

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

NEW REPORT PROVES CHARGES AGAINST AMERICAN HELD IN INDIA ARE FALSE

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 29, 1996

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, a report issued earlier this month by the Human Rights Wing—Shiromani Akali Dal—proves that the charges filed against Balbir Singh Dhillon are false. Mr. Dhillon is the 43-year-old American citizen who was arrested about a month ago while visiting Sikh temples and his family village in Punjab, Khalistan. I am inserting a copy of the Human Rights Wing report into the RECORD.

In the report, the Human Rights Wing states:

The HRW investigation team is satisfied that Balbir Singh is innocent and all charges against him should be dropped immediately. He should be allowed to return to his country. The HRW is satisfied that the Punjab Police wants to keep the spectre of Sikh militancy alive so that it can continue to enjoy the extraconstitutional powers vested with it.

According to the report, a police party led by the local chief visited Mr. Dhillon's native village of Salala on May 17 and inquired about Balbir Singh Dhillon. He had recently returned from a visit to Gudwaras in Pakistan. On May 18 Mr. Dhillon went to the police station with his father and the local MLA, state legislator, and the police chief told him that there were no charges against him and he should go home. The chief also denied having visited Salala. On May 20 Mr. Dhillon was arrested and charged with carrying RDX explosives and plotting to kill Sikh political leaders. He was forced to sign blank papers. He was not allowed to talk to his family.

The political leaders Mr. Dhillon was charged with plotting to assassinate are affiliated with the Akali Dal, the largest Sikh political party. The Human Rights Wing is also affiliated with the Akali Dal. The Human Rights Wing is also the organization of Jaswat Singh Khalra, who was kidnapped by the Punjab police on September 6. His whereabouts remain unknown.

These actions prove that even under the new regime, India is not the democracy that it claims to be, but an authoritarian police state described by Indian Journalist Rajinder Puri of the Times of India as "a rotten, corrupt, repressive, and anti-people system." The recent report from India's Central Bureau of Investigation confirming the mass cremations of Sikh in Punjab, Khalistan supports this also. This policy was described by the Indian Supreme Court as worse than a genocide.

The United States cannot allow this to happen to an American citizen. I call upon Secretary of State Christopher and Ambassador Frank Wisner to intervene with the Indian regime to see to it that Mr. Dhillon is released immediately. If India is not willing to release

him, then we should impose tough sanctions on this tyrannical regime. America cannot stand idly by while an American citizen has his rights violated on the basis of trumped-up accusations. We must do everything to secure freedom for this American citizen as soon as possible so that Balbir Singh Dhillon can return to his wife and children.

ARREST OF BALBIR SINGH DHILLON

The Panjab Police issued a press release to the newspapers on 22nd May, 1996, about the arrest of Mr. Balbir Singh Dhillon. Mr. Dinkar Gupta SSP Jalandhar, claimed that Mr. Balbir Singh a U.S. Citizen, who was visiting India, was apprehended at a Police 'Naka' near his native village Salala, on the outskirts of Jalandhar. Mr. Balbir Singh was allegedly carrying one kilo of black RDX in his car. Family sources and friends of Mr. Balbir Singh refuted the police version, and approached the Human Rights Wing to investigate the matter. A 3 member team of the Human Rights Wing consisting of Mr. Harshinder Singh (Advocate), Mr. Amrik Singh and Mr. Jaspal Singh, visited Jalandhar, and apart from Mr. Balbir Singh, also met, other persons concerned with this case. The report is as follows:

Mr. Balbir Singh Dhillon, aged 44 years, married, father of two, immigrated to the U.S.A. in 1980. Mr. Dhillon is engineer by profession. He is an active member of youth of America, and is the treasurer of the organization. Youth of America is one of the representative organisation of the Sikhs in the U.S.A. It is a democratic and peaceful organisation, advocates the creation of Khalistan, and every year organises rallies and demonstrations before the Indian Embassy and U.N. Headquarters during the operation "Blue Star" week and visits by Indian dignitaries.

