the demolition a little before the fanatics began felling it with sledgehammers and iron rods. They include Mr. L.K. Advani, Mr. M.M. Joshi, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, Ms. Uma Bharrati (all BJP), Mr. Ashok Singhal (VHP) and Mr. Moreshwar Save (Shiv Sena MP). Sadhvi Rithambara, the fiery orator of the saffron brigade, and various "sants" including Swami Dharmendra, Mahant Avidanath, Swami Vamdev and the chairman of the nyas (trust) are also seen in the film which gives a graphic account of what happened that day.

The video film also shows the Uttar Pradesh [UP] police either standing as passive spectators or slinking away from the site only to reappear in the evening when the makeshift temple was being constructed. As it is known, the Ayodhya police were under instructions from the former chief minister, Mr. Kalyan Singh, not to use force or fire upon the kar sevaks.

In the process, the explosive footage gives the lie to the plea of the former state government that it could not protect the Babri Masjid by pushing back the aggressive demolition squad as this would have resulted in a bloodbath. To begin with, there were just about 25 to 30 youths wearing distinctive saffron scarves to mark them out as the "hard core of the demo-squad. Nothing was done to stop their entry from the chabutara towards the Babri Masjid through a barricade. A little later, in a crowd of a few hundred, the saffron scarves group did not number more than hundred. This too was not tackled. Instead, this group pushes its way with "sants" on other side, as if being given a guard of honour.

Later, as the frenzy built amid high pitched chants on the public address system of "Jai Ram, Jai Rama, Jai Sri Ram," the demo-squad grew steadily but at no stage

exceeded 400 to 500 men, many of them in khaki shorts. Not only was there no political will to stop them but instead there was full encouragement to them to pull down to historic structure.

The chanting was being done from a dais outside the Ram Diwar where Mr. Advani, Mr. Joshi and Mr. Singhal sat for a while waving at the kar sevaks sitting there and whom they addressed before the demolition began. At no stage did any leader of the Sangh parivar come forward to stop the demo-squad from performing their task. Indeed, the video film shows RSS men in khaki shorts clambering up the fence and waving from atop the Babri Masjid in jubilation.

Yes, the film does show a couple of RSS volunteers pushing back one or two men towards the barricades. But they were only disallowing the "untrained" men from joining the professional demolishers. Thus, the film does not bear out the RSS claim that it tried to prevent the mosque from being damaged or demolished. The passivity of the U.P. police was appalling.

Not recorded in this film but recorded elsewhere is how the district administration officials, with their families in tow, watched the "operation demolition" take place as if they were watching a one-day cricket match on a Sunday outing. The net result was that there was free access to the Babri Masjid to those who were thirsting to raze it to the ground. This, after Mr. Kalyan Singh had given an affidavit affirming he would do all to protect the structure.

This is the sequence of the more important of the events filmed minute by minute by a crew deputed by Mr. Sharad Pawar:

7.20 a.m.: The first group of RSS men enter the 2.77 acre plot.

8.26 a.m.: Mr. Ashok Singhal walks in with some "sants," protected by policemen.

8.57 a.m.: First group of 200 kar sevaks comes in.

9 a.m.: A police posse takes position.

9.04 a.m.: A saffron flag is hoisted on a pole like in a shakha.

9.15 a.m.: A policeman arrives on horseback.

9.20 a.m.: Chabutara is swept with brooms by RSS men and others.

9.34 a.m.: Puja begins on chabutara.

10.01 a.m.: "Sants" appear on chabutara for puja.

10.07 a.m.: Illegal entry through barricades begins with ease.

10.10 a.m.: Swami Vamdev enters followed by saffron clad sadhus.

10.14 a.m.: Ms. Uma Bharati and Sadhvi Rithambara arrive.

10.15 a.m.: Shankha Dhvani takes place (blowing of conch shells).

10.24 a.m.: Mr. Advani, Mr. Joshi, Mr. Mahajan, enter followed by Mr. Singhal and Mahant Avaidnath and take an inspectional round of the site. Waving their hands, policemen hold hands to encircle Mr. Advani in a protective manner. This group leaves after a few minutes for the dais behind Ram Dwar.

10.35 a.m.: Men seen clambering up the barricade fence at this stage, there is a frenzied announcement saying that those who were breaking the "arrangements" were not kar sevaks. This is meant to keep at bay people not trained for breaking the structure. Youths seen dancing and jumping.

10.43 a.m.: RSS men lead the demo-squad towards Babri Masjid.

11.54 a.m.: An aggressive group enters the structure from the rear: there is a bit of stone throwing and the police quietly melt away, leaving the field clear.

11.56 a.m.: The first stroke on the dome of the Babri Masjid, the assault begins with sledge-hammers, pick-axes, iron rods and shovels. As the work of destruction begins, the public announcement cautions the demo-squad to beware of the electric lines and wires. Clouds of dust rise in the next few minutes.

17.56 p.m.: In floodlights, the makeshift temple is readied. The white umbrella and idol of Ram Lalla taken away at 12.15 p.m. is brought back here. Sadhvi Rithambara is roaring away on the mike. One sadhu watching the scene from horseback makes an interesting sight.

8.41 p.m.: The makeshift temple is ready. Cops reappear.

Correspondent's Report

93AS0464C Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
14 Dec 92 p 10

[Article: "Hardcore, Trained Group May Have Masterminded Act"]

[Text]

Babari Masjid Demolition

Ayodhya, Dec. 13.—A hardcore, trained, specialist group appears to have masterminded the demolition of the 464-year-old disputed shrine at Ayodhya last Sunday, reports PTI.

Events leading to the destruction of the three domes and the structure clearly indicate that this group led the demolition squad through a well-coordinated and pre-designed operation, writes a correspondent who witnessed the day's fast-paced developments.

While one segment from this group instigated kar sevaks to push through the police cordon, another, armed with hammers, pick-axes and iron rods, deftly jumped over steel barricades around the disputed structure and started pounding the domes.

Another team apparently provoked kar sevaks to pounce on members of the media, particularly photographers and video cameramen, to prevent them from recording the incident.

Official sources said investigations were under way to identify this group, as also others who joined the demolition squad.

It was a pleasant Sunday morning. Thousands of kar sevaks had made an early start for the disputed complex to take part in the kar seva slated to begin at 12-15 p.m.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad [VHP] and religious leaders had already announced a day earlier that kar seva would comprise cleaning, scraping and chiselling operation on the Ram Chabutra and kar sevaks would also drop handfuls of sand from the nearby Sarayu river at the shilanyas site.

The dry run carried out by the organizers on Saturday turned out to be peaceful. The RSS VHP, Shiv Sena and Bajrang Dal workers were regulating the movement of the kar sevaks who carried banners representing their respective States in a disciplined manner.

On Sunday, too, the arrangements made by the VHP looked impeccable. Kar sevaks sat in rows outside the Ramkatha Kunj, a few hundred metres from the shilanyas spot.

A security cordon was moving around the site. A human chain of RSS-VHP-Shiv Sena-Bajrang Dal activists also prevented kar sevaks from entering the premises.

By 11 a.m., the metre-high platform forming part of the incomplete Ram Chabutra was packed with saffron clad sadhus and sants who had come from different parts of the country.

Some of the reporters and photographers were allowed into the shilanyas site. Others took a vantage position on the terrace of Manas Bhavan, facing the shilanyas site and the disputed structure.

By this time, several kar sevaks chanting "Jai Sri Ram" had collected at the entry point near the police post. The surging crowds were repeatedly restrained by security personnel and the organizers.

Around 11-25 a.m., the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leaders, Mr. L.K. Advani, and Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi arrived at the complex amid lusty cheers from the crowd, and joined other prominent BJP, VHP, Bajrang Dal leaders on the terrace of the single-storeyed Ramkatha Kunj.

By then, the entrance to the disputed complex from the police control room end was bursting at its seams.

About 50 to 75 kar sevaks managed to break the cordon, rushed inside and squatted very near the Ram Chabutra, shouting "Jai Sri Ram." Efforts by the organizers to persuade these persons, some of whom were carrying tridents, to leave the premises proved futile.

All of a sudden, about 30 youths with yellow bands on their foreheads, moved in from another side, lifted these kar sevaks and roughly pushed them towards the entrance points.

Kar sevaks watching the scene from the rooftops and around the complex gesticulated and vehemently protested against these actions.

At about 11-45 a.m., all hell broke loose as kar sevaks stormed through the security cordon and started menacingly moving towards the disputed structure.

A few kar sevaks started violently shaking the closed gates of the disputed shrine.

Pleas by CRPF [Central Reserve Police Force] personnel stationed inside the disputed complex to the kar sevaks not to damage the structure went unheard.

Agitated kar sevaks then started pelting stones and bricks at the domes as several youths climbed up the steel barricade, jumped down and quickly mounted the three domes.

Simultaneously, several youths whipped out hammers hidden under loose clothing, while some others brought pick-axes, apparently kept within easy reach. Two of them were seen with pistols.

Several hammers and pick-axes were then passed on to those perched atop the domes.

At this stage, a frenzied mob had started pulling apart the steel barricades and used the steel rods for chipping concrete from the domes and the walls below it.

As kar sevaks rushed in, the CRPF personnel decided to retreat and quickly abandoned the place they had guarded for several months.

At the police control tower, the District Magistrate, Mr. R. N. Srivastava, the SSR, Mr. D. B. Roy (both since suspended) and several other senior officials helplessly watched domes crumbling one after another.

Reporters, photographers and video cameramen trying to get close to the scene of the action suddenly found themselves targets of the kar sevaks who brutally assaulted them, broke their expensive equipment into pieces and hurled some of the journalists on the ground and one even into a urine pit.

It was no different for the Press persons witnessing the events from the Manas Bhavan terrace. Even as they were shouting for the police to help their colleagues being

beaten up near the disputed shrine, the scribes were attacked by kar sevaks who had jumped walls from adjacent buildings.

At the Ramkatha Kunj, speakers from the dais first requested those atop the domes to get down. But their tone changed as the first dome caved in.

"Ek dhakka tum do, Babari Masjid tod do," (give one push, smash the Babari Masjid) screamed some in high-pitched tones from the dais. The kar sevaks were then prodded to demolish the remaining domes while being cautioned against getting hurt from falling debris.

Uma Bharati and Sadhvi Ritambhara were seen hugging each other in glee as the Delhi BJP M.P., Mr. B.L. Sharma, congratulated the kar sevaks for "accomplishing the mission."

In one corner on the terrace, Mr. Advani, Dr. Joshi, Mr. Dalmia and Mr. Sahni, sat silently, looking visibly upset and shaken by the sudden development.

As the demolition work continued unabated, the three domes collapsed in a matter of five hours, the last one going down at 16-45 p.m. The four leaders realized that the situation had gone completely out of control.

By 6 p.m., the entire disputed structure had been razed to the ground and one group of kar sevaks was busy clearing the debris.

Another group reinstalled the "Ram Lalla" idol which had been removed from the sanctum sanctorum before the demolition. Six kar sevaks were killed and 525 sustained injuries in the operation.

Riots broke out in the evening as communal clashes erupted. An indefinite curfew was imposed on the twin cities of Ayodhya and Faizabad and the CRPF personnel have taken complete control. Yet, there is palpable tension and an eerie silence even a week after the 464-year-old structure came down.

Papers Report Convention of Marxists-Leninists

Spokesman Reports

93AS0482A Calcutta THE SUNDAY STATESMAN
in English 27 Dec 92 p 12

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] The CPI(M-L) [Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist] has revised its assessment of the international and national situations because of the recent developments in the country and the world.

The party congress, on the last day of the session on Saturday, did not adopt the ideological document prepared some time ago but adopted an ideological resolution. A spokesman of the party remarked that had the congress been held six months ago, the ideological document would have been adopted.

The changes highlighted by the party include the resurfacing of Communist organizations in the Commonwealth of Independent States and other East European countries. The Communists there were no longer scared to reveal their identity. It was pointed out that the ideological document was drafted following the upheaval in the Socialist world.

In the national scene, the CPI(M-L) feels there is a distinct possibility of consolidation of the Left forces. The Left alliance forged by the CPI(M) and the CPI has reached a dead end. The rank-and-file of the Left parties are in favour of unity of all the Left parties and groups, and their urgency to achieve this has been reflected in the entry of many CPI(M), CPI, Forward Bloc and other party workers in the CPI(M-L).

Even in the trade union field, members of the different Left parties, including the CPI(M-L), are often working together.

The decision of the CPI(M-L) to come out in the open and participate in parliamentary democracy was prompted by the evidence of the resurgence of the Left revolutionary movement in India.

The CPI(M-L) has made a marked departure from its past by asserting, in an ideological resolution, that the party is firmly against any international centre of Communist movement or a super party. The party now believes in following an independent course, both at the national and international levels.

The resolution points out that Stalin's crucial role in building Socialism in the erstwhile Soviet Union, despite some grievous mistakes committed by him, and that of Mao Zedong in fighting modern revisionism cannot be denied.

The party, however, denounced Mr. Gorbachov as a "renegade" for operating within the framework of the bourgeois ideology and in collaboration with the Western imperialists while implementing his policies of 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost'.

Further Details

93AS0482B Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
27 Dec 92 p 6

[Text] Calcutta, Dec. 26: In a surprise move, the CPI(ML) [Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist] Liberation group has been able to bring in former members of the CPI, CPI(M), Forward Bloc and several other parties, including the Congress(I), for its fifth party congress now in progress here.

Briefing newsmen on the deliberations of the party congress, the CPI(ML) leader, Mr. Arijit Mitra, said here today that at least 25 from the CPI(M) and seven from the CPI had joined as delegates. Altogether 167 delegates from different parts of the country attended the congress.

Mr. Mitra announced that a three-member central control commission had been set up to strengthen the democratic process within the party. He said commission members would see that a proper democratic process be maintained in the party "despite having several inner contradictions on various issue." He said the congress had adopted some political resolutions though no political document was placed at the congress.

Mr. Mitra said Monday's rally at the Brigade Parade Ground would be a call to the CPI(M) to mend its anti-people policies in West Bengal.

28 Dec Rally

93AS0482C Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English
29 Dec 92 pp 1, 3

[Text] The CPI(M-L)'s first-ever open rally at the Brigade Parade ground in Calcutta on Monday gave a call for Left unity. Mr. Vinod Mishra, general secretary of the party, in his first public appearance since he went underground two decades ago, made an emphatic appeal to all Leftists to form a single united Communist party in India.

Other speakers, including Mr. Jayanta Bhattacharya and Mr. Nagbhushan Patnaik, both members of the CPI(M-L) Central Committee, also stressed the need for a united Left movement in the country. The meeting adopted a resolution urging all Left forces in the country to boldly intervene in the present political crisis and lead India towards a Leftist alternative. The working people of the country strongly supported Left unity and a trend to jointly participate in political activities among different sections of the Left was emerging, the resolution pointed out.

Considering it was the first public rally of the CPI(M-L) in the past 20 years, the turnout was extremely impressive. The biggest section of the crowd was from Bihar, where the CPI(M-L) has a strong base among landless peasants. Also present were party workers from different districts of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Two delegates from abroad, Mr. Madan Bhandari, general secretary of the United Marxist-Leninist Party of Nepal and Mrs. Sloveig Amdal, chairperson of the Workers Communist Party of Norway, also attended the rally.

Mr. Mishra, who was given an enthusiastic ovation by the audience, spoke about a third alternative, a Leftist one for the country. He explained that the Congress(I) and the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] were hand in glove as was evident from the latter's support to the Government's economic policy. The BJP was only different from the Congress(I) in being blatantly communal. Mr. Mishra, however, did not regard the Congress(I) as a secular party.

Mr. Mishra suggested that a Left unity could be forged through joint efforts by the parties concerned and through an organized movement including the landless

peasants and the working class. He said such joint movements had already been launched in Bihar, where the CPI, CPI(M) and the CPI(M-L) were fighting on a single platform for the rights of the landless peasant. The trade union movement in the State also saw such a joint effort recently.

He pointed out that an alliance among the Left parties should not be for electoral purposes but for fighting for the cause of the people. Mr. Mishra was optimistic that such an unity was inevitable but would take some time.

He saw the CPI(M-L) emerging as the single largest Communist Party in the country and taking the lead in bringing about a unity among the Left forces in India. This united force could only save the country from the present crisis. The influence of such a united Left front would one day spread from the Ganga to the Volga, he added.

The general secretary of the CPI(M-L) admitted to the earlier mistakes committed by his party. The assessment of the party about some great sons of the country was not always correct, he pointed out. He regretted that the CPI(M) after coming to power only referred to the killings of their partymen during the "stormy days in the 70s", but had never acknowledged the sacrifices made by others for the Communist cause. He said that it was at the Brigade Parade ground that many Naxalites, including Saroj Dutta, had been killed.

