

# TAMIL VOICE INTERNATIONAL

# TVI

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CONFERENCE  
SPECIAL



யொங்கு தமிழர்க்கு கின்னல் வினாத்தாரர்க்கு  
சங்காரம் நிகழ் ஒன்று சங்கை முடிங்கு

## EDITORIAL

## SECOND INTERNATIONAL TAMIL CONFERENCE

The World Federation of Tamils can justly claim for itself the accomplishment of the principal goals of the First International Conference held on 30 April and 1 May of last year. That Conference met in the climate of crisis when the New Delhi Government, presumably at the behest of ex-President Jayewardene and his cohorts, was determined to slay if not to capture, the universally renowned Veluppillai Prabaharan. The move failed dismally. In addition the Conference re-iterated the historic principles of the Thimpu Declaration of July 1985.

**We are glad to report that the accredited spokespeople of the Tamil Nation have not compromised on any of our goals.** We have sustained our honour despite the humiliations and crimes against humanity inflicted on innocent Tamil people by the IPKF. Our people and the LTTE, our freedom fighters, have been bloodied by the world's fourth largest standing army, but **we remain unbowed.**

The Second International Tamil Conference meets under more ominous circumstances. A sword of Damocles, the 5 July Referendum to sever the Eastern Province from the North, is scheduled. In Sri Lanka's electoral system, manipulated as it is by the mandarins and politicians of Colombo, the results of "free elections" are predictable. We are certain that all the paraphernalia of democratic electioneering will be adhered to but the erosion of civil politics and political rationality in Sri Lanka have already been ensured. Colombo knows the results.

The fact is that the centre no longer holds and its writ does not run in many parts of the country. Government by terror and through 'Black Cats' prevail. It is under these intimidating circumstances that we meet. And we must therefore resolve firmly and redoubtably never to surrender an inch of our territory, the territory that rightly belongs to the Tamil people. If the Sinhalese take away the Eastern Province, we will get it

back one way or another. Are the Colombo political leaders so callous as to waste human life in another conflict which they are certain to lose?

On the credit side, there are many developments in the last year which have sustained our will to resist the forces of evil. Tamil Nadu's election results are in a sense an expression of the loathing and disgust of Tamils in Tamil Nadu against the war that New Delhi pointlessly wages against Tamil Eelam. The great leader, Muthuvel Karunanidhi, has emerged triumphant and seeks to play a vital role in a settlement which can satisfy both New Delhi and the LTTE. We urge that talks begin without delay. Otherwise, as Abou Sharif of the PLO said of his leader's (Yasser Arafat's) peace initiative, "the train would have left the station" if Israel does not seize the opportunity.

More important than these preliminary observations is the programme of action we need to accomplish in our "Conference 1989." Having successfully attained our primary goal, we need to prepare for the times ahead. Eelam, like Rome, will not be won in a day. It then becomes the sacred duty of the Tamil expatriate diaspora to undertake tasks and responsibilities that will relieve the burden of our brothers and sisters who are giving battle on the ground in Eelam and where our innocent kith and kin are brutalised by Indian 'peacekeepers' -Peacekeepers who, we must note, should never ever be sent in such a capacity to any other part of the world's troubled zones.

The Tamil Agenda for the 1989 Conference asks the right questions. The answers we expect will enable participants to formulate strategies for the future, strategies which we anticipate will leave no room for doubt that the right of self-determination is our destination. We will not falter. Nor will we bargain or barter away this sacred, inherent and inalienable right of an oppressed nation for a mess of provincial councils pottage, the laws of

# TAMIL VOICE International

எப்பொருள் வாய்வாய்வாய்க் கேட்பினும் அப்பொருள்  
மெய்ப்பொருள் காண்ப தறிவு.

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which bodies, as already known now, are written on water.

The workshops we have arranged for at this Conference will become the focus of Tamil agenda. We urge all Tamils who will participate in our Conference to address their minds to the work of the four workshops and to evolve plans that will ensure our goals. The Second International Tamil Conference is in this sense epoch-making. It will provide the basis for the emergence of the world's newest State. As Admiral Lord Nelson said of his countrymen in the England of his day, "England expects every man to do his duty." We Tamils can with a greater sense of responsibility say in today's circumstances, "**Tamil Eelam expects all brothers and sisters to do their duty.**"

தலைமைச் செயலகம்

தமிழீழ விடுதலைப் புலிகள்  
தமிழீழம்

08.04.89

சித்திரைத் திங்கள் 29-30 ஆம் திகதிகளில் லண்டன் மாநகரில் நடைபெறும் மாநாடு சிறப்பாகவும் வெற்றியாகவும் அமைய வேண்டுமென விரும்புகின்றோம்.

கடந்த ஆண்டு சிறப்பாக நடைபெற்ற இம்மாநாடு ஈழத்தமிழ் பேசும் மக்களின் அவல நிலையை உலகிற்கு வெளிச்சம் போட்டுக் காட்டியது.

இம்முறை நடைபெறும் இம்மாபெரும் மாநாடும் எமது மண்ணில் நடக்கும் இனப்படுகொலைகளை தெளிவாக எடுத்துக்காட்டும் அதேவேளை எமது போராட்டத்திற்கு எந்தெந்த வகையில் ஆக்கபூர்வமாக உதவலாம் என்பது குறித்தும் சிந்திக்க வேண்டும்.

உலகில் இன்று மூன்று இலட்சத்திற்கு மேல் தமிழ்பேசும் மக்கள் அகதிகளாகவும் தமது சொந்த நாட்டில் வாழ வசதி இல்லாததால் அந்நிய நாட்டு மண்ணில் வாழ்வு தேடியும் வாழ்ந்து வருகிறார்கள்.

குடும்பங்கள் பிரிந்தும், உறவுகள் உடைந்தும் அந்நிய மண்ணில் அந்த மண்ணிற்கே அந்நியமாக நாம் வாழ வேண்டிய அவசியம் தான் என்ன?

வெளிநாடுகளில் வாழும் தமிழ் பேசும் மக்களின் குழந்தைகள் நமது மண்ணிற்கும் சொந்தமில்லாமல், அந்த மண்ணிற்கும் உரியவர்கள் இல்லாமல் தொலைந்துபோகும் [LOST GENERATION] சந்ததியினராக வாழும் நிலை ஏன் நிலைக்க வேண்டும்?

இன்று வாழும் நாடுகளில் நாளை ஏற்படும் எதிர்பாராத நிர்ப்பந்தங்களால் மீண்டும் தாய்மண்ணிற்கு செல்லும் நிலைவந்தால் செல்வதற்கு ஓர் தாய்நாடு அவசியமல்லவா?

உகண்டாவில் வாழ்ந்த இந்திய மக்களுக்கு நடந்தது எமக்கும் ஏன் நடக்கக் கூடாது? எமக்கென்று ஓர் நாடு அமையக் கூடாது என்பதில் சிறீலங்காவிலும் இந்தியாவிற்கு அதிக அக்கறை இருக்கின்றது.

இந்திய வல்லாதிக்கம் தனது நலன் என்ற பெயரில் எம்மை அழிக்க சிறிதும் தயங்கியதில்லை. இன்று எமது நாடு இந்திய ஆக்கிரமிப்புப் படைகளினால் அழிக்கப்படுகின்றது. சிங்களக்குடியேற்றத்தால் எமது மண் கூறுபோடப்படுகின்றது. எமது நாட்டின் விடுதலைக்காக இதுவரை 1110 போராளிகள் உயிரிழந்திருக்கின்றார்கள். கடந்த 18 மாதத்தில் தமிழீழ இந்தியப் போரில் 479 போராளிகள் உயிரிழந்திருக்கின்றார்கள்.

நாம் அழிக்கப்படவில்லை. மாறாகப் பலம் பெற்றிருக்கின்றோம். இந்திய ஆக்கிரமிப்பாளர்களிடமிருந்து 400 இற்கும் மேற்பட்ட ஆயுதங்களைக் கைப்பற்றியிருக்கின்றோம். எமது போராட்டம் விரைவில் வெற்றிபெற உலகத் தமிழ் மக்களின் பங்கு அவசியம்.

எமது போராட்டத்தின் நியாயங்கள் உலகம் முழுவதற்கும் எடுத்துச் சொல்லல் வேண்டும். இது தவிர தொழில்துட்பத்துறை வல்லுநர்கள், வைத்தியத் துறை வல்லுநர்கள் போன்ற வல்லுநர்களும் ஏனையதுறை வல்லுநர்களும் பிறருக்குப்பயன் படாமல் மறைந்து போய் விடக்கூடிய தமது அனுபவங்களையும் அறிவையும் எம்மோடு பகிர்ந்து கொள்ள வேண்டும் என்பதோடு எமது போராட்டத்தின் வளர்ச்சிக்கு உதவவும் வேண்டும்.

நாம் எந்த சக்தியின் துணையுடனும் நின்று போராடவில்லை. எமது மக்களின் துணையோடு போராடுகின்றோம். அதனால் நிமிர்ந்து நிற்கின்றோம். இன்று உலகில் வாழும் 8 கோடி தமிழ் மக்களுக்கும் ஓர்நாடு கிடையாது. தமிழீழம் என்பது முடிந்த ஒரு முடிவு. எமது இலட்சியத்திற்குக் குறுக்கே எந்த சக்தியும் வருவதை நாம் அனுமதிக்க மாட்டோம். எமதுமக்கள் தான் எமது பலம். நாளை அமையப்போகும் நமது தேசத்திற்காக ஒன்றிணைந்து போராடுவோம்.

இந்து மகா கடல்

சிந்து மகா குருதியால்

இங்குமோர் செங்கடல்

ஆகினும்

தமிழீழம் 'ஈழம்'

என்றே

அலைபாயும்

இனம் ஆர்ப்பரித்து எழும்

விலங்குகள் அறும்

வேங்கைகள் கொடி பறக்கும்

புலிகளின் தாகம் தமிழீழத் தாயகம்

வே பிரபாகரன்

தலைவர்

தமிழீழ விடுதலைப் புலிகள்

## PEACE TALKS

A unilateral ceasefire was declared by the Sri Lankan and Indian governments with effect from the morning of 12 April 1989. The LTTE responded to this initiative with an open letter to President Premadasa, which is reproduced below:

### **"NO CEASEFIRE UNTIL THE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF THE INDIAN ARMY OF OPPRESSION FROM TAMIL EELAM"**

You and your government and the government of India have declared a unilateral ceasefire with effect from the morning of 12 April 1989. But you and your government cannot be unaware that so long as the Indian army continues to occupy our land a ceasefire is a meaningless exercise.

Without addressing yourselves to the central issues of the Tamil national struggle, your government and the government of India have instead chosen to declare a one-week ceasefire. If this ceasefire is intended merely to secure the handing over of our weapons, then may we tell you that the ceasefire is an exercise in futility - because we do not propose to hand over weapons to anybody. You and the Indian Government have sought to deprive the birthright of our people and their freedom under the cloak of the so-called Peace Accord. Fortunately we retained our weapons. Without weapons what would have been our fate and the fate of our people?

In so far as we are concerned, we view this ceasefire as an attempt to intimidate the Tamil people and the vanguard of the liberation struggle, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The underlying message of the ceasefire is, "Hand over the weapons and surrender; otherwise you will be annihilated." But please understand that intimidation, oppression and threatened genocide will serve to strengthen and increase and not weaken and decrease our commitment and the commitment of our people to the struggle in which we are engaged.

Before your election as President, you declared that when you became president you would secure the withdrawal of the Indian army. But today, you have changed your views. It would appear that you wish to continue the tradition which the Tamil people have had experienced firsthand for several decades - the tradition that Sinhala presidents and prime ministers always say one thing and do the opposite.

It may be that you do not consider that the Indian army is an occupying army. Because, after all, the Indian Government is performing a task that you want done without unduly deplet-

ing your own resources. The task that the Indian Government is performing on your behalf is the destruction of our homeland and the mass killings of our people. That which you did before 1987 the Indian Government is doing now, on your behalf. However, we wish to tell you straightforwardly that you may go ahead and mortgage the birthright of the Sinhala people. But we will not mortgage the rights of the Tamil people to anybody. Today, in Tamil Eelam, there are more than 500 Indian army camps and around 100,000 Indian troops. It may be that you do not know about this. But you will no doubt know about the continued Sinhala colonisation of our lands at Seruwila, Amparai and Walioya. Why is it that you who show such great desire for Tamil lands yet show such dislike for the Tamil people?

We take it that you have heard of the sufferings of our people at the hands of the Indian army. From 1983 to 1987 you killed around 20,000 Tamils. But the Indian Government has killed more than 5,000 Tamils within the short period of 18 months. The Indian Government can take pride in having improved upon even your performance. But that is not all.

You cannot be unaware of the activities of those murderers and robbers who call themselves the elected representatives of the people and who carry on their trade from Indian army camps and under the protection of Indian troops. Recently the driver of a bus was ordered by Provincial Council members to set down two young Tamil women at the Indian army camp at Palaly. The bus driver refused and that night that bus driver was shot dead in his house. The members of the Provincial Council are using their authority to assist the Indian army to rape our women. This too appears to be one of the powers devolved to the Provincial Councils under the 13th Amendment.

And while all this goes on, the economic blockade of our land continues. The people do not know at what time curfew may be imposed (by the IPKF) and for what period. Newspapers cannot be published freely. They are required to report killings by the Indian army and its agents as "killings by unidentified persons." If a newspaper does not comply with this requirement it can

not be published. In Tamil Eelam today there is no freedom of the press. There is no freedom of speech. And there is no right to life.

Your own army continues to attack our people in areas such as Silavathurai, Maarambaikkulam. In Puttalam 193 Muslim houses were burnt and the inmates driven out. Our sorrows have always gladdened you. But, for our part, may we say that we are saddened by the indiscriminate killings of Sinhala people by your own Sri Lankan army and your "Black Cats."

Mahatma Gandhi's India and Buddhist Sri Lanka are seeking 'Shanthi' (peace) by oppressing the Tamil people. But this the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam will not permit. Until the oppressive Indian army leaves our land there will be no such thing as a ceasefire. And, after they leave, you will come to realise that in the Island of Ceylon, there are two nations. And after that, we will need neither war nor ceasefire."

### **LTTE DENIES INVOLVEMENT IN TRINCOMALEE BOMB BLAST**

On 14 April the LTTE categorically denied that the organisation was in any way involved in the bomb blast in Trincomalee the previous day. It said that groups backed by the Indian government perpetrated the attack so as to create a climate that would justify the continued presence of the Indian army.

The following day the LTTE accepted President Premadasa's invitation to hold talks. In its reply to the President it said: "You have made comments that external forces have been able to secure their own interests because of the internal conflict between us. You will appreciate that we have been consistently opposed to the policy of bringing external forces into the country."

Mr Anton Balasingam has been appointed the accredited representative of the LTTE to facilitate a direct dialogue between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government. It is expected that Mahataya and Yogi will act as chief negotiators. The Sri Lankan government has agreed to the LTTE providing its own security during negotiations.

# Ask Rani Conference Special

Dear Friends,

## THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

It is a welcome change to be writing a letter rather than replying to one. As delegates gather from around the world for the Second International Tamil Conference, it seems an opportune time to reflect on some of the issues that have been raised in the "Ask Rani" column over the past months, and introduce some new ones for readers to mull over.

For too long and far too often we have preached the need for unity, and yet in reality we have only paid lip service to it. We are divided amongst ourselves to a degree that makes any talk of unity seem an absurdity. But I believe that we are united in the fundamental belief that the sufferings of the Tamil people must come to an end, and that we must be free of the oppression we have endured for so long. So why are we so divided? Many of our shackles are self-made: 'Prisoner, tell me who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain?'. 'It was I' said the prisoner, 'who forged this chain very carefully'. Our salvation lies, first and foremost, with us. Therefore I write, not about the Indian Government or the Sri Lankan Government but what I see as the seven "deadly sins" of Eelam Tamils.

### PRIDE

The first is pride. We pride ourselves on being a chosen people with a manifest destiny and a superior intelligence. In times of crisis, such crutches may be necessary to uphold, sustain and inspire. The danger is that once instilled, such thinking becomes entrenched in our consciousness. It blinds us to our limitations, and creates within us delusions of grandeur. One has to look at

Israel and South Africa, not to mention Hitler's Germany, to see where such unbridled thinking can lead. It also leads to divisiveness between the 'educated' and the 'uneducated'. We forget that the ability to regurgitate facts learnt by rote in order to pass examinations is not the same as the 'ability to learn, understand, apply knowledge, or think abstractly especially in relation to new or trying situations' as the dictionary defines intelligence. Yet we deify those with degrees, and spurn those who, with no formal learning, have adapted with ingenuity to changing circumstances. Perhaps we should pause to ask that if we are indeed as clever as we think, then why we have not yet liberated ourselves? Are we not simply engaging in an exercise in futility in believing in the myth about our intelligence while people die around us?

Then there is personal pride. Our egos get bruised and personality differences prove insurmountable. Yes, it is very hard, when one has been slighted, maligned or exploited, to forgive and forget. It is a feeling that I know well from having been the victim of some scurrilous behaviour not through any fault of my own, but because of someone else's pride. But does that injustice even begin to compare with the tortures, rapes and killings being suffered by Eelam Tamils at home? Should we not as Eelam Tamils rise above our disagreements and the pettiness which seem such a sad part of our culture, for the sake of the higher cause, namely the liberation of Tamil Eelam?

### COVETOUSNESS

The second is covetousness. We want what others have and more. As we hoard material wealth for our-



selves and our family, we tend to forget that our true family extends beyond those who happen to be related to us. Maybe we should remind ourselves once in a while that those who made this world a better place to live - Buddha, Jesus, Gandhi and the countless saints and seers who have walked this earth - owned nothing. One of the most poignant photographs I have seen is that of the earthly possessions of Gandhi when he died - they could be put in one paper bag. I am not for a moment suggesting that we renounce our possessions. That would be foolish and most unwise. Rather, I would hope that we would use what we have to serve and help our sisters and brothers as I know some wealthy Tamils already do. Just the other day, one such person offered to pay part of the conference costs so that the money could be used to defray other expenses, while another agreed to bear the cost of some of the airfares.

### GLUTTONY

The third is gluttony, taken here to mean 'open-mouthedness'. We Eelam Tamils are quick to open our mouths and criticise others without stopping to think whether we could do any better. Should not the golden rule be that one should not criticise except in a constructive manner which means suggesting a better course of action to that which is being criticised?

Is it also not preferable to criticise an action, policy or behaviour rather

than the person who is responsible for it? There is a world of difference between the two. To give an example, heaping personal abuse on Rajiv Gandhi achieves little except to let off steam, and in the process antagonise those who may find him personable. On the other hand, to point out the horrors of his policy that is causing our people so much grief, or his inaction against the atrocities being committed by the IPKF, is a more constructive step towards alleviating the situation.

The Jewish people with whom we often like to compare ourselves, though for what reason I know not, have in the face of adversity been loyal to their own. Many Israelis who are highly critical of the treatment of the Palestinians, for instance, will not voice those criticisms when outside of the country especially in public fora. I am not saying that this is necessarily a good thing, but it does strike me that we Eelam Tamils are not one bit averse to washing our dirty linen for all the world to see and hear, regardless of the consequences.

### ENVY

The fourth is envy. To stay with the Jewish analogy, Jews take pride in the achievements of other Jews. We, on the other hand, become jealous and do our damndest to undermine those who achieve fame and fortune, and even those who don't. An MP asked me in amazement why Tamils complain about other Tamils who have been granted asylum, and another told me that the Home Office constantly gets calls from Tamils giving harmful information about other Tamils. We should rejoice when a Tamil achieves recognition or receives asylum. If we cannot support our own, how can we expect others to do so?

On another level, I hear Tamils and others routinely condemn our liberation fighters on the grounds that they use violence. Tamil politicians are wont to take the moral high ground, particularly when overseas, to espouse the cause of non-violence and by inference condemn those who are defending and fighting for our rights with arms. Yet to echo the

words of an Eelam Tamil Catholic theologian: "Those who have fought so well would have done still better had they been given, besides physical training and guns, some basic religious and cultural values that are common to the Tamil people and expressed so well by Thiruvalluvar, Thirumoolar, Manikkavasagar and others."