Mr. Balbir Singh and his father Mr. Dilbagh Singh arrived in India on the 4th of April '96, to visit their relatives, friends and their native village. On 8th April, '96, Mr. Balbir Singh joined the Sikh pilgrims going to Pakistan to visit the historical gurudwaras on the occasion of Baisakhi. The "Jatha" of pilgrims returned to India on the 18th April, '96.

On 22nd April, '96 Balbir Singh went off to visit other historical gurudwaras in India, Nanded (Maharashtra) and in U.P. etc., he also used this opportunity to visit tourist sites. Mr. Balbir Singh returned home on the 16th May, '96.

On 17th May, '96 a police party headed by DSP Rajinder Singh (Jalandhar) and SHO Bhogpur visited village Salala and made enquiries about Mr. Balbir Singh from the villagers. On learning about these enquiries being made Mr. Balbir Singh, his father Mr. Dilbagh Singh accompanied by Mr. Amarjeet Singh Samra, MLA (Nakodar) went to DSP Rajinder Singh's Office on 18th May, '96. D.S.P. Rajinder Singh told them that there was nothing against Mr. Balbir Singh and he should not worry at all and should go home, however to be doubly sure he would check with the department and Mr. Balbir Singh should check with him, again, the next day. The D.S.P. completely denied having visited Salala village and making any enquiries. On 19th May, '96 about 5:30 p.m. Mr. Balbir Singh drove down to the DSP's office in his car to meet the D.S.P. He was asked to wait outside, Mr. Balbir Singh sat in his car. At

about 7:30 p.m. the D.S.P. came out and asked Mr. Balbir Singh to accompany him. They drove down to the SSP Mr. Dinkar Gupta's office in the police jeep. While Mr. Balbir Singh was made to wait outside, DSP Rajinder Singh met with the SSP for half an hour. Emerging from the SSP's office DSP Rajinder Singh asked Mr. Balbir Singh to come with him. They drove down to the Sadar Police Station within the city where Mr. Balbir Singh was told that he was being arrested. He was not informed of the charges against him. The time was about 9:00 p.m. Mr. Balbir Singh managed to have a telephone message sent to advocate Hardayal Singh, a relative, at village Garha. At about 11:00 p.m. advocate Hardayal Singh and Mr. Puran Singh came to the Sadar Police Station and met Balbir Singh. They left after assuring them that they would return in the morning. They were back at 6:00 a.m. on 20th May, '96 and arranged for some tea etc. for Balbir Singh, as no senior officers would be available at this early hour they left promising to come back around 9:00 a.m., they were informed that Balbir Singh had been shifted to the C.I.A. staff office for interrogation.

At the C.I.A. staff he was interrogated by D.S.F. Rajinder Singh and several other officers whom he was unable to identify. He was asked to provide information about any militants he knew, or help in recovering arms and also about the motive of his visit to Pakistan. Balbir Singh denied any contact or knowledge about militants. He also told them that if he had any covert intentions for visiting Pakistan he would not have gone so openly nor returned to India. During his interrogation Balbir Singh was man handled and beaten. He was forced to make a written statement that he was allowed to return home on the 19th May, '96 night after being questioned. He was also forced to append his signature on some blank papers by DSP Rajinder Singh. He was then handed over to the Adampur Police Station, and charged with carrying one kilo of black RDX in his car, and booked under section 3/4 official secret Act 1923. (Provide information of defense and other vital information to Pakistan) 4/5 Explosives Act (RDX) 25/54/59 Arm Act and 120-B I.P.C.

While in Jalandhar, Balbir Singh met Bhai Jasbir Singh Rode former Jathedar of the Akal Thakt, and handed over some clothes sent by his relatives in the USA. Bhai Jasbir Singh Rode told the HRW team that the Jalandhar Police questioned him about his meeting with Balbir Singh. Bhai Jasbir Singh admitted that Balbir Singh had come to meet him but do not know him from before. Balbir Singh has also asked Bhai Jasbir Singh to introduce and arrange meetings with Bhai Manjit Singh and Mr. Simranjeet Singh Mann. He told Balbir Singh that it would not be possible to meet these leaders as they were busy with the Lok Sabha election results just out.