Mr. Bhattacharya said that the Left Front which had made a mark by launching Operation Barga but its panchayat administration had now become infamous for Phulbagan and Hariharpara incidents. But there was a bright prospect for a Left alternative, he said.

Mr. Patnaik said that it was significant that such a large number of people attended the CPI(M-L) meeting in a State, which was under the rule of the CPI(M). Mr. Patnaik was scathing in his attack of the CPI and the CPI(M) for their eagerness to join hands with the Congress(I) to fight communalism.

Mr. Bhandari observed that the torch of revolution that was first lighted in Naxalbari more than 25 years ago had been rekindled in the State of its origin. He stressed that Socialism was the answer to the problems of the working class all over the world.

Congress (I) Urged To Set Correct Priorities

*93AS0506B Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
21 Dec 92 p 8*

[Editorial: "Mistaken Priorities"]

[Text] The Union Human Resources Development Minister, Mr. Arjun Singh, was not in tune with the public mood when he sought to revive the proposal to de-recognise the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP]. The Centre had plainly overplayed its hand by dismissing the three BJP Governments in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and

Himachal Pradesh and the least it can do now is desist from exacerbating the tensions that have been created partially owing to dissensions within its fold. Mr. Arjun Singh's interest in the proposal is particularly suspect because his name has been linked with forcing the Prime Minister's hand in the earlier Central action. Among other reasons, Mr. Singh's past in his home State of Madhya Pradesh, where the BJP had been pursuing cases of malfeasance against him, have cast a shadow over his intentions. His secular credentials were never in question but the ruling party needs to avoid at all costs the impression that its post-Ayodhya role is tainted by any individual's personal considerations. It needs to be borne in mind that despite its recent misadventures the BJP remains the most significant political party in the country after the Congress(I) in terms of parliamentary strength and it is doubtful whether the prerogative for banishing it can be apportioned by anyone yet. It is also a moot point whether normal conditions can be restored without cooperation from contrite and moderate sections within the party. The specious grounds on which the three State Governments it headed were dismissed have already created misgivings which Mr. Singh's counterparts within the party can be relied upon to exploit. A ban on the BJP would definitely invest it with the halo of martyrdom and considerably set back the clock on efforts to heal the wounds that have been inflicted on the national fabric.

The task of communal reconciliation should head the national agenda after last week's parliamentary resolution to undo the wrongs of December 6 and consolidate democratic and secular forces. The nascent Congress(I)-Left understanding that is emerging in Parliament needs to be widened and nurtured by concrete coordination on the ground. As the ruling party, the Congress(I) is duty-bound to set the pace and can ill-afford political machinations behind the facade of party unity. Its members need to unequivocally throw their weight behind their established leadership in accordance with the undertaking they have made.

Editorial Condemns Wrongdoers in Parliament

*93AS0506I Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
26 Jan 93 p 10*

[Editorial: "Fraud on Parliament"]

[Text] The detection that two signatures in a memorandum submitted to the Lok Sabha Speaker to formalise a split in the Janata Dal in last August were forged, has exposed the illegitimacy of the break-away faction of that party led by Mr. Ajit Singh. When doubts were raised about the genuineness of some of the 24 signatures appended to that memorandum, Mr. Ajit Singh had self-righteously insisted on a forensic examination of his document to prove his point. That has, in the event, established that the signatures of two Janata Dal MPs [members of Parliament], Mr. Hari Kewal Prasad and Mr. Ram Prasad Singh, had been forged. Whether Mr. Ajit Singh was initially so sure that the forgery could not

be detected or he was unaware of some signatures in his document having been forged, is beside the point. If he was acting on the first assumption, he stands straight-away condemned for an offence that should see him behind bars under the normal law of the land. If he had no inkling of forgery in a document he was himself presenting to the Speaker, he still cannot escape denunciation for having sought to wreck his parent party so dubiously, not for any apparent ideological reason but merely on the strength of a gang whose loyalty or identity was not even clear to him. For this, Mr. Ajit Singh should bow his head in shame and retire from public life.

But he is in no mood to do so. His as well as his supporters' reaction to this murky episode has been marked by effrontery and acute cynicism. The temerity he had to make light of this serious episode by hinting that the MPs whose signatures were forged could have themselves done it, is unbecoming of a public leader of stature. A functionary of Mr. Ajit Singh's faction, Mr. Ram Lakhani Singh Yadav, has made the amazing declaration that it is not relevant whether or not the signatures of the two were genuine because, in his reckoning, the Janata Dal split when 20 of its 59 MPs decided to break away.

Even more distressing than the utterly cavalier reaction of Mr. Ajit Singh and his minions, is the attitude of the ruling party, which has been a great beneficiary of the schism induced in the Janata Dal. Its loud silence suggests that it has chosen to condone the crime. The demand for Mr. Ajit Singh's prosecution cannot be dismissed lightly. While it is yet to be known what view the Speaker takes of the argument that the whole sequence of events leading to the submission of a memorandum containing the names of 24 break-away Janata Dal MPs was vitiated by political immorality, there can be little doubt that whosoever presented a forged document has to be held responsible for the fraud on Parliament. In the best traditions of parliamentary democracy, Speaker Shivraj Patil should institute an inquiry to bring out the whole truth and prepare a case to award exemplary punishment to the guilty men. Those who are out to deceive and mislead Parliament should not go unpunished.

Fourteen Rajasthan Janata Dal-D Legislators Join BJP

*BK2701131293 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 1230 GMT 27 Jan 93*

[Text] In Rajasthan, 14 former Janata Dal-D MLA's [members of Legislative Assembly] have joined the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP]. Ten of them were ministers in the BJP-Janata Dal-D coalition government led by Mr. Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. Nine former MLA's joined the BJP today in the presence of Mr. Shekhawat. According to a party press release, the other five had accepted the BJP membership earlier.

Article Urges Return to Regular Agenda, Peace

*93AS0506D Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
21 Dec 92 p 8*

[Article by Uttam Sen: "Staving Off a National Crisis; Time for Political Moderation"; italicized words as published]

[Text] The national fever which developed into a coma from December 6 has persisted because political competition has kept raising the mercury in the thermometer rather than reduce it.

Whether it was the imposition of President's rule on the Bharatiya Janata Party-run States or the inexorable march towards anomie, the vast electoral multitude could not but be asking itself basic questions like how much higher prices would rise, how many more impressionable children would miss their exams and how many more would join the restless ranks of the unemployed.

Insecurity

It does not take much imagination or erudition to tell that racist outbursts in Germany or Sweden, or ethnic strife in what remains of Yugoslavia have had their roots in insecurity born of economic uncertainty. When other devices of management fail, political societies undergoing far less acute conditions of scarcity have turned a blind eye to the fuelling of atavistic passions.

When questions of faith had initially been tested at Ayodhya such issues had not spontaneously sprung to the foreground. The hardcore had waged its battle in the belief that an unapologetic enunciation of its goals would bring its party to power in New Delhi and herald a new dawn of *Hindutva* nationalism.

The swelling ranks of the unemployed and their perceptions of discrimination and alienation from the socio-economic mainstream had rendered cerebral distinctions between religion and State redundant for the time being. The rhetoric fed to them was simple, direct and gripping.

Only unrelenting optimists—though there are many—will agree that they have been on target. The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] admittedly broke in dramatically upon the national political horizon in 1989 and appeared to be doing better when it subsequently raised its strength in the Lok Sabha.

The Congress(I) was, however, returned as the minority ruling party. And if the gains the Leftists and the National Front are making on the ground in the Hindi heartland and the east are to be taken into consideration, the BJP's accretions do not seem impressive enough to invest it with the pre-eminence it is in search of.

The party had also run into problems with the Congress(I) astutely positioning itself as an alternative to the moderate sections within the BJP itself. In upmarket

urban middle class eyes the Congress(I)'s brand of economic liberalisation and selective espousal of Hindu sentiment made it indistinguishable from the BJP as a ruling party.

Felt Let Down

Mr. L.K. Advani's praise for Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao when the bonhomie between the two parties was at its peak was noteworthy. The parting of the ways came at the Congress(I) session at Tirupati with Mr. Narasimha Rao questioning the BJP's bonafides to function within a secular constitutional system.

The BJP, despite protestations to the contrary, felt tactically outmanoeuvred and politically let down. But Ayodhya was still hanging fire and Mr. Narasimha Rao had to find a solution.

On an impartial reckoning the lead-up to the tragic climax on December 6 would indicate that the ruling party leadership was striving as far as possible not to repeat the mistakes of the past. When Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav had been in charge at Lucknow he had been firm about implementing the law. He saved the Masjid by deploying all the resources at his command. In the bargain, he might have alienated significant electoral segments but he had secured the backward class and Muslim constituencies.

Cross-Currents

When the battle was joined earlier this month, the parties at the Centre and the State were competitors for political power. It would be disingenuous to ignore the cross-currents. The Congress(I) has been formally committed to secularism but its heterogeneous composition could not be overlooked. If that made it vulnerable to charges of shamming, its claims to most effectively reflect the national mosaic were also the source of its strength.

In the circumstances, unlike the V.P. Singh-Mulayam Singh Yadav combine, Mr. Narasimha Rao was not in a position to swing his arm and get away with it. Politically it might even have spelt his nemesis. He chose to abide by the law and accepted at face value a federal unit's undertaking to the Centre as well as the Supreme Court that it would preserve the law.

The desecration of the mosque, however, gave a dimension to the problem which transcended legal and power equations. The December 6 outrage was a challenge and a threat to the country's secular cornerstone on which it depended for survival. The ruling party proved culpable to the extent that it failed to rise above prevalent standards of *realpolitik* which it hardly corrected by veering to the other extreme and knocking out three BJP governments.

As in most crises, hawks, with their misleading self-assurance, snatched the initiative on both sides, setting off a war of attrition which threatens to disfigure the national fabric.

The voice of moderation within the BJP rose and fell as the Centre imposed President's rule in three States. But it emerged again with Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee apologising for the vandalism that took place at Ayodhya and asking the guilty *kar sevaks* to own up for their misdeeds.

Conspiracy theories and speculation on the party's tactical motives are predictably rampant, just as much as those of the others. But the inescapable fact is that no political party can permanently misrepresent and thereby defy the popular will. The national majority is at the moment a genre at the mercy of political adventurers and in peril of economic ruin. It is being deceptively split up into religious, caste or class categories.

Support

It can still be redeemed. Opinion polls, newspaper correspondence columns and silent expressions of artistic protest demonstrate a craving for peace and the return to a relevant agenda.

In political terms it is a reiteration of support for constitutionally-sanctified activity and a rejection of extra-legal opportunism. Political moderates would be well-advised to recognise popular support for their endeavours and reassert themselves, if necessary by reaching out to each other across party lines.

Government Dismissals Said To Mandate Speedy Election

93AS0438E Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
27 Dec 92 p 8

[Article by Ashin Das Gupta, former vice-chancellor of Visva Bharati University: "Bans Require Ballots"; italicized words as published]

[Text]

Strong measures after Ayodhya need ratification by the public.

The tragedy at Ayodhya will now have its consequences and it is important the country should be clear about what these may be.

For one thing, leaving the men and women of god out of it, there is an aftermath of violence. This violence may flare up again if Indians are unmindful. There are many people in this country of simple faith who can be attracted to communalism. They do not wish to harm their neighbours and they are not supporters of any communal party, but they feel communally. This feeling is a social feeling and it represents the greatest danger to society. We must guard against it if we can.

For another thing, there is a problem of fixing guilt. No one knows who destroyed the mosque at Ayodhya. The Bajrang Dal, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP] and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS] will of course deny all responsibility. The kar sevaks cannot be faulted. They were singing *kirtans* when they were not roughing up journalists. It is my suspicion that ultimately attention will turn to Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao who may have been prowling around the mosque with a pickaxe in his hand. But as he is so indecisive it would never be known whether he actually used it.

The stark fact would however remain that over 1,000 people lost their lives in the countrywide violence and this destruction—whether the guilty are found or not—will remain a landmark in India's history.

For a third thing, we must be clear about what we mean by a communal party if we want to ban them. Nobody is sure as to how a ban affects a group. It will be impossible to show a particular group is inciting hatred. All the group has to do is deny this was their intention and to claim they have been misrepresented. Problems may be created about the use of money and papers and an organisation can always change its name to carry on its work. The use of force even by state authority can only be a short term measure.

Lastly, we have to be sure there is authority to act in the matter. The matter is so important that the people of India must decide.

That the violence has been contained is a great tribute to the Indian people. But it can be incited again in various areas. I write from the conviction that the overwhelming majority in this country do not want violence and unsettlement. This is true in spite of the fact that many people are communally minded. Persuasion is the need of the hour, and these people of simple faith must be detached from their communal universe.

Secularism in India has now come to mean the protection of minorities. Muslims, as the largest religious and social minority in India, require this protection both physically and also in the matter of worship. This does not mean they are always innocent and that they are weak and helpless. There may well be occasions when Muslim militancy may provoke retaliation. But Hindu power in this state and society is so well established that Muslim provocation can be accepted and ignored.

Secularism in the Indian context therefore is not a philosophical attitude but a vital principle to maintain social peace. This has become more evident by the crisis of Ayodhya. That is why Ayodhya shall remain a landmark in Indian history. Secularism has changed its meaning from state support of all religions to mean the protection of minorities. Thus secularism in the Indian context becomes a part of democracy.

This democratic country hankers after permanent peace. Peace will not be obtained by punishing the guilty. Nor will it be permanent if we wish to proceed by banning

organisations. If people feel communally there will be communal organisations. There is no known method to prevent this.

After 40 years of independence, India is going in for a market economy. I am not very clear what that means. But I am convinced it will not solve the problem of poverty and illiteracy. What is interesting in this effort, however, is the lip service given to the makers of the earlier and opposite policy.

Similarly, India can well set up a Hindu state, discarding the earlier concern for harmony, but such a transition can never be smooth. As I have said the Indian people, by and large, do not like unsettlement and such a change from social harmony will be resisted. This resistance, however, need not be there. The hardcore elements in the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] may well be isolated. Moderate and responsible leaders of that party should not be treated as criminals. This unnecessarily makes martyrs of them and produces a fictitious unity within the BJP which is dangerous for the country. Men like Mr. L.K. Advani or Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee are able and persuasive. They can serve the nation well provided they accept the values it stands for. Whatever this nation does it must not drive such men into a helpless opposition.

India is ultimately ruled by its people. All authority is derived from the people and the situation now requires an appeal to them to discover how India should proceed. It will be a great mistake to force the issue without determining the popular will. It may be that the popular will shall be found to be confused. But let it speak for itself.

I am entirely convinced that the wisdom of the Indian people will never vote in a government of unsettlement. This judgment may go awry in particular areas but will be true of the country as a whole. It is possible that if India goes in now for national elections it may lose the semblance of peace that has been established. This risk should not at present be taken as we do not want any violence to resurface in this country.

If, however, the government wishes to take strong measures it must be ratified by national will. But a national election is a tall order and would involve a number of factors such as the political parties and the harvest. However, without the verdict of the people, state governments cannot be set aside and organisations banned on an issue like this. There can be no taxation without representation. This old adage may serve with suitable modification.

Government Dismissals Shatters Rao Credibility
93AS0438D Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
8 Jan 93 p 8

[Article by A. G. Noorani: "Article 356-I: Rao's Credibility Lies Shattered"]

[Text] The Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, could not have intended it, but a direct result of his discovery of a "lacuna" in Article 356 of the Constitution, concerning the imposition of President's rule in States, is to focus attention on his own inaction. It is one thing for an inept carpenter to decry his tools. But when he attributes his failure to the very set up in which he functions, his performance becomes the crucial issue.

Sadly, even the tragedy of December 6 has failed to instil in the Prime Minister and his Home Minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, any thought of regaining their lost credibility by proper means. On the contrary, every move serves to destroy its remnants. As before December 6, the BJP gains. Article 356 is notoriously one of the most abused provisions of the Constitution. People were justifiably shocked to hear the Prime Minister's words in the Lok Sabha in reply to the debate on December 21: "For the first time Article 356 was put to the test. It has not been able to stand the test. There is a lacuna in it. It has to be made good." Each of these four propositions is manifestly wrong.

Disingenuous

What is the lacuna? Article 356 does not deal with "a situation likely to arise," he holds. It speaks of a situation that has "arisen in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution." The argument is that the Centre is powerless before the breakdown even if it should appear imminent. The plea was made for the first time, a fortnight after the mosque was demolished, in sheer desperation in reply to the debate on the motion of no-confidence. It is as disingenuous as it is belated.

