

HM'S STATEMENT IN LOK SABHA

National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) is a technical organisation of the Government, and I make this statement on behalf of the Government. A GoM had recommended that such an organisation be set up. The organisation was notified on April 15, 2004.

Government have seen the allegations against the NTRO contained in the story in Outlook magazine of May 3, 2010.

I wish to state categorically that no telephone tapping or eavesdropping on political leaders was authorized by the previous UPA Government. Nor has the present UPA Government authorised any such activity.

After the issue of the magazine was available late Friday, April 23, 2010, the allegations in the story were thoroughly enquired into. Nothing has been found in the records of the NTRO or elsewhere to substantiate the allegations.

Our intelligence agencies function within the law. They are fully accountable to Government. Under the Telegraph Act and the Information Technology Act each case of monitoring of telephone or electronic communications has to be approved by the Union Home Secretary personally, and is subject to review by an Oversight Committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary. Such monitoring as may be necessary to fight crime, for national security, or for our counter-terrorism effort, is subject to multiple checks and oversight.

Both this government and the previous UPA Government have respected and upheld the laws of the land. We are committed to defending the rights of every Indian citizen, including the right to privacy, and will uphold the rights of the individual citizen enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Further enquiries are being made into the allegations in the magazine. If any evidence is forthcoming or discovered, the matter will be thoroughly investigated by the appropriate agencies.

26 April 2010