All life is sacred. We cannot create life, therefore we do not have the right to take it. How then does one reconcile this with the killings that are taking place in the name of liberating our people? I have no answer except that those in the forefront of the struggle - each and every one of the LTTE - are willing to sacrifice their lives with the cyanide capsules they carry. But even they have to face the fact that they are using violence to kill and maim other human beings, so envy them not.

### LUST

The fifth is lust - the lust for power, for office, for recognition. To participate in the struggle for personal gain and glory is to subvert the very basis of our struggle. A variation of that much used quote is, "Do not ask what the struggle for Tamil Eelam can do for you, but rather what you can do for the struggle for Tamil Eelam." One of our problems is that everyone wants to be a leader even if ill-equipped to do so.

There are too many pretenders to the throne who want to lead, but will only do any work if the leadership position that they aspire to will be guaranteed them. Leaders emerge, they cannot be created.

### SLOTH

The sixth is sloth. We should not expect others to do our work for us. We bemoan the fact that the world pays scant attention to the plight of the Tamil people, but the onus is on us to keep international attention focused on our struggle. This means taking the time to write as individuals and groups to international organisations such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth, and to ministers, Senators, congressional representatives and

the like. We should carefully monitor news reports on radio, television and the press, and not hesitate to complain when the information is wrong or incorrect. Even if we feel we are unable to express ourselves adequately in writing, it should not stop us making a phone call to complain, and give our names as it adds more weight to the complaint. To postpone taking such action only prolongs our struggle.

### ANGER

The seventh is anger. In any community people hold differing opinions and we as Eelam Tamils are no exception. How we deal with these differences is not only important for the present but also for the future. It can become all too comfortable to eliminate with a bullet those with whom we disagree, and are angry. That is the easy option. It is much harder to confront those with whom we disagree through persuasion, precept or the political process. But that is the more noble option. In the internecine warfare in which we are engaged, we cannot get away from the fact that Eelam Tamils are killing other Eelam Tamils; and every single militant group is guilty of this crime.

How one reacts to oppression, and how one operates under pressure, will ultimately decide the present and future course of Tamil Eelam. Respect for life - one's own and that of others - is essential in any fight for liberation. To quote Mahatma Gandhi, "No paper contribution will ever make us fit for self-government. No amount of speeches will ever make us fit for self-government. It is only our conduct that will make us fit for it."

We need introspection, for without self-understanding there can be no true liberation. We may differ in strategy, but not in principle. We have survived all our oppressions with great fortitude and courage. We have overcome all the efforts to crush and demoralise us. We will, in the end, come out victorious in our quest for Tamil Eelam - of that I have no doubt.

Yours in the struggle,

*Rani*

# EELAM thoughts

Kurushetran

*"How times have changed! But they are changing again even before our eyes. History usually works slowly through the centuries, though sometimes there are periods of rush and burst-ups....." - Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Glimpses of World History'.*

To the Eelam Tamils, and to the country that they once thought they belonged - Sri Lanka - the last few years have been a period of "rush and burst-ups." Naturally, such a historical phase cannot be expected to end suddenly, or end without leaving a trail of far-reaching consequences. If the course of history does not always run smooth, neither does a cause involving human freedoms. In such a period of "rush", events telescope into each other, institutions are overturned, and historical pressures affect both States and the individuals. The unceasing churning of violence, the Tamil diaspora, the shifting of values, the changes in the very behavioural patterns in Eelam society are no doubt disturbing; but there is no point in complaining about them; they are part of the very structure of change, and are as much unavoidable as the birth-pangs that accompany the delivery of a child. Why should the birth of a nation be any different?

What is important is firstly that recognition, and secondly the adoption of whatever measures necessary to ease that pain. Unfortunately however, governments, leaders, politicians, who are the ones in command of the situation do not see it that way. It is **their** failures that lead to the challenging of laws, challenges to authority, withdrawals from political participation, dissent, protest, agitation, revolution and various social upheavals, which they in turn, in their lack of wisdom, try to put down by arbitrary arrests, torture, State violence and ruthless repression. But they are no answer, as history has shown time and again. Given the fact that governments do not learn from history, what do the

## THE INEVITABILITY OF TAMIL EELAM - 3

citizens do? Fold their arms and wait? But that is no answer either. If those in command fail, and that failure leads to disaster, well, someone else has to take command of the situation; and this is precisely what Prabaharan did. As to how he did it, and by what right he did it, are questions of academic luxury that the suffering Eelam Tamils cannot afford. They are best left to those in ivory towers or those who want to make a livelihood by examining such questions at leisure, miles away from where the action is, without attendant risk to life or limb.

If the failures and stupidities of governments are not obvious to the public mind, it is because governments have the means to control the minds of people. Where powerful means of mass communication such as the Radio and TV, and sometimes even sections of the Press, are under the effective control of politicians in power, it becomes all the more easy. I remember a night in Colombo in December 1971 listening to the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation news bulletin. The Bangladesh war was at its peak, and Dacca, the East Pakistan capital, was about to fall to Indian troops. Having listened to the BBC, I tuned in to the Sirimavo Bandaranaike government-controlled Radio. Unbelievable but true, there was not a word! Instead, the poor newsreader kept on devoting two, three minutes of air time to describe how a rubber dinghy carrying six or eight persons had capsized somewhere in the Pacific Ocean and that rescue operations were under way, how helicopters had been pressed into service, blah, blah, blah. The Ceylon radio listener who was "patriotic" enough to depend on his own country's radio for information was being cheated out of a piece of history even while it was being made!

Moreover, governments have a way of punishing those who uncover the truth and rewarding those who are prepared to be silent. Even in countries like Sri Lanka and India where governments function under a democratic apparatus, it is possible for corrupt men and criminals to enjoy their freedom as long as they support the man in power; while

those who espouse the cause of freedom run the risk of ending up in jail. With such constraints on freedom to think, act, and receive information, it becomes difficult for the average citizen to perceive trends and compulsions that propel major events that later they read in newspapers and in the pages of history. This is why when one talks of the inevitability of Tamil Eelam, popular reactions could vary from raised eyebrows to supercilious scorn. The reasons for this are many. Not all people (these include even academics) are endowed with the "feel" for history. They lack the capacity, despite knowledge, to visualise anything until it happens. There are those with vested interests who will resist change at all costs. These include those in positions of power, because change will deprive them of those positions. There are others who are **paid** to be myopic. Under this category come officials, bureaucrats, diplomats and those who carry out policy orders. They have to go short-sighted because that is what they are paid for! As to the vast mass of the public, they are brain-washed into believing that they must always stand by their governments ("my mother, right or wrong"), which they are told is a mark of patriotism, the kind of patriotism that Dr Johnson described as often "the last refuge of the scoundrel." People who have been taxed and conditioned to submit to authority, seldom realise that some of the worst "scoundrels" are not found in jails, but in high positions in politics. The State (the "mother") is identified with the government, the government with the leader, the leader with the people, and ipso facto, anyone who criticises the leader earns the bad name of wanting in patriotism. The statement ascribed to King Louis XIV - "I am the State", which centuries later found echo in independent India in the Congress I slogan - "Indira is India" - are part of the same syndrome. In Sri Lanka, in his vain attempt from 1977 to 1988 to stem the tide of Tamil nationalism and preserve himself in power, ex-President Jayewardene unleashed the forces of State terrorism on the Eelam Tamil people. The name of



the game was "wiping out Tamil terrorism." To the foolish Sinhalese people who believed him, and made common cause, he has now bequeathed another legacy under which they are now continuing to reel - Sinhala terrorism. Having engineered the violence against Tamils, having become the architect of violence against his own people, the Sinhalese, and having institutionalised violence in the country, and having brought the country into the verge of anarchy, and after eleven years of failure, having apportioned the responsibility of crushing Tamil resistance into the safe, willing hands of another government, having allotted the task of putting down Sinhala terrorism into another pair of waiting hands, that of Mr Ranasinghe Premadasa, he now watches in quiet retirement the passing scene. And how would you describe this man who within his 11-year rule was responsible for the loss of at least 15,000 human lives? Ask any two-penny Indian political commentator and he will tell you, "He is 'Asia's elder statesman'." "Elder" is right because he is on the wrong side of 80; but "Statesman"? The tragedy about most of us, as Boris Pasternak once said, is that "we are required to live a life of constant duplicity. Your

health is bound to be affected if, day after day, you say the opposite of what you feel, if you grovel before what you dislike...." But we have stopped grovelling before what we dislike. We have refused to participate in the framing of two constitutions, in 1972 and 1978, we have challenged government laws, we have voted against the government in power in all elections since 1977, we have seen to it that the Sri Lankan writ does not run in Tamil Eelam areas, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are waging a heroic armed struggle not against one but two governments, and they have proved over a period of fifteen years that they have the capacity to keep the resistance alive - to the point of even driving thinking Indians into questioning the wisdom of their own government. In short, **we have learnt not to fear governments.** For anyone to imagine that this historical achievement could end with provincial governments and puppet administrations would be vacuous.

And what are governments? What are the ways of governments? "...The intensity of repression and terrorism is a measure of the fear of a government. Every government, reactionary or revolutionary, alien or 'swadeshi', when it

fears for its own existence, indulges in terrorism. The reactionary government does so on behalf of some privileged people and against the masses; the revolutionary government acts on behalf of the masses and against the privileged few. The revolutionary government is franker and more straightforward; it is often cruel and harsh, but there is little subterfuge or deceit in it. The reactionary government lives in an atmosphere of deception, for it knows that it could not last if it were found out. It talks about liberty, and means thereby liberty for itself to do what it pleases. It talks of justice, and means by it the perpetuation of the existing order under which it flourishes, though others perish. Above all, it talks of law and order and, under cover of this phrase, shoots and kills and imprisons and gags..."

Who said this? Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India (probably one of the very few politicians in contemporary times who was endowed with a sense of history), writing to his daughter, the third Prime Minister of India, long before the sixth was born. (Glimpses of World History, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Oxford University Press, Copyright Rajiv Gandhi, 1982).

(to be continued)

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## RAHEEM WRITES FROM IPKF TORTURE CAMP

"It is thought in some quarters that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Indian Government aspires to be the Policeman for the South-east Asian region. But policemen uphold and enforce the law, and that which distinguishes a policeman from a thug is the commitment of the former to the enforcement of the law and the latter a contempt for the rule of law. The actions of Rajiv's government are the actions of a regional thug." [We publish a letter addressed by Captain Raheem of the LTTE to Chris Nuttal of the BBC in Colombo. Ed]

I write this letter to you from the edge of death. And I have no doubt that when this letter is made known to the outside world, it will serve as the cause of my death.

In the early hours of the morning of the 9th of October 1988, at about 1.30 a.m., 84 of us who were being held in custody at the Madras Central Prison under the Indian National Security Act, were taken to the Indian Air Force camp at Tambaram, in Madras. We were told that we would be taken to Tamil Eelam, freed and released to our comrades there. We were taken to Tambaram by a Tamil Nadu Police contingent which was headed by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Radhakrishnan, "Q" Branch Additional Superintendent of Police, Thurkayandy, Intelligence Bureau Additional Superintendent of Police, Anthony, "Q" Branch Additional Superintendent of Police, Kent, and Research & Analysis Wing (RAW) S.J. Nair. At Tambaram, the Intelligence Bureau's Inspector General, Mr Saraniyan, Superintendent of Police K.V.S. Murthy and others met us. We told them that since we had not been given an assurance that we would be released to our comrades in Tamil Eelam immediately, we will take our lives in Tambaram itself by swallowing cyanide. Both Mr Saraniyan and Mr Murthy gave us their solemn promise and undertaking that we would be freed immediately on arrival in Tamil Eelam and handed over to our comrades there and they took from us the cyanide capsules that we had with us. Our hands and legs were tied, it was said, "for protection purposes" (including those of us who had lost one of our hands or legs) and we were taken in five aeroplanes from Tambaram. Intelligence Bureau, Superintendent of Police, Alagarsamy, "Q" Branch Superintendent of Police Thurkayandy, and Research and Analysis Wing S.I Nair travelled

with us, saying that they were coming along to hand us over to our comrades in Tamil Eelam.

At Palali Airport (in Tamil Eelam), we were met by Brigadier Balakrishnan Reddy, and Colonel Abdul Cader (Civil Affairs). Seven of us, including Kittu and myself were kept in custody in a house at the Kankesanthurai Rehabilitation Camp. Captain Santhuna was in charge of us. The others who were transported in the five planes were kept in custody in the army camp (number 56APO) at Point Pedro in the Pooranampillai Block at Hartley College.

At Kankesanthurai, Major Ravinayar (Military Intelligence), Major Lalithnath, Lt. Col Ghai, 2nd Lt. Vas, and 2nd Lt. Srivastava met us. On the 10th of October 1988, Major General Sandesh Pande, and Brigadier B. Reddy met us. Major General Pande launched an intimidatory verbal attack on us and on the Tamil Nadu M.P., Mr V Gopalsamy. He threatened to kill us if we did not behave.

On the 12th of October, 9 persons, including Kittu, were released. At the Kankesanthurai Camp my Prisoner Number was 1365. On the evening of the 13th of October, Sri (Prisoner Number 1366), a fellow prisoner, was taken for questioning and was assaulted by Captain Paul George (Military Intelligence). From the 12th afternoon to 14th afternoon we were locked inside a dark unventilated room. On the 14th October, five of us were tied together and taken from Kankesanthurai to Palali and from there by helicopter to the army camp at Hartley College, Point Pedro. Colonel Sukender Singh (CMP), Major Anil Raina (from Srinagar in Jammu-Kashmir), Major Santhiranath, and Major Venugopal (from Karnataka) were in charge of the army at Point Pedro. At this camp I was given the Prisoner Number 80. On the 15th October 1988, Brigadier Sameram,

the officer in charge of the Vadamadurai area and who was stationed at Valvettiturai, met and talked to me. On the 25th of October, in the presence of Major Ravinayar (Military Intelligence) and some other unidentified officers, an identification parade was held before a few persons who had their faces covered.

The Prisoner Number that has been given to me now is 43. On the 10th of November 1988 arrangements were made for me to write home. On the 13th of November Brigadier Samayaramu met me. On the 1st of December, the Kankesanthurai Punar Valvu Kalagam Secretary Gal Babgana met me. On the 3rd of December, my fellow prisoner Bsir was severely assaulted. On the 4th of December, my fellow prisoner Ragupathy was severely assaulted.

On the 10th of December I wrote to Lt. General A.S Kalkat requesting that I be freed, that I be given newspapers and a radio, and that I be permitted to see my parents. I sent copies of this letter to Major General Pande, Brigadier Samarayaramu, and Colonel Sukender Singh. Colonel Sukender Singh told me that permission had been granted to make radios available and that I should delete the word 'radio' from my letter. He also questioned me as to how I knew Lt. General Kalkat, Major General Pande and Brigadier Samayaramu and also as to how I knew that these persons were in charge.

On the 11th of December, I deleted the word 'radio' from my letter and gave the letter. That afternoon, Captain N.S.Chabra came to me and said that permission had been granted for newspapers to be given and that therefore I should delete the word 'newspapers' from my letter. Further, because I had attached an additional copy to Colonel Babbar, he questioned me as to

how I knew him.

On the 12th of December, we were given radios for the first time. And on the 13th of December, we were given some old issues of the Hindu newspaper. After two months, we came to know about what was happening in the outside world through these old newspapers. We learnt that the North - East Provincial Council elections had taken place. On the 14th of December, batteries for the radio were given but up to date, we have not been given current newspapers.

Sixteen of us, including myself, are locked inside one room. Others are locked in two rooms. I have no communication whatsoever with the persons in the other two rooms. In the morning and in the evening we are allowed outside our room for 15 minutes to wash and to go to the toilet. A bucket is provided inside the room for us to excrete into, if the need arises at other times. The food that is given to us is not what we are used to, and because of this we have several loose motions and if the sentries do not allow us out, we excrete into the bucket or into small bags. The smell inside the room is nauseating. We are given food daily at 10 a.m. and in the evening at 4 p.m. There is no light in our room.

On the 26th of December two Majors from Military Intelligence and on the 27th of December, one Major from Military Intelligence and Captain Paul George questioned me at length. From the 26th of December to the 28th December I was kept in solitary confinement inside a locked dark room. Nobody outside knew what was happening here and likewise we did not know what was happening outside. But it is certain that the Indian Government is telling the outside world lies about our position.

The Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr. Santosh Mohan Dev stated in the Indian Parliament on the 3rd of November 1988 that 157 members of the LTTE who had entered India illegally without visas had been deported. When questioned as to whether Mr. V. Gopalsamy M.P had been detained at the I.P.K.F camps, the Minister evaded an answer by saying that he did not

know anything about that.

On the 20th of July 1987, I went to India with the injured Kittu. After the 29th of July Sri Lanka-India Accord was entered into, the leader of our movement, V. Prabaharan returned from Delhi and I returned to Jaffna with him and Kittu in an Indian Air Force plane. On the 12th of August 1987, I together with Kittu and several others, who had been injured in the earlier war, went to Madras in two Indian Air Force helicopters. Passports were obtained from the Sri Lanka High Commission in Madras for the purpose of obtaining medical treatment for Kittu and myself. The Passport Numbers are IO 202895 and IO 202896. At the same time, visas were obtained to permit us to stay in India till the 31st of December 1987. But after the IPKF - LTTE confrontation started, Kittu and I were placed under house arrest from the 15th of October 1987.

On the 18th of November 1987, I went to Jaffna with Lt. Col S.S. Gil (Military Intelligence), Lt. Col N.S Bandari (Public Relations Officer) in connection with the release of 18 Indian prisoners of war taken by the LTTE. On the 5th of March 1988, I went to Vavuniya in an Indian Air Force plane together with the LTTE member Lt. Col. Johnny and with Lt. Col S.S. Rana (Military Intelligence), with a special message from the Indian Prime Minister to the leader of our movement. From Vavuniya, Johnny and I went with other mem-

bers of the LTTE to meet our leader and deputy leader. But within a few days, Johnny who had come as an emissary seeking a settlement of the conflict, was murdered by the IPKF. Despite an intensive search for me by the IPKF, I escaped back to Vavuniya and I returned to India in an Indian Air Force plane.

The details of all of us in the army camp at Point Pedro were noted in the registers maintained by the Indian Police authorities and the Indian Custom authorities at the time we entered India. All of us were in India under the watchful eye of the Indian Government. And we went to India in Indian Air Force planes. (But Santosha Mohan Dev denies this)

I not only participated in the unconditional talks between the LTTE and the Indian Government but, in my official capacity, I also met with the Intelligence Bureau's Director General, Narayanan, Intelligence Bureau Inspector General, Saraniyan, Research Analysis Wing Director General A.K. Verma, the P.L.O. Representative in India, Khaledshiek, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M.G. Ramachandran, Mr Karunanidhi, Tamil Nadu Police D.G.P Ravindran, Inspector General (CID) Sarma and others.

I suspect that the plan is to deceitfully murder some of the senior members of the LTTE whilst in custody. Please bring the contents of this letter to the notice of the outside world.

## A SONNET FOR TAMIL EELAM (OR, TIME IS ON THE SIDE OF TAMIL EELAM)

Tamil Eelam's children everywhere! Come forth  
And Sound the Conch of Freedom loud and clear  
For our Dawn of Liberation from cruel tyrants  
And devious "protectors" is near.

Ye freedom fighters, scions of the Chola tiger-race,  
Ye have made inevitable Tamil Eelam's birth  
By your death-defying sacrifices while the world stands still in amaze  
That ye so few have held at bay your nation's enemies so many, so long -  
so come forth

Ye people all who long held your breath in doubt,  
Come forth, blow the conchs, ring the bells, beat the drums,  
For our Freedom's Dawn raise raise a thunderous shout,  
Salute the Tiger Flag of our Traditional Homeland's freedoms.  
Sing with Bharathiyar, "When will be quenched our thirst of freedom?"  
Answer in thunderous chorus, "Only on the birth of Tamil Eelam."

