

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SUPPORTERS OF S.S. MANN
BEATEN UP IN TARN TARAN

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 8, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, on December 3, supporters of the former member of India's Parliament, Simranjit Singh Mann, were beaten up in the town of Tarn Taran in Punjab, which Mr. Mann used to represent in parliament.

Mr. Mann was burned in effigy. He has blamed former Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal for the incident. Badal's party is aligned with the Bharatiya Janata Party, BJP, the former ruling party, which is under the umbrella of the fascist, Hindu militant Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, RSS.

The Hindu extremists attacked Mr. Mann's supporters and Mann's supporters were the ones who got arrested.

Tarn Taran is a central place in Sikhism, built by the fifth of the Sikh gurus, Guru Arjun Dev, and there is a historic Gurdwara—Sikh place of worship—in the town. The fact that supporters of the RSS are able to beat Sikhs in Tarn Taran is distressing. It shows the need for Sikh independence in a sovereign Khalistan.

According to SS News online, at least six people were injured in the clash, which broke out after one of Mann's supporters wrote an article critical of Shiv Sena, one of the militant branches of the RSS.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, president of the Council of Khalistan, has issued an excellent press release on the incident. He notes that a free, sovereign Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987, would help put an end to incidents like this. As long as Sikhs are under Indian subjugation, the RSS and its allies are going to be able to run roughshod over Sikhs and other minorities. Remember that last year, 35 Sikhs were arrested simply for making pro-Khalistan speeches and raising the Khalistani flag. Since when are making speeches and raising a flag crimes in a democracy?

India has killed more than a quarter of a million Sikhs, over 90,000 Kashmiri Muslims, 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims in Gujarat, over 300,000 Christians in Nagaland and tens of thousands of other minorities such as Assamese, Bodos, Dalits, Manipuris, Tamils, and others. If India is the democracy that it claims to be, how can it do such things?

America is the beacon of freedom, Mr. Speaker. That is why we need to act. Incidents like this must not be allowed to continue. We should stop our aid to India and end our trade with that country until human rights are respected for all people there. And we should put the Congress on record in support of a free and fair plebiscite on independence in Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagalim, and wherever else it is sought. That is the best way to help

bring freedom, security, safety, dignity, and prosperity to all the people of South Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to put the Council of Khalistan's press release on the beating of Mann supporters in the RECORD at this time.

WASHINGTON, DC, Dec. 7, 2006.—Supporters of former Member of Parliament Simranjit Singh Mann were beaten up in Tarn Taran by members of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Mr. Mann's effigy was burned. Mann has publicly blamed former Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal, who is allied with the BJP, a branch of the fascist Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), for the beating. Mann was elected to represent Tarn Taran in the Indian Parliament with 95 percent of the vote while he was in jail in 1989.

Tarn Taran is the center of the Sikh religion. Guru Arjun Dev Ji, the fifth Sikh Guru, established Tarn Taran and there is a historic Gurdwara there. Captain Amarinder Singh, the chief minister of Punjab, is establishing a Guru Arjun Dev Ji University there.

"It is outrageous that supporters of Mann could be beaten up and his effigy burned in a place so central for the Sikh Nation as Tarn Taran," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. "We hope that Badal is not behind the incident," said Dr. Aulakh. "If he is, shame on him. Ultimately, the Indian government is behind this act and both Badal and Mann are under the control of the Indian government, as their letters published in Chakravayuh: Web of Indian Secularism demonstrate," said Dr. Aulakh. In one letter, Mann pledges, "I reiterate my allegiance to the Constitution and I stand by the integrity of the country." On his trip to the United States in 2000, Mann attended a Sikh event and said, "Close the offices of the Council of Khalistan, headed by Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh in Washington DC."

"If the BJP can carry out its nefarious activities in a place as central to the Sikh Nation as Tarn Taran, then the handwriting is on the wall for the future of the Sikh Nation. They cannot protect their respect and honor and they are slaves in India. This shows why we must liberate Khalistan from Indian occupation and oppression," said Dr. Aulakh. "That is the only way for Sikhs to protect ourselves from India's brutality."

After human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra exposed the Indian government's policy of mass cremation of Sikhs, in which over 50,000 Sikhs have been arrested, tortured, and murdered, then their bodies were declared unidentified and secretly cremated, the police kidnapped him. Khalra was murdered in police custody. No one has been brought to justice for the kidnapping and murder of Jaswant Singh Khalra. Rajiv Singh Randhawa, who was the only witness to the Khalra kidnapping, has been repeatedly subjected to police harassment. This includes being arrested for trying to hand a piece of paper to then-British Home Secretary Jack Straw in front of the Golden Temple. The police never released the body of former Jathedar of the Akal Takht Gurdev Singh Kaunke after SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna murdered him.

In 1994, the U.S. State Department reported that the Indian government had paid over 41,000 cash bounties for killing Sikhs. A report by the Movement Against State Re-

pression (MASR) quotes the Punjab Civil Magistracy as writing "if we add up the figures of the last few years the number of innocent persons killed would run into lakhs [hundreds of thousands.]" The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide."

The MASR report states that 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial, mostly under a repressive law known as the "Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act" (TADA), which expired in 1995. Many have been in illegal custody since 1984! There has been no list published of those who were acquitted under TADA and those who are still rotting in Indian jails. Tens of thousands of other minorities are also being held as political prisoners, according to Amnesty International. Last year, 35 Sikhs were charged and arrested in Punjab for making speeches in support of Khalistan and raising the Khalistani flag. "How can making speeches and raising a flag be considered crimes in a democratic society?" asked Dr. Aulakh.

India is on the verge of disintegration. Kashmir is about to separate from India. As L.K. Advani said, "if Kashmir goes, India goes." History shows that multinational states such as India are doomed to failure. "Countries like Austria-Hungary, India's longtime friend the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others prove this point. India is not one country; it is a polyglot like those countries, thrown together for the convenience of the British colonialists. It is doomed to break up as they did. There is nothing in common in the culture of a Hindu living in Bengal and one in Tamil Nadu, let alone between them and the minority nations of South Asia," Dr. Aulakh said.

"Freedom is the God-given right of every nation and every human being," said Dr. Aulakh. Sikhs must be allowed to have a free and fair plebiscite on the issue of Khalistan. In a democracy, you cannot continue to rule against the wishes of the people. As former Senator George Mitchell said about the Palestinians, "the essence of democracy is the right to self-determination." We must reclaim the sovereignty of the Sikh Nation," Dr. Aulakh said. "Currently, there are 17 freedom movements within India's borders. It has 18 official languages. A country having 18 official languages cannot hold its people together for very long," he said. "We hope that India's breakup will be peaceful like Czechoslovakia's, not violent like Yugoslavia's," Dr. Aulakh said. "Earlier this year, Montenegro, which has less than a million people, became a sovereign country and a member of the United Nations," he said. "Now it is the time for the Sikh Nation of Punjab, Khalistan to become independent."

Dr. Aulakh stressed his commitment to the peaceful, democratic, nonviolent struggle to liberate Khalistan. "The only way that the repression will stop and Sikhs will live in freedom, dignity, and prosperity is to liberate Khalistan," said Dr. Aulakh. "As Professor Darshan Singh, former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, said, 'If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh,'" Dr. Aulakh said. "We must free Khalistan now."

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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