From the time of his interrogation at the C.I.A. staff till his production before the duty magistrate at Jalandhar on 21st May, '96, Balbir Singh was not allowed to meet any relative or lawyer, nor informed about the reasons of his arrest or charges leveled against him. The magistrate remanded Balbir Singh to Police Custody till May 22nd '96. On 22nd May '96 when he was again produced in court Balbir Singh was able to meet his father and relatives. The police remand

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

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

was extended 'til 26th May '96. On 26th May 96 Balbir Singh was sent to Jalandhar jail under judicial custody. A UNI date lined story from Jalandhar of 25th May 96, quoting police interrogation reports that Balbir Singh was part of a larger militant conspiracy to indulge in disruptive activity and also to eliminate moderate Akali leaders.

The HRW investigation team is satisfied that Balbir Singh is innocent and all charges against him be dropped immediately. He should be allowed to return to his country.

The HRW is satisfied that the Panjab Police wants to keep the spectre of Sikh militancy alive so that it can continue to enjoy the extra constitutional powers vested with it.

The Police force also would like the community to stay divided, and so. The continuous uncovering of plots, of militants out to assassinate Akali Leaders. For a rallying together of all sections of Sikhs is seen as a development that would culminate in a drastic reduction of extra constitutional powers.

HARSHINDER SINGH
Advocate
AMRIK SINGH
Vice Chairman
J.S. DHILLON
Chairman

HONORING JACK BRAS

HON. BILL BAKER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 29, 1996

Mr. BAKER of California. Mr. President, in an age in which heroism and human dignity sometimes seem like notions from a bygone era, we need to be reminded of what personal character and long-term commitment mean. It is the men and women who each day obey the law, work hard, raise children, and contribute to their communities who are the true heroes of American life.

Jack Bras is such a person. Born in 1929 in Okemah, OK, young Jimmie Jack Bras moved with his family to California at the age of 7 and went on to graduate from the University of California at Berkeley in 1952 with a degree in architecture. He served his country in the Army and then married his wife, Flo, in 1959.

In 1964, he opened his own architectural firm in Pleasanton, CA, in the heart of the San Francisco region's east bay area. Since then, he has planned and remodeled literally scores of facilities, from banks and firestations to professional buildings and private homes. One cannot travel around the east bay without seeing the outstanding architecture of Jack Bras.

In addition, Jack has been active in a wide range of civic activities, including the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce, the Valley Memorial Hospital Board, and the United Way. In many of these positions, he has served as chairman, president, or board member. And he has always served with the public interest in mind.

Jack and Flo have raised their family and conducted their business in a way that has brought credit not just to them, but to the greatest east bay community. As Jack prepares to retire as he nears his 67th birthday, I wanted to take this opportunity to recognize him in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Unsung heroes deserve their own songs, and today I am proud to join in the chorus of my constituents who are celebrating Jack's life and friend-

ship. I wish Jack and Flo every good thing in all the days ahead, and am pleased to salute them for all they have done to make the east bay the wonderful place it is.

INDIA CONFIRMS MASS CREMATIONS OF SIKHS

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 29, 1996

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, once again India's genocide against the Sikhs has been exposed. Just Monday, July 22, India's Central Bureau of Investigation [CBI] told the Supreme Court that it had confirmed that "bodies tagged as 'unidentified' by Punjab Police had been disposed of surreptitiously during 1990-95," according to the India Express of July 23.

The CBI told the court that it had prima facie evidence of almost 1,000 cremations by the police, and its investigation is ongoing. However, police officials are making it very difficult for the CBI to get information. The court said that if this behavior continues, it will constitute contempt of court. According to human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalsa, who first exposed the mass cremations, over 25,000 young Sikh men have disappeared and subsequently been cremated by the police.

Mr. Speaker, these are very significant admissions by the Indian regime. An agency of the Indian Government is admitting that the police were involved in the murder of Mr. Khalsa, that the mass cremation scheme is ongoing, and that police officials are trying to cover up these atrocities by burying the information. The justices of the Supreme Court labeled these acts "worse than a genocide." They said that "we shudder to think that such a thing could happen in a democracy."