# INDIA, THE PEACE PROCESS AND THE INDO-SRI LANKA ACCORD OF JULY 29, 1987

A Jeyaratnam Wilson (University of New Brunswick)

*"Tell me thou who viewst the stars when shall cease these mortal wars" -  
(Sir Walter Scott - The Lay of the Last Minstrel)*

The Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord of 29 July 1987 was conceivably signed in haste and was therefore an unfinished document. It was an example of a major regional power successfully intervening in the domestic affairs of a neighbouring state whose pro-West stance and whose treatment of its Tamil minority (there was opinion building up in Tamil Nadu against the repressive policies of the Sri Lanka Government against Sri Lanka's Tamils), New Delhi disapproved of.

## BACKGROUND

In order to bring neighbouring states in line, especially where India's geo-national interests are concerned, successive post-independence Indian governments have followed a consistent policy of destabilising vulnerable border regimes in order to secure and safeguard India's geo-national interests.

There was however a difference in emphasis. The Nehru government preferred the velvet glove to Mrs Indira Gandhi's mailed fist. This was best exemplified in India's relations with the Himalayan kingdoms, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. Their proximity to the People's Republic of China was a matter of sensitive concern. Nehru preferred to have Nepal as a buffer zone because at that time (1950) the arrangement suited India's geo-national interests. Hence the Indo-Nepali Treaty of 1950 provided for mutual consultation in the event of either state being threatened by an outside power. The treaty was signed because of China's claim to her traditional boundaries which in unofficial Chinese government statements included Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal and Tibet.

The special relationship with Nepal was maintained till 1955. The new king, Mahendra, who ascended the throne in 1955, faced with criticism that his kingdom's external relations were being increasingly influenced by India, established diplomatic ties with the People's Republic in August 1955. The Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai visited Khatmandhu in January 1957 and April 1960. The closeness between Nepal and the PRC obviously concerned India. So the process of pressuring began. The Indian National Congress's counterpart, the Nepali National Congress pressed the King for a general election. The Nepali Congress won in early 1959 and its leader B P Koirala was appointed Prime Minister. Indo-Nepali relations would have improved but on 15 December 1960, the King dismissed Koirala, assumed all powers and declared that he would follow a neutral stance in Sino-Indian relations which he did till his death in January 1972.

## INDO - SRI LANKA RELATIONS

Sri Lanka's relationship with India was not exactly the same. From 1948 (the year of independence) to 1956 Sri Lanka maintained a mutual defence agreement with Britain and was generally pro-West. After 1956, the country averted possible Indian intervention by adopting (though not deliberately) a variant of Mr Nehru's non-alignment policies. The Prime Minister, Mr Solomon Bandaranaike (1956-59) enunciated his own version of non-alignment. He called it *dynamic neutralism*. After the Chinese invasion of India in 1962, the Prime Minister of the time, Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike (1960-65), functioned as an intermediary for both sides. In the war between India and Pakistan ending in the creation of the state of Bangladesh, Mrs Bandaranaike's (Prime Minister 1970-77) government remained neutral. The Bandaranaikes and their Sri Lankan Freedom Party claimed to be committed to a *Buddhistic middle path* not necessarily true where the Tamil minority and the Christian religion were concerned and *dynamic neutralism* was therefore of the same genre.

It was not so with the United National Party. That Party's governments were suspicious of Indian designs and therefore maintained connections with the West. As early as in October of 1956, Mr J R Jayewardene, then a leading Oppositional figure censured the policy of *dynamic neutralism*. He alleged that *leading Indians were saying that India should occupy Trincomalee when the British moved out. What, he asked, was there to prevent a future hostile Indian Government from occupying Trincomalee to protect Indian citizens?*

Nor were strategic Indian historians reassuring of Sri Lankan sensitivities. K M Panikkar, the historian and defence analyst, for instance, had stated in 1945 that *the future of India has been identified, not on the land frontiers, but on the oceanic expanse which washes the three sides of India*. Panikkar was not concealing India's interest in Sri Lanka. Later events on India's borders with Pakistan and China proved him incorrect.

## INDIA'S SOUTH ASIAN POLICY

Mr Nehru was more successful in securing Indian dominance over Bhutan and Sikkim. A Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship was signed with Bhutan in August 1949. India guaranteed non-interference in the internal affairs of Bhutan, and Bhutan agreed to Indian guidance in its external relations. On 28 August 1959, Mr Nehru guaranteed the territorial integrity of Bhutan and Sikkim. In this instance, the guarantee of territorial integrity was against a possible Chinese attack. There was at the time no question of either of these states disintegrating from within.

Where Mr Nehru (Prime Minister 1947-64) dealt diplomatically with the states in the Indian region, Mrs Indira Gandhi (Prime Minister, 1967-84 with a break in 1977-79) boldly spelled out a hegemonistic Indian role in the sub-continent. Mrs Gandhi sought to impose, as one observer remarked, a version of the Monroe doctrine over South Asia, viz.,

1. *"South Asia was a troubled region" and "Indian interests" must therefore be "protected."*
2. *If law and order breaks down in a neighbouring state, India's assistance should be sought to arrest the destabilising process; help could be solicited from within the region but not to the exclusion of India.*
3. *Mrs Gandhi claimed she had obtained between non-Congress (Indira) parties and her party "a national consensus" on her doctrine. The emphasis was that "India as a big power could not be isolated in any regional development, notably one which involved regional security." India was therefore critical of US military assistance to Pakistan.*

In effect from the non-aligned state, Mrs Gandhi had moved to a *national security state*. The claim to be non-aligned was nevertheless maintained. Three of the characteristics of this national security state, according to Bharat Wariawalla, were

1. *high defence spending at the expense of developmental needs;*
2. *general mobilisation of national energies against any external threat; and*
3. *an atmosphere of beleagueredness and an expansionist (emphasis ours) foreign policy.*

In pursuance of seeking insurance against external attack (probably Chinese) Mrs Gandhi concluded a mutual defence agreement with the Soviet Union in August 1971. It was referred to as the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty because there were provisions in it dealing with other matters such as trade and cultural exchanges. The pledge of mutual support in the event of either state calling upon the other was however a vital guarantee to India. Furthermore one of the two super-powers (the USSR) had recognised India as the dominant power in the region.

In furthering India's hegemonistic hold on the sub-continent, Mrs Gandhi, unlike Mr Nehru, pursued a more aggressive policy. She actively assisted in the internal destabilisation of regimes hostile or unfriendly to her. In 1970-71, Mrs Gandhi turned a blind eye to the training and equipping of some 40,000 of Mujibur Rahman's (the first President of the Republic of Bangladesh established in 1971) Mukti Bahini guerrillas. These forces disrupted communications in Bangladesh and attacked Pakistani troops making it easier for General Sam Manekshaw and his Indian forces to defeat Pakistan's army.

#### **MRS GANDHI AND SRI LANKA**

In 1983-84, Mrs Gandhi followed a similar policy towards President Jayewardene whose pro-West foreign

policy she disapproved of. Tamil militant groups were provided facilities for military training in the southern parts of India. They were given sufficient weaponry to wage a low intensive war with the Sri Lankan forces. The leaders of the Tamil parliamentary party, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) were encouraged to establish, as exiles, their headquarters in Madras. More significantly, Mrs Gandhi seized for herself the role of mediator. From then onwards, President Jayewardene was forced into a situation where he became answerable to Mrs Gandhi and the Indian Government. Mrs Gandhi bade the rest of the world stay out of the conflict claiming for herself and her government the sole right to persuade the parties in the civil war to come to an agreed political settlement.

Mrs Gandhi was critical of President Jayewardene's involvement with the United States, with Israel and with Pakistan. She referred to the establishing of an Israeli interests section in the US embassy's office in Colombo as an "induction." But unlike her son, Mr Rajiv Gandhi in 1987, she had not come to the stage of perceiving this involvement as a threat to India. She and Mr Rajiv Gandhi were however apprehensive of Sri Lanka dividing into two separate sovereign states.

In a statement to the Lok Sabha in August 1983, Mrs Gandhi stated unequivocally that "India stands for the independence, unity and integrity of Sri Lanka" just as Mr Rajiv Gandhi in the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 29 July 1987 guaranteed "the territorial integrity" of the island. In that same statement Mrs Gandhi, as Mr Rajiv Gandhi in his time (pressured by the Tamil Nadu government), emphasised that because of the historical, cultural and such other close ties between the peoples of the two countries, particularly the Tamil communities, India cannot remain unaffected by such events there.

In actual fact, for Mrs Gandhi, Mr Rajiv Gandhi and future prime ministers of India, the state of Tamil Nadu constitutes a significant political constituency. The politics of Tamil Nadu therefore is an important component of India's scheme of relationships with Sri Lanka. Viewed from this angle, the "dynamic neutralism" of the Bandaranaiques and the SLFP will hereafter be overruled by the political responses of Tamil Nadu.

The question however may not revolve around the Sri Lanka Tamil secessionist movement being successful in carving out a mini-state. It is in this context that the Gandhis have guaranteed "the territorial integrity and unity" of Sri Lanka. Looked at in the context of historical time, the Sinhalese may want to expel the Tamil region or the Tamil-dominated provincial council or councils so as to preserve a homogenised Sinhalese ethnic entity comprising the rest of the island. In this way, the Sinhalese could ensure that they develop and promote their language, culture and Theravada Buddhism without disturbance, interruption or intervention by the Tamil factor. How, in such a context, could India guarantee "the territorial integrity and unity" of Sri Lanka is a Catch 22 question. However, Indian policy until 1985 was determined by political considerations and pressure exerted by Tamil Nadu, not as much by geo-strategic interests.

### INDIAN INTERVENTION IN SRI LANKA

Mrs Gandhi sent her Minister of Foreign Affairs, Narasimha Rao, to investigate the situation in Sri Lanka after the serious inter-ethnic disturbances of late July 1983. Narasimha Rao's arrival was the first step in India's presence as an interested observer of the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict. Thereafter, India discouraged other states or individuals from involvement. Narasimha Rao's visit was followed by the appointment of G Parthasarathy, Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee in Mrs Gandhi's government, who had also cabinet ranking, as special envoy to Sri Lanka on the inter-ethnic problem. Parthasarathy negotiated the document "Annexure C" of December 1983 with President Jayewardene. The document fell short of the expectations of the Tamil militants and was from their point of view a non-starter. The TULF was willing to consider the proposals though these were a long way from what TULF leaders had been led to expect from the promises made to them by Mrs Gandhi.

Broadly, "Annexure C" provided for a measure of devolution of power to a single regional council in the Tamil Northern Province and a single regional council in the ethnically mixed (Tamil, Muslim, Sinhalese) Eastern Province. Other provinces could also provide for the merger of their district development councils into provincial councils.

Romesh Bandari, the Indian Foreign Secretary, followed G Parthasarathy as mediator. Bhandari tried in the phase 1984-85, to pressure the two groups to reach a settlement within a programmed time frame (mid-1985). Meetings were held in Thimpu, the capital of Bhutan. These were deadlocked over Tamil claims to self-determination, to be regarded as a distinct nationality, to the territorial integrity of their traditional homelands and the request for the guaranteeing of citizenship rights of the Indian Tamil plantation workers and fundamental rights to all Tamils who had made Sri Lanka their home. The Thimpu deadlock was followed by attempts by the chief of the Sri Lanka delegation, H W Jayewardene (President J R Jayewardene's brother) to re-present the Sri Lanka government's proposals amended in minor details in August 1985, the *Draft Framework of Terms of Accord and Understanding*. This was, as expected, declined by all Tamil groupings.

P Chidambaram, Union Minister of State, was sent by the Indian Prime Minister in May 1986, as head of an Indian mission of negotiators, to attempt a fresh start with a view to breaking the deadlock. On 9 July 1986, a document dated 8 July 1986, *Proposals sent to the Government of India by the Government of Sri Lanka based on discussions with the Indian Delegation led by the Honourable P Chidambaram, Minister of State* was published by the Sri Lanka government. The document was essentially a colandered patchwork on the Tamil demand for a merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. It provided for district development councils within a province to merge as a provincial council subject to several provisos which undermined their utility. There could be interlocking political mechanisms to co-ordinate policies, facilitate their imple-

mentation etc. between the Northern and Eastern Provinces, a poor substitute for the demand for merger. As if to infuriate Tamil opinion, the Sri Lanka government introduced two new concepts, (a) national settlement schemes and (b) the national ethnic ratio in regard to the distribution of land in the Tamil region. The sum effect would have been further state-aided colonisation of the Tamil homelands and an erosion of their majority Tamil-speaking demographic composition. As was only to be expected all Tamil groupings rejected these proposals.

The Indian Government was determined to end the conflict and persuaded President Jayewardene to enter into further negotiation when he visited Bangalore for the SAARC summit in November 1986. In December 1986, there followed a further refinement of the proposals of 8 July 1986. These provided for a demarcation of powers, three lists (central, provincial and concurrent) and a proposal to re-demarcate the Eastern Province so as to separate the Sinhalese minority (in the Amparai district in the southern part of the Eastern Province) from the Tamil-speaking people (Tamils and Muslims). This was subjected to critical examination by the TULF which submitted amendments for its improvement. It was rejected by the Tamil militants.

The Sri Lanka Government thereafter commenced a major military offensive in the Jaffna peninsula and subjected the civilian inhabitants there to air attacks and an economic blockade. Mr Rajiv Gandhi and the Indian Government were increasingly being drawn into the Sri Lanka imbroglio. In April 1985, President Jayewardene visited General Zia with whom he raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. General Zia visited Sri Lanka in December 1985. The Indian Prime Minister expressed concern, adding "we were disturbed that he (President Jayewardene) opened the Kashmir issue." Indian disapproval of Sri Lanka's unfriendly actions was registered when it recorded its protest on the occasion of the President of Israel's visit to Sri Lanka on 20 November 1986. After the failure of the Chidambaram proposals (it was an unfinished agenda) Mr Gandhi himself took a direct interest in the deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka. In early 1987, the Indian Government issued what was tantamount to a warning to Sri Lanka. Indian planes crossed into Sri Lankan airspace and dropped parcels of food to the people of the Jaffna peninsula. Then followed protracted negotiations which culminated in the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 29 July 1987. Mr Rajiv Gandhi himself visited Colombo and met with President Jayewardene before finalising the Accord.

The July 1987 Accord though it contained provisions for the settlement of the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict (provisions unacceptable to all Tamil groupings) placed immediate focus on India's concerns on Sri Lanka's involvement with the USA, Pakistan and Israel. The annexures to the Accord contained letters of exchange in which Sri Lanka agreed to consider ridding itself of foreign security advisors, dismantling arrangements relating to the Voice of America's broadcasting facilities and providing for the safeguarding of Indian interests in respect of Trincomalee harbour. In return Mr Rajiv Gandhi agreed to disarm the Tamil militants and, for this purpose, dispatch an Indian Peace-keeping Force to

the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. The Chidambaram proposals and the subsequent negotiations with President Jayewardene were to provide the basis for legislation for provincial councils with devolved powers. The Tamil language was to be made an official language along with English. The Sinhala language would cease to be the only official language. The Northern and Eastern Provinces were recognised as the "historic" habitations of the Tamil people. The two provinces were merged for one year after which a referendum in the Eastern Province only would decide whether the merger was to continue or whether the two provinces would separate with each having their own provincial council.

The Sri Lanka Government has fulfilled its commitments, though very unsatisfactorily. The provisions relating to the Tamil settlement have not been accepted by any Tamil grouping. The provisions for devolved power to the provinces are inadequate and these open up a series of other problems. Legislation on the Tamil language, though enacted, has yet to be spelled out in a meaningful manner. The merger of the two provinces has given rise to "a demographic warfare" between the Sri Lanka Government's surreptitious attempts to introduce new settlers to the Eastern province under the guise of re-settling Sinhala refugees and the Tamil Tigers; this, with a view to winning the referendum on whether the one-year merger is to continue or not (since fixed for 5 July 1989).

President Jayewardene had raised questions about the annexures, stating that these were "intentions" which need a treaty with India. In an interview with 'India Today' (reproduced in 'The Island', 23.12.87), President Jayewardene stated 'letters exchanged between Rajiv (Gandhi) and me deal with the foreign trainees, use of Trincomalee port and the Voice of America broadcasts from Sri Lanka. We want India to assure us that she will not do anything against our interests'. He added, "we only promised we will consider these", and for good measure, he added, "we have started discussions (with India) and are preparing a draft treaty."

The significance of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of July 1987 lay in that (1) for the first time in India's relations with Sri Lanka, the question of India's geo-strategic security interests came to the fore (2) India's involvement underlined the fact that the Indian Government and Mr Gandhi were responding to the concerns of Tamil Nadu and (3) Sri Lanka, from President Jayewardene's statement, had been told by Washington and London that he must go to New Delhi to have his problem resolved.

#### SUPER POWER INVOLVEMENT

Did the response of Washington and London mean recognition of India as the major regional power? We think not. Advantageous bilateral trade prospects dictated US and British policy. In the last year (1988), Indo-US trade had surpassed Indo-Soviet trade. But US strategic interests lie in Pakistan which remains a vital friend in regard to US interests in the Middle East.

Moscow's interest in India's involvement was probably due to hostile powers (USA, Pakistan and Israel) fishing in the troubled waters of Sri Lanka. For the Soviets, the Indian sub-continent with the exception of Pakistan constitutes a

single strategic unity with New Delhi as the supervisor and not necessarily the dominant regional power. If Sri Lanka is viewed in this context, then Article 8 prevents either side permitting the use of its territory for military purposes that may be detrimental to the other. Thus Mr Gandhi's arrangement with President Jayewardene in respect of Trincomalee harbour and the limiting of broadcasting facilities to the Voice of America. Low frequency broadcasts from the latter, Indian military analysts have pointed out, could transmit messages to US nuclear submarines while they remain beneath the North Indian Ocean without such submarines having to surface. This arrangement with Sri Lanka would fit into Article 9 of the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty. The article stipulates that in order to ensure that neither side will assist a third party (in this instance, possibly the USA or the People's Republic of China) taking part in an armed conflict with the other side, the two parties (the Soviet Union and India) will eliminate this threat and ensure the peace and security of their countries. Thus commercial and strategic interests prompted Washington, London and Moscow to depute India as peacemaker in Sri Lanka.

To conclude, our view is that the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord will not endure the test of time. The question of strategic interests remains to be resolved by President Premadasa in the form of a Treaty. Even if such a treaty were concluded, India cannot remain certain that Sri Lanka's foreign policy will toe the Indian line. Nor for that matter can there be certainty that the Voice of America's powerful transmitters could be prevented from jamming Soviet broadcasts to the outside world or these transmitters broadcasting propaganda to the peoples of the Soviet Union. The uneasy peace imposed by Mr Rajiv Gandhi is of a transitory character. Sinhalese-Tamil relations will never be back on the rails again. Tamil Nadu will continue to exert pressure on New Delhi once the Sinhalese-Tamil war resumes after the withdrawal of the Indian Peace-keeping Force. The outlook is one of gloomy forebodings.

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## THE TAMIL AGENDA : INDIA'S ROLE AS THE REGIONAL SUPERPOWER

By Sunanda K Datta-Ray, Editor, *The Statesman (Delhi & Calcutta)*

If Dr Henry Kissinger is to be believed, India is not only "already the predominant military country in its region" but has also "shown no hesitation to use its power to achieve its national interests." More bluntly, he says that "India judges issues on a very cold-blooded calculation of its interests."

The only people at home to endorse this somewhat sinister image are certain disgruntled ethnic communities that look on India as a State of many nations held together only by the now fraying bonds of Pax Britannica, and whose purpose demands a weakened central authority and a failure of the governmental will. They are important in this context because no matter how much India might wish to assert herself in regional affairs, she must always bear in mind the consequences for her own delicately balanced polity of races and religions.

