

Afghan Mercenaries along the Line of Control

3577. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan has started losing its grip on the local Kashmiri population in fomenting insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) if so, whether Pakistan has attempted to replace that influence by locating Afghan and other foreign mercenaries along the Line of Control (LoC); and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) Pakistan is relying in ever greater measure on foreign terrorists in its pursuit of cross border terrorism in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Bulk of the foreign militants infiltrating into Jammu & Kashmir, at present, are of Pakistani origin. There are also a few Afghan and Arab nationals. Since the military coup in October 1999, Pakistan has been enhancing its State sponsorship of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in India.

Cross Border Terrorism

3578. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that India is a major victim of the cross border terrorism;

(b) have any study been made in the past in this regard and any action taken on that basis; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government on international front to curb this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) Yes Sir. Government are very much aware of the fact that India is a major victim of cross border terrorism for the past two decades. Tackling the phenomena of cross border terrorism is a major priority of Government of India and all ways and means are being explored including on the international arena where India has been at the forefront in shaping international consensus on the need to eliminate terrorism. As part of this initiative, India has tabled a draft Comprehensive Convention on

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RAJYA SABHA

International Terrorism, discussions on which, as the 54th UN General Assembly has decided, will commence in September 2000.

At the bilateral level also, discussions on the need to tackle and eliminate terrorism forms an important part of agenda for deliberations with key countries.

Regional Initiatives to Tackle Terrorism

3579. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned ""Regional initiative needed to tackle terrorism" which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated 26th January, 2000;

(b) whether a view was expressed that the forces fired by the ideologies of extremism/fanaticism and equipped with more lethal power are needed to be tackled urgently; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to tackle the growing menace of terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Government have seen the report appearing in the Hindustan Times dated 26th January, 2000.

(b) Pakistan and the Taliban controlled areas of Afghanistan are witnessing the spread of obscurantist ideologies, the expansion of narcotics trade and above all the pursuit of terrorism as State policy.

(c) Government remain firm in their resolve to take all necessary measures to preserve the security and territorial integrity of the country. Government have effectively and appropriately, also brought to the attention of the international community, Pakistan's support to cross-border terrorism and attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of India. Facts regarding Pakistan's State sponsorship of terrorism have been brought before several international fora and raised at high-level bilateral discussions with world leaders.

South African High Commissioner on Match-Fixing Scandal

3580. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the South African High Commissioner was recently called in