These events prove not only that India is a long way from being a real democracy, but that it could even be branded an authoritarian police state which commits acts of genocide against the diverse peoples living under its rule. Is it any wonder that so many of them are struggling to free themselves from this brutal regime? I urge my colleagues to consider carefully whether this is the kind of country we should be propping up with hard-earned dollars of the American taxpayers.

I thank Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, president of the Council of Khalistan, for bringing this report to my attention. As you know, Dr. Aulakh and his organization have worked for several years to secure freedom for Khalistan, the Sikh homeland which declared its independence on October 7, 1987. The case of the cremations, as well as the beating of a Sikh leader in the Delhi airport, and the continuing detention of an American citizen on what have now been proven to be false charges, show why this struggle is vital to the survival of Sikhs and others in the South Asian subcontinent. The Council of Khalistan has issued a press release on this story, and I would like to place this in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. It is time to end the oppression in India.

[From the Indian Express, July 23, 1996]

COPS CREMATED 1,000 AS UNIDENTIFIED

NEW DELHI, July 22.—The Supreme Court was today told by the CBI that it had found enough material and evidence to show that

as many as 1,000 bodies tagged as "unidentified" by the Punjab Police had been disposed of surreptitiously during 1990-95.

A 74-page preliminary report submitted by the CBI to a division bench comprising Justice Kuldip Singh and Justice Saghir Ahmed has stated that on the basis of the material collected during the probe ordered by the court, it had prima facie found that a total of 984 bodies had been cremated by the police on the ground that they were "laawaris" (unidentified).

Expressing their "horror and shock" at the finding the judges in a brief order directed the CBI to continue its inquiry into the matter and issue a general direction to the public authorities or government officers to hand over any information regarding the issue to the CBI.

The court ordered the DIG (Border) Punjab Police, B.S. Sandhu to hand over all relevant records regarding the cremation of bodies of unidentified persons to the CBI without any further delay. The direction came after the additional solicitor general K.T.S. Tulsi told the court that there was some delay in those records being handed over to the CBI.

The court warned that any further delay in handing over the records to the CBI by Sandhu would amount to violation of its orders and would attract contempt of court.

The judges observed that this incident of disposal of bodies of unidentified persons was "worse than a genocide."

"We shudder to think of such a thing happening in a democracy," the judges said.

Adjourning the hearing in the matter to October 7 to enable the CBI to submit its final report the judges asked the CBI to speed up the probe.

In another report the CBI told the court that it had investigated into the murder of a human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalsa and had found several policemen were involved in the case.

It sought the court's permission also to file three separate cases in the killings of three other persons by Punjab policemen.

"WORSE THAN A GENOCIDE," SAYS INDIAN SUPREME COURT

WASHINGTON, DC, July 24.—According to a report in yesterday's Indian Express, India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) today admitted in court that it had amassed evidence that "bodies tagged as 'unidentified' by the Punjab Police had been disposed of surreptitiously." In a 74-page preliminary report on its ongoing investigation, CBI admitted that it had "prima facie found that a total of 984 bodies had been cremated by the police" after being labelled "unidentified."

The Court ordered local police chiefs to turn over any information they have on the subject to CBI. The justices warned that any further delay in turning over these records would be considered contempt of court.

On September 6, 1995, Jaswant Singh Khalsa, General Secretary of the Human Rights Wing (Shiromani Akali Dal), was kidnapped by the Punjab Police after publishing a report showing that over 25,000 young Sikhs had been abducted by the regime, tortured, killed, then declared "unidentified" and cremated. After the report was published, the police chief of the Tarn Taran district told Mr. Khalsa, "We made 25,000 disappear. It would not be hard to make one more disappear." The CBI reported to the court that Mr. Khalsa was murdered in custody, and that it "had found several policemen were involved in the case," according to Indian Express.

Calling these cremations "worse than a genocide," the justices also stated that "We shudder to think of such a thing happening in a democracy."