Abroad, the Kissinger thesis prompts alarm and foreboding among South Asian governments who see a regional superpower as a threat to their own security. For that very reason, however, it inspires a degree of hope among the region's embattled minorities who expect a new power equation at the expense of national governments to improve their own chances of achieving political self-expression.

The expectation received a tremendous boost in 1971 when India went to war with Pakistan, apparently to liberate East Bengalis from a form of colonial exploitation. Ever since then, other suffering communities, notably Sri Lankan Tamils but also Bangladeshi Hindus, the Chakma, Maung and Bomong tribes of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and even Pakistan's Sindhis and Pathans, have looked to India for deliverance. Nor is the expectation entirely illogical for it is clearly not in the interests of the region's stability that Sinhalese and Tamils should forever wage the epic battle between Dutugemunu and Elara. What is even more tragic is that belying all expectations, Indian troops should be engaged in hostilities against a minority organisation.

But, before considering the circumstances in which India can and will intervene in foreign situations, it is as well to note that an interventionist role does not receive unanimous endorsement at home. The popular psyche does, of course, respond to appeals to chauvinistic glory; but the concept of "Akhand Bharat", which stands in effect for Greater India, peddled by certain organisations comprising the Hindu right does not have too many takers. Nor did the Janata Party M.P, Subramaniam Swamy, succeed in convincing anyone that Sri Lanka's agony will come to an end if only the island is restored to the bosom of its Indian motherland.

**Misgivings have been expressed at a more sophisticated level that Rajiv Gandhi's India might be overtaxing its strength. There is no lack of sympathy for Sri Lankan Tamils and other minorities under siege; but recent signs of a measure of tactical agreement**

**between President Ranasinghe Premadasa's government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on making common cause against the Indian Peace-Keeping Force in Sri Lanka have strengthened the feeling in some circles at home that India may gratuitously have undertaken a thankless quasi-imperial responsibility. Objections to this role are buttressed by the argument that there can be no sustained exercise of power abroad without a matching domestic capability.**

True, India is the world's eighth most industrialised nation. It boasts the fourth largest standing army in the world, and will soon have its sixth biggest navy. All this is a source of considerable pride to Indians. But India is also the 15th poorest country in the world with a daunting population problem and mounting international debts. Above all, the virtual collapse of many simple services and facilities - the domestic telephone system, for instance - that are regarded as essential adjuncts of modern civilised existence, and the grovelling living standard of the bulk of our people, who also happen to be illiterate, make a mockery of pretensions to superpower status.

As Vasant Sathe, one of Mr Gandhi's own Cabinet colleagues, says in his recent book 'The Challenge of Change', "Our counsel will be truly respected only when we are able to provide a model of a society free from exploitation of man by man."

But this is probably an unfashionable minority point of view. Australia's Defence Minister, Kim Beazley, who knows India well, having done his post-graduate research on the student movement in Maharashtra, dismisses the poverty and underdevelopment with the plea that this is not the India with which the world needs to do business. "There are, in fact, two Indias. There are about five or six hundred million people who live in a state of considerable poverty, but there is a hundred million who emphatically do not, a hundred million pretty wealthy people by even approaching European standards constitutes a very powerful country instead..."

In other words, foreign policy reflects the confidence and urges of a small elite rather than the nation's strength. If this postulation be accepted as accurate, then India's regional role need raise no cavil. The Prime Minister who heads this elite - and one of whose key advisers, Sam Pitroda, was not long ago quoted as saying that "jeans and Scotch do not stand in the way of adopting Gandhian principles of social justice" further to add to the anomalies of our times - is already credited with what Indians call the "Rajiv Doctrine." To outsiders it is an Indian variant of the USA's Monroe Doctrine.

From New Delhi's point of view Mr Gandhi has succeeded where Jawaharlal Nehru's statesmanship and Indira Gandhi's astuteness failed. Neither was exactly reluctant to shoulder the burdens of regional leadership; in fact, both viewed India as the successor state to the British



Empire in South Asia. But they were thwarted by circumstances and by other regional leaders who were themselves of not inconsiderable stature, and who made up in Western patronage for what they may have lacked in personal attributes.

Nehru got a flea in the ear when he, in effect, tried to censor Sir John Kotelawala's Bandung speech; his daughter is believed to have been upstaged by both Pakistan's Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the late King Mahendra of Nepal. India was not accepted as the region's superpower under either prime minister.

Ironically, that achievement belongs to the least experienced leader that India has had in 42 years of independence. Fate played into Rajiv Gandhi's hands. First, Sri Lanka's ethnic civil war provided the opportunity for 'Operation Eagle' to be mounted in the teeth of Colombo's furious protests, demonstrating how easily the island could be bombed. Secondly, last November's SOS from the President of the Maldives, who was faced by an attempted coup, allowed Mr Gandhi to carry out a rescue operation whose speed and efficiency won worldwide praise and firmly established him as South Asia's policeman.

The Indian Government has moved a long way since the sixties when "sphere of influence" was a dirty word in New Delhi, a device to extend and perpetuate hegemony. Now, not only can Mr Gandhi boast of being able to solve problems "among ourselves without outside interference" but he can rightly claim U.S and also - though less explicitly - Soviet blessings for this role.

It is a role that seems to have left Pakistan as, perhaps, the only other totally independent country in South Asia, able to exercise options that may not always be to India's liking. But this does not mean that the rest have accepted the position without demur. Bangladesh complains of being treated unfairly in respect of sharing the waters of international rivers like the Ganges and Brahmaputra. Nepal and India are currently locked in an acrimonious debate on fresh trade and transit arrangements for the landlocked Himalayan kingdom. Even tiny defenceless Bhutan - another landlocked Himalayan kingdom - sends occasional discreet reminders that Article 2 of the 1949 Treaty whereby Bhutan agreed "to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to its external relations" has lost its relevance and should be rewritten.

But there is not much that the neighbourhood can do about the position on the ground. When King Birendra of Nepal says that his kingdom "is not part of the sub-continent; it is really that part of Asia that touches both China and India", he is in effect, acknowledging Indian supremacy in a region from which he is, therefore, anxious to withdraw. The Nepalese monarch's further claim that "there is no reason to suppose that Nepal's geo-political importance to India is greater than it is to China" and his "zone of peace" formulation are additional efforts to escape the rigours of geography which give an undoubted advantage to India.

That the king began this exercise of distancing himself

from India before Mr Gandhi became prime minister indicates that there has been no sudden turning point in Indian diplomacy. On the contrary, the trends that have fructified under the present leadership in New Delhi were all discernible earlier. The overthrow of Nepal's Rana oligarchy in 1950, the "liberation" of Goa in 1961 and the take-over of the protected Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim in 1975 were as much illustrations of the Kissinger thesis as the Bangladesh war.

Mr Gandhi is thought to be different from his predecessors in as much as he is more easily persuaded to separate India's commitment to the notions of Panchasheel and non-alignment from the pursuit of national interests which he is prepared to back with armed force if necessary.

**But it would be naive for Sri Lankan Tamils or anyone else to imagine that altruism inspired these initiatives, or that India will respond to pleas that have no bearing on her own security.** There was sound political reason for the vivisection of Pakistan, and it had very little to do with the deprivation suffered by East Bengalis. At the same time, the circumstances have to be right for armed intervention. India might have hesitated to go to war in 1971 if General Yahya Khan had not made the first formal move, allowing Mrs Gandhi to scream aggression. She could hardly have initiated war in defence of democracy in erstwhile East Pakistan without incurring the immediate wrath of the rest of the world which would have viewed it as a dangerous precedent. Human rights violation is not yet *casus belli*. The East Bengali plight was cited only in the context of the refugee burden that India had to bear as a result of military repression in East Pakistan.

The other important fact is India's long history of quiet interaction with dissident political and ethnic groups in neighbouring countries. **As the LTTE will bear out, rebellious minorities are succoured to the point where they can be used as leverage against the governments of the countries to which they belong, but no further. Bangladesh is the sole exception.**

The pattern for this delicate tightrope walking was established on the small stage of Sikkim - then technically independent - in 1949 when India's local representative pressured a most reluctant ruler, Sir Tashi Namgyal, to appoint as his first ever prime minister a Sikkimese politician called Tashi Tsering who enjoyed India's patronage and had launched an agitation for popular government. The Indian action was trumpeted as the triumph of democracy against a feudal monarchy. But just two weeks later, India's deputy minister for external affairs, B V Keskar, appeared in Gangtok, capital of Sikkim, and agreed to the prime minister's dismissal and to the democratic experiment being snuffed out. The explanation for this *volte face* was that Sir Tashi Namgyal had acquiesced in New Delhi's demand that an Indian chief executive (Diwan) should be appointed to rule the kingdom in the monarch's name. He had also agreed to enter into a formal treaty with India.

The tactic was repeated in Nepal the very next year when B P Koirala's Nepali Congress Party was allowed to

take up arms from bases in India against the recalcitrant Rana dynasty which held the king a virtual prisoner. But the Congress was ditched as soon as India had won over King Tribhuvan who became the centre of power once the Ranas had been overthrown. Not surprisingly, by the time he died Koirala was among India's most severe critics, bitter with the realisation that espousal of democracy in Nepal was strictly determined by India's relations with the ruler of the day.

Many years later, Morarji Desai, as prime minister, was quite prepared to bundle Kader Siddiqui, the 'Tiger of Tangail' as he was called, back to Bangladesh and certain death as the quid pro quo for his rapprochement with the Bangladeshi military ruler, General Ziaur Rahman. Siddiqui was, of course, one of the guerrilla leaders who fought for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the 1971 war and fled to India when Mujib was killed four years later. He enjoyed Indian protection and harried subsequent Bangladeshi governments from his base in India.

Such fluctuations held a lesson in realpolitik for all those who seek to promote minority causes in the sub-continent and its environs. They might expect sympathy but not support until India is moved by her own reasons to act against the government with which they are engaged. Indeed, the Shanti Bahini - the militant underground arm of the liberation movement of the Buddhist Chakmas of the Chittgong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh - complained of a reduction in aid when Mr Gandhi's relations with General Hussain Mohammed Ershad registered an improvement. And the Chakmas have a special claim to Indian loyalty since they were forced into East Pakistan not only against their will - they had already opted for India - but against the explicit promise given by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel that India would stand by them.

**What it boils down to is that India's assistance is not exclusively reserved for minority groups like the Sri Lankan Tamils. Neighbouring governments can also avail of it if they feel threatened by domestic pressures, if India thinks it necessary to bail them out and if they are prepared to pay the price.** Even the limited military help given to Sirimavo Bandaranaike to put down the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna rebellion made sense in the light of her Democratic Socialist Republic's alignment with India on almost all global issues.

Applying this well-worn yardstick, it would appear that the Sri Lankan Tamils lost much of their clout with India as soon as the government in Colombo signed the agreement of July 29, 1987. The arrangement may not have made Sri Lanka the 26th State of the Indian Union, but it did subordinate Sri Lanka's foreign policy and defence, and even certain features of its domestic programmes, to India's perception of the region's security. What the external affairs ministry in New Delhi lauds as "an example of how two non-aligned countries can solve major and complex problems bilaterally, without the involvement of outside powers" was, in fact, the assertion of authority by one which the other had no option but to accept.

**Would a Tamil republic of the future in northern and eastern Sri Lanka be equally obliging and similarly guarantee India's requirements? And if it**

**did, how would it be an improvement on the present situation where the ever-present fear of such a republic emerging is one of the most powerful instruments of persuasion that India has in relation to Colombo, even while the IPKF and the LTTE are fighting it out? Finally, what repercussions would a Tamil Eelam have on India as the major Indian Ocean power?**

**Indian policy planners must take these questions into account in deciding their attitude to Tamil nationalists.** They must also ascertain the extent to which the Indian government can expect to influence sovereign Tamils who derive their ideology, funds and arms from diverse sources. Experience with Bangladesh is seen as a warning that gratitude alone does not make for permanent friendship.

The possible impact that a successful campaign for Tamil Eelam may have on India's more than 50 million Tamils is also often mentioned. But what is more to the point, there are several far more restive ethnic communities in India who would at once fasten on any secessionist precedent that is set across the Palk Straits. India's former president, Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, spoke of the danger when he observed, "What holds good for Punjab also holds good for the Sri Lankan ethnic problem. If the right of Sri Lankan Tamils to form a free state is supported, the same cannot be denied to Sikhs in Punjab." Or to Nagas, Mizos, Manipuri Meteis and Tripura tribals who have all been in a state of violent revolt for much longer.

The fears may, of course, be groundless. The balkanization of India has been talked of for so long - since before independence - that it has ceased to be the awesome future and is almost a part of the country's political mythology. It can be argued too that the impact of developments abroad has similarly been exaggerated. For all the feverish discussion at the time of partition of an independent Bengal comprising the two halves of the British Indian province, no one in Bangladesh or Indian West Bengal has the slightest desire to merge. As with the two Bengals or with India and Nepal, modern compulsions add an altogether new dimension to traditional bonds of history, culture and language, militating against union.

**But, there is no point in pretending that the Sri Lankan problem is any nearer solution today than it was at the time of the communal bloodshed of July and August 1983.** The Indo-Sri Lankan Accord may have created a framework within which the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil community might have been fulfilled, but the conduct of the provincial elections and the continuing violence can only suggest that, for whatever reason, the terms of the agreement are not wholly acceptable to all the parties.

The situation is, therefore, fluid; it can develop in several ways. It is not beyond possibility that if rival Tamil organisations continue to fight among themselves they will only hand victory on a platter to the government in Colombo. Perhaps this is part of a grand design in which the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front

*continued on page 25*

# The role of Tamil Nadu in the Tamil Eelam Liberation struggle

by P. Nedumaran  
(President, Tamil National Movement)

It should be emphasised that the people of Tamil Nadu have not realised all the dimensions (nature, forms and objectives) of the struggle of the Sri-Lankan Tamils, in spite of the fact that the Sri Lankan Tamils have been struggling for their rights for over three decades. Had the people of Tamil Nadu been vigilant the acts such as Sirima-Sastri Pact, Sirima-Indira Pact and the gifting of Kachathivu Island which deprived the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka of their rights wouldn't have surfaced at all.

The Sri Lankan government dishonoured the pact reached between the Tamil leader Mr Chelvanayagam and Mr Bandaranaike the then Prime Minister in 1957 and the one reached with Mr Dudley Senanayake in 1965, yielding to the pressure of the Sinhala chauvinists. Sri Lanka would have been constrained to implement those pacts, if the Indian Government had expressed protest and apprehension on those occasions.

India was unconcerned and indifferent to the violence and genocide perpetrated by the Sinhala chauvinists and Sinhala army against the Tamils in 1958, 1961, 1974 and 1977. India refused to intervene in the matter on the pretext that it was an internal problem of Sri Lanka. Tamil Nadu also failed to goad the Indian Government to act.

There were riots against Tamils again in August 1981. The Jaffna Public Library was burnt and razed to the ground by the Sinhala army. But Tamil Nadu remained complacent and unconcerned. An all party delegation headed by the then Chief Minister Mr M.G. Ramachandran met the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, on the 7th December 1981. It was the first time in the history of Tamil Nadu that an all party delegation led by a Chief Minister met the Prime Minister in the cause of the Tamils.

It was the genocide of the Tamils in Colombo in July 1983 that shockingly awakened the people of Tamil Nadu for the first time, and made them take pity on the Sri Lankan Tamils. The genocide of over three thousand Tamils, the brutal killing of Thangadurai, Kuttimani and Jegan, the freedom fighters, in the Sri Lankan prison, woke up the people of Tamil Nadu from their deep slumber. It was only after this that proper attention of the people of Tamil Nadu was drawn toward the problems of the Sri Lankan Tamils. The upsurge among the people of Tamil Nadu condemning the genocide in Sri Lanka surged through the length and breadth of the Indian sub-continent.

The protest marches and demonstrations of the people of Tamil Nadu forced the Indian government to intervene in the Eelam Tamil problem which had until then been evaded on the pretext that 'the problems of the Sri Lankan Tamils were internal problems of a neighbouring country'. All the political parties in India were compelled to evince interest in the problem. Cutting across party lines, caste and religious barriers, various struggles organised by the Tamil people in unison during July and

August 1983, manifested the awareness of the Tamil Nadu people. These struggles were not organised at the behest of political parties or their leaders. They were natural upsurges of the people of Tamil Nadu. It was not an emotional or sentimental response. **In fact, it was an upsurge of the latent Tamil national consciousness.** This was the first impact of the Tamil Eelam liberation struggle on Tamil Nadu. Not only in Tamil Nadu, but also in the midst of Tamils all over the world, this did unleash the Tamil national consciousness. In order to appease the rising anger of Tamil Nadu, the Indian Government was compelled to evince interest in the problem. The then Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi sent the then Foreign Minister Mr P Narasimha Rao and Mr G Parthasarathy to Colombo. Following this, there were several rounds of talks between the Tamil representatives and the Sri Lankan governments. Talks between the Tamils' representatives and the Sri Lankan government continued. The policy pursued by Mr G Parthasarathy under the leadership of Mrs Gandhi in the Sri Lankan problem had primarily the following policy aspects.

1. That Sri Lanka is within the sphere of India's influence.
2. That the big powers like America and Britain and the 'enemy' countries like Pakistan, Israel and China should not intervene in the issue.
3. That Jayewardene should strive to resolve the crises politically and shouldn't resort to military action. India shall never permit any attempt by the Sri Lankan government to seek the resolution of the crisis through military action.
4. That any military assistance to Sri Lanka by any foreign country will be construed as an action against India.
5. That Sri Lanka must realise that India would oppose establishment of any foreign military base either at Trincomalee or at any other place in Sri Lanka.
6. That India is firm against making any territorial or demographic changes in the Eastern Province, particularly in Trincomalee. That is, India vehemently opposes the government's plan for the restructuring of Tamil majority area into a Sinhala majority area.
7. That India will pressurise the Sri Lankan government with the help of the militants, if the talks between the TULF and the Sri Lankan government fail.

It is needless to emphasise that the policy aspects enumerated above were framed only to protect the interest of the Indian hegemonistic and territorial designs and not in support of the struggle for the self determination of the Tamil Eelam people. However, this policy incidentally did help the Sri Lankan Tamils to continue that struggle.

Owing to the above policy pursued by the Indian

government the interests of neither the Sri Lankan Tamils nor India were jeopardised, although the problems of the Sri Lankan Tamils were not resolved immediately. At the time it dawned on Mrs Gandhi that India's attempt to appease the Sri Lankan government had had unexpected and disastrous consequences after she was assassinated. This resulted in a great turn in the Sri Lankan crisis. When Mr Rajiv Gandhi assumed office as Prime Minister, a new policy gradually emerged with regard to the Sri Lankan crisis. Mr Romesh Bandari began to gain popularity and importance over Mr G Parthasarathy and he became the principal adviser to Mr Rajiv Gandhi on the Sri Lankan issue.

### **Thimpu Conference**

Indian government forced the movements of the Tamil militants to participate in the Thimpu Conference, at the instance of Mr Bandari. In the midst of the talks, the representatives of the militants, staged a walk out protesting against massacre of innocent Tamils by the Sri Lankan army even as the Conference was going on. Infuriated by this, Mr Bandari made Mr Gandhi initiate the following actions:

1. He ordered the deportation of Mr Balasingam, Mr Chandrahasan and Mr Satyendra from India.
2. The plan drafted by Mr G Parthasarathy and largely accepted by Mr Jayewardene was shelved.
3. The militants were pressurised not to insist on the fact that 'Tamils are a nation' and 'Tamils have a homeland'.
4. He supported the ambiguous principles of state autonomy proposed by the Sinhala government.
5. The government ordered the seizure of communication equipment of the militants who refused to heed the government pressure followed by the arrest of many.

The above course of action of the Indian government enraged the people of Tamil Nadu. Thousands of people courted imprisonment during the struggles organised by TESO (Tamil Eelam Supporters Organisation). The Indian government was constrained to withdraw and seeing the rising tide of the opposition, all the three who were deported were called back.