The desperation emerges in the Prime Minister's panicky remarks: "What happened to the Constitution of India? It lies shattered. What happens to Article 356? It lies shattered." Truth to tell, it is his and his Government's credibility that lie shattered. What are we to make of a Prime Minister who asks a question like this: "What is the precise point when the administration cannot be run according to the Constitution? We send paramilitary forces but the Chief Minister says he is not going to use them."

Is Mr. Narasimha Rao truly unaware of the correct constitutional position as set out in the Sarkaria Report only four years ago? It said clearly enough that "it may happen that a State is unwilling or unable to suppress a serious breakdown of law and order or refuses to seek the aid of the armed forces of the Union. In such a situation, fast drifting towards anarchy or physical breakdown of the State administration, the Union may, of its own motion, deploy its forces under its control and take whatever other steps are considered reasonably necessary for suppressing the disturbances in discharge of its duty under Article 355."

This provision reads: "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." Three categories are mentioned. Against external aggression, the Union has the armed forces and the power to proclaim an Emergency (Article 352) while Article 356 is available for constitutional Government. But it has the power and the duty to suppress "internal disturbance" even without imposing President's rule (Article 356). Entries 2 and 2A of the Union List empower it to deploy armed forces "in any State in aid of the civil power."

The Sarkaria Report holds that the deployment can be done "in a situation fast drifting towards anarchy or physical breakdown." The Union need not wait till the point of no-return. When was such a situation reached in U.P. [Uttar Pradesh]? As was pointed out in these columns on October 30 in an article on the Rapid Action Force, the CRPF [Central Reserve Police Force] was sent on three occasions to States against their wishes in situations far better than that in Uttar Pradesh, and especially Faizabad district in the last week of November 1992. One was in Kerala in September 1968 during the strike of Central employees. The other two were in West Bengal in 1969 to protect the Farakka barrage and to prevent clashes between the workers of the Durgapur Steel Plant and U.P.'s armed constabulary, also sent there by the Centre.

New Concerns

The Constitution did not stand in the way of these steps any more than it deterred the Prime Minister from sacking the three BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] Governments wholly unconstitutionally to silence his critics. The Prime Minister's new-found concern for federalism will impress none. The Constitution empowers the Union (Article 256) to issue directions to States to ensure compliance with Central laws and also "not to impede or prejudice the exercise of the executive power of the Union" (Article 256). Such directions were issued to Kerala in 1968. None were sent to Uttar Pradesh in 1992.

Of a piece with the smokescreen of pretexts floated in a bid to cover up the Centre's lapses is the outrageous nonsense that "the Central forces could not reach Ayodhya because they were told by the Magistrate to return. This is either legal illiteracy or forensic conmanship. The Magistrate comes in only when the State invokes the aid of the Union's armed forces under Sections 130 and 131 of the Criminal Procedure Code, not when the Centre sends forces of its own accord. The Prime Minister said on (December 9) that the CRPF languished "for want of orders from the State Government officers under whose command it was placed."

As for President's rule, as Mr. K. Santhanam told the Constituent Assembly on August 3, 1949, "There may be a physical breakdown of the Government in the State, as for instance, when there is widespread internal disturbance... or for some reason or other, law and order cannot be maintained... Then there may be political

breakdown." It can be a combination of both. In 1973, Mr. Narasimha Rao himself resigned as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and President's rule was imposed because he could not handle the Telengana agitation. On June 12, 1973, Mr. Kamalpathi Tripathi resigned as Chief Minister of U.P. in the wake of the PAC's revolt.

Considering the abuse of Article 356 in fancied cases of political breakdown, the test of "impossibility" of governance laid down by the draftsmen of its ancestor, Section 93 of the Government of India Article 1935, is a fair one. In regard to a physical breakdown, the answer is two-fold.

Truth To Tell

First, the Centre can intervene through its armed forces even without imposing President's rule and regardless of the wishes of the State. Secondly, should it prefer to invoke Article 356, it need not wait till there is an actual physical breakdown. Once a drift towards violation of the Constitution has begun irreversibly, despite the Centre's warnings, the situation contemplated by Article 356 can legitimately be said to have "arisen." It is a fallacy to regard only the actual total breakdown of law and order as the situation envisaged in Article 356, namely, one "in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution." That situation can be said to have "arisen," in fact, when the drift towards a collapse seems to have begun in earnest with the State's inaction. In the present case it was with its complicity.

When was this point reached in Ayodhya? It was well before December 1 when, as this paper disclosed on December 21, Mr. Chavan wrote to Mr. Kalyan Singh about "disturbing reports of specially-trained squads being arranged during the kar seva for purposes inimical to the security of the structure." On December 23, Mr. Chavan blurted out the truth in the Lok Sabha, namely, that it had become apparent right at the time of the meeting of the National Integration Council [NIC] that a "definite opinion" was being formed. The mobilization of kar sevaks in the four BJP-ruled States was also a pointer to their intentions, he added. On May 2, Mr. Kalyan Singh had warned of mobilization of people—that was warning enough.

Center Authority to Dismiss Local Government Questioned

93AS0525A JANSATTA in Hindi 16 Jan 93 p 4

[Article by Jagdish Prasad Chaturvedi: "Why Should Article 356 Not Be Reformed?"]

[Text] Prime Minister Narasimha Rao said in the Lok Sabha in response to the no-confidence motion against the government that one reason for the failure to control the situation in Ayodhya was the structure of the Indian Constitution. According to the Constitution, law and order are the responsibility of state governments, and the

UP [Uttar Pradesh] government did not allow the Central Government security forces to protect Babri Masjid. The Central Government security forces could not do anything until presidential rule was declared in Uttar Pradesh. He also suggested that Article 356 of the Constitution needs to be amended to allow imposition of presidential rule before a situation gets worse, giving the Center the right to use force to control the situation. Previously, Narasimha Rao had expressed the opinion that, since the Indian structure is federal, the Central Government needed to help the state government resolve the Ayodhya issue. How could the Central Government not believe the state government when the latter had assured it that it would protect the mosque structure?

We do not want to get into the argument whether the Indian administrative structure is federal or unitary. The Constitution never mentions the word federal even once. Therefore, it is important to know that the report that was presented to the constitutional assembly clearly said that the Indian legislative system would be federal and India would be known as a union or federation of states. Thus, the adjective "federal" was added to the legislature, the executive branch, the public service commission, and the auditor general. However, when the draft committee presented its draft, the word federation was removed from all these places, and the word "union" replaced "federation" in the first paragraph. The highest court's name was changed from federal court to supreme court. It simply meant that the writers of the Constitution did not want any room for the interpretation that the Indian Constitution was federal in nature. The Constitution gives many rights to the Center that affect states' rights. For example, the Indian government has the right to deal with issues related to scheduled castes and tribes, scheduled regions, and development of backward groups. The Center also has the power to make decisions on high level state appointments, promotions, and service regulations. All courts are under the Supreme Court regardless of the kind of cases. However, the Central Government has another major power that no one would have challenged if it had been exercised in connection with Ayodhya. This power is included in Article 355 which says: The union has the responsibility to protect the states from external attacks and internal strife and to determine that each state government follows the Constitution. The Central Government could have used this power to tell the state government to let the Central Government's security forces protect the structure from all sides and to not interfere in its efforts during a riot. This would not have broken any constitutional mandate or criminal law that was used to force the Central Government's security forces to obey the acting magistrate's orders. Since City Magistrate Umesh Chander Tiwari had refused them permission to go forward and had ordered them not to shoot, they returned. The truth is that if the security force officers had ignored this order, they would not have been breaking any law.

This is not my personal opinion. The Sarkaria Commission in its report on center-states relations emphasized that India is a federal organization. It considered the use of Article 356 necessary and appropriate for the Central Government. However, it advised that authority given under Article 355 should be used before Article 356 is used. The Commission referred to the constitutions of the United States, Australia, Switzerland, and West Germany and explained in its report's sixth chapter that the federal governments of these countries have broad rights to interfere in state affairs to control violence within the country. The Commission wrote, "When the use of Article 356(1) is considered unnecessary or inappropriate in the context of violent disruptions in a state, the Central Government has the right to deploy its armed forces to control violence and to establish peace. The Central Government has the full right to use its armed forces to protect the citizens in a state under the 42d Amendment, First Index, Provision 2A, and in the Union Index, Provision 2, Clause 73. The union's right to use armed forces to protect the citizens has always been separate from the first provision of the States Index-2. In the next paragraph, the Commission's effort to define Provision 2A perfectly fit what happened in Ayodhya. It seems like this Commission expected such situations. Therefore, the Commission wrote, "These words do not necessarily mean that the Union government can use its armed forces only at the request of a state government. It is possible that a state does not want or is unable to control the serious law-and-order situation, and refuses the Union's offer of armed forces. In such a situation, when a state is moving fast toward anarchy and its administration has collapsed, the Union must use its armed forces and do whatever is necessary to control the explosive situation. It must do its duty mandated by Article 355. It can use its armed forces and take other steps necessary to control the situation. Such steps would be according to the rights given to it under the Union Index, Provision 2, 2A, and according to the additional executive powers given to the Union government."

The Commission later asks when it is necessary for the Central Government to interfere in a volatile situation in a state? This question is left to the discretion of the union government. The Commission wrote in the next paragraph, "Usually the state would ask the Central Government for such assistance. Still, as mentioned earlier, Article 355 is very broad and it gives the Central Government the authority to provide assistance, including deployment of armed forces, even when the state has not requested them." The Central Government can also take precautionary steps to avoid recurrence of such situations. The Commission also advises that the union government should utilize its authority under Article 355 before it uses Article 356 to avoid the collapse of the constitutional administration.

This opinion was given by the Commission whose report is respected by even the states that do not agree with the

Central Government's policies. Almost all political parties have demanded implementation of the recommendations included in the Sarkaria Commission report to improve relations between the Center and the states. The political parties criticize the use of Article 356 and say that its use is against the recommendations included in the Sarkaria Commission's report. The Sarkaria Commission has expressed its opinion about the authority and range of Article 356 and says that it can be used in four areas: (a) political emergency, (b) internal strife, (c) collapse of government, and (d) disobedience of constitutional mandates of the Central Government. The Commission, while discussing it, advised that, if a state does not follow Articles 256, 257, 339 (2), and 355, then Article 356 can be used, and its use in such a situation would be appropriate.

Thus, we learn that using Article 355 could have solved the problem. If using Article 355 did not solve it then Article 356 could be used and presidential rule could have been established. The Commission considers the use of Article 356 constitutional and has recommended that it be used only when all other options are exhausted and the state has been warned before it is invoked. In the present case, Home Minister Chavan warned the state about using Article 356; however, he did not first use Article 355. Perhaps this happened because Article 355 has never been used and the Central Government thought that it was more appropriate to use Article 356 in this situation. It appears that the government did not even know that it has this weapon in the Constitution. It is interesting that the bureaucracy was ignorant about it even after the widespread discussions on it after the Sarkaria Commission report was published. Perhaps, no bureaucrat had the tenacity to read the 594-page report. The political leaders do not even have the time to read simple files.

The imposition of presidential rule in three states was strongly criticized. The Commission did not think that the lack of a majority government at the Center is the only reason for implementing president's rule. If the Center feels that a state is neglecting law and order, it can impose president's rule. The final decision is left with the president. This does not mean that any changes in Article 356 would result in a better situation for the Center. What is important is that the Center should use its authority wisely and with full control. If this is practiced there will be no need to amend Article 356. However, one correction is necessary. Presidential rule may be implemented, but, the elected vidhan sabha should not be dismissed until and if Parliament approves the proclamation. If the Parliament rejects the proclamation, the harm done by dismissing the vidhan sabha would never be made up. The Sarkaria Commission has expressed this opinion.

Rao Dismissals Said Strengthening BJP

93AS0438F Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
29 Dec 92 p 8

[Article by Arnab Mitra: "Saffron Paradise Regained"; italicized words as published]

[Text]

By dismissing BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] governments, the Centre has made martyrs of the party's pariahs.

The saffron leadership must be laughing all the way to jail. After sparking off the worst communal conflagration in the history of independent India, they can now sit back in the comfort of their "prison cells" and count their vote bank growing by the minute.

And grow it will. Not for them the hustle and bustle of political life—not for some time at least. They can rest easy, knowing they have done their part of the job well. It is now for others—read: the Congress and the left—to deliver.

And they are right. In the weeks following the demolition, the government has managed to convert yesterday's pariahs to today's martyrs. It's almost as if the secular forces in this country have decided to commit collective suicide.

In their desperation to be seen as firm and decisive, Messrs Narasimha Rao, Arjun Singh, Jyoti Basu and others have clearly exposed the lack of a coherent game-plan to checkmate communalism.

Instead of setting the terms, the government is only reacting to the agenda dictated by the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. Going into battle on the enemy's terms can hardly be expected to send out the right signals to the votaries of secularism.

If Mr. Narasimha Rao erred on the side of caution prior to December 6, his subsequent actions have oscillated between rank political adventurism and meek acquiescence. Instead of attempting to isolate the saffron bandwagon politically, the government has adopted administrative measures, which though dramatic, can by no stretch of imagination be called judicious.

After breathing fire and brimstone for a while over rebuilding the mosque at the disputed site, the government quietly gave in and allowed *darshan* of the Ram Lalla idols installed in the makeshift shrine. This will make the task of rebuilding the mosque doubly difficult.

Such actions lead one to question the motives of the government. Was it really serious about the reconstruction? Probably not. It was more a panic reaction of a government floundering for answers to a problem for which it has no solution.

Prior to that there was Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's celebrated indefinite fast. Once again the Centre's inability to withstand pressure was highlighted in dramatic fashion. In one masterstroke, the BJP veteran forced the government to unconditionally concede all his points.

To be absolutely fair to Mr. Rao, it must be said that precipitate actions like the dismissal of the three BJP

governments were forced upon him by an increasingly belligerent Congress working committee, as a consequence of the failure of his consensual approach.

But throwing the baby out with the bathwater will not help matters. On the contrary, strong arm tactics will allow the BJP to legitimately claim that it is being victimised.

The people may have bought this approach on the night of December 6. There was spontaneous disgust at what had happened at Ayodhya. But with the action coming one week after the event, it does look like intra-Congress oneupmanship, a move by a weak prime minister to placate the hawks in his party.

After all, the grounds for dismissal are extremely flimsy. The respective state governors merely dittoed the views of the Congress and sent their reports to the president.

The alleged breakdown of the constitutional machinery in the three states does not hold much water. The record of the Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh governments in tackling the riots was not really all that bad, particularly when compared to the rest of the country. And Himachal Pradesh was one of the few states which was practically free of communal tension.

In this context it is pertinent to note the observation of the Rajasthan governor, Mr. Channa Reddy, who said the record of the Bhairon Singh Shekhawat government in tackling the law and order situation after December 6 was satisfactory. And if the riots were at all an excuse for the dismissals, then Mr. Jyoti Basu and Mr. Sudhakar Naik have no business to be heading their states either.

If, however, one considers the implementation of the ban on communal organisations, then the record of the three governments was also better than, say, Tamil Nadu. Allegations that the state has given safe sanctuary to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS] members have even prompted the home minister to seek a report from the governor. But Ms. Jayalalitha calmly continues to rule, safe in the knowledge that any move to dislodge her could mean curtains for the Centre.

The stated reason, however, is that all three chief ministers have RSS links. This reason also is questionable. The ban on the organisation itself has come under a cloud following the direction of the Indore bench of the Madhya Pradesh high court to reopen the sealed offices of the RSS.

Besides, Mr. Shekhawat was not a member of the organisation. The reason, in his case, was that Rajasthan saw the maximum number of ministers resigning to join the *kar seva*.

This argument is the weakest of the lot. After ministers resign, they revert back to being private citizens and are free to act in any way they please. To hold the state government responsible for their actions stinks of political vendetta.

After all, the BJP remains a legitimate political party, even if its views are diametrically opposed to what was hitherto the national consensus.

What, for instance, will the Centre do if the saffron party wins the next assembly elections in these three states? A refusal to let the party rule because of past associations with the RSS would be fraught with danger.

The actual reason, one suspects, has less to do with constitutional niceties than with the eagerness of the Congress to stage a comeback in the Hindi heartland. Having failed to defeat the BJP politically, the party has now started to play the game it is most comfortable with.

Taking advantage of what it thinks is an anti-BJP mood in the country, and masquerading as the guardian of the Constitution, the Congress is back to its toppling game.

But by doing so, the party has simply given the BJP a new lease of life. The people of Madhya Pradesh, for instance, were growing disenchanted with Mr. Sunderlal Patwa's government. This was reflected in the 1991 general elections. Instead of letting the state government stew in its own juice, the Centre has gifted it with martyr's robes.