Mr Gandhi's short-sighted and inexperienced approach caused the following repercussions in Sri Lanka:

1. Israeli's Mossad came to Sri Lanka to train the Sri Lankan army.
2. Mercenaries from the West were recruited to fight against the militants.
3. The strength of the Sri Lankan army was increased five fold.
4. West-European countries, Israel, Pakistan, China and South Africa rendered military assistance to Sri Lanka.
5. American naval ships were permitted to refuel and call at Trincomalee harbour for refuelling.
6. Pakistan's pilots were engaged to fly Sri Lankan planes.

7. Most modern and powerful radio station was installed at Trincomalee to unleash malicious propaganda against India.
8. India's enemy countries gained their influence in Sri Lanka.
9. India's activities began to change very much against the interest of Tamils and in support of the Sri Lankan government.
10. About 20,000 Tamils were massacred after Mr Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister. About five hundred thousand Tamils became refugees. Thousands of Tamil women were raped and molested. Thousands of crores of rupees worth properties of Tamils and their dwellings were razed to the ground. Sinhala colonisation of Tamils land continued unabated.

**Upon realising the attitudes and policies of Mr Rajiv Gandhi, Jayewardene gave him the following guarantees:**

1. Sri Lanka would pursue a policy (internal and external) which would not be detrimental to the interests of India.
2. Sri Lanka would ensure that their external policy would not be in conflict with that of India; No other foreign country would exercise its domination over Sri Lanka.

**In return Mr Rajiv Gandhi gave the following assurances in reciprocation:**

1. India would never support division of Sri Lanka and establishment of separate Tamil Eelam.
2. Militants would not be permitted to use India as their base.
3. India would help, if necessary militarily, to suppress the Liberation Tigers and to quell their struggle for the liberation of Tamil Eelam.

The Accord between Mr Rajiv Gandhi and Jayewardene was reached in July 1987 on the basis of the above mutual assurances. Consequent to this 'evil' Accord, Indian army has been continuing the massacre of the Eelam Tamils on the pretext of liquidating the Liberation Tigers. Mr Rajiv's assurance that he would ensure the rights of the Tamils has been allowed to go with the wind.

Mr Jayewardene has clinched what he desired, through the Accord. Mr Jayewardene wished that India shouldn't extend its helping hand to the Eelam Tamils. On the contrary, he wanted India and the Eelam Tamils to be at logger-heads. Mr Rajiv was thus trapped by the evil designs of Jayewardene. As a result, the Indian army which claimed to have been sent to Sri Lanka to protect the Tamils is continuing the massacre of the Eelam Tamils. The Tamils who reposed tremendous faith and confidence on India have now been betrayed. As every one is aware of the gory repercussions of the Accord, I feel, that I need not elucidate them further here.

### **Our Tasks**

The Tamils and the Liberation Tigers under the leadership of Mr Prabakaran, are continuing their heroic struggle

against the Indian and Sri Lankan armies. The struggle by the militants has blossomed into a people's struggle from that of merely the LTTE struggle.

The Liberation Tigers have created a new epic in the peoples' war by their stupendous sacrifice.

We should discharge our duty for the victory of this struggle. The Tamils all over the world are eagerly awaiting the steps to be taken by Tamil Nadu. The echo of this struggle has already begun to reverberate in Tamil Nadu.

### **The impact on Tamil Nadu**

The youth of Tamil Nadu have begun to realise the futility of phony struggles and empty slogans hitherto pursued in Tamil Nadu. Now they are aware of the true meaning of genuine sacrifice and genuine struggle. The massacre of Tamil youths in the Sri Lankan prisons; the heroic struggle of the Liberation Tigers against the Sinhala army and the valour of the Liberation Tigers who court 'cyanide death' when taken as prisoners to save the Movement at the time of dire necessity have made an indelible impression on the youth of Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu has begun to realise that the Liberation Tigers are the genuine activists unlike some of the politicians of Tamil Nadu who are mere boasters.

It is unfortunate that the ADMK hesitated to lend its open support to the cause of Tamil Eelam Liberation struggle in the past. When ADMK leader MGR was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, he extended some limited help to the Liberation Tigers and other militants, secretly. At the same time he stood one with the Indian Government on the Sri Lankan issue, openly. At one stage MGR's government even forced the militants to stand by the decisions of the Indian Government. The government did not come forward to warn the Indian Government not to impose political solutions which were not acceptable to the militants.

### **TESO**

The Tamil Eelam Supporters Organisation (TESO) was formed in order to enlist support for the liberation struggle of Eelam Tamils. This was founded by DMK, DK and Tamil Nadu Kamaraj Congress (now Tamils National Movement). Tamil Nadu Forward Bloc was enlisted into this later. TESO organised rallies in all districts in support of the Tamil Eelam liberation struggle. Finally a mammoth TESO Conference was organised at Madurai on 4th May 1986. The Indian Government dreaded this exhibition of the power of Tamil support to the Eelam cause. Hence it attempted to liquidate the very organisation which was responsible for this mammoth gathering.

The DMK leader Mr Karunanidhi began to condemn the LTTE, unilaterally, without properly probing into the real background behind the conflict between LTTE and TESO. He suddenly announced that he would not open his mouth on the Tamil Eelam issue till the militants got united and he kept quiet. This came as a boon to the Indian Government. This was what the Indian Government desired. TESO became defunct. TESO was not activated when the Sri Lankan Government besieged

Jaffna intending to starve the people of Jaffna to death, and during various other crises for the people of Tamil Eelam.

### **Rajiv-Jayewardene Accord**

Rajiv Gandhi and Jayewardene signed an Indo-Sri Lanka Accord on 29 July 1987. The Accord, which was prejudicial to future of Sri Lankan Tamils, was supported by the ruling ADMK. DMK, the principal Opposition Party, chose to be silent. Prime Minister Rajiv derived further 'spunk' from these actions. In fact he had ensured this through Intelligence before signing the Accord. Mr Prabaharan refused to submit to the Accord and opposed it, but Prime Minister Rajiv was prepared to ignore him. Tamil Nadu Kamaraj Congress, Dravidar Kazhagam and various other Tamil organisations stood united and protested against the Accord.

But the situation immediately after the Accord, the conflict between Indian army and the LTTE and the upsurge among the people of Tamil Nadu, compelled the leadership of the ADMK and DMK to rethink their stand. Hence they began to condemn the Accord and India's military intervention. This was not carried to its logical end.

Had the two Kazhagams along with the other parties raised their voice in unison against the Indian military intervention, there would have been certainly a change in the attitude of the Indian Government who might have come forward to announce a ceasefire and to hold talks with the LTTE.

Lack of adequate protest among the people of Tamil Nadu was also responsible for the Indian army unleashing a reign of terror against the people of Tamil Eelam. The principal parties of Tamil Nadu did not shed their differences and come forward to unite the people of Tamil Nadu against India's military intervention. Consequently, the Indian Government derived further courage to annihilate the Tamil Eelam liberation struggle.

### **India's objective**

India does not favour the division of the Sri Lankan island into two separate nations. The Indian Government feels that retaining Sri Lanka as one country and managing it to serve India's interest is the best for India's advantage. Hence India does not support the demand for a separate Tamil Eelam. India's objective is to resolve the Tamil issue in such a way as to subserve its own interest, and at the same time make the Sri Lankan Government accept its hegemony over Sri Lanka. In order to achieve this objective, the Indian Government continues to extend help which the Sri Lankan Government may demand and thus retain the fraternal relations with the Sri Lankan Government.

This is the policy of the Indian Government from the days of Nehru to Rajiv. Nehru dropped the Sethu Canal Plan (a plan which would have been of immense benefit to Tamil Nadu and Eelam) for it was objected to by the Sri Lankan Government.

In order to appease the Sri Lankan Government, the then Prime Minister, Mr Shastri, accepted five hundred

thousand Indian Tamils as refugees and signed the Sirimavo-Shastri Pact. As a gesture of reciprocity the Katchativu (an island) which belonged to Tamil Nadu was bequeathed by Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi to Sri Lanka.

When the Sinhala extremist organisation Janatha Vimukti Peramuna staged an armed uprising against the Sri Lankan Government in 1971, India extended its military assistance to Sri Lanka to crush the uprising. Thus, India's objective has been one of appeasement of the Sri Lankan Government.

Mr Prabakaran did not intervene in Indian or Tamil Nadu politics, now or while he was in India. He never even expressed his opinion about the Indian/Tamil Nadu politics. He adhered to non-interference and neutrality. He sought the support of all political parties without prejudice to the cause of Eelam. Hence, it is the duty of every Tamil to express solidarity with him.

Any liberation struggle can be victorious only under an able national leadership. Now Mr Prabakaran is the genuine national leader of the people of Tamil Eelam. He has proved time and again his unshakable and unflinching faith in the objective of Tamil Eelam. He has never submitted to threats and intimidations; never yielded to any bait. He thinks and acts independently. He always acts in consultation with the top body of the LTTE.

The six Tamil organisations which participated in the Thimpu talks in 1986 unanimously announced four cardinal principles on the Eelam issue. TULF, EPRLF, PLOTE, TELO and EROS have drifted away from these four cardinal principles. But, it is only the LTTE which continues to hold steadfast to these cardinal principles.

During the SAARC conference held at Bangalore in February 1987, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi made earnest efforts to arrange for a meeting and a settlement between Prabakaran and Jayewardene. Mr MGR, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, was asked to accompany Mr Prabakaran and through MGR attempts were made to lure Prabakaran. Rajiv Gandhi and MGR insisted that Prabakaran should be satisfied, for the present, with the Northern Province and assume charge as the Chief Minister of the Northern Province.

MGR offered to donate Rs.10 crores immediately, and assured more help for the Tamil Eelam liberation struggle, if Mr Prabakaran accepted the above arrangements. Prabakaran did not yield to these 'offers' and intimidations. In order to appease Rajiv Gandhi, MGR unleashed a chain of hostile actions against the LTTE. LTTE's offices at Madras were raided. Their communication equipment was seized. Prabakaran announced a fast unto death condemning these actions. Only after this the seized equipments were returned. Prabakaran returned to Eelam realising that it was not safe to continue to live in India.

When in 1987 Rajiv and Jayewardene signed the Accord, Prabakaran was coerced to assume the office of Chief Minister of the North-Eastern Province. Prabakaran categorically refused neither to compromise with his objective nor to assume the office. Subsequently, Thileepan resorted to a fast-unto-death and succumbed to it. It was a great sacrifice for the cause of Tamil Eelam. In spite of it, there was no change in the attitude of the

Indian/Sri Lankan Governments. With the sacrifice of 12 Liberation Tigers, including Pulendran and Kumarappa, attempts were made to liquidate Prabakaran. Rajiv Gandhi made all efforts, including unleashing of the Indian army to suppress the Liberation Tigers. Prabakaran and his comrades are continuing to resist the onslaught of the Indian army. Despite the untold sufferings faced by Prabakaran and his comrades they continue to struggle resolutely. He never agreed to be the stooge of anybody at the cost of his objective. Those who attempted to make use of him also failed miserably. These incidents vouch for his character. He lives like a genuine national leader.

Hence, it is the task of all parties in Tamil Nadu to support the cause of Tamil Eelam liberation struggle and its unparalleled leader Mr Prabakaran. Particularly DMK and ADMK, the parties which claim to be Tamil nationalist parties, are duty bound to express their solidarity with the Tamil Eelam liberation struggle and its leader Mr Prabakaran.

On top of all, Mr Karunanidhi who has assumed the office of Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, now has stupendous tasks to perform in this regard.

At the time of the Bangladesh liberation struggle, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mr Siddarth Sankar Ray, extended all assistance to the struggling militants. The camps of the fighting militants were organised in the territory of West Bengal. West Bengal government and the people stood with them. West Bengal legislative assembly passed a resolution demanding the Indian Government to support the liberation of Bangladesh. Similarly, now the Tamil Nadu Government should come forward to render all assistance to the cause of Tamil Eelam.

The Tamils all over the world expect that the Chief Minister, Mr Karunanidhi, to do the following:-

1. There should be an "Immediate ceasefire and the IPKF should return to India. Sri Lankan Government should begin to negotiate with Mr Prabakaran the leader of the LTTE." A resolution to this effect, pressuring the Indian Government, should be passed in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly.
2. Indian Government should insist that the Sri Lankan Government implement the bilaterally agreed decisions between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government within a defined period.
3. Indian Government should initiate effective steps to implement the decisions, with the help of the LTTE, in case the Sri Lanka Government either refuses or hesitates to implement the same.
4. Chief Minister, Mr Karunanidhi, should insist upon the Delhi Government that only a Tamil, who is conversant with the issue, should be posted as a High Commissioner of India in Sri Lanka.
5. Mr Karunanidhi as Chief Minister should strive to enlist support for the above demands of the leaders of all the parties in Tamil Nadu and at All-India level.
6. A goodwill mission should be sent abroad to mobilise the solidarity of the people of the world and to present the truth before all the countries.

# (I) THE ROLE OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN THE STRUGGLE (II) FUTURE TACTICS AND STRATEGIES (III) THE NATURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURE REQUIRED

by A Jeyaratnam Wilson, University of New Brunswick

There are three problems, interconnected, which have to be dealt with. We will take these separately and test whether they can all be accommodated within a broad framework. The problem arises if there are conflicts among the three which can mean (a) internecine warfare, and (b) an unsatisfactory international image for our freedom movement. Either of these consequences will weaken our movement.

The electoral process is now universally recognised as the lifeline of democracy. Other things being equal (sometimes they can be approximately equal and on other occasions divergence occurs), the process determines the support the groups possess among the electors. We have to recognise this fact. But questions arise about (i) the Presidential Election, (ii) the elections held to the merged Provincial Council, (iii) the Referendum and (iv) the parliamentary elections. All elections were held, except for the Referendum scheduled for July 5, under the intimidating presence of Indians who came to keep the peace.

For practical reasons, there is nothing that can be done about the Presidential Election. President Premadasa occupies the presidency. He will refuse to be dislodged even if by any chance there are judicial sanctions against him.

The elections to the merged North-East Provincial Council left a great deal to be desired. There is not a doubt that the IPKF, RAW and the Indian authorities conspired to produce the result that returned the EPRLF. There is a fair and just case to have this election annulled and a new election held. In any case, it is possible that new elections will have to be held if the Eastern Province is delinked from the Northern after the Referendum of 5 July 1989. Our view is that normal elections in these areas cannot be held until such time as the IPKF which encouraged various illegalities in the previous election is withdrawn and the rival Tamil militant groups agree at a solemn convention to give up their fratricide and agree to participate in the mainstream of Tamil political life.

Of necessity there will be an interim period before the return of normalcy. This will require a provisional government for the Tamil areas. We suggest that the original 'interim board' of 13 members agreed upon between President Jayewardene and New Delhi be restored without any change in the composition as agreed upon at the time. This is the view of the Tamil people. Neither Sri Lanka nor Delhi should attempt to tamper with this. If scrupulously followed by President Premadasa who does not have a reputation for double dealing or of deception by sleight of hand, we can hope for the beginnings of a peaceful return to normal government.

The proposed Referendum of 5 July 1989 virtually

nullifies the atmosphere of good intentions sought to be created by the 1987 Accord. We question the wisdom of the Referendum both for President Premadasa and the Tamil people. We note that there is only one frustrated superhawk croaking for this Referendum, Lalith Athulathmudali. Lalith's plan seems to be to create as many problems for the go-getting President. President Premadasa has been elected for a six-year term. Nothing that he does now with regard to the Referendum will enhance his position. The JVP will mark it down as one of their gains in their inexorable march towards overthrowing the established order. Lalith Athulathmudali will enjoy the spectacle of a President heaped with one more burden, a burden which we caution will bring in its wake untold misery, war, guerilla struggle and a permanently unhappy Tamil minority.

We do not see any reason why President Premadasa should so knowingly step on the time bomb of a Referendum planted for him by the former President (Jayewardene) whose two terms of office had constitutionally ended. It became incumbent on President Premadasa, as the incoming President with a new mandate, to judge the mood and the situation in the country and then decide on an appropriate date. Why should he make himself the prisoner of a date fixed by an outgoing President?

President Premadasa is morally obliged to survey the scene of mass misery and the refugee situation in the Eastern Province to determine whether a normal Referendum can be held till normalcy is restored. There is the ineluctable IPKF presence and it has been established that the IPKF with RAW personnel has forced Tamil voters to vote the way India's interests were best served. A safer approach would be for President Premadasa to extend the time frame. In the meanwhile the President can negotiate an amicable settlement with the LTTE.

We come to the last of our questions, the role of parliamentary elections in our struggle towards our goal. An immediate question is, should we have anything to do with an electoral process that ties us hand and foot to the Sri Lanka Parliament which we do not recognise? Parliament is seductive and **unless** we are on our closest guard, the electoral process either through parliamentary or provincial council victories can, like the sirens of the Greek legend, lull us into a false sense of security. This cautionary note stated, the electoral process can serve two purposes. Firstly, as in the case of the triumph of the Eelavar Democratic Front, we can prove to the world that the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord of July 1987 was written on water. It was hatched in secrecy and the parties immediately concerned were never consulted. There is more that can be said. For the present we will confine our remarks to two crucial problems. Firstly, there is the enormity of the IPKF crimes against humanity, their rapings,

lootings and sodomising of innocent youth who are rounded up for supposedly pro-LTTE activities. There is a crying need for an impartial international commission to investigate these war crimes and for a Nuremberg-style trial of Indian war criminals. Our representatives in Parliament can use Parliament as a forum to give expression to this demand.

Secondly, our representatives, by which we mean the genuine representatives of the Tamil people, not India's quislings, can protest the encroachments on our traditional homelands as well as invite attention to the innumerable acts of discrimination being perpetrated on the Tamil people by the state and its agents. We do not recognise the unitary Parliament. Any street hawker, as Bernard Shaw stated, can enter an electoral body. But the chosen among us have a sacred duty to discharge. The Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaja Party was committed to the overthrow of Parliament and of the British monarch that presided over Ceylon till 1972. But this fundamental commitment of theirs did not prevent them from taking their oath to the monarchical constitution up to 1972. Such stalwarts as Dr Colvin R de Silva and Dr N M Perera found no difficulty. Parliament they said provided them with an added platform to proclaim their beliefs in world revolution.

Elections therefore constitute only one component of the struggle for an independent homeland. I leave the term vague. On the basis of the Thimpu Declaration, the Tamil people demanded the right of self-determination. Self-determination is for colonised repressed people who constitute an ethnic minority. The Eelam Tamils qualify for self-determination in all the respects indicated. But it is for the Tamil people in their wisdom to determine what form the self-determination should take. Whether it should be separate statehood or whether it should take the form of a firmly rooted regional autonomy, a federal link-up or a confederal arrangement. A great deal will depend on the attitude of the Sinhala leadership.

I personally do not expect the right of self-determination to be offered to us on a platter. The problem arises from the fact that the Sinhala elites are unwilling to share power with us Tamils, even after a grave national crisis such as experienced in the recent past. As I have stated elsewhere there might be interim solutions. We can only hope that these will become permanent. But given the historical process, the Sinhala mind does not appear to be ready or willing for an everlasting compromise. In these circumstances we must be prepared to consolidate our existing strategies and tactics and evolve and develop new ones.

In the evolving and development of new tactics and strategies, we have suffered grave and irreparable losses in the recent past, losses which in more ways than one are irreplaceable. In particular I refer to the Tamil Information Centre in London with its dynamic director, the late K Kanthasamy and the Tamil Information Centre in Madras which put out numerous publications, especially its invaluable diaries, closed after the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of July 1987. These have to be started again. We have to set up documentation and information centres which will work in close liaison with human rights

organisations and which will bring to the attention of the world the numerous vile acts of violations of human rights committed first by the armed forces of Sri Lanka and its ancillary organisations and worse still the abominable atrocities of the IPKF which in reality is an army of occupation. Our first priority therefore is for information centres.

Secondly, we need to establish relationships with legislative lobbies in the democratic world. Expatriate Tamils in certain parts have accomplished these successfully especially in Britain, Canada and Australia. More of such contacts can help to bring us closer to our day of deliverance. We need the support and goodwill of the US Congress, the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights and aid-giving bodies such as the Canadian International Development Authority, USAID and even the UN's financial institutions.

Thirdly, a better understanding with the media, with Television, with weeklies and dailies is indispensable. News of the indignities and atrocities perpetrated on our people must be aired in the world's information outlets. We are a community of learned men, of professionals. We must possess the talent to man, what I might call, a Tamil World Information Centre, TWIC for short. TWIC's main function will be to co-ordinate the work of publicity in the world's capitals.

Our tactics must relate to the goals and objectives of our movement. We have to be definite and determined on two broad ends. First we must not hesitate or falter over our demand for the right of self-determination. This right is inextricably intertwined with our concept of the unity of the Tamil-speaking areas in the North and East of Ceylon. Anyone who fails to appreciate the geographic contiguity and unity of the Northern and Eastern Provinces as the homeland of the Eelam Tamils fails, in my view, to understand the Tamil demand. On language and on territory there can be no compromise. Secondly, we must forge the unity of the Tamil-speaking people under one all-embracing banner be they in different parts of Ceylon or in different parts of the planet. The Eelam Tamils are a distinct and unique entity and only in unity can we move forward to our destination. We cannot therefore afford to have contending schools of thought. In a grave hour of national crisis we must stand as a solid phalanx. This is not the time for a hundred flowers to bloom and a hundred schools of thought to contend. Chairman Mao gave free rein to this expression only after he had consolidated the gains of the Chinese Communist Revolution.

This brings me to the last of our propositions, namely the nature and future of the international structure. I interpret this to mean the future of the structure we must fashion for ourselves and the future of the international structure with which we will conduct our negotiations for the attainment of our goals. There are models to choose from for our internal structure. Given that we have differing views on how to achieve our final objective (Tamil Eelam) and on this goal, we must be united, we can have umbrella organisations of which the All India National Congress was the classic instance in the past and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation of Yasser Arafat and the African National Congress of Nelson Mandela are



contemporaneous examples. However, I emphasise that Tamil Eelam is our goal. We cannot have groups with differing ends and contradictory methods within the same all-embracing framework. For example, the pro-Indian or pro-Colombo advocates cannot find a place in our nationalist-oriented movement. They will have to be left out just as General de Gaulle refused to have anything to do with the Vichy Government of Marshal Petain in France which collaborated with the Germans. Our movement then in terms of being engaged in a struggle for the achievement of self-determination will be similar to the organisations I have already referred to. More likely it can be similar to the Free French Movement of General de Gaulle.

How then do we unite the various Tamil organisations that are dispersed in all parts of the globe? The World Federation of Tamils is making an effort to build bridge-heads between the disparate groups. But there is more to be done. Once a measure of unity is obtained, we must have a World Parliament, a World Convention or World Congress of Eelam Tamils. Such a body could undertake to co-ordinate through an executive committee the different kinds of work that our varying types of Tamil networks are involved in internationally. Through such inter-linking we will achieve strength and we will more importantly avoid many a pitfall. My point is that our goal is in sight but we are apparently not adequately prepared to meet the challenges.

Challenges there are in plenty. There is a need for a constitutional framework. The economic resources of Tamil Eelam have to be assessed and 5-year plans or 3-year plans have to be prepared. We need to look into our educational resources. Above everything else the financial resources for such a major endeavour require careful exploration. There are planners and economists in our community who can address their minds to these problems.

With our internal structure in place, we have to approach the international structure with its multifarious networks to present our point of view and convince it of the correctness of our stand. First the international comity of nations must be certain that we will not be a threat to the peace of the world and that we will not in any way destabilise the global system. An obvious way out is to ensure that the major power or powers in the region guarantee our neutrality, in short, declare Tamil Eelam a neutralised zone. The state of Belgium enjoyed such a status before World War I. Switzerland, in a way without international guarantees, as does Luxemburg, remains neutral state despite the wars fought around their frontiers. Tamil Eelam can secure for itself such a status. In any case the position is negotiable.

Secondly, we need to convince the world that unlike other poor countries, one and a half to two million souls will surely not become a breadbasket case. Our planners and economists must prove that we have the resources and the inner strengths to pull ourselves up by the bootstraps and become a viable state in our own right, not being a satellite state of any other power, nor bartering away our strategic facilities for foreign aid, or being, in any

sense of the term, an international beggar.

Lastly, the strength of our unified and united organisation will determine our standing in the international community. States will take us seriously and will seek to negotiate with us if we are a solid phalanx. We will no doubt meet with rebuffs in the beginning as did Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Makarios, Yasser Arafat and others. In the end they will realise that it is with us that they must negotiate and do business. Through unity we achieve strength and through strength we can reach our destination at a much faster pace than we appear to be moving at the present juncture.

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## THE TAMIL AGENDA

*Continued from page 18*

(EPRLF) seems to have replaced the old Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) as India's most favoured organisation. A coalition of Tamil and Sinhalese opinion against external, i.e. Indian, forces can compel India to withdraw the IPKF, the signs suggesting that just such a manoeuvre is now under contemplation. Or India might recall her troops for her own reasons, either because of the high political and military cost of the involvement or because of some drastic shift in the domestic equation, such as a Congress (I) defeat at the next general elections.

In either case, withdrawal is likely to leave the field open for renewed full-scale warfare leading - since the Sri Lankan army cannot match the IPKF in tactics and fire-power - to some kind of de facto partition, on the lines of what has happened in Cyprus. Indeed, **if Sri Lanka is not India's Vietnam, the most probable alternative comparison seems to be with Cyprus.** Which is why the threat to withdraw the IPKF has so far been India's strongest card against the government in Colombo.

The fighting on the ground is important but not as important as it was when the hope was that the IPKF would quickly disarm the LTTE and restore Colombo's rule - now exercised through the provincial EPRLF - in the North-Eastern Province. Had that happened, partition would have been ruled out, and Tamil Eelam put away among history's many other lost causes.

But the LTTE has not only forced India into a no-win situation; it is at last displaying a shrewd grasp of diplomacy. The Tamil future would, therefore, seem to hang on two principal factors: First, the course of the expected negotiations between President Premadasa and Velupillai Prabhakaran. And secondly, on the political survival of the author of the "Rajiv Doctrine."

Without superpower India the Sri Lankan Tamils may not have come so far. Now it would appear that superpower India is the most formidable obstacle to the realisation of their further aspirations.

# A TEN-PHASED PROGRAMME TO SOLVE THE SRI LANKAN TAMIL ETHNIC CRISIS

by Professor Kopan Mahadeva

## INTRODUCTION

The next 6-12 months represent a most opportune time to make an all-out effort to tackle the above problem, to a substantially tolerable degree. Several reasons could be adduced to support this contention: (1) The next Indian General Elections are round the corner, and Rajiv Gandhi would naturally like to pull out his troops from Sri Lanka before then, hopefully without loss of face and with an image that they have achieved something worthwhile in Sri Lanka for all the expenditure of money and lives lost so far; (b) All the inhabitants of the Island - Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims alike - are really fed up with the prolonged battles, deaths and suffering, and are craving for a return to peace; (c) Sri Lanka's new President, Mr Premadasa, understands the language and culture, and problems and aspirations of the Tamils more than any other leader of Sri Lanka in recent times, and looks keen to promote justice and fair play for all sections in equal measure and to relieve India from its ordeal as soon as possible; (d) The time is now ripe, with all the publicity of past years for mustering support of the United Nations and the international community for solving the Tamils' problems; and (e) Dr M Karunanidhi, Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister, has demonstrated keenness to commence negotiation with Mr Rajiv Gandhi as soon as practicable, and he has the capability at this juncture to wield significant influence.

## THE TEN-PHASED PLAN

A ten-phased Plan, for consideration at the Conference, is presented below in summarised form. Any clarifications required, and explanations on specific aspects of the Plan will be given orally at the Conference itself. Necessary and suitable amendments to the Plan from the other conferees will naturally be welcome so as to ensure greater success of the Plan. Some background information on the thinking behind the proposals, however, could be found in this Paper under the heading "Some Suggested Strategies."

### SRI LANKAN ETHNIC CRISIS : RECOMMENDED 10-PHASED PLAN OF ACTION

	Recommended action	Principally by whom	By when
1.	Declare a permanent ceasefire in the N-E province	Govts. of India and Sri Lanka, LTTE and other groups	1.6.89
2.	Withdrawal of all but 5000 Indian troops to India	Govts. of India and Sri Lanka	1. 7.89
3.	UN Force of 1,000 to be invited to help peace-keeping and rehabilitation	Govt. of Sri Lanka and UN Security Council	1. 7.89
4.	Confirm the N-E Merger as a permanent unit, renamed Tamil Eelam	Govt. of Sri Lanka	1. 8.89
5.	Grant amnesty to all the civilian combatants and grant official recognition as new political parties	Govt. of Sri Lanka	1. 9.89
6.	Surrender of arms by civilian combatants under a negotiated Scheme	Govts. of Sri Lanka and India, LTTE and all civilian groups	1.10.89
7.	Withdrawal of all remaining Indian troops to India	Govts. of India and Sri Lanka	15.10.89
8.	Fresh Elections in the N-E under new constitutional provisions	Govt. of Sri Lanka with assistance from UN, India and all Sri Lankan political parties	1.1.90
9.	Formulation & implementation of a Programme of Rehabilitation, Reconstruction & Development of Tamil Eelam with UN and Indian funds	Govts. of Sri Lanka & India, UNDP, State Governments of Tamil Nadu, Tamil Eelam and the UN itself	From 1. 2.89 to 31.12.92
10.	Departure of UN troops and all UN and Indian officials	Govts. of Sri Lanka, India, Tamil Eelam State and UN	1.1.93

#### Note:

*The above programme can only be accomplished by sincere and timely actions and co-operation of the Sri Lankan Government led by President R Premadasa, the Government of India led by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Tamil Nadu State Government led by Dr M Karunanidhi, the LTTE, the N-E Provincial Council and Leaders of all Sri Lankan political parties.*

## THE RESOLUTION

"This International Tamil Conference organised by the World Federation of Tamils representing nearly 200 local, regional and national organisations of the Tamil peoples world-wide and comprising delegates of Sri Lankan Tamil origin as well as other Tamils and well-wishers from several other ethnic groups from all parts of the world, held in London on 29/30 April unanimously resolves that the Sri Lankan Tamil Ethnic Crisis must be effectively solved within the next 6-12 months in order to alleviate the human misery and suffering of the Tamil population as well as in the best interests of other ethnic groups and of the Island as a whole, and sincerely and earnestly urges:

President R Premadasa and the Sri Lankan Government and citizens, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Indian Government and citizens, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Dr M Karunanidhi and colleagues, The Sri Lanka North-Eastern Provincial Council members, all Sri Lankan Sinhala, North-Eastern Tamil, Plantation Tamil, Muslim and other political parties and groups, the United Nations, Commonwealth and Humanitarian Organisations, International Communities and all Sovereign States, and all other individuals and social groups interested in justice, elimination of suffering, human welfare and peaceful progress, to accept the proposals contained in the Ten-point Programme hereby unanimously recommended by this Conference & forwarded, and to do all that is possible, as a matter of urgency to effectively solve within 6-12 months the problems of the Sri Lankan Tamils."

## POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Sinhala is spoken only in Sri Lanka, and the Sinhalese naturally like to preserve and develop their cherished language. The Tamils are, of course, not opposed to the Sinhala language or the Sinhalese people, but are fighting chauvinism, discrimination, military domination and thuggery, and striving to preserve their own Tamil language, culture, independence and equality of opportunities and as citizens share the resources of the Island. Hence it should be a fruitful strategy to publicise this fact time and again, as often as is necessary, in Sinhala itself whenever possible so as to clearly communicate the real objectives of the Tamils to the Sinhalese public.
2. Similarly, Buddhism is the religious faith of the great majority of the Sinhalese. Also Sri Lanka has been a great leader and pilgrimage centre to the world of Buddhism with established long tradition and heritage. It is again natural that the Sinhalese would want to foster and promote Buddhism and expect the Government to make special provisions to assist them. It is also true that Tamils, most of whom are Hindus, have nothing against Buddhism and treat it as a kindred religion. It would help to promote better understanding and expedite the solving of Tamils' problems if the above message is communicated effectively and repeatedly by all Tamil leaders until it sinks in.
3. One of the reasons why the Tamil language and the Tamils were held back in Sri Lanka in past years was

the fear inherent in the minds of the Sinhalese that the Tamils of Sri Lanka would join with Tamil Nadu and drive them (the Sinhalese) into the sea or dominate them. Events since 1987 have proved that such fear was imaginary and unfounded. It would help to arrive at a speedy solution to the problems of the Sri Lankan Tamils if the Tamil Nadu leaders could be persuaded to put the minds of the Sinhalese at ease in this respect as soon as possible, through suitable assurances.

4. There are several Sinhalese leaders, ordinary citizens, associations, unions and parties who have spoken up for the Tamil cause on various occasions in recent times. Even the alleged opponents have at times seen the justification of the Tamils' actions and said so openly. It would be both fair and wise to welcome praise and publicise such support and pronouncements sincerely, on every possible occasion and thus promote further understanding of the Tamils' thinking among the Sinhalese.
5. It always pays to examine any conflict from the viewpoint of your opponents, understand the real obstacles and reach interim compromises (as Mahatma Gandhi often did), thus making a series of "small wins" but gain more and more understanding and mutual respect from your rivals to pave the way for further cordial talks and "bigger wins." Following such a strategy at this juncture will unite the various Tamil factions working for similar goals in different ways, enable President Premadasa and Prime Minister Gandhi to review their stands and ease the suffering of all.

## WHO DUNNIT?

(*Indian Abroad - April 21, 1989*)

A car bomb (in Trincomalee) that killed 45, of whom 42 were Sinhalese, was allegedly engineered by Tamil terrorists. But it is not certain whether the militants of the LTTE or the ruling party of the north-east, the EPRLF, was responsible. The IPKF and the Chief Minister, A.V.Perumal, accused the LTTE. But according to Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne, who visited the site, most of the Sinhalese in the area were convinced that it was the handiwork of the EPRLF.

Earlier, a seven-day unilateral ceasefire announced by the government was followed by an open invitation to the LTTE and the Sinhala rebels of the uncompromising JVP to enter negotiations. The government proposal was unconditional .....  
According to Indian High Commission sources, India was unhappy because it was not consulted on the wording of the announcement.

Wijeratne said "The lesson in history is clear. When a nation is wracked in internal conflict only outsiders will reap the benefits." The obvious reference was to India.

UNI adds from Madras: The EPRLF has charged that forces within the Sri Lankan government were helping the LTTE with arms to fight the IPKF. EPRLF Secretary General K.Pathmanabha said, "The chain of events which took place in Trincomalee, Sammanthurai and Jaffna are engineered by the LTTE and divisive forces within the UNP government."

# THE STRUGGLE FOR TAMIL EELAM: POLITICAL REALITIES AND DILEMMAS

Jeya Wilson, University of Oxford

Imagine for a moment the following scenario: a group of people living in an island state, who for years had suffered discrimination, oppression and even death at the hands of the rulers, decide to fight for their right to self-determination. Their sufferings are compounded when invading forces from the neighbouring kingdom are called in by the rulers. The valiant fighters who had taken on the might of the rulers' forces are now faced with an even mightier force. Against all the predictions of the political and military pundits, however, they survive the onslaughts waged against them.

The freedom fighters refuse to participate in any farcical exercise in democracy, and refuse to take up the offer of political power. Yet they know full well that a political solution is the only solution. The rulers too know this. In a guerilla war such as the one being waged by the freedom fighters the objective is to wear down the enemy, to harass and frustrate it, and in avoiding defeat demonstrate the limits of the power of the state. The rulers hold out the olive branch. Is it real or a ruse to get the fighters to lay down their arms?

The predicament that arises is as obvious as it is classic: to refuse the offer is to remain true to one's commitment that dialogue is not possible so long as the invaders are in the land; to accept the offer and the opportunity that comes with it, particularly with regard to asking the invaders to leave, means to sacrifice one's pristine integrity. Politics is, after all, governed by its own inescapable laws; integrity of principles is seldom compatible with political realities.

Even as this paper is being written, the struggle for Tamil Eelam is at the proverbial crossroads. President Premadasa's invitation for talks has been accepted by the LTTE. This is not an "unexpected reversal" as the press would have us believe because, though it is seldom acknowledged, the armed struggle has always been an adjunct to the political struggle, and not the other way around.

That the withdrawal of the IPKF is central to the talks is not in doubt. To offer any prognostications beyond that at this point, given the rapidity with which events are moving, would be facile yet foolish. Nevertheless it is useful to ponder on the various elements that make up the present context insofar as the Tamil struggle is concerned.

## THE LTTE DILEMMA

There are three *main* actors that are directly involved: the LTTE, the Indian government and the Sri Lankan government. Let us consider each in turn starting with the LTTE. To those who doubt the validity of the LTTE's claim to leadership of Eelam Tamils, the question must be posed as to the available alternatives. The report of the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) notes that "for the other militant groups, given their past political and military failures, an Indian presence provides an expeditious means of re-establishing themselves." In this

regard, the EPRLF's claim to be the elected representatives of the Tamil people is difficult to sustain given that its very existence is dependent on the protection afforded by the IPKF. In Batticaloa, the election of Prins Casinader and Sam Tambimuttu was not so much a victory for the EPRLF as for the two individuals who are long-standing and established members of the community. Where the election of EROS is concerned it was acknowledged, even by the Indian press, that in the absence of the proscribed LTTE, the vote "was a clear indication of the support which the LTTE still retains there."

That is not to say that the LTTE's record is without blemish. Violence is inimical to those of us nurtured on the absolute precept that all killing - without qualification - is wrong. To support therefore an armed liberation struggle, however justified the cause, is not easy. At the same time, one has to contend with the awful realities faced by Eelam Tamils. Disillusioned by the unkept promises made to them by successive governments, and indeed by those whom they had elected to represent their interest, they have watched thousands being mercilessly slaughtered at the hands of mobs and troops, their houses burned to the ground, their daughters raped, and their sons tortured.

They know that their salvation lies in their claim for the homeland of Tamil Eelam. This is not going to be handed to them on a platter but on the blood of the thousands who have laid down their lives in defence of their people. Does one therefore have the right to condemn those who have taken up arms, from the distance and comfort of surroundings which are as much symbolic as they are real? The only way to resolve the ethical dilemma is to offer an alternative, and at present no one seems to have one.

## INDIAN REALITIES

The second actor in the struggle for Tamil Eelam is the Indian government. The historian Paul Kennedy in his much acclaimed book **The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers**, predicts the replacement of the present bipolar world with a multipolar one dominated by regional powers. India does not rate a mention as one of the great regional powers whom Professor Kennedy believes will emerge in the next century. China, however, does and herein lies a possible explanation for India's hegemonistic designs.

To quote Mr Venkateswaran - a distinguished guest at this conference and a person of much intelligence and wit - on this point: "Why is China's power - her huge army and her inter-continental ballistic missiles - considered absolutely acceptable while India's is not? Why do Western analysts speak of India's drive to build a blue water Navy while they remain silent about China's submarine-launched missiles? Is there any reason why India should not have military power commensurate with her size, as China does?"

As the strength and influence of the United States and

the Soviet Union begin to wane, there are other powers which seek to fill the power vacuum that is left behind. In Asia there are two contenders: China and India. India's paranoid suspicion of China whose influence it sought to neutralise, led to a close alliance with the Soviet Union, China's arch ideological rival. However, improved Sino-Soviet relations, and the dramatic shifts in Soviet foreign policy under President Gorbachev have weakened India's security alliance with the Soviet Union. Consequently, India now seeks to be more openly assertive in promoting its security interests and needs as the largest and most populous nation in the sub-continent.

Prime Minister Gandhi's contrary assertions that India does not think in terms of dominance and spheres of influence, but rather as being "one of the prime movers towards a non-violent world" ring hollow in the wake of the more than 5,000 killings inflicted on Eelam Tamils by the IPKF. The gross violation of human rights is particularly galling in the light of India's proud record over apartheid. It is indeed hard to believe that it was the same country which in 1946 became the first to impose sanctions against South Africa. At the very first session of the United Nations General Assembly that same year, India brought up the matter of the treatment of Indians in South Africa. The Indian case rested on the grounds that legislation enacted by the South African government was a violation of the Charter concerning human rights and fundamental freedoms. Since then India has not deviated from its right and just condemnation of apartheid and the ignominy thereof.