What is even more surprising is the unconditional support extended by the left to this move. Indian politics will truly never be short of surprises. To think that the left—the self-appointed guardians of public morality—would support such an indiscriminate use of Article 356 is unthinkable.

Mr. Jyoti Basu and the entire spectrum of leftist intelligentsia were gunning for the abolition of this controversial article in the not too distant past.

But the craving to satisfy the long unsatiated desire to be a permanent part of New Delhi's "inner circle" seems to have got the better of them. Principles end where power begins. How the mighty have fallen.

Already there is a very perceptible countrywide polarisation along communal lines. If the majority of Hindus were disgusted at the demolition of the Babri Masjid, they are dismayed at the aftermath, as rioters belonging to the minority community spread terror and mayhem. Inaction and even passive support of the administration have only led to the growing feeling that Hindus in India will be safe only under the BJP.

All the major players sense this. The mood of despondency in the congress and non-BJP Opposition camps is palpable. The left and the various factions of the Janata Dal, in spite of strongly censuring the government over its handling of the crisis, have opposed the no confidence motion against it.

And the saffron leaders who went into hiding on December 6 are now vociferously on their feet once again. They know they are setting the agenda, and are trying their utmost to precipitate a mid-term poll to ride this crest.

If the BJP-RSS-VHP combine lost their paradise following the demolition, they have regained it in its aftermath. Pragmatism and good sense, at a premium even at the best of times, seems to have deserted our country. How else can one justify all that is happening?

BJP Ready To Capitalize on Weakened Congress(I)

*93AS0438B Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
21 Jan 93 p 8*

[Article by Mohit Sen: "Hindu Order Out of Chaos"; italicized words as published]

[Text]

There is a danger Congress failure to quell violence will be exploited by a BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) claiming it can do better.

The release of Mr. L.K. Advani and his colleagues who were resting in Mata Tila has now put them on trial. It has released many secularists from the constraints of having to be ambivalent about the justice of their arrest and coming out against their outlook and actions. The battle can now be taken to its logical conclusion. The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] leader has called for war and war is what he will get.

There need be no doubts regarding the prime minister's intentions. He will lead the war against the BJP which he clearly assesses as the political sword arm of the most aggressive and dangerous communal forces in the country. But he is neither going to oblige the BJP nor the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist] led left by leading the war on the terrain of their choice and the issues which they dictate.

A reasonably representative personal survey of sentiments in Hyderabad and Madras showed the dichotomy in the minds and hearts of Hindus and Muslims, especially the generation below 35. Very few among the Hindus were happy about the demolition which came to them as a shocking surprise. All of them wanted a Ram temple to be built on the site where the mosque stood if the court decreed that a temple had once stood there. In case the first alternative is not possible, they would like to see a temple in a spot near the site where the mosque stood.

The BJP, along with all other political parties, were accused of playing politics and not being really interested in the temple issue. There was, however, a distrust of the Muslims who were also felt to have received favoured treatment for which they had not shown much gratitude. The feeling for Ram was very pronounced. This was in stark contrast to cynicism about all human agencies which purported to be concerned about the country and the people.

It is worth noting the change that has come about in Tamil Nadu where once Periyar Ramaswamy Naicker had put a garland of shoes around an idol of Ram,

proceeded to slap his face with chappals, proclaimed Sita as a seductress and Ravana the wronged hero somewhat in the manner of the treatment of Lucifer in *Paradise Lost*. There is now veneration and love for *Purshottam Purusha*.

What is disturbing and saddening is the sense of fear among Muslims. They did not imagine that anyone or any organisation could ever have been able to challenge the might of the Indian state and get away with it. There is a sense of alienation which is particularly upsetting in Tamil Nadu where the Hindu-Muslim integration is so complete.

At the same time there is a growing realisation that the previous laxity on the part of secular Muslims to speak out against the views of communal Muslims was wrong in principle and helpful to the campaign of the Hindu communalists. There have been far more protests against *namaz* being offered by obstructing traffic which is totally opposed to the Muslim concept of prayer. There has been condemnation of the destruction of temples in Pakistan, Bangladesh and elsewhere by Muslim secularists on a far more extensive scale than it the past.

This has gone along with the sharpest possible attack on the outlook, policies and deeds of the *sangh parivar*. The Congress and the Central government, especially the prime minister, are bitterly criticised for having failed to protect the Babri Masjid. This, however, has not made them the chief target or even an equal target of anger. It is the *sangh parivar* which occupies that position. Incidentally there does not seem to be any particular sympathy for Mr. V. P. Singh while the CPI(M) and the associated left parties are regarded as being too weak to be relevant.

It will not do to overlook the growing sentiment among sections of the Muslim youth that they should learn to defend themselves by all possible means with Iran's fundamentalist armed bodies being taken as models. This can lead to an all India replication of what goes on in Kashmir and Punjab.

The reactions both among the Hindus and Muslims are more than likely to be strengthened after the conflagration in Bombay. Oil has been poured on the flames by the statements of Mr. Advani after his release. They are outrageous statements showing that the person who has made them has no respect for national sentiments and interests.

Mr. Advani should have bowed his head in shame and begged forgiveness from the people of India for having broken his word that he and the government of his party would take full responsibility for the safety of the mosque. In the name of Ram a solemn pledge has been blatantly violated and yet Mr. Advani remains his suave self.

He goes on to state the BJP does not have the destruction of the mosques in Varanasi and Mathura on the agenda and is independent of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP]

which does have such a programme. Does he think we should thank him and his party for not promising to provide more demolition squads? Does he imagine that anyone is likely to believe him? Most monstrous of all is the fact Mr. Advani has not a word to spare to condemn the VHP for announcing its plan to destroy the two mosques. He has not stated that he would do his best to see that mass hysteria is not worked up on the matter as happened in Ayodhya. As he himself has said it was this mass hysteria that became uncontrollable and had consequences which he says he did not desire.

The BJP leader should not imagine that he would be able to get away with this kind of prevarication. The unexpectedly small turnout to welcome him and his colleagues would shrink further if it became known that he was preparing the ground for more acts of sacrilege. He cannot evade responsibility for the horror that went on and goes on in Bombay and Ahmedabad.

It is true criminal gangs are having a field day. It is also true the Congress government is unable to act effectively because of the disastrous factionalism that has overtaken it. But it is, above all, true it is the sacrilege on December 6 that is continuing to take its toll.

It is ominous Mr. George Fernandes has been in the forefront among those who have invited Mr. Advani to Delhi. The former's far from reputable connections and performance in Bombay are well known. Despite all his anti-BJP rhetoric it is quite likely that he will begin the implementation of the second phase of the destabilisation strategy. And that is to present the BJP as the party that can effectively stop the carnage in Bombay and, perhaps, elsewhere as well. If such an image can be projected then the BJP will be the ruling party even before its representative occupies the coveted office room in South Block. Nothing could be a bigger disaster for us all.

BJP Sought After

93AS0473C Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
23 Jan 93 p 9

[Article: "Many 'Waiting To Join' BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party)"; boldface words as published]

[Text] New Delhi—A large number of politicians, including sitting and former MPs [members of Parliament] and MLAs [members of Legislative Assembly], are understood to be keen to join the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] bandwagon. The party is not only encouraging this trend but is going out of its way to woo influential individuals and groups in areas where it is not strong enough to take on the congress.

It is paradoxical that the BJP holds attractions for these politicians even while non-BJP parties have joined hands to isolate it and the party is under a severe attack from the media and the intelligentsia for its role in the Ayodhya happenings.

Mr. Sunder Singh Bhandari, a vice president of the party, would like us to believe that this is the outcome of the ideological polarisation brought about by the Ayodhya movement. The fact, however, remains that an overwhelming majority of those seeking admission to the BJP are the ones who, rightly or wrongly, perceive the party as the "government in waiting."

The BJP's perception is that one of the major fall out of the Ayodhya happenings and its aftermath has been a massive "hindutva" upsurge which has brought about a major shift in public opinion in favour of the party at the grassroot level. It is convinced that politicians in touch with the ground realities could not but be aware of this change.

Mr. Bhandari admits that certain influential individuals and groups were in touch with the party in several states and that negotiations were underway at various levels. He understandably declines to divulge the identity of persons in touch with the party and says their names will be made public as soon as the talks mature into a decision.

In the run up to the 1990 Lok Sabha elections, a large number of professionals, including soldiers, lawyers, film stars and former civil servants—had joined the BJP. This time, it appears to be the turn of politicians and middle order leaders.

Caste loyalties: Mr. Govindacharya, a general secretary of the party, is not surprised by the "movement towards the party" and says the Ayodhya movement had transcended caste loyalties. The Mandal charisma was fading. It was, therefore, not surprising that district level leaders belonging to certain backward castes were driven to the BJP fold. The process of integrating these elements in the party, he observed, will take some time. The process will gain momentum after the Lok Sabha is dissolved and elections are announced.

The BJP leadership is obviously pleased by the new trend but is in a dilemma on the apprehension in party circles that these new entrants to the party may affect party's homogeneity and discipline. The party ideologues are worried that entry of a large number of politicians of various hues may arrest the process of sharpening the ideological thrust of the party.

Mr. Bhandari admits that a number of politicians seeking admission to the BJP have sought an assurance from the party for a ticket in the next elections but maintains that the party would not accept such conditions. Those who believed in the party's ideology were welcome to join and work for the party. The decision about tickets would be taken on merit. This is easier said than done. The party will have to weigh the pros and cons of such conditional offers. If the track record of the BJP is any indication, the party would welcome even those who insist on getting a party ticket as a precondition.

Sources in the party say negotiations with the JD(D) [Janata Dal-D] for merger of the latter with the BJP are at an advanced stage. Announcement is expected any moment. In Haryana, talks with Mr. Ranjit Singh, a son of Mr. Devi Lal, have run into rough weather because Mr. Singh wants to join the party as part of a group consisting of sitting and former MLAs [members of Legislative Assembly].

Government Neglect of Hindu Kashmiri Refugees Questioned

93AS0526A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 10 Jan 93 pp 1, 12

[Article by Alok Tomar: "Who Is Looking at the Destroyed Kashmiri Temples?"]

[Text] New Delhi (Special Correspondent) 9 January. During a meeting of the Rashtriya Ekta Parishad in November 1992, Mr. Murli Manohar Joshi, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] general secretary, touted his party's old line. He asked why no one had said anything when 40 temples were torn down in Kashmir.

One person interrupted him and asked, "Which temples are you talking about? Did you visit those temples? Can you tell us the name of even one such temple?"

Neither Mr. Joshi nor Lal Krishna Advani, the director of the Ayodhya drama, could answer these questions. However, the talk about destruction of the temples is still alive. In addition they are using this issue to justify what happened on 6 December. They announced: "In a country where no one said anything when 40 temples were destroyed in Kashmir, no (pseudo-secularist) has the right to question why Babri Masjid was torn down."

And that very courteous person was still asking which temples we were talking about. This man is nicely challenging the leadership of the BJP and other parties of the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] family to visit those temples they claim have been torn down in Kashmir. If necessary, they should also take this person with them so he can see the facts with his own eyes. No one is giving him an answer. Only some angry letters are written.

The name of this man is B.G. Varghese. He has been known as a brave and distinguished journalist all his life and believes that destruction of any place of worship is a great sin. He also believes that practicing the politics of lies in the name of places of worship is an even greater sin. He is neither a pseudo-secular Hindu nor a fundamentalist Muslim. He is a secular Christian. No one can say that religion has interfered with Varghese's search for truth. Mr. Varghese, who was abroad since 8 December and returned last week, found that lies were being told uninterruptedly, and those who know the truth are not ready to speak up.

Mr. Varghese remembers, "In 1991, someone (perhaps Lal Krishna) told me that a respected leader in the RSS

family had a list of temples that had been torn down in Kashmir. I said that it was a serious matter if it was true and wanted full information. A few months later this leader gave that list to me through his sources. I started an investigation with the help of some dependable people in Kashmir. They sent me a report after checking and visiting those temples. The claim made by the BJP appeared to be wrong."

Mr. Varghese wrote an article in the INDIAN EXPRESS titled "Temples in Kashmir" on 8 May 1991. This article explained how some BJP leaders had told Mr. Varghese about the destruction of 100 temples in Kashmir valley and Chheh Dora district. The Sanatan Dharma Sabha in Jammu also mentioned six temples, one of which was in Fatahaka Dal in Srinagar. Another temple mentioned was the Ganesh Mandir in Srinagar. Mr. Varghese and members of the Indian Press Council went there and visited with the temple priests.

"I had a list of 62 temples that the RSS had said had been totally destroyed since 1990. There were names of 1,644 villages whose names were changed by the Jammu-Kashmir government in 1981-82. They also had alleged that Anantnag was changed to Islamabad."

However, investigations revealed that these places of worship were never harmed at all. There were inns attached to Jawahar Nagar, Karan Nagar, Ganpatyar, Dashnami Akhara, Parushyar Bhairav, Sheetal Nath, and Ksheer Bhawani temples. Security forces were living in those inns with the permission of the temple authorities. Except for isolated incidents of shootings, no one had ever harmed these temples. There were communal riots in Anantnag in 1946, and some temples were attacked at that time, and nothing else happened until the end of 1991. Mr. Varghese also says that, even after the 6 December incident in Ayodhya, no temple was reportedly harmed.

After this article was published, several critical reactions were also published. Mr. Varghese was called an arm-chair intellectual. Later, Mr. Varghese went to visit the Kashmir valley with other members of the press council. He visited the "destroyed temples" and talked to the priests and worshippers there. He has albums of photographs taken at those places. He informed the leaders of the RSS, the BJP, and the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad], but to no avail. Mr. Varghese is surprised, "They have continued their false propaganda as usual. I met Chaman Lal Gupta, the regional chief of the BJP, at Delhi's Kashmir Bhawan, and asked him why he did not visit those temples that his party claims to have been destroyed. Mr. Gupta said he did not go there because of security problems." Mr. Varghese is not ready even to give them the benefit of a doubt. He asks, "What kind of dangers are there that hinder the search for truth, but do not stop them from telling lies?"

Mr. Varghese does mention the changing of names of places and villages. He said that Anantnag was named Islamabad during Shah-i Jehan's time; however, this

name did not become popular. As for names of other villages, not only have names been changed to Muslim names, but also the opposite has happened. He has the government gazette which shows name changes such as Pohar to Nandpur, Daitunag Narayan to Nagpur, Aari Chhohal to Lalpur, Karandigaon to Chandigram, Kota Narang to Lal Marg, Kaliva to Nitampur, Domhaq to Haripur, and most important of all, Babarpur to Joharpur. Mr. Varghese said that no violent incidents took place when the government announcement was made on 24 October 1981 about these changes. Does this not prove that the people accepted these name changes?

We can understand the selfish reasons for the false propaganda by the BJP, RSS, and the VHP. What surprises Mr. Varghese is the attitude of the Indian government. "I asked Home Minister Shankar Rao Chavan to tell this truth to the nation. I asked the minister for information and broadcasting to show the real situation and pictures on the television to stop this false propaganda. However, no one listened to me." Instead they are chanting incessantly about giving credibility to the Doordarshan. This is Mr. Varghese's theory.

Mr. Varghese is not angry without reason. He says, "Those who spread false information are dishonest. The government that refuses to reveal the truth is cowardly, incompetent, and irresolute."

V.G. Varghese is unhappy because he is an eyewitness to truth and has to hear lies all the time. The disclosures about Kashmir temples are false but very aggressive. Mr. Varghese wants to ask the government, "A destroyed mosque is made of limestone and rocks and can be rebuilt. Who will repair the cracks that are emerging in the walls of trust in our nation?"

Hindu Kashmiris Said Seeking Homeland

93AS0438J Bombay SUNDAY OBSERVER in English
8 Jan 93 p 15

[Article by Usha Manchanda: "700,000 Kashmir Hindus Demand Separate Territory"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Recently, representatives of Panun Kashmir, a political movement started one year ago to protect the interests of Kashmiri Hindus, were in Bombay. They organized a symposium on the 'Present Kashmir Situation' and in a press conference demanded that a union territory be carved out for seven lakh Kashmiri Hindus, including two-and-a-half lakh of them displaced in the last three years following terrorist activities in the valley, to return to their homeland with honor and dignity.

Is this demand a form of communalism or a bid for self-protection?

Fight for land between majority and minority populations is as old as human history whether it be on religious lines or based on settlement period. Panun Kashmir has

raised a very pertinent question—does the minority populace, in this case Kashmiri Hindus, have a right to claim a portion of the valley. They are demanding 40 percent of the area in the Kashmir valley north and east of the river Jhelum, mainly covering parts of the four districts of Anantnag, Srinagar, Badgam and Kupwara, be declared as a union territory where the constitution of India will be applied in letter and spirit.

“We want the government and political parties to realize that this minority (of Kashmiri Pandits) is the civil presence of India in the valley and should be protected by them,” said Panun Kashmir’s spokesperson, Ajay Chrungoo said.

More than 1,000 Kashmiri Hindus have been killed by terrorists, while another 4,000 have died due to pathetic conditions in the camps of Jammu where they live like refugees. Although he refused to give the number of people who have changed their religion, he said hundreds of Hindus had converted out of frustration and fear.

About 70 percent of Kashmiri Hindus live in Jammu, while 20 percent are in New Delhi and the rest are scattered all over the country. Youth who have left their homes looking for job opportunities elsewhere in the country, cannot return to their homeland for fear of being killed by terrorists.

Panun Kashmir has alleged that all that the Union government is concerned with is fighting over the ‘line of control’ in JEtK [as published], but has paid no attention to the plight of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the condition they live in.

Meanwhile, it has been recently reported that the Union government is planning to have assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir to restart a political process in the state, while parties like the Janat Dal have decided to depute some of its leading members to frequently visit the trouble-torn state with a view to establish contact with the people there.

These steps have been prompted by the fact that President’s rule cannot be extended after September 1993, three years since the rule was promulgated in the case of Jammu and Kashmir, without an amendment of the constitution to this effect. Talk of elections and the restoration of the democratic process is also prompted by external pressure. However, in the changed scenario of U.S.A. no longer needing Pakistan for strategic reasons, India can approach the U.N. for effectively fighting terrorists and human rights violations committed by them with the support of foreign powers.

The demand for a separate homeland is not new. It has been raised at different platforms in Jammu and Delhi without much response from the politicians. What disturbs the representatives of Panun Kashmir is the Union government softening its stand against the militants and reports of giving more autonomy to the state of Kashmir.

The Kashmiri Hindus’ contention is that they want to remain a part of India. And since the Muslims in Kashmir valley do not want to co-exist with them or be a part of India, the government and people of India should decide what they want to do with them, without compromising on the Kashmiri Hindus’ right to stay in the valley with dignity.

“We cannot stop the Union government from giving more autonomy to Muslims in Kashmir, but we don’t want to be subservient to terrorists,” said Chrungoo.

“Under the circumstances, where the Kashmiri Pandit youth may be forced to take to the gun out of frustration, we have to establish a dialogue with the people of India. We are prepared to protect our homes in the union territory,” he said.

Karnataka: Cabinet Expansion Imbalance Criticized

*93AS0506G Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
25 Jan 93 p 8*

[Editorial: “Doesn’t Augur Well”]

[Text] The muffled rumblings being heard in State Congress(I) circles over Cabinet expansion might sound a bit odd in view of Chief Minister M. Veerappa Moily having opted for an elephantine sized Ministry. While the Chief Minister has still to grapple with the difficult task of defending the jumbo-size of the ministry, the dissonant note being struck by certain sections like the Lingayats and Left-hand Scheduled Castes, who feel aggrieved on their not getting due representation, has added another dimension to the issue. All this is unfortunate indeed. Though the propriety of the tendency to calculate the share of each community in the distribution of loaves and fishes of office in a supposedly secular polity might be of only utopian value going by the ground realities, doing it so brazenly will not redound to the credit of anyone. Yet, the ruffled feelings of the Lingayat legislators appear to be the result of their getting poor representation in the Ministry when compared with that of their traditional political rivals, the Vokkaligas, who have walked away with the post of the Deputy Chief Minister. Their grouse is compounded by the fact that the community had to suffer the loss of the chief ministership in the recent past.

Now it might be only of academic interest to ponder whether the Chief Minister could have avoided the political hassles like this, had he done his home work meticulously prior to the expansion. Nevertheless, he should explore the possibility of assuaging the wounded feelings of both the Left-hand Scheduled Castes and Lingayats by resorting to a reshuffle of portfolios with more imagination and also shed some of the key portfolios which might demand the full attention of a senior minister. The ministry making exercise as such would be a thankless job for any Chief Minister of the Congress(I) where practically everyone is an aspirant for a berth in

the Ministry. The Congressmen would not cover themselves with glory and further the cause of the party if they fail to place the interests of the party above their own. This, indeed, is a tall order.

Punjab: Initiation of Election Process Hailed

93AS0506H Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
25 Jan 93 p 8

[Editorial: "Another Milestone"]

[Text] Punjab has crossed another important milestone on the road to normalcy by the successful conduct of panchayat elections all over the State last week. Over 11,500 panchayats with a voter strength of 92 lakhs went to the polls in four phases. The voter turnout of over 80 percent was much more than what was expected. It shows that the rural voters, who were at the receiving end of terrorism in the last 10 years, have now emerged out of the shadow of fear and are keen to strengthen the political process that will stamp out the last and smouldering embers of militancy in parts of the State. The Chief Minister, Mr. Beant Singh, deserves credit for bringing an almost hopeless situation to near normalcy in almost a year of assuming office. The successful conduct of municipal elections in September and of panchayat elections now has helped to strengthen the claim to legitimacy of his Government which was formed in the wake of an Assembly election with a voter turnout of barely 21 percent. But the real heroes of Punjab's happy story are the common people who got weary of terrorism and created the psychological environment for Mr. Beant Singh to work in. They have acted again and set a clear direction for the State and the Government to take in the coming days.

The elections were largely free of violence and untoward incidents. The usual quota of charges of rigging and misuse of official machinery by the State Government for the advantage of Congress(I) candidates is there. Charges against the administration and the ruling party range from bullying of villagers and enlisting bogus voters to prevention of unanimous elections in several villages. On the Government side, there was apprehension that the call for unanimous elections, given by some militant and Akali organisations, was a ruse for silent pre-poll rigging. In any case, the wild cries of "fraud" and "farce" made by some Akali leaders generally lack substance. But there is evidence that the bureaucracy and the security forces were not everywhere neutral in their attitudes to candidates and the conduct of polling. It is doubtful if this influenced the electoral process or the results to any great extent. The outcome of the elections is still not certain and claims and counter-claims by the Congress(I), Akali parties and others notwithstanding, it might take some time for a clear picture to emerge. But the final tallies of seats are not very important in Punjab's present context; what matters more is that elections were conducted successfully with active participation by all important political parties in the State.

Advani For Muslim Introspection

93AS0473E Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
24 Jan 93 p 9

[Article: "Advani for Muslim Introspection on Country's Secularism"]

[Excerpt] Ahmedabad, Jan. 23 (UNI)—BJP leader L.K. Advani today made a fervent plea to members of the Muslim community to decide whether the pseudo-secularism of the Congress(I) had ever helped them in the last 45 years.

Addressing a press conference here on the second day of his three-day tour of Gujarat, Mr. Advani said he had sympathies for the Muslims for the hardships they had to undergo because of the existing faulty system. The system had weakened the unity of the country, he said.

The BJP leader asked Muslims to analyse if their counterparts in the Gulf countries, Pakistan and Bangladesh enjoyed the same freedom which they enjoy in India. He asserted that if India was secular today it was because of the Hindu majority.

Attack on Cong(I): In a frontal attack on the pseudo-secularism of the Congress(I), Mr. Advani said that it was again trying to strengthen its Muslim vote bank by giving an assurance to reconstruct the mosque at Ayodhya. By making such a statement, the Congress(I) was doing disservice to the Muslim community at large, he maintained.

The BJP leader asked the Muslims to compare the Congress(I)-ruled States and the BJP-ruled States to find out which were peaceful after the Ayodhya developments on December 6 last year.

To a question, he said that if the BJP came to power at the Centre it would ensure that riots did not take place and that Muslims got a fair deal in nation building. [passage omitted]

Doordarshan TV's 'Creeping Paralysis' Noted

BK2801005593 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
in English 18 Jan 93 p 13

[By S.S. Gill, the former secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting]

[Text] Healthy institutions work normally during normal times, and rise to higher levels of performance when challenged by hostile forces. Doordarshan [television] has been ailing for years even under normal circumstances, and appears to be suffering from creeping paralysis when faced with serious challenges. Doordarshan could have merrily ambled along in its somnolent state but for CNN's coverage of the Gulf war. The vivid visuals of soaring missiles dropped like stones into the placid waters of Doordarshan, and its monopoly of the air-waves was breached for the first time. Then followed

a shower of foreign telecasts from STAR TV, BBC, ATN and, most recently, ZEE TV.

Despite rapidly increasing popularity of these programmes Doordarshan continued to maintain that it was only a marginal phenomenon confined to the urban rich who even earlier watched foreign films on their VCRs. But the ground reality was too obstinate to be wished away, and gradually the monolith started showing signs of nervousness. After endless confabulations a grand design was prepared to give the foreign intruders a befitting reply and to win back the alienated viewers to the original fold.

But before we examine this package and other plans in the pipeline to rejuvenate Doordarshan, it will be necessary to see how rot has gradually taken hold of this organisation. The motive power of an institution like Doordarshan is ideas, imagination, creativity. Consequently, the quality and morale of the people manning this outfit is critical to its proper functioning. And it is on this front that the institution has suffered the most. The last regular Director General [D.G.] of Doordarshan retired in August 1991. Since then it has been headed by ad hoc appointees. The present incumbent is only a Deputy D.G. who is holding officiating charge of the post. He has no security of tenure, and no assurance that ultimately he will be selected for the job. Earlier, a Director General was assisted by three Additional Directors General and three Deputy Directors General. At present the workload of these six officials is being looked after by just one Deputy D.G. With this sort of crippled organisation headed by a lameduck D.G., what sort of performance do you expect?

Now, let us come to the concrete responses crafted by Doordarshan to the threat posed by an increasing number of satellite telecasts. Two independent plans have been prepared in this connection. One, to increase the entertainment content of the primary, national channel. And, second, to privatise the four metro channels by allotting regular time-slots to private producers.

Under the revised schedule, we are being shown two episodes, instead of one, during prime-time and the length of news bulletins has been reduced from 20 to 15 minutes. In addition, Doordarshan will screen nine feature films and seven film-song based programmes every week. From the fare dished out so far it appears that several prime-time episodes will be either repeats of popular earlier programmes, or imported English serials.

This revised schedule raises a basic question about the role and identity of Doordarshan as the most powerful mass medium funded by public money. Obviously, the main objective in introducing the new format has been to woo the TV viewers at any cost. And which viewers? Primarily, the urban middle class. Otherwise, how can you think of telecasting an English language serial during prime-time, when hardly 2 to 3 percent of our people can understand the language? Moreover, by relying so heavily on feature films and film-based programmes,

what happens to Doordarshan's own identity? And when you will be showing 468 films per year, and most of them in Hindi, what quality of entertainment would you be purveying? India produces around 200 Hindi films per year. Eighty percent of them are so bad that they bomb at the box office. Some are never exhibited. Yet, Doordarshan would now heap on its viewers all the garbage produced by the film industry and to add insult to injury, repeat even the worst of productions to reach the annual target of over 400 films.

The primary reason for this approach of Doordarshan is to retain its hold on viewers. It must give them what they want. But Doordarshan's function is not only to cater to popular taste, but also to shape and upgrade public taste by exposing people to a better type of entertainment. There was a time when films like *Padosi*, *Devdas*, *Aadmi* and *Aurat*, were box-office hits. By aping Hollywood, our film producers corrupted the people's palate by exposing them to high voltage violence, sex and crime. This process can be reversed only by a determined bid to regularly telecast high-class telefilms specially commissioned for this purpose. Instead of that, Doordarshan is aiming to become a pale copy of STAR TV. The stuff that it is now telecasting is being shown by every cable-operator in every street and mohalla [locality]. The flagship programme of any television network is its newscasts. Just see what BBC is best known for. And here Doordarshan has reduced the duration of main news bulletins by five minutes, without making any effort to remove their drabness.

As to the refurbishing of the four Metro channels, a really bizarre situation had developed. Earlier the Government set up a high-powered authority to allot time slots on the four channels to talented private producers. But whereas the authority was still preparing guidelines, etc. for inviting applications from the producers, the Ministry of I&B [Information and Broadcasting] has announced its decision to launch the first phase of this scheme on January 26 and allot time slots on first-come-first-served basis. This raises some very ticklish issues. If the Government had to take such decisions, then what happens to Allotment Authority set up for this purpose? Also, how could a producer make available a spanking new serial at a fortnight's notice? And what is this first-come-first-served stipulation? Does it mean that if Mrinal Sen wishes to offer a programme, but he is pipped to the post by a tea-stall owner outside Mandi House, the former will lose the race?

Actually what Doordarshan needs is not abrupt dramatic gestures, but considered formulation of a long-term policy. The thrust of modern technology has completely eroded its monopoly of the electronic media. Exposure to slickly produced foreign programmes has raised people's expectations of the standard of Doordarshan's programmes. The forces that have compelled the government to liberalise the economy, should produce a similar impact on the state-controlled media also. When any Johnny come lately from abroad can hire a transponder and start beaming telecasts to India, where is the harm in

permitting an Indian national to have the same facility? He would, at least, operate within your guidelines, and pay some heed to the national interest. And if competition is good for our economy, so should it be for Doordarshan. Why then, the government is dragging its feet on permitting Indian parties to establish a parallel national television channel to give Doordarshan a run for its money. As a result of these measures, the Indian viewer will certainly get a better deal, and Doordarshan would be forced to improve its programmes. Also, the surest way to prevent forcing telecasters from acquiring a firm hold over our people is not to copy them mindlessly but to come up with a strong, indigenous response rooted in the Indian culture and tradition. There is creative talent as well as enterprise enough in this country provided we really care to tap it seriously.

Government Control Over TV Broadcasts Questioned

93AS0525B New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 23 Jan 93 p 10

[Article by Atul Jain: "The Indian TV Programs' Step-motherly Treatment"]

[Text] New Delhi, 12 January. The government is discriminating against Indian programs compared to foreign programs in the name of controlling cable television. It cannot control the foreign programs because they are available in every home via dish antennae set up in every corner. However, it wants to control the programs produced in India by any means.

The government has been aware of the dangers of cable television for a long time, but it has acted a bit too late. First, the government procrastinated while deciding which ministry should be responsible. The Information and Broadcasting Ministry said that only the Indian Telegraph Act could deal with the cable television and dish antenna programs; therefore, it comes under the Communications Ministry. The Communications Ministry said that it is not capable of controlling these issues. Then the question of programs shown on the cable television channel arose, and the issue of copyright, which is under the Education Ministry, was raised. The programs related to current affairs are regulated by the Cinematography Act, which is implemented by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry. Finally, following the prime minister's suggestion, it was decided that the Information and Broadcasting Ministry would be responsible for making regulations for cable television.

After working for almost one year, this ministry was able to finish the document that contains the regulations. Last week, this document was sent to other ministries in the form of a Cabinet note. According to this note, cable television operators do not need a license for airing programs on their networks. All they need to do is register with the government, just for keeping records. They can register at the local post office. All laws, such as

the copyright law, Cinematographic Act, television code for software, and the codes of the Advertising Federation for regulating advertising will be imposed on them. At the same time, the government reserved the right to give special instructions and to close networks in sensitive areas.

Attention was given to another aspect of the note. According to the note, a dangerous level of radiation is created by the instruments used by cable television. The law provides one year to bring those instruments to required standards. Similarly, registration will take three months. This regulation appears to be simple on the surface. However, television operators will have to obtain "no objection" certificates from local governments and the telephone department. This could be their most difficult task. This system will also create additional opportunities for corruption.

Two new restrictions are imposed on the operators. The first condition requires them to broadcast at least one of the Doordarshan channels on their network. Second, every three months the operators must submit records on all the programs they air. The ministry official considers the first requirement unnecessary because the viewer has control over which channel he watches. If one wants to watch the Doordarshan channels, he will use the antenna to receive it.

The government should first amend the Indian Telegraph Act of 1885, which is an anachronism now, if it wants to regulate cable television. The government is indeed thinking about overhauling this law. Under provision four of the present Act, only the government has the right to establish broadcasting centers and telegraph networks. Cable television technically comes under the telegraph network classification. That is why the Information and Broadcasting Ministry wants to make the Communications Ministry responsible for television.

The prime minister had to interfere last year. He had meetings with the high officials of all the ministries. After all these meetings, it was decided that the Information and Broadcasting Ministry will make regulations for cable television. The ministry has suggested that a national cable authority be established. This entity will be responsible for giving cable franchises to 30-40 major firms. These major firms can give licenses to smaller operators later. Last September this issue was given to the Council of Secretaries (COS). The COS formed a subcommittee under the direction of an additional secretary. This subcommittee had prepared its report before the first week of November. In the last week of November, the COS rejected the ministry's proposal and asked to make a major regulation. The present note was prepared because of that order.