Yet in Tamil Eelam, the practices of the IPKF do not accord with the restoration of the democratic process or normal civil law. The people do not know at what time a curfew may be imposed by the IPKF and for what period. Newspapers cannot be published freely - they are required to report killings by the Indian army or its surrogates as "killings by unidentified persons." A newspaper that does not comply with this requirement cannot be published. In Tamil Eelam today there is no freedom of press, no freedom of speech and no right to life.

### THE PREMADASA FACTOR

The third actor in the struggle for Tamil Eelam is the Sri Lankan government, and the less said about this the better. President Premadasa's predicament is an unhappy one. His offer of a unilateral week-long ceasefire left over 100 people dead. The LTTE has accepted his offer of talks, but any concession he may make to the north would invite a backlash in the south. To do nothing about the north and let the IPKF remain will also invite more trouble in the south. Quite frankly, if one were President Ranasinghe Premadasa at this point in time, it would be tempting to "do a Ronnie de Mel."

### WHITHER NOW?

So how are Eelam Tamils to respond? First we have to live with the political reality that we are pawns in the struggle between India and China for regional hegemony. It is likely that the rivalry between India and China will become

more marked. India's defence budget which has doubled in real terms this decade, and its military research and development which has quadrupled since 1982, underscore India's persistent fear of a powerful and expanding China. The development of ballistic missiles, state-of-the-art jet fighters and a deep water navy, all indicate that India will press its claim to be the pre-eminent power in the Indian Ocean region. This suggests, therefore, that not only will India continue to ascribe to itself the role of regional keeper of the peace, but will expect its smaller and weaker neighbours to recognise and accept Indian supremacy.

The Indian government has, of course, to contend with the demands of Tamil Nadu where matters are in a state of flux. There are others at this conference, however, who are better able to comment on the implications for Tamil Eelam of Indian domestic politics.

Second, the failure to accept unequivocally that the only political group capable of leading Eelam Tamils is the LTTE, can only lead to greater dissension in an already divided community. Tamils must speak with one voice, and that voice must surely be that of the LTTE. So far there has been little evidence to indicate that any other group can shoulder the mantle of responsibility for the fate of the Eelam Tamil people.

Third, the divide between the north and the east of Tamil Eelam needs to be bridged, and not widened. In other words, the people of Batticaloa and Trincomalee must be made to feel that they are as much a part of the struggle as those in the Jaffna peninsula, and not be accorded a peripheral role. The rights and aspirations of plantation Tamils and Muslims should also be given priority and not assigned a secondary place. It is a reality of politics that if one seeks to change even a small corner of the world, then one must learn to live by the very rules of behaviour that one has pledged to uphold.

Fourth, we have to accept the fact that the break-up of a unitary, sovereign state is not going to be welcomed either by others living in the state, especially the Sinhalese, or by the international community at large which will only see such a step as destabilising the international system. It is up to the Eelam Tamils living overseas to argue their case convincingly and cogently, and to ensure that Eelam Tamils within the country are given the necessary feedback so that they can make an informed decision based on as many factors as possible.

Fifth, that no community can undergo an upheaval of such proportions as Tamil Eelam has seen without it leaving a permanent impression on its collective conscience: the killings, rapes and other human tragedies are written in blood on the consciousness of Eelam Tamils and cannot be easily erased.

The struggle for Tamil Eelam is a universal struggle. It is the struggle of a people for survival in the face of oppression, discrimination and death. It is the struggle to leave behind a legacy so that the next generation at least will be free to determine and control their own lives as full and equal citizens. It is a struggle for power, but the power to control one's own destiny and not that of others. The struggle for the liberation of Eelam Tamils is a struggle for the liberation of all peoples. It is a struggle that must and will succeed.

# RESISTANCE, FUTURE TACTICS AND STRATEGIES FOR FREEDOM

by J G Veerasingam

The people of Tamil Eelam were frustrated by the political decisions made in the Indo-Sri Lanka accord, which they viewed as an agreement thrust on them without their participation and not satisfying their aspirations.

## RESISTANCE BY THE PEOPLE

The dissatisfaction with the accord resulted initially in peaceful resistance by the people to achieve their demands. Subsequently, people realised that it would not work with India and Sri Lanka, especially after witnessing some distasteful incidents culminating in the fast unto death of Dileepan.

Peaceful resistance therefore turned into armed struggle; although people disapproved initially, subsequent events confirmed the necessity for such resistance.

## REACTION BY INDIA AND HENCE IPKF TO INCREASED RESISTANCE

"In an attempt to control and contain the increased resistance by the Tamils the following resulted;

1. India airlifted more troops increasing its strength from the original 2,000 to the present 80,000 - 100,000.
2. Troops which originally functioned as peace keepers turned out to be warmongers, with Tamils showing all-out resistance to the Accord.
3. The confrontation resulted in human rights violations, war crimes and indescribable atrocities. Increased resistance by the people made IPKF to commit more human rights violations and thus began the vicious cycle of more resistance followed by more human rights violations. These violations were brought to the attention of the international community.
4. In an attempt to defend and pre-empt such accusations, India started to provide weapons to some militants from whom they were earlier confiscated. She obtained the assistance of these handful of militants disliked by the people, to carry out espionage, killings etc. which she could not herself do. She also designated some of them as "Police Force."

## REACTION BY THE PEOPLE

This action by India created anger and more resistance by the people who felt that India was setting up a band of ruthless persons to administer or police them, especially when these persons were involved in a fraudulent election. The election was fraudulent because those representing the people's aspirations were cunningly deprived of participation.

It was now becoming evident that India was not interested in the welfare of the people of Tamil Eelam

who had been too optimistic about India's role and intentions.

The inhabitants of Tamil Eelam realised that human rights violations would increase enormously and that their sufferings would be greater under a puppet administration imposed on them. There was an exodus of youths, many of them going abroad as refugees. In Switzerland there were about 500 school children under the age of 18. Those unable to go abroad remained in Colombo.

## PROGRESS IN INTERNATIONALISING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The human rights violations and the atrocities committed by the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) were increasingly brought to the attention of the International Community and at the 45th session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission which ended on the 10th March 1989 in Geneva, the position was as follows:

### WORK DONE AMONGST MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE COMMISSION

Total number of member countries	43
Representatives who evinced interest in our appeal	22
Further representatives with whom WFT delegates established contact	14

### WORK DONE AMONGST COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AS OBSERVERS

Total number of countries as observers	71
Representatives who evinced interest in our appeal	33
Further representatives whom WFT delegates convinced	14

### WORK DONE AMONGST NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGO)

Total number of NGOs	123
Representatives who evinced interest in our appeal	86
NGOs whom WFT delegates spoke and convinced	21
NGOs prepared to give special assistance	9

In its reply to our appeal, the representative from India spoke of

1. "Triumph of the ballot over the bullet", "Faith in democracy", "March towards democracy", "Elections represent a clear vote and mandate for peace", "We would hope that those groups which have kept out of the process will give up terrorism and join the democratic process without further delay." etc.
2. "The spirit of the agreement and sincere efforts at its implementation are sought to be obstructed by extremist elements in Sri Lanka through terrorism and violence."

3. "By engaging in such one-sided and motivated propaganda, organisations have not only damaged their own credibility but have harmed the cause of the Tamil people, a case in point is the appeal to the Commission issued by an organisation that calls itself 'World Federation of Tamils'. The appeal is eloquently silent on terrorist atrocities".

**In a circulated reply to the participants, WFT pointed out that**

1. India and Sri Lanka respond to accusations of Human Rights violations by talking about political issues. WFT also pointed out that South Africa, by tossing around the same words, had been covering up the crime of apartheid and human rights violations for several years. Democracy grows from within the people and we reject a foreign power telling us what we must accept.
2. India has accepted that the IPKF has failed to pacify the Tamil people and has been ineffective in stopping human rights violations. We insist on having outside independent observers.
3. We object to the attempt by the Government of India to deny known facts merely because it disapproves of the sources of information. What is important is that they are accurate.

We acknowledge that the Government of India opposes the WFT because it brings to the world's attention human rights and humanitarian law violations of that government's military forces.

### **INEVITABLE POLICY 'U' TURN BY THE GOVERNMENTS OF INDIA & SRI LANKA**

There are very many people in Tamil Eelam, the learned and the elderly, the high and the lowly, the rich and the poor, who find it very difficult to believe that Tamil Eelam can be governed by anybody other than the LTTE.

LTTE does have mass support, it does have the best organisation, it does have the discipline. Above all, it does have the loyalty of a whole generation of Tamils who associate LTTE with sacrifice, leadership and bravery in its resistance against oppression.

From such an analysis of the expectations of the people we can clearly foresee the following events to happen:

1. Political resistance within Tamil Eelam reinforced by armed resistance will certainly destroy the administration in Tamil Eelam and the Provincial Council will remain derailed with nothing concrete emerging.
2. Increased armed resistance will make the IPKF to commit more human rights violations and continuous effective presentation of information on Human Rights violations to the United Nations should result in mounting international pressure on India and Sri Lanka.
3. The flywheel of resistance, both political and armed, will turn faster and it will accelerate our progress towards freedom and as it gathers momentum the IPKF will lose complete control.

4. Internal political problems will arise in India owing to its massive economic investment of money and manpower. Mounting toll of casualties among Indian troops - the dead alone exceed 1,000 - trying to instal an unpopular and totally unrepresentative administration will lead to a serious loss of morale.

These facts should make India and Sri Lanka take a 'U' turn in their policies, ultimately leading to talks with the genuine leaders of the Tamils.

Already we are witnessing the first step towards such a 'U' turn. EPRLF and TELO delegates, during the third week of March this year, disclosed from Delhi the need for India to talk to LTTE. In South Africa we see the first steps in the Government trying to talk to the genuine black leaders, the ANC. Perhaps, oppressors, wherever they are, have to take a 'U' turn at some stage or the other to be a part of the civilised world. If we look at the general trend it will not be an overstatement to say that developments in Tamil Eelam are moving in the right direction.

### **STRATEGIES AND TACTICS TO MAKE THE 'U' TURN COME SOONER**

The basic aspect to be understood is that India is trying to divert the national aspirations of the people of Tamil Eelam into dubious political ploys. India is trying to tell the international community that Tamils are happy with the current political processes. This has to be countered by clear rebuttals from the WFT and all others who value true democracy and justice.

We must clearly differentiate between politics and human rights violations. Political policies have to be decided by the people of Tamil Eelam and our leaders will attend to it having in mind the aspirations and the existing mood of the people. Our duty will be to talk of human rights violations in Tamil Eelam. We must report all human rights violations to the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva with a copy to WFT.

We must speak with a united voice and not confuse the international community. Therefore it becomes necessary to know the policies; for example, the present position of WFT is that, in Tamil Eelam, we must have UN observers, ICRC and foreign correspondents and to achieve permanent peace an international conference, similar to the Lancaster House conference on Zimbabwe, should be held. A group of concerned countries or the United Nations itself could help in convening such a conference.

We must show that the IPKF has lost effective control as it is unable to prevent human rights violations and is a party in the conflict. We must obtain factual information and know what is happening to our people so that we may help with up-to-date information. We must convince the international community that there will be peace after freedom and not degenerate into civil war. As people advocating human rights we have to be prepared for freedom's sake to accept and pardon those who betrayed our people and our cause. If we do not remain indifferent to their fate and if we can wholeheartedly forgive, should they denounce their actions and apologise to the people,

peace can prevail. Such action could enormously strengthen the march towards freedom. Such an eventuality certainly enhances the possibility of permanent peace.

We must always be on the alert and not become victims of the deceptive and diversionary tactics used by the governments of India and Sri Lanka. To quote an example, a WFT delegate who lobbied at the 45th session of the Human Rights Commission was told by an adviser to the Indian Delegation that the IPKF would withdraw within two weeks. This was a blatant lie to soften the WFT from forcefully presenting the case for unfettered access to UN observers, ICRC and foreign correspondents. They prevailed on the most capable and articulate speakers for freedom amongst us to give up and go over to their side. The leadership of TULF, TELO and EPRLF are classic examples, some of whom already realise their mistakes.

We must express clearly and unequivocally that the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, signed in July 1987, has failed to deliver the desired results. The machinery imposed on our people has degenerated into an instrument of discrimination and oppression. Any attempt by legislation to undo discrimination and oppression has failed and will continue to fail in Sri Lanka. There is no concern whatsoever for the happiness and security of the Tamil citizens in the North-East; when civilians are being killed by IPKF and their allies, the Sri Lanka government is silent, indifferent or refuses to appoint even a commission of enquiry, a continuation of the pre-accord thinking that Tamils are like "mosquitoes", as stated by the earlier president. India is now sadly supporting it.

We must prove that decentralisation of powers has not taken place even after 19 months of IPKF intervention, as confirmed by the Chief Minister of North-East Provincial Council in Delhi, during the 2nd Week of March this year.

We must point out that truth about the events in North-East Sri Lanka is not known by the international community. This is solely because the perpetrators of the crimes bear the name 'Peace Keepers' and are the sole agents of information and news to the world. They add, twist or fabricate where necessary to conceal the truth and blame others at the same time to obtain sympathy from the international community for their so-called peace keeping role. The truth remains buried and the Human Rights situation continues to degenerate.

We must repeat with concern that there is terrorism in North-East Sri Lanka under the cover of "pacification" and bringing LTTE into the "political mainstream." There are no police enquiries or investigations and legal institutions do not function, only ruthless "instant justice by the soldiers." There is blatant suppression of demonstrations. Recently, IPKF soldiers dealt ruthlessly with a demonstration by Jaffna University students where the protest had been limited to slogans and placards. Two students were killed. A pattern similar to the situation in South Africa and Israel.

We must stress with utmost urgency to the international community that knowingly or unknowingly, by their actions, they brought the human rights situation in

Sri Lanka to its present degenerate form. Some countries at the inception supplied weapons which resulted in escalation of violence. Some others sent their military personnel and carried out aerial bombing. UN Human Rights Commission in March 1987 passed a resolution unanimously for ICRC to go to the North-East, which is yet to be carried out. The international community in its silence is thereby indirectly supporting the Human Rights violations of India and Sri Lanka, who are members of the UN Human Rights Commission. All the Commonwealth countries irresponsibly welcomed the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord at their summit meeting held in 1987, even though Tamils were not a party to the Accord, especially at a time when thousands of Tamil civilians were being ruthlessly killed by the Indian forces in Jaffna. Their support strengthened, and continues to strengthen, the hands of the persecutors.

We must appeal for peace in North-East Sri Lanka. Human Rights, peace and progress are all interlinked, as pointed out by the wife of the Nobel prize winner for peace, Andrei Sakharov, in Oslo in 1980. If there are no Human Rights there will be resistance and violence. Resistance will result in absence of peace. Absence of peace will impede or even completely halt progress.

The onus is on the international community to bring peace and tranquility to North-East Sri Lanka; to bring about a situation which will enable over 250,000 Tamils living all over the world as refugees to return to their country of their free will; to restore human rights and reactivate the economy so that people can continue to live as human beings.

We must, therefore, contribute our maximum with determination and our traditional resourcefulness. Let us make freedom come faster by effective individual and group secret strategies. Let us hope that the time is not far away for our earnestly longed-for return to our motherland, to enjoy enormously the freedom which we the citizens of Tamil Eelam have neither experienced nor seen in our life-time.

"Next year in Tamil Eelam" should be our motto from now onwards.

## CONFERENCE PUBLIC MEETING

**"Tamil Eelam, India and Sri Lanka: The future of Tamil Nationalism"**

**Speakers:** V. Gopalsamy, K. Veeramani, A.P. Venkateswaran, K.P. Unnikrishnan, P. Upendra, Sunanda Datta-Ray, Karen Parker, S.P. Singh and several others.

**Venue:** Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane, Wembley (Tube: Wembley Park)

**Date & Time:** 1st May, commencing 2.00 p.m.

**ALL ARE WELCOME**



# INTERNATIONALISING THE TAMIL STRUGGLE - TODAY'S FOCUS

by Wakeley Paul

## A NEW GOVERNMENT - CAUSE FOR OPTIMISM OR CAUTION

With the election of a new President and Parliament in Colombo many Tamils seem to believe that a new era in race relations is round the corner. This belief is accompanied with the thought that any offers to negotiate should be seized upon with open arms and blind faith. They feel the time is ripe to trust Sinhala politicians to lay aside their adherence to Sinhala Buddhism as the cardinal principle on which Sri Lankan nationalism is founded. They expect that Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism will suddenly evaporate and give way to an enlightened realisation that the island does after all belong equally to all its inhabitants.

It is our view on the other hand that new governments must be viewed with circumspection and caution, and not embraced with euphoric expectation. We must chill our emotions and hopes and steel ourselves to the realisation that we are dealing with a new and unknown factor. We must recall our experience with Mr Dudley Senanayake and realize that even the most well-meaning of Sinhala politicians were trapped by the Sinhala Buddhist mania of their supporters. We must remember that new leaders will entertain the fear that their opponents will capitalise on any action of theirs that ignores Sinhala paranoia. Can we forget that Mr Jayewardene with his massive electoral victory did nothing to overturn the fears, phobias and complexes of his people? Why then would those with more slender electoral majorities dare to do so?

We must in this regard remember that the following cardinal concepts of the Sinhala Buddhist philosophy have been the corner-stone of Sinhala thinking since independence:

- 1) That the Island of Sri Lanka is the only Sinhala Buddhist preserve in this universe.
- 2) That all minorities have roots elsewhere.
- 3) That the Sinhala race and Buddhist faith are entitled to special treatment and protection on this Island since it is their exclusive enclave.
- 4) That minorities live in the Sinhala domain on sufferance.
- 5) That minorities cannot expect to be equals in this territory.
- 6) That minorities have no territorial rights in the Island.
- 7) That minorities are subject to Sinhala rule on Sinhala terms.

All governments that have sought to erode any of these principles however slightly have been hounded out by a vociferous Sinhala opposition that has forced them to stop in their tracks and renege on their promises.

Sinhala rulers have never acknowledged, nationally or

internationally, that they have practised racial discrimination. They have justified discriminatory action (without accepting that it is) on the grounds that they are a beleaguered majority protecting themselves from the inroads of a more privileged minority in their midst. They have scoffed at demands for separation or federalism on the ground that Tamils constitute less than 15% of the population and are seeking more than their due. They have accused minorities of being responsible for violence without admitting that they are really its cause.

It is time that the expatriate community exposed Sinhala rulers for what they are, while a younger generation fights valiantly at home for their rights. It is time we embarrassed Sinhala governments into recognising that their actions are untenable, unjustifiable and contemptible. It is time we stopped sparring defensively and made the world appreciate the Tamil demands for separation as the only alternative to a minority without hope. It is time our stand was deemed just and valid by the world forums and the international press. It is time they all forced the Sri Lankan Government to answer the embarrassing questions it has avoided doing so far. It is time their actions were equated with those of South Africa.

In this quest, we must emphasise that numbers have no place in discrimination, that according pre-eminent status to the majority is discriminatory, that entrenchment of discrimination by majority legislation is irreversible, that discrimination is incompatible with equality, and that separation where territorially feasible must be recognised as an alternative to blatant inequality.

We must first tell the outside world media repeatedly of the insidious discriminatory legal actions of Sinhala governments that have gone unnoticed for the past 40 years. Up to now they have been led to believe that we have had benevolent Sinhala democrats, whose good deeds have been stultified and thwarted by ungrateful Tamils. They have, with India's help, created the impression that a segment of an obstinate minority continues to oppose all that the government has done to satisfy their demands and aspirations. Some members of the minority enhance the government's credibility by endorsing its actions posing as reasonable moderates. The International Press has heard more from the government than from us to even begin to assess our position. The world forums have hardly been touched. Foreign governments have had some exposure to the problem but sympathies are yet in favour of the government in power.