Amnesty Reportedly Ignoring Plight of Kashmiri Pandits

*BK0202004493 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English
19 Jan 93 p 5*

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi—Kashmiri Pandits, who are mostly immigrants and refugees in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, the Jammu plains and other northern states, are upset about human rights organisation Amnesty International has repeatedly refused pay heed to their complaints on the torture and genocide in the valley. [sentence as published] The Amnesty has, however, contested that the Indian Government has not allowed them entry into the valley or even meet people in Delhi.

Migrant Kashmiris will observe 'exodus or holocaust day' on January 19 to mark the large scale exodus of Hindus from the valley. "On January 19, 1990, lakhs of people came out on the streets of Srinagar asking non-Muslims to get out from the valley. There were loud-speakers in every nook and corner of the city threatening the people. This set off one of the biggest exodus of all times," V. Tikoo, a migrant leader said in Delhi.

These migrant organisations have contacted the London-based Amnesty International and other human rights outfits to record evidence of brutalities against the 'minority' pandits, mainly because the Central Government has refused to assist them and because none of the political parties have bothered to react to the charges.

According to a member of one of the organisations, an Amnesty team had come to India in September and a delegation of the Panun Kashmir had met the team to relate their tales of horror. "It came as a surprise when they refused to entertain our complaints on the grounds that they do not investigate anything other than State repression." But the Amnesty is probing ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, Ravi Kaul, a member of the Panun Kashmir said.

"Two weeks ago these organisations again approached the Amnesty which has stuck to its guns saying that mass killing of Kashmiri Pandits was not under the purview of their work." V. Tikoo, who is fighting for better facilities in the refugee camps, said.

In the memorandum to Amnesty, the migrants have roughly taken 1988-89 as the cut off period in which brutalities against the pandits and other Hindus were systematically stepped up and people began to be gunned down on roads, in their shops, at their workplaces. An atmosphere of terror was created to force the Hindu community to flee.

According to an IAS [Indian Administrative Services] officer from Jammu and Kashmir, the memorandum prepared by the pandits and presented to the Amnesty team was the most exhaustive document prepared on the Kashmir problem. It included a list of those killed upto

late 1992, pictures of hideously mutilated bodies, warnings on walls and lead stories in mainline Kashmiri dailies asking the "infidels" to leave the valley.

According to the memorandum, "the pandit in the Kashmir valley, irrespective of their age, sex and status became the prime target of the terrorist onslaught. They were warned and threatened, individually and collectively, through word of mouth, insinuation and innuendo, through posters and press and thousands of loud speakers installed in mosques all over the valley."

It goes on to claim that "pandits were identified and denounced, hitlists were exhibited on electric poles, doors and entries to institutions and the public were at large exhorted to watch them and hound them out."

"The extent of houses, institutions, religious places destroyed in the valley can be gauged from the fact that even the officials admit to the destruction of 4,500 premises," says Dr. Agnishekhar, convenor of several Kashmiri migrant bodies.

Some of these organisations are also seeking a list of other human rights agencies all over the world to propagate their view to the world and "let them know our real conditions. Propaganda is vital for us and we will also hire a lobbyist in the West if we can afford it," says Dr. Agnishekhar.

When contacted in London, an Amnesty spokesperson Anita Tiessen, said that they had up till now only dealt with military atrocities in the valley. "Now we have been glad to receive details about abuses of Kashmiri Hindus by militants fighting in the valley. They are important for our understanding of the human rights situation in Kashmir," she said in a faxed statement from [sentence as published]

Tamil Nadu: Jayalalitha Said Warlike

*93AS0506E Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
21 Dec 92 p 8*

[Article by S. Murari, DH News Service: "Jaya Is Still on the Warpath"; italicized words as published]

[Text] Every action has a reaction and people in public life have to bear this in mind. That was Tamil Nadu Director-General of Police S. Sripal's seemingly innocuous reaction to the increasing attacks on leaders of Janata Party President Subramanian Swamy's movement against Chief Minister Jayalalitha. The implication is obvious: the AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] has every reason to pay Swamy and Co in their own coin.

No doubt, Dr. Swamy in his campaign to unseat Ms. Jayalalitha by January 31 may often be hitting below the belt. But no one has ever accused him of having transgressed any law except perhaps the law of defamation.

Mr. Sripal chose to offer his rationale for the AIADMK men taking the law into their own hands on the day

Janata Party State unit Vice-President C.N. Sridharan was injured in an attack by three assailants in his house in Madras and another Vice-President, Mr. Varadarajan was hurt when another gang hurled a bomb at the party office in Vellore. Mr. Sridharan, who is 62 and is a practising lawyer, cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a street fighter and he is not even in the forefront of Dr. Swamy's battle against Ms. Jayalalitha.

The Madras and Vellore attacks were among a series which started after December 6. It started with the simultaneous attacks on the houses of former Minister K. Rajaram and former Speaker P.H. Pandian. Mr. Rajaram's house was stoned and his car smashed. The City Police Commissioner ruled out a political motive and offered the explanation that the incident was a sequel to a quarrel between Mr. Rajaram's domestic staff and local slum dwellers. An FIR [First Information Report] was registered accordingly and the husband of Mr. Rajaram's servant maid was arrested.

Mr. K.R. Rajkumar, formerly State President of the Janata Party and now General Secretary of the campaign committee of the Nallatchi Iyakkam (Movement for Good Governance), escaped a knife attack in his photo studio a couple of days later. The studio and the Janata Party office are in the same premises which has been under constant surveillance ever since Dr. Swamy set up camp in Madras in October to direct the campaign against Ms. Jayalalitha. And yet, four assailants managed to carry out the attack in the busy morning hour and get away in an autorickshaw.

Demonstration

On December 14, a group of AIADMK men and women led by a functionary of Jayalalitha Peravai (fan club) held a hostile demonstration against Dr. Swamy in the High Court premises when he emerged from the court of the Principal Sessions Judge after attending a hearing in a defamation case filed by the State Government on behalf of Ms. Jayalalitha. The demonstrators jumped on Dr. Swamy's car and tore the party flag, all in the presence of the police. Dr. Swamy had to seek refuge in the judge's chamber.

Significantly, the attacks started after December 6 when the country was plunged in turmoil in the wake of the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Dr. Swamy is seen to be vulnerable now as his perceived protector, Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao is battling for survival in the aftermath of the Ayodhya developments.

Such attacks fall into a sinister pattern when seen against the backdrop of a series of attempts by Ms. Jayalalitha to stifle dissent since assuming office in June last year.

Consider the attack on the office of *Tharasu*, a political weekly, in August last year in which two employees were killed. The attack came a day after Mr. R. Nagarajan, who was an all powerful Home Secretary in the previous DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] Government, sought voluntary retirement. He was arrested within

days of the attack and a case was made out that he sought to settle scores with the magazine for running him down when he was Home Secretary.

Next to be targetted was *Nakkeeran*, another political weekly. Its copies were burnt and distribution vans attacked for carrying an article by Congress(I) leader K. Suppu in which he called Ms. Jayalalitha a Hitler. The magazine's running battle with the Government ended in the arrest of its printer and publisher, Mr. Ganesan. He died a few days after coming out on bail.

Rajarishi, yet another political weekly launched by former AIADMK member of the Rajya Sabha Valampuri John, was smothered in its infancy after it carried the first of a biographical serial on Ms. Jayalalitha, warts and all.

Another Method

The sober sections of the press are earmarked for another kind of treatment—a spate of privilege issues in the Assembly starting with *The Illustrated Weekly*, *Murasoli* and *Kovai Malai Murasu*.

When this strategy backfired with the Supreme Court stepping in, a series of criminal defamation cases were filed against a host of political leaders and public speakers and publications. Since April, 48 defamation cases have been filed in Madras City and 51 in the districts by the State Government. All the cases in the districts arise from speeches made at public meetings. Thirty of the cases pending in Madras are against Opposition leaders and platform speakers and the rest against newspapers and magazines. In all the cases, Ms. Jayalalitha is the aggrieved party.

Ms. Jayalalitha has not spared her political opponents. Those against whom cases have been filed include DMK leader M. Karunanidhi, his son M. K. Stalin, DMK member of the Rajya Sabha Aladi Aruna, former Minister Arcot Veerasamy and Mr. K. Kalimuthu and of course Dr. Swamy.

Ms. Jayalalitha, however, denies that she has declared a war on the press and her political opponents. As she put it: "When freedom is available to any individual to use the political platform or the media to damage the reputation of a public figure, equal freedom exists for the maligned person to defend his or her reputation through the courts".

No one will quarrel with that view or contest her opinion that platform speeches are a sad example of the depths of indecency to which the speakers have descended. Many examples can be given, but they are so bad in taste that "no one will look at them", as she puts it. Here are a few printable examples. "When MGR [expansion not given] died, I felt like committing sati... Janaki is not MGR's wife... She killed him by poisoning his buttermilk... She suppressed the news of his death for three hours in order

to forge his will..." All quotable quotes from no less a person than Ms. Jayalalitha before she ascended the throne.

Assam Plans Crackdown on ULFA Rebels

93AS0475A Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
1 Jan 93 p 4

[Text] Guwahati, Dec. 31: In a stern New Year resolution tonight, the Assam government has asked Ulfa [United Liberation Front of Assam] hardliners, including its exiled leaders to surrender by January 31 or face the consequence of being declared proclaimed offenders which would enable the authorities to confiscate and attach their property.

The state government has also decided to order the Army to once again launch a "vigorous operation" against the recalcitrant Ulfa activists with "immediate effect."

The Army offensive is to be intensified in six districts—Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Darrang, North Lakhimpur and Sonitpur—which are still in the grip of the hardliners, highly placed official sources told this correspondent.

The administration has thrown this fresh gauntlet against the outlawed Ulfa in the wake of official reports that the organization was planning a major offensive in the state with the advent of the New Year.

The chief minister, Mr. Hiteswar Saikia, had told the state Assembly last fortnight that the Ulfa cadres, who are opposed to any talks with the government, were planning to organise selective killings of "politicians" in Assam from January. He, however, did not elaborate their supposed plan of action.

The decision to set the fresh deadline and to declare Ulfa as proclaimed offenders if they failed to surrender by

then was taken tonight at a high-level meeting presided over by Mr. Saikia at the state secretariat here.

Besides Mr. Saikia's Cabinet colleagues, the state director general of police, IGP [Inspector General of Police] (special branch), IGP (operations), the home secretary and several "key bureaucrats" attended today's meeting. However, the ground work for tonight's decision was prepared at a high-level security meeting yesterday presided over by the chief minister.

The state government will issue public notices to the Ulfa, communicating its decision, through advertisements in tomorrow's edition of local dailies. The authorities have, meanwhile, sounded a general alert throughout Assam and beefed up security measures.

According to official sources, there are an estimated 500 Ulfa activists who are opposed to holding talks with the government. Of these, 30 are believed to be based in Bangladesh, including chief-in-charge Paresh Barua, chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa, vice-chairman Pradip Gogoi and general secretary Anup Cheita.

The Ulfa, in fact, has already launched fresh strikes in the state. A group of 21 western oil experts engaged by the French company, Cvompaigne General de Geophysics, fled Assam earlier this month after the Ulfa served them with a quit notice. The rebels accused the experts of being utilised by the government to "exploit Assam's natural resources."

On December 31 the outfit is believed to have abducted three executives working for the Monabari Tea Company. According to the state government, the outfit last fortnight kidnapped Mr. V.G. Raghavan, chief executive of the joint sector Prag Bosimi Synthetics Limited, a Rs [Rupees] 327-crore company promoted by the Bombay Silk Mills Limited. The Ulfa has, however, denied responsibility for Mr. Raghavan's abduction.

Outcome of IDA Meeting, Talks With IMF

93AS0504A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA*
in English 19 Dec 92 p 18

[Text] New Delhi, December 18. In reaffirmation of its support for India's policy reforms, the International Development Association (IDA), a World Bank affiliate, has approved a \$500 million credit with a co-financing facility of another \$406 million for the social safety net programme and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has paved the way for the disbursement of \$700 million under the last two tranches of the current stand-by arrangement in the first half of 1993.

The meeting of the IDA board of directors in Washington yesterday was marked by a strong and unanimous recognition for what the government had accomplished over the past 18 months by initiating structural reforms. There was positive support from the United States, Japan, the U.K. and other donor countries, both for the content and the pace of the economic reforms.

The current round of discussions of the finance ministry officials with an IMF team concluded here today on a similar positive note with IMF fully satisfied that the Indian programme was fully on track and reform measures initiated by the government were fully in consonance with the programme outlined in the finance minister's letter of intent to the IMF.

A finance ministry release said with the likelihood of the end-December performance criteria being met, the availability of \$700 million from the IMF under the last two tranches of the stand-by arrangement now looks assured.

There were also preliminary discussions with the IMF team on the extended fund facility (EFF), with an enhanced structural facility (ESF), for a coverage of three years. These discussions enabled better appreciation of the programme content over a medium term and its consistency with the ongoing reform programme of the government.

In the event of EFF arrangement being concluded, it would enable India to access about \$7 billion, with the blend of \$1 billion of ESF resources, over a period of three years. In addition to these funds, there will be an added cushion in the programme designed to mitigate the impact of exogenous shocks during the period of the programme and this would provide the government with considerable flexibility in a satisfactory management of the balance of payment position.

Further negotiation on the EFF will be undertaken after the presentation of the Union budget for 1993-94 and the arrangement is expected to be in place by the middle of May 1993.

The social safety net programme to be assisted by the IDA with co-financing facility from Germany (\$31.5 million), the Netherlands (\$55.56 million), USAID (\$35 million), EEC-EWCUS (\$184.5 million) and the Asian

Development Bank (\$100 million) will cover expenditure on retraining and redeployment of workers affected by industrial restructuring.

It will target its operation in areas of primary education, primary health care, disease control and intensive child development scheme.

The IDA board also endorsed a new country assistance strategy over a medium term which would focus more closely on fast-disbursing adjustment lending operations in support of the economic reforms being pursued by the government.

In addition, the IDA board approved two other loans, the first designed to meet the cost of controlling the environmental pollution caused by the Jharia coalfields in Bihar and the second of \$216 million for renewable resource development project for promoting development of solar photo voltaic systems, small hydro electric projects and wind farms.

Top British Businessmen Seriously Consider Investment

93AS0506L Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
26 Jan 93 p 11

[Text] ENS Economic Bureau, New Delhi—Neither the securities scam nor the Ayodhya incident has done permanent damage to India in the eyes of foreign investors although these developments have temporarily dampened the interest of some of them. This is precisely why such senior businessmen from the United Kingdom chose to accompany their Prime Minister John Major who is on an official visit to this country.

"We have come here not to have a jolly good time. We are serious businessmen and our time is precious. We accompanied the Prime Minister because we are serious potential investors", said Brian Shaw, chairman, ANZ Grindlays.

The business delegation is having a busy time in Delhi. It met the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, the Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh and the Commerce Minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, and is interacting with their Indian counterparts. Mr. Rao asked the businessmen to report back to the Government within a year about the progress of their projects.

The high profile delegation includes top notch executives of some of the largest enterprises such as Brian Shaw of ANZ Grindlays, Robert Evans of British Gas, Peter Grant of Sun Life Assurance, Terry Harrison of Rolls-Royce and Douglas Gadd of GEC-Alsthom.

The British businessmen feel that the economic liberalisation is moving in the right direction but there are miles to go. The delegation identified areas such as full convertibility of the rupee, import tariff, restricted industries and financial sector which needed to be liberalised. The Finance Minister told them that rupee convertibility would be possible only when the balance of

payment position improved. He did not respond to other issues as it would amount to disclosing budget proposals.

The delegation interacted with the media over lunch. Mr. Brian Shaw was a star attraction in view of his bank's alleged involvement in the securities scam. "You cannot expect me to reply to accusations", reacted he when asked to comment on the charge that ANZ Grindlays played a major role in the securities scam. "We should wait for the report of the investigating agencies", he said.

Rolls-Royce, a power engineering company with expertise in industrial, marine and marine aerospace system, has been operating in India for many years. It is now planning to expand its business, taking advantage of the liberalised industrial climate. Dr. Terry Harrison, its Chief Executive, told INDIAN EXPRESS that his company was negotiating supply of power generation sets to a private company in India. He did not disclose the details of the Indian company. He said Rolls-Royce had a long and successful relationship with India. Last year, when Indian Air Force celebrated its diamond jubilee it also marked 60 years of association with Rolls-Royce. The 1000 MW Rihand Super Thermal Power Project in Uttar Pradesh was engineered and project managed by the Rolls-Royce. India's ONGC [Oil and Natural Gas Commission] has a total of 35 Rolls-Royce engines installed or on order.

Bovis International Ltd, a subsidiary of P&O, has tied up with Jayprakash Industries for providing managerial expertise in hotel industry. According to Roger Mabey, its managing director, his company has expertise in infrastructure areas and is on the look-out for expanding business in India.

Mr. Philp Hills of Samuel Montagu & Co. which operates in India through Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank does not think that securities scam has had any serious impact on foreign investors.

In his view India had lot of regulations but there was no effective supervisor. Despite the scam, the international community is sympathetic to India. He feels that the government refused to act against the foreign banks involved in the scam because of the need to use them to get foreign exchange. "It must have been in the commercial interest of the country", he said.

Mr. Douglas Gadd, chairman, GEC-Alsthom, is confident of better business opportunities in coming years. His company had operated in India even in difficult times.

It has 9000 employees in the country. "We will take advantage of the favourable situation", he said without disclosing his company's business proposals.

Government Warned Not To Let Export Initiative Die

93AS0506C Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
21 Dec 92 p 8

[Editorial: "Some Cheer"]

[Text] It appears that the Government's export drive is beginning to pay off. Monthly performance of exports can never indicate a definite trend. But for four months in succession, beginning in July, exports grew rapidly. The latest official statistics show that between April and October in the present financial year exports rose, in dollar terms, by 6 per cent over that in the corresponding months of last year. This seemingly modest growth hides some impressive trends. Monthly performance is on the whole improving with each month. In October exports increased by almost 16 per cent, compared to a single-digit growth rate in the initial months of 1992-93. Second, exports to general currency areas are surging. In the first seven months of the present financial year they were more than 13 per cent above that in the corresponding period of 1991-92. Exports to the rupee-trade area of the Commonwealth of Independent States continue to be down. This is unavoidable with the economic chaos in the CIS. But the fact that exports to west Europe, the United States and east Asia have been large enough to substantially overcome the precipitous fall in sales to the CIS seems to suggest that given normal conditions exports can do well. Finally, the substantial growth in exports in spite of near-recessionary trends in the industrialised countries shows that there are markets that can yet be exploited by Indian industry.

Export growth this year has not done much to dent the trade deficit. In fact, the low deficit in 1991-92 (held down by import controls) looks likely to almost double in the present financial year. Import liberalisation has resulted in an import growth so far of over 20 per cent. However, in the Government's scheme of things it is exports which hold the key to an eventual improvement in the trade deficit. This is where the recent performance of exports provides ground for guarded optimism. In the medium-term a self-sustaining growth depends crucially on two well-known factors. One is the recovery of growth in the industrialised world and, second, a successful resolution of the Uruguay Round of international trade talks which were recently resumed. There is now a new and unknown factor: the Government's ability, after the Ayodhya demolition, to quickly create the conditions for a renewal of export activities. A number of new ventures and existing companies are now, with the many incentives that have been provided, turning their attention more than ever before to the overseas markets. Unless the Government acts positively one of the innumerable negative effects of the events of December 6 will be that the export drive of Indian industry will be still-born.

Commentary Views Hurdles to Economic Liberalization

93AS0506A Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
21 Dec 92 p 7

[Commentary by Janaki Nair: "Economic Liberalization and Illiberal Politics"; first three paragraphs are DECCAN HERALD introduction]

[Text] To the stockholders, industrialists and government officials impatiently waiting to resume their activities in the name of reforms, the razing of the Babri Masjid temporarily appears to be something of an embarrassment.

This may by no means indicate a permanent disillusionment with the ways of the Hindutva camp. After all, the call for increasing India's integration within the world market and closely aligning it with western needs only appears to be at odds with the simultaneous resurgence of the Hindutva ideal, parochial in the extreme, a virtual denial of globalisation processes.

The paradox is only apparent, for the sovereignty that is being lost in economic terms, is being recuperated in cultural terms.

A spectre is haunting the custodians of the New Economic Order and its beneficiaries in the country—the spectre of a ferocious, illiberal and anti-democratic Hindutva, destined to stall, if temporarily, the economic reform process and delay, if not actually thwart, possible foreign investment. While the IMF has declared that it will "wait and watch" the situation as it unfolds in India, those captains of industry, intellectuals and sections of the middle class who have cheered lustily for the anti-democratic economic and industrial policies of privatisation, retrenchment and high inflation, with its promise of suffering for millions in the country, and even their possible extermination, now find the demolition of the Babri Masjid on Sunday December 6 too distasteful and something from which to distance themselves.

In part, what has prompted this denunciation of the Sangh Parivar's blatant repudiation of constitutionality is less a concern for the defence of democratic practices or the plurality of religious practices and more a fear that the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] can no longer be relied on as the Party of Order. A sneaking admiration for the battalions of disciplined VHP/RSS [Vishwa Hindu Parishad/Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] cadres, and the longing for similar discipline among industrial workers, has yielded place to uncertainties about what the irresponsible mobs may unleash. It is necessary, however, to ask whether in fact the BJP is a Party of Order and whose order is being preserved. In the four states where it has been in power, the BJP certainly does not appear to have hesitated in summoning "the illegalities of the law" to contain popular movements. The recent attack on former Commissioner (now activist and sympathiser) of the SC/STs, B. D. Sharma, the conspicuous footdragging

on the prosecution of Shankar Guha Neogi's assassins, and other attacks on activists in BJP ruled states are causes in point.

Clearly some of the BJP's undemocratic ways may be aligned with the programme of liberalisation more easily than others. Even so, the transgression of judicial and constitutional norms should really come as no surprise to those who have followed the development of the strategy of the BJP in the past decade, which has consistently moved between the realms of "faith" and "reason," translated as moving between the constitutional and extra-constitutional. History has also taught us that parties such as the National Socialists in Germany in the 1930s deployed both extra-constitutional and constitutional methods in order to secure power: once such power was secured, they no longer felt in any way bound to adhere to constitutional methods.

The fears of the captains of industry may however be unfounded, if they think, for example, that foreign investment is primarily linked to the question of democratic rights of the country's citizens. Indeed, democracy and market reforms have not gone hand in hand in any of nations which have acquired the status of economic wonders in the recent past. Far from being daunted by scenes of trishul-wielding mobs attacking ancient structures and journalists with equal ferocity, the "watch and wait" policy of the IMF/World Bank relates less to the nature of terror than to the speed with which such terror is brought under control, or is at least concealed from international view. Manmohan Singh appears, with customary savvy, to have understood this well when he dismissed the fears of industry on this count by citing the case of China, where democracy was steamrolled three years ago in full international view, yet whose Most Favoured Nation status has not been annexed, despite some protests in the U.S. Congress. Indeed, this week's news has it that the U.S. will once more engage in high level trade talks with China, in the belief that "economic freedom will inevitably lead to political freedom" (DH, December 11, 1992).

In a country like India, where a certain degree of political freedom has been enjoyed by most people and economic freedoms are being guaranteed to a section of its people at the expense of others, the IMF/World Bank will urge reforms which are aimed at reducing the possible disruptive potential of such political freedoms. As such, political freedom will be seen as impediments in the structural reform process rather than as freedoms to be guaranteed. This is the context within which the new Industrial Relations Bill, which was scheduled to come up before the current session of Parliament, may be understood. This is also the context against which the extraordinary call has been given by the FICCI [Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry] to "delink economic reforms from a fragile political system" and augurs ill for the democratic rights of Dalits, working class, women, tribals and other marginalised groups in Indian society. Narasimha Rao's recent call for a moratorium on contentious issues may well be

seen as a symptom of this concern for eliminating impediments. At a time when the true face of corporate criminality of an extraordinary magnitude is being unmasked by the press, the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] and the JPC [Joint Parliamentary Committee], revealing the complicity of political structures at a variety of levels, the FICCI plea can only be interpreted as legitimising certain kinds of political activities while eliminating others.

To the stockbrokers, industrialists and government officials impatiently waiting to resume their activities in the name of reforms, the razing of the Babri Masjid temporarily appears to be something of an embarrassment. This may by no means indicate a permanent disillusionment with the ways of the Hindutva camp. After all, the call for increasing India's integration within the world market and closely aligning it with western needs only appears to be at odds with the simultaneous resurgence of the Hindutva ideal, parochial in the extreme, a virtual denial of globalisation processes. The paradox is only apparent, for the sovereignty that is being lost in economic terms, is being recuperated in cultural terms. Symptomatic of this tension are the activities of the much-courted Non Resident Indian [NRI].

Safely distanced from the actual pragmatics of the Indian political process, the NRI has provided important sustenance, of a material and emotional kind, for the nationalism of the Hindutva kind. This long distance cultural nationalism results from an increasing absorption in the unrestrained consumption characteristic of the west, and for the NRI represents another commodity through the consumption of which she/he may derive some compensation for a lost world. Far from working within a context that is hostile to the concept of a violently conceived Hindutva, the BJP has actually received sustenance from the very processes of liberalisation. Those who therefore have taken courage in the fact that the December 6 events has cost the BJP dearly may be premature in their optimism, for such ground may be recouped, because, rather than in spite of, the process of restructuring that is under way.

Economists Call for 'Horizontal Extension' of Reforms

*BK2001123393 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English
7 Jan 93 p 13*

[Text] New Delhi—A few leading economists have called for horizontal extension of reforms to all sectors of the economy and society.

At a pre-budget discussion with the Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, here on Wednesday, the economists said that to achieve a consensus on reforms, it was essential that sacrifices were spread out equitably among different sections of the society. They pointed out that in the face of resistance by organised groups against cuts in

subsidies and other benefits, the burden of fiscal correction was falling heavily on the social sector and infrastructure. This needed to be corrected. They also called for a time-bound plan to phase out both open and hidden subsidies.

It was suggested that the message of economic reforms should percolate to the level of States and that structural changes needed to be initiated in the area of cooperatives, rent control and urban land ceiling.

The participants in the discussions include: Dr. G. Thimmaiah, Dr. R.K. Sinha, Dr. P.R. Brahmananda, Dr. V.M. Dandekar, Mr. M.R. Shroff, Prof. Mrinal Datta Chaudhary, Prof. Suresh Tendulkar, Dr. Raja J. Chelliah, Mr. S. Guhan. Dr. Isher J. Ahluwalia, Mr. Swaminathan A. Aiyar, Dr. A.M. Khusro, Dr. Sangmitra Das, Prof. Pravin K. Visaria and Dr. Ajit K. Singh.

In his opening remarks, the Finance Minister said that two percent rise in the savings ratio and a two percent fall in the current account deficit would transform the economy. The country had only three or four years to restructure the economy.

He claimed that the reforms programme was already yielding results: the balance of payments (BoP) position had been stabilised, exports were increasing, inflation had come down and industrial production was beginning to recover. But unless the productivity improved, fiscal adjustment could lead to stagflation. Export could increase faster only with rising levels of industrial efficiency. To spread the benefits of growth evenly, agriculture had to be given fresh impetus. This was why structural reforms must be accelerated, he said.

The economists pointed out that international empirical evidence showed that a reduction in the tax rates would lead to better compliance and higher tax yields, thereby underscoring the need for tax reliefs.

They said that farm surpluses should be tapped for equity investment as well as mobilisation of resources. This might be done through an imaginative land holding tax. Policies should be framed to ensure that surplus labour moved out of the farm sector and capital moved in.

The participants also felt that an effective exit policy was a must for the success of reforms. Complete job security and automatic promotion were counter-productive to the objective of employment generation for the whole economy. While safety nets should be devised to minimise hardship to workers, the Industrial Disputes Act should also be amended for introducing an exit policy. Without that, direct foreign investment might not be forthcoming.

Expressing concern over stagnation in exports, they said that unification of exchange rates would encourage overseas sales. Exchange rate and other macroeconomic policies should be used to influence balance of payments.

The economists also stressed the need for maintaining the allocation in real terms for antipoverty programmes and for ensuring that the funds were efficiently spent on the poor.

Daily Notes Irregularities in Garment Exports to U.S.

BK2201112793 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
in English 7 Jan 93 p 10

[By S. Rajagopalan]

[Text] NEW DELHI, Jan. 6—Established garment exporters have lost anything from Rs [Rupees] 10 crore to Rs 40 crore following the US Administration's recent embargo on certain fast-moving categories of Indian garments in the wake of malpractices by some unscrupulous exporters who have made their buck on the strength of forged documents.

Although the embargo has been lifted on Jan. 1 after being in force for two and a half months, the authorised exporters are far from sanguine about salvaging their position. Some of the consignments, held up at the US customs and the Indian ports, can be adjusted against this year's export entitlement, but the quota losses of 1992 cannot be redeemed, they say.

While the genuine exporters holding valid entitlement quotas from the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) have been left high and dry, the black sheep within the exporting community have made their kill in the earlier part of 1992 through unauthorised exports with the help of forged documents that went undetected at the US-end.

By mid October, the US Administration clamped the embargo on the Indian garments on the ground that India had used up the export quota agreed under the bilateral trade agreement. This did not correspond with the export statistics maintained by AEPC, the immediate inference being unauthorised exports through falsification of documents.

An embarrassed AEPC, which has had to dishonour its own export entitlement certificates issued to genuine exporters and ask them to withhold their shipments, has since referred the matter to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). This apart, it has suspended and deregistered some of the exporters found involved in the shady export deals.

The problem of unauthorised exports to the US and slapping of embargo by the latter is not a new phenomenon as such. But the 1992 embargo and its impact on the exporting community has apparently been on a scale not witnessed before. Some of the authorised exporters, jolted by this experience, say that if correctives are not applied speedily the garment export business could be in jeopardy.

The high premium that garments enjoy on the American market goads the Indian exporters to go to all lengths to make a beeline for it. There is a flourishing trade in the quota entitlements issued by the AEPC and exporters vie with one another to buy the quotas at high premium in the hope of striking it rich finally in the US market.

Estimates of the losses suffered by the genuine exporters as a result of the latest embargo vary widely. While trade circles have put the losses at Rs 30 to 40 crore, official sources feel it would not be more than Rs 10 crore. All the same, the official circles concede that the situation warranted serious concern.

Mr. Ashok Chugg and Mr. H.K.L. Magu, chairman and vice-chairman respectively of AEPC, say that situation of the type where the AEPC is unable to honour its own entitlement certificate should not recur. Mr. Magu, estimating the loss at Rs 30-40 crore, said that exporters who bought quotas from the market at a premium stood to lose a great deal.

"It is not as though the genuine and authorised exporters are the only ones to suffer losses. The country's image takes a beating. Because of the embargo, consignments are held up at the US customs and at our exit points. It is difficult to convince the buying houses in the US about our predicament," says Mr. Magu.

Mr. Prakash Dudani, one of the authorised exporters who has lost out in the wake of the embargo, has moved the High Court. "Despite valid quotas from the AEPC, we could not make shipments to execute our orders. Garments worth Rs 1.25 crore are held up here and consignments of the order of Rs 75 lakh are detained at the US customs" he said.

Another exporter, Mr. Sudhir Khanna, said the Indian exporters would be up against the problem of securing the right prices for the delayed delivery. Buyers could very well dictate terms and insist on renegotiated prices that would certainly be much lower. Yet another exporter feared the possibility of auction, which would mean very poor realization.

Mr. K.L. Madan, president of the Garment Exporters Association, has urged the government to compensate the affected exporters by giving them the unshipped quantities as additional entitlement for 1993. But this proposal has not cut ice with the government, which has sought to view the problem as a "business risk."

REVISED PROCEDURES: The AEPC, while acknowledging the shortcomings of its procedures so far, now claims to have introduced "foolproof" measures that will more or less eliminate the problem of unauthorised exports and embargoes in their wake.

According to AEPC's senior director, Mr. D.K. Nair, the new export entitlement certificate will be on security paper with watermarking. Considering that it will be an intricate and expensive process, the AEPC is confident

that falsification of the export documents will be virtually eliminated now. Printing of export certificates on security papers has already been set in motion.

This apart, the AEPC has recently introduced a modified procedure for clearance of shipping documents by Customs. Under this, the AEPC will get photocopies of shipping documents after the exporters file them with the Customs. The AEPC feels this procedure will also help to some extent in detecting unauthorised exports before the shipments are made.

According to Mr Nair, there are 56 exporters currently under deregistration for offences relating to falsification of visas and export certificates, unauthorised exports and so on.

Commentary Foresees Higher Economic Growth in 1993-94

BK0802123993 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 8 Feb 93

[Commentary by Economic Commentator S. Seturaman entitled: "Economic Rejuvenation in India"]

[Text] The economy and the ongoing reforms have again become the focus of attention after the recent spell of violence which rocked parts of India in the wake of the pulling down of a disputed mosque complex at Ayodhya. The political storm, which threatened the stability of the government itself, appears to have blown over. The visits of British prime minister, the Russian president, and a series of economic missions from various countries over the last few weeks have helped to underline international confidence about India. With parliament reassembling on the 22d of February and the budget for the new fiscal year, beginning 1 April, to be presented, the nation is increasingly turning to matters of economy.

After the crisis year of 1991-92 when the economy had to be stabilized with tough fiscal and credit policies, there have been signs of recovery and modest growth in output of goods and services. From a low of 1.6 percent rise in gross domestic product last year, the current year is expected to show a growth of around 4 percent. Notably, the rate of inflation, which had peaked to about 17 percent in 1991, has come down to a range of 7 to 8 percent. Government is confident that the single-digit inflation has come to stay and this should enable a cut in interest rates to stimulate production. Industrial output, which was negligible last year, has risen by 3.8 percent in the first seven months—April to October—of the current fiscal year. Tight demand management measures, including reduction in public expenditure, had affected manufacturing sectors like automobiles and other consumer durables. India expects a record production of food grains at 180 million tons. Agriculture, still the major source of strength to the economy, with near self-sufficiency in food and (?fibers), it will provide a strong base for diversification of exports.

The industrial deregulation, trade liberalization, and new incentives for foreign investment have created a highly favorable environment for future growth. The reforms backed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank cannot, by their nature, produce quick results. The tax and tariff reforms now under way and the liberalization being extended to the financial sector are all aimed at making India increasingly outward oriented after four decades of virtually a closed economy. Exports have become crucial for managing the balance of payments and in the current year, exports rose by a modest 6 percent despite the sharp decline in exports to the former Soviet Union under the rupee trading arrangements. With liberalization of import controls, the trade deficit has grown to over \$3 billion in the period April to last November. The global economy has been in recession and prospects of growth in 1993 are also not rated high. However, with the downtrend incentives likely to be available, exports in 1993-94 should be higher. Much would also depend on the successful outcome of the current global trade negotiations, the Uruguay round which has been deadlocked on counter trade disputes between the United States and the European Community. India has concluded an agreement with the European Community which establishes the principle of partnership and should facilitate enhanced access to the single market in Europe. India is also turning to East and plans to intensify trade exchanges with countries of East and Southeast Asia.

Over the last year, India attracted over \$1 billion of foreign investment as a result of the new economic policy. Important areas such as power generation and distribution and oil exploration and production have been opened up for 100 percent foreign equity participation. As the prime minister noted, recent disturbances caused a temporary setback on the economic front, but the reforms on which the country has embarked are irreversible. The forthcoming budget is expected to provide the stimulus for savings and investments to set the economy on a higher growth path in 1993-94.

Improvements in Airline Industry Recommended

93AS0506K Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English 26 Jan 93 p 10

[Editorial: "Deal in the Air"]

[Text] If all that the agitating pilots of the Indian Airlines (IA) wanted as a precondition to end their strike was a ministerial assurance to look into their genuine demands, they should not have waited this long, thereby causing enormous losses to the airline and agonising inconvenience to the travelling public. Nothing that has been made public suggests that the Indian Commercial Pilots Association (ICPA), which spearheaded the irresponsible strike, could extract anything more than what the management was willing to concede from the beginning. Its sudden volte-face is perhaps attributable to its having greater faith in the new incumbent in the Civil Aviation Ministry, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, than in his

predecessor who had, and quite rightly, thrown his full weight behind the IA management, thereby precluding ministerial intervention to end the strike. While, Mr. Madhavrao Scindia had not covered himself with glory during his short stint as the Civil Aviation Minister, his belated readiness to give a free hand to the IA management to deal with an avaricious class of workers was commendable. One hopes that his successor has not diluted this decision in his enthusiasm to break the ice at any cost. In fact, had Mr. Scindia shown a similar respect for managerial autonomy a year ago, normalcy in the IA's operations could have been achieved much earlier and at a lesser cost.

Now that the confrontation has ended, a settlement comprehensive enough to be lasting must follow. Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad has much more to do than merely getting the pilots to work. The mess he has inherited will require more than cursory ministerial interest to clean up. While the day running of the IA and Air India (AI), is the task of their managements, the ministry must concern itself with the broader policy issues. Civil aviation the world over is on the threshold of a new era. To enable the IA and AI to keep pace with time, the present situation, where there is little co-ordination between the IA and AI, and also among the various organisations connected with civil aviation, must end. With the operations and functioning of the two airlines overlapping increasingly, there is an urgent need for joint planning in such areas as fleet expansion, engineering and maintenance, selection and training of operational crew and so on. Big international airlines are looking for such co-operation across their national boundaries to contain runaway operational costs.

As the first step towards ensuring such co-operation and co-ordination, the ministry must replace the two separate boards for the two airlines by a common one and put in it people who know their business and are not merely close to the seat of power. Also, there is a need to revamp the ground infrastructure which is pathetically poor and inhibits optimum utilisation of aircraft. No less importantly, air-taxi operators must be told to bring fuel-efficient aircraft and adhere to safety rules.

Paper on Improved Performance of Coal Sector
BK1002101393 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English
27 Jan 93 p 8

[Editorial: "Recovery Of Sorts"]

[Text] For the second time in a row, the nationalised coal sector seems poised to end up in the black. The current year's profit is estimated to be around Rs.[rupees] 250

crore against Rs.167 crore last year. Given Coal India Limited's [CIL] accumulated loss of Rs. 2,500 crore, the annual turnover of Rs.8,000 crore and the massive investment, the enhanced profit this year is no doubt nothing much to write home about. Even so, the fact that a perpetual laggard is shaping up is encouraging. More significantly, it underscores the fact that things in the nationalised coal sector have not been as messy as has been made out and can improve further with some managerial determination backed by ministerial support. In fact, this is the one lesson the CIL management and the department of coal ought to draw from the performance in the last couple of years. Clearly, the price hike granted in December, 1991, was a major contributory factor to the turn-around in the CIL's financial fortunes. But rather than depending wholly on it, the management also seems to have done some tightening of expenditure, besides putting pressure on workers and mine managers to perform better. The combination of all these factors has put CIL on the recovery road.

Evidently, this is just the beginning of a long, arduous march to assured efficiency and profitability. A closer look at the performance of the individual coal-producing companies reveals some disturbing trends. To begin with, the two major producing companies—Bharat Coking Coal Ltd, and Eastern Coalfields Ltd—account for a combined loss estimated at Rs.700 crore in the current year. Ostensibly, the enhanced net profit has been made possible by flogging the better-run companies. Even in the case of the latter, the easier mining possibilities have been a major factor contributing to better performance. With productivity remaining at a low 1.47 oms (output per manshift) the claims to efficient performance seem suspect.

Of greater concern is the fact that despite massive investment in men and machinery, production from underground mines has been stagnating at around 80 million tonnes. Also, it is ironic that while the producing companies have been complaining of mounting pithead stocks, the supply position is critical in many areas. It is disingenuous to plan for higher production in areas which lack in infrastructure to transport coal to consumption centres. The benefits of higher production can be reaped only if matching movement facilities are made available. For the moment, there is a discernible mismatch between the two resulting in serious production-distribution distortions. No less importantly, in their eagerness to produce more, coal managers have been giving lower priority to quality much to the disadvantage of the consumers. All this underlines the need for a new marketing strategy. That the CIL has not had a director (marketing) for the last several years bespeaks of the importance it attaches to this crucial area.

Necessity to Restructure Defense Ministry Underlined

*BK2701034793 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English
21 Jan 93 p 9*

[By Pravin Sawhney: "Only perestroika can lend sting to our defence"]

[Text] Unless a restructuring of the Defence Ministry is undertaken as suggested by the unpublished Arun Singh Committee report on defence expenditure, self-reliance through modernisation perspective planning and indigenisation with foreign collaboration, is likely to remain a cosmetic exercise devoid of cost-effectiveness, according to authoritative sources.

The matter assumes significance in the new world order, where India's traditional ally Soviet Union does not exist and defence product support has recently been extended by Russia, Ukraine, Britain and France.

Unfortunately, the vast defence industrial base (comprising of 39 ordnance factories and 8 major public sector units) has not been geared to fully exploit the foreign defence collaboration, as emphasis has been to purchase new equipment and critical spares on easy terms from the former Soviet Union.

At best, the neglected defence research and development (R&D) has catered for low-level technology evolution, with the ISRO [Indian Space Research Organization] and missile programmes being aberrations.

The Arun Singh report submitted to the Government in December 1991 is understood to have recommended the creation of a Vice-Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS). The nearly defunct Defence Planning Staff (DPS) tasked with perspective planning for the three services has been suggested to be merged with the VCDS, which then directly reports to the Defence Minister on all existing and futuristic services operational requirements.

The VCDS secretariat consisting of officers from all three services, has been recommended by the senior most services vice chief, to be in office till the age of 60. This will provide minimum three year term, necessary for continuity in perspective planning, to VCDS (at present vice-chiefs retire at 58 years age).

By working in close coordination with the chairman Chiefs Of Staff Committee (COSC), VCDS will also be able to effectively tackle inter-services problems and duplication of assets.

With modernisation priorities and perspective planning taken care of by professionals in the VCDS, the report has further recommended integration of civil, military and financial officers, scientists and procurement executives into the ministry, each working in respective spheres and none having superior functional status.

With a decentralisation necessary for fast and timely action (which alone can result in cost-effective utilisation of declining defence budgets) so achieved, the role of the defence secretary automatically gets restricted. Like in the case of Britain, the defence secretary then is responsible only for defence organisation subjects. These are financial advice, parliamentary questions, administration of defence civilians, public relations, resettlement of ex-servicemen and national cadet corps.

Sources opine that if the recommendations are favourably considered by the CCPA [Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs], at least, four benefits accrue. First, leave aside the neglected services modernisation, fast and firm action on major existing operational deficiencies can be initiated.

For instance, even when functioning on 80 percent preparedness, the army alone is deficient of over Rs [Rupees] 13,000 crore worth of combat equipment. Housing (works) deficiencies are over Rs 8,000 crore. Most alarming are major critical shortages in certain categories of ammunition.

"The war wastage reserves are much less than should be maintained," observed a senior officer.

Since 1988 no worthwhile services modernisation has taken place. For the army, money for buying indigenous combat equipment has substantially reduced over the years and upgradations have largely remained cosmetic. For instance, while T-72 tank factory at Avadi has a capacity to produce nearly 240 tanks annually, army does not have finances to procure more than 40 tanks each year. The upgradations of BMP-I (armoured personnel carriers) to BMP-II are way behind schedule.

There are urgent requirements of certain electronic warfare and command, control and communications equipment and upgradation of existing radars in the three services. And the pending case since 1986 for an immediate advanced jet trainer for the air force requires little elaboration.

"The problem is that under the existing ministry dispensation, bureaucrats determine operational requirements," observed a senior officer.

Second, VCDS armed with financial powers, a stable organisation and direct access to the Defence Minister, can contribute to towards perspective plan 4.

One reason why the existing DPS is nearly defunct is that the services are aware that DPS has little authority to push matters, and so are hardly enthusiastic for whole-hearted cooperation. "What is happening instead is that individual services depending on their clout with the ministry are seeking equipment priorities in ad-hoc fashion," opine sources.

Third, at a time when the Government, has sought foreign defence product support, the existing organisation of the country's defence industrial base is hardly geared to take up the challenge. Speaking at a recent

seminar, defence secretary N.N.Vohra admitted the Government's inability for taking firm decisions, prevalent secrecy syndrome, compartmentalised services and technological potentials as reasons for tardy interaction between the ministry and industry.

A greater interaction between ministry and industry alone can provide requisite and timely infrastructure to absorb the foreign defence support.

A cue may be taken from Pakistan, which in 1991 created a separate ministry of defence production staffed with services professionals, scientists, administrators and industrialists.

Recently, the Pakistan Government has even offered 90 percent loans to private sector to provide defence support. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that Pakistan has

been able to export small arms and artillery ammunition in sizeable quantities, compared to India with a measly 1992 defence exports of Rs 102 crore, comprising of largely non-lethal items.

And importantly, research and development (R&D), which is closely connected with perspective planning, suffers in the absence of the latter. Even at a time of declining budgets and cuts in forces levels, the world over, R&D budgets have shown an upward trend.

In India, for the 1992-93 defence budget of Rs 17,500 crore R&D allocation was Rs 646.29 crore, a mere 5 percent. This itself is a reflection that even the "evolution" process for defence self-reliance followed in developing countries, in contrast to "revolution" process sought by the developed world by pumping in massive funds into R&D, is yet to assume priority in the country.

Eminent Scientist Denounces Patenting Life-Forms

93AS0506M Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
26 Jan 93 p 15

[Article by M. A. Deviah: "Patenting Life Forms Will Be Anti-Science: Swaminathan"]

[Text] Bangalore—The patenting of seeds and other life forms, as proposed by the Dunkel Draft, will work against science and retard progress in agriculture according to eminent agricultural scientist Dr. M. S. Swaminathan.

"So far it has been easy for scientists to exchange plant genetic material, which accounted for the big progress made in agriculture since World War II. If patenting laws come in, this will not continue. There will be secrecy, there will be conflicts, there will be litigation," he told INDIAN EXPRESS.

Dr. Swaminathan, who is often referred to as the father of India's Green Revolution, felt that seed patenting would create a scenario that would be very anti-science. "If more and more natural resources go for private profit rather than public good, it will create a new unhealthy situation," he said.

Referring to various farmers' groups' opposition to seed patenting, he said what the Government needed to do was to clearly enunciate its policy about the issue, and the sooner the better. "Because the government has not yet announced a policy, the farmers' fears may be justified," he said. It was all right to ensure the plant breeder's rights, but under no circumstances should the farmer's right to re-plant the seeds he has harvested be compromised. Similarly, scientists and researchers should be allowed unrestricted access to any plant material they needed for research and breeding programmes.

However, on the other hand, the signing of the bio-diversity convention at Rio, which the U.S. refused to be a party to, had created a situation where we now claimed that genetic material was the sovereign property of the nation. "I hope the Government will look carefully into the operational implications of saying bio-diversity is our national heritage and our sovereign national property. Where do you allow others to come in?" he asked. "We should not do anything that will make it difficult for us to get material from abroad."

Dr. Swaminathan pointed out that most crops now grown in this country are not of Indian origin. "Agriculture has never respected political boundaries. Wheat and barley came from the Middle East, jowar and bajra came from Africa, maize from Latin America, potato from Peru and Bolivia, coffee came from Ethiopia, rubber

from South America. So, ostrich-like, we cannot say that we are the ones having all the genetic material, and that others are trying to take it away. We are as much beneficiaries of exchange as anybody else," he said.

Many crucial genes that were responsible for the new varieties that brought about the green revolution also came from abroad, he said. The cytoplasmic male sterile and dwarfing genes for rice came from China while the dwarfing gene for wheat came from Japan. The basic wheat genetic material was an American variety that was supplied to India by Dr. Norman Borlaug who was growing it in Mexico. "Significant developments of recent agricultural history has come by sharing genetic resources. If we clog this avenue, it may not be to the advantage of our own agriculture," he said.

However, the clause in the Dunkel Draft seeking to remove the farmer's right to plant back his own seed would be opposed by the American farmers themselves, Dr. Swaminathan felt. In any case, even if plant back rights were taken away, he wondered how it could ever be implemented in India with its huge farming population of 100 million families.

One aspect of the Dunkel Draft that would prove beneficial to India however would be the removal of all subsidies to the farm sector. If this was done, India would have a tremendous comparative advantage in seed production because of its easy availability of skilled labour at lower costs and the bright weather which facilitated year-round agriculture. It was because of this that the labour-intensive tissue culture industry was booming so rapidly in India. Thanks to the Indian farmer's dexterity at hand pollination, this country was the first in the world to have hybrid cotton. Indian seed companies were now producing seeds for several foreign countries.

Mr. Swaminathan said differences on the implementation of the Dunkel Draft ought to be settled peacefully, not by attacking the offices of foreign seed companies as had happened last month in Bangalore. If foreign seed companies did not feel safe here, they would just pack up and go to other countries like China which had created 100 million jobs in the last ten years through "rural enterprises," such as seed production, in collaboration with foreign companies. "We too should learn from them, take benefits from external expertise," he said.

At the same time, it was for the Indian Government to take note of the farmers' apprehensions and announce very clearly what it intended to do. "Anything that went against the food and livelihood security of the farmers must be discarded. Our commitment must be jobs for Indians. The farmer's right to plant back must be assured, the researcher's exemption must be assured. There should not be restrictions to scientific study, especially on food crops," he said.

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