## WHERE HAVE WE FAILED?

One of the prominent roles we can play as expatriates is to internationally validate the actions of our Tamil leaders at home. Our efforts to do this appear to have been relatively ineffective for the following reasons, amongst others:

\* We do not have regular communication with the

Press. Our efforts have been concentrated on contradicting "first strike" reports issued by the government, belittling the militants and portraying themselves as victims of militant villainy.

- \* We have not fed foreign governments with a steady diet of news portraying government atrocities, human rights violations and other unjustifiable actions.
- \* We have had little direct contact with foreign diplomats and NGOs in international forums.
- \* We have not made direct contact with members of the Press at these forums.
- \* We have not stated our plight sufficiently in foreign universities and institutions.
- \* We have not created our own visual media for distribution.

All of the above have been handled to a certain degree, but need not only improvement but also expansion. Fax machines should and could be used to provide media with a steady diet of news that would make them wary of government releases. More lectures, informal meetings and one to one contacts need to be developed on an organised basis by each expatriate group, using the talents and resources of all. Our positive posture needs to be portrayed with more organisation and vigour to make those that matter regard our situation as serious. We must inspire organisations and governments to question the Sri Lankans and make them face up to their unjustifiable role.

The justifications given thus far for the discrimination they have practised must be exposed to the point where they realise they are treading on thin ice if they dare use them any more. Their claim, for instance, that Buddhism must be accorded a pre-eminent position in order to protect it, must be met with the obvious 'from whom?' Do you rectify minority superiority by discrimination or by improving your own performance? Are citizens equal when you give disproportionate grants of state land to your own kind? Is not the minority response in seeking proportionate allocation of land a defence forced on them? How can minorities defend themselves against majority discrimination except through separate regional governments? Are the Sinhalese governments and opposition parties ever going to change their stance that Tamils seek too much, implying thereby that they are different and unequal?

How does one protect oneself from unequal treatment when you do not have the votes to prevent it? Can we change the Sinhala beliefs that they are 'more equal' than others? Are they fit to rule anyone but themselves if they feel threatened by minorities against whom they feel discrimination is justified? Does anyone expect us to accept inequality in perpetuity? Is the demand for separation as the only viable alternative to the theory of "justifiable inequality" asking for too much? What secondary roles do the Sinhalese think the Tamils will be prepared to accept?

What seems obvious and fundamental to us have not been made so to the outside world, which yet looks upon

us as ungrateful upstarts who will never be satisfied with anything we are given. People use double standards unless they experience the same plight. The best example I can give of this is the personal experience I had with a Jewish representative of a leading New York paper, when we criticised the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord as an unbalanced document in favour of the government and against the Tamils. His response was "Will you people be satisfied with anything?" to which I asked, "Do you think any party to any Middle-East Accord would accept a truce on the condition that they be asked to totally disarm while the enemy remained fully armed in their midst?" The realisation that Israel could never accept an accord in which they were obligated to disarm on these conditions was too stark for him to counter. In the same vein, without equating ourselves and South Africa, we can highlight the fact that the yoke of discrimination is throttling in whatever form it comes. We must contrast the desperate efforts being made in the US, for example, to overcome the effects of past discrimination, with affirmative action. We must have foreign governments and NGOs to screw the idea into the heads of Sri Lankan rulers that there are no excuses for discrimination in any form in this day and age. Majorities cannot use the practice of past discrimination when returned to power, for the slowness in reducing discrimination against the powerless and sometimes even justification for its continuation.

## CONCLUSION

In essence, we have to galvanise the validity and righteousness of our struggle by getting the international community to ask awkward questions from the ruling regimes and not allow them to get away with pious and fraudulent excuses for their actions, and put them on the defensive. We must switch roles from having to prove the justness of our struggle to making them wriggle while trying to justify their stances. The seminar in London on the subject of internationalising our struggle should be used to foster thoughts in this direction.

### **IPKF Troops Lack Knowledge about Tamil Ethnic Conflict**

(India Abroad - April 21, 1989)

Sri Lanka Tamil Groups known to be pro-India have asked New Delhi to direct Indian troops in the island to show restraint while dealing with civilians and rebel subjects. The plea was made by the EPRLF which controls the North-East provincial administration and the TELO, to India's Defence Minister, K.C.Pant.

India has admitted charging and court-martialing four soldiers for rape. IPKF sources say there have been numerous complaints of harassment and petty theft against the soldiers.

"When some soldiers are killed, people are harassed indiscriminately" said Siraji, a TELO leader. "Many of them may be Accord Supporters. But when they are slapped and abused simply because they happen to be in the area where the LTTE has struck, they turn out anti-India out of sheer vengeance."

IPKF sources say many troops stationed in Sri Lanka lack knowledge about the Tamil ethnic conflict and the various warring groups.

# SELF-DETERMINATION OF PEOPLES AND THE TAMIL NATIONAL STRUGGLE

by Karen Parker - Attorney - U.S.A.

The right of self-determination is firmly established as one of the fundamental principles of international human rights law. Unfortunately, the right of self-determination has not been viewed to apply to the Tamil national struggle. Recent events in Sri Lanka, however, compel reevaluation of the right to self-determination of the Tamil people. This paper discusses the law of self-determination; shows why under traditional analysis, the Tamil struggle did not previously invoke the right; and why recent events now justify its application.

## THE LAW OF SELF-DETERMINATION

The right to self-determination is found as the first protected right in both the two major international human rights instruments - the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. As these treaties do not define self-determination, a number of other international law documents must be consulted in order to define self-determination.

## SELF-DETERMINATION APPLIES TO "PEOPLES"

The first issue to be addressed in defining the right to self-determination is to whom does the right apply. The right is generally viewed to apply to "peoples" not states or individuals. The International Court of Justice emphasized this aspect of the right in its case regarding Western Sahara when it referred to "the principle of self-determination as a right of peoples." (1975 I.C.J. 12,31). The United Nations Special Rapporteur, Hector Gros Espiell, in his Report on the Right to Self-determination, also defined self-determination as the right of peoples: "**Self-determination is a right of peoples . . . of a specific type of human community sharing a common desire to establish an entity capable of functioning to ensure a common future.**" (U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/405/Rev.1 (1980) at p. 9).

The use of the term "**peoples**" presents yet another definition problem. "Peoples" are not merely ethnic minorities; the group claiming the right to self-determination has to have an identifiable territory or homeland which due to certain circumstances, they no longer fully or partially control. Most authorities agree that the right originally applied to peoples not in control of their territory due to foreign or colonial domination. The United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples focusses on countries under foreign (mostly European) colonial control. (U.N. G.A. Res. 1514, 15 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No.16) at p. 66 (1961)). The dominated peoples held the right to self-determination as long as the colonial power was present. However, after the colonial power left, the right to self-determination expired. This was true, even if the colonial power had artificially created a "state" from the territory of several ethnic groups, each having political separation

and control. The pre-existing ethnic groups were not viewed as having separate rights to self-determination. Once the colonial power left, the right to self-determination only applied again if another power seized control, such as when Morocco seized Sahara from the Saharan peoples when the Spanish colonizers left.

Of course, the underlying divisions among different ethnic groups have led to separations or attempted separations of states since the departure of the colonial power. Both Pakistan and Nigeria suffered civil wars based on ethnic and political differences. In the case of Bangladesh, statehood was gained, not because the Bengalis were recognized as having the right to self-determination but because they won the war. The Ibo people in Nigeria are not viewed as entitled to self-determination, but might have established a state recognized by other states if they had won the civil war.

## THE SUBSTANCE OF SELF-DETERMINATION

The substance of the right to self-determination causes fewer difficulties. When a people have the right to self-determination, it means they have the right to freely determine their own political status, and to pursue economic, social and cultural development. The importance of economic control as an aspect of self-determination is stressed in the United Nations Declaration on Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources (G.A. Res. 1803, U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 17) at p. 15) in order to ensure that the entity remains independently viable. Cultural rights, including the right to traditional styles of housing, languages, religions, and traditions are included in the substantive right of self-determination. For example, in the developing Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, cultural rights are set out as follows:

*Indigenous nations and peoples continue to own and control their material culture, including archaeological, historical and sacred sites, artifacts, designs, knowledge, and works of art. They have the right to retain items of major historical significance. . . . [They] have the right to be educated and conduct business with states in their own language, and to establish their own educational situations. (U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1985/WP.5 and Add.4).*

## SELF-DETERMINATION IS A PEREMPTORY NORM

The importance of the right to self-determination is reinforced by its consideration as a peremptory or *jus cogens* norm. This means it has a binding, mandatory nature, and cannot be denied under any circumstances. The operation of *jus cogens* voids any treaty, international or national instrument or law or act that violates one of its norms. In the International Court of Justice's case on Namibia, Judge Ammoun called the right to self-determination a norm of the nature of *jus cogens*, deroga-

tion from which is not permissible under any circumstances. (1971 I.C.J. 16, 89-90 (Ammoun, J., separate opinion)). Most international experts in the field concur that the right to self-determination, with its prominent place in the human rights treaties and its importance to the achievement of international peace and friendly relations among nations, is peremptory.

### **THE TAMIL SITUATION AND SELF-DETERMINATION: THE OLD VIEW**

The current Tamil national struggle has not been viewed to invoke the right to self-determination. This is because the last foreign or colonial power, England, has already left. The one new government was considered "indigenous", even though the two major ethnic groups had been sufficiently distinct in language, territory religion and culture to have been two different states prior to English colonization. The international community has not accepted the view that the Sinhala-dominated government is a foreign or colonial power over the Tamil nation. Accordingly, the Tamil struggle has been considered to be against an indigenous government, and the conflict against the Sinhalese government has been characterized as a civil war -- not a war of national liberation. According to that reasoning, if the Tamil people were to win full or partial sovereignty because of military victory or political negotiation, then, of course, they would have the power to exercise the substance of self-determination -- the free determination of their political status as well as their economic, social and cultural development.

The international community has recognized the continued violations of the human rights of individual Tamils. Since 1983, both the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Commission on Human Rights have addressed the situation of Tamils either in resolutions or extensive testimony. The international community also recognized the application of humanitarian law. I have addressed these issues more fully in last year's presentation at the first Conference, and in various publications excerpted in Tamil Voice International. Normally, the existence of violations of human rights, even when carried out in a systematic fashion against one segment of a national population, does not lead to development of the right to self-determination. Nor does the existence of a civil war, such as existing in Sri Lanka because of the armed conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the armed forces of Sri Lanka, invoke the right to self-determination -- even when there are widespread violations of the rights of combatants and civilians in the course of the armed conflict.

### **THE TAMIL NATIONAL STRUGGLE AND SELF-DETERMINATION: THE NEW VIEW**

In spite of traditional analysis, there are two ways in which the application of the right to self-determination becomes justified in Sri Lanka -- (1) the long-standing virtual intransigency of the Sri Lankan government by its refusal to respect the human rights of the Tamil people in spite of continued international pressure; and, (2) the internationalization of the armed conflict by the entry of the armed forces of India.

### **THE INTRANSIGENCY OF THE SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT**

The intransigency of the Sri Lankan government by its refusal to fully respect the rights of the Tamils has led directly to the armed conflict. Many Tamils felt there was no alternative -- all other less drastic measures had been tried and failed. The international community does not require oppressed people to suffer in silence or to passively resist for years and years and years. At some point the international community has to expect that oppressed people will fight back. When this happens, one could argue that demand for and exercise of the right to self-determination has become the only way in which Sri Lankan Tamils can achieve the other human rights. Armed struggle is one vehicle to achieve the exercise of self-determination. In 1975, Judge Ammoun of the International Court of Justice, recognized the lawfulness of armed struggle to achieve the right to self-determination. (1975 I.C.J. 12, 304 (Ammoun, J., separate opinion). International law expert Ian Brownlie, in stressing the peremptory character (*jus cogens*) of the right to self-determination, points out the special combatant status for armed defenders of the right. (Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law* - 3rd edition, 1977 at p. 83)

### **INDIA'S INTERVENEING ARMY**

With the entry of India into the Sri Lankan civil war, the war became internationalized. The war between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and India is governed by international armed conflict rules. India, being an outside power, can be said to be a foreign power for purposes of invoking the right to self-determination. The Indian armed forces are intervening in the internal affairs of another state in contravention of international law. A civil war is *per se* an internal affair. The Colombo government, of course, claims that it "invited" the armed forces of India -- thus apparently refuting the operation of the principle of self-determination. Yet the international community rejects this reasoning. In a parallel situation, that of the 1980 "call" by the Afghan government for troops of the USSR to assist in repelling the opposition forces, the United Nations considered the issue under the agenda item for self-determination. And in its numerous resolutions over the years, referred to the right to self-determination of the Afghan people violated by the foreign troops.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Tamil people will have to choose the degree to which they wish to exercise the right to self-determination. Some argue for a completely separate state, some for sufficient regional autonomy in Tamil Eelam to allow full rights and development of the Tamil people, others for a situation analogous to a state of the United States, still others for a situation analogous to a province of Canada. Whatever the style self-determination finally takes, and whether it is guaranteed by battlefield victory, or negotiation or both, it is clear that until the aspirations of the Tamil people as a whole are met by some arrangement, there will be no end to the strife in Sri Lanka and no improvement in the human rights situation of the Tamil people.

## AN APPEAL

Hail! Heroes of Eelam!  
 Upon your altar of liberation  
 Lie young lives, mangled bodies,  
 Blood, tears, hunger, thirst and sweat:  
 A thousand homes abandoned,  
 Ten million hopes surrendered,  
 Branded as terrorists, hunted as rebels,  
 A race to be destroyed or subdued,  
 All this and more you endured  
 For Eelam, Hail to you!  
 From these tortured palmyrah beaches  
 These porous limestone blocks  
 Drenched with your rich, red blood  
 Shall spring billions and billions  
 Of Tamils, heads held high,  
 Children of liberty, joy and peace,  
 Proclaiming in resonant tones,  
 "Live forever in our hearts and homes  
 Martyrs of Eelam!

How far advanced are we on freedom's path  
 Aware at last of the monumental hurdles  
 Of chauvinism, national stagnation,  
 Economic insecurity, glaring inequality,  
 Of religion, race, land and language?  
 Are we free of plunder, arson, violence, fear?  
 Has India justified our trust?  
 Does her fidelity to territorial integrity  
 Stand in the way of guaranteeing  
 The liberties and aspirations of Eelam?  
 What are we asking for?  
 A separate State or nothing!  
 Or something that gives Tamils  
 Equal rights with all free nations  
 Like Swiss, American or Indian States;  
 The Alands or any other accepted formula.  
 Talks have failed; yes, time and again

So have pacts; remember the Banda-Chelva pact,  
 The Thimpu talks, the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord?  
 But we don't give up.  
 We keep on fighting, talking;  
 As the Mahatma said, "Kill me,  
 You have my dead body, but not my obedience."  
 Let us stand together!  
 "A house divided against itself  
 Cannot stand." Having withstood  
 Mighty enemies from without, shall we  
 Destroy ourselves from within?

With hope we hail!  
 The proposed International Forum  
 Of Expatriate Tamils.  
 Let them tell the world, of human rights denied  
 Of torturous methods of subduing Tamils  
 Of imposition of unjust political settlements  
 Of our need for a land of our own  
 To cultivate our customs, preserve our traditions  
 Nourish our language, protect our people  
 Our need for self-expression  
 To grow and flourish as an accepted nation  
 Small, yes, but brave and free!

Tamil Voice International !  
 Your very existence is a strength,  
 A rallying ground, a support and inspiration;  
 Eelam has need of you.  
 Tamils all over the world appeal to you  
 To find ways and means  
 To let the world know  
 What Eelam is and what it wants.  
 Let us accept a common leadership,  
 Rally round a common flag,  
 One policy, one ideal,  
 One EELAM !

A Tamil Mother

## US TAMILS RESOLVE

**THE ASSOCIATIONS OF TAMILS IN USA**, representing the majority of Tamils resident in the USA, after exhaustive deliberation on all aspects of the problems affecting the Tamils in Sri Lanka, affirm the following as our position on the issues:

**ONE:** The armed conflict between the IPKF and the LTTE is counter-productive, and contrary to the stated objectives of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, and other efforts at restoration of peace.

This prolonged and needless war has resulted in heavy casualties on both sides, and more importantly, unjustifiable destruction of social structures and civilian life on a much larger scale.

Further, this protracted strife, after two and half years, does not show any signs of abatement or resolution in the near future.

**We therefore call for an immediate and total cessation of all hostilities, without preconditions.**

**TWO:** It is our considered view that the IPKF has strayed from its role as a peace keeping force, and has become a partisan in the conflict.

Further, the Indian Government, by virtue of its control of the IPKF, by its declared inimical attitude towards the predominant Tamil group, and its concurrent allegiance to mercenary groups and to the Sri Lankan Government, has lost credibility as a sincere third party mediator.

**We deem that this situation is not conducive to an equitable or impartial resolution of the discord, and that the immediate introduction of an impartial intermediary (such as the UN) is absolutely urgent and vital.**

**THREE:** The recently enacted Provincial Council statutes do not devolve sufficient governmental powers to the Tamil people.

In view of the well-documented history of the successive discriminatory Sinhala regimes in Sri Lanka that were savagely malicious to the Tamils, this amount of autonomy is totally inadequate to afford the Tamil people even minimal shelter from physical violence and other discriminatory and malevolent acts they have previously been subjected to.

**We demand that the aforementioned statutes be replaced with one that provides secure, equitable and stable autonomy to the Tamils.**

**FOUR:** The proposed Referendum in the Eastern Province to dismember the Tamil Provincial Unit is a spiteful and malicious effort to divide and weaken a people who are already disadvantaged because of their numerical handicap.

Plebiscites in such situations serve only to confound the issue. If permitted, the Tamil people of the Eastern and Northern Provinces can then demand a referendum to decide if they want to secede from Sri Lanka. The Muslims of Gampola and Galle, the Hindus of Nuwara-Eliya and Wellawatte, and the Catholics of Negombo, Ja-ela and Wattala can similarly demand referendums for separate localised governments.

The desire of the Tamil speaking people of the Eastern and Northern Provinces, who have been the subject of

intense pogroms for forty years, to function as one unit must be respected.

The rights of sub-groups of minorities (Sinhala-speaking Christians and Muslims, Tamil-speaking Christians and Muslims, Tamils living in the Sinhala areas, Sinhalese living in Tamil areas, etc.) should also be honoured and protected by enactment of suitable anti-discriminatory and affirmative action statutes.

**We demand, as a first step, the permanent abandonment of the proposed referendum in the eastern province.**

**FIVE:** The North-East Provincial Council as it is currently made up is illegitimate.

The people of this unit were asked to elect representatives to a body which, as legislated, was not what they strove for.

The elections were conducted under a partisan armed occupation, and as a result important parties were precluded from participation.

Consequently, the entire Northern Province with 36 of 71 seats were not contested except by one party favoured by the IPKF. The illegitimate and corrupt electoral technique in the Eastern province election is well documented.

**The North-East Provincial Council as presently constituted must be declared void. Fresh elections must be held under an adequately liberal milieu, but only after the issue of a satisfactory devolution of powers to the provinces is reconciled.**

**SIX:** We are of opinion that, when the issue in dispute is the Sri Lankan Constitution itself, the pre-condition that all participants in any democratic processes should take an oath of allegiance to this Constitution is presumptuous.

This requirement is the first and foremost deterrent to Tamils utilising democratic modalities to resolve the conflict.

We demand that this requirement of an oath of allegiance to the Constitution as a prerequisite to democratic participation be immediately rescinded.

**SEVEN:** The physical safety and the psychological well-being of the Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka are of utmost concern to us.

We are deeply distressed by the IPKF and Sri Lankan army operations which very frequently disrupt civilian life. Cordon and search operations, arbitrary arrests, prolonged incarceration without trial and torture while in detention over a decade have all had extremely deleterious effect on the physical and psychological well-being of the Tamils.

We are informed that over 1,500 political prisoners are held in Indian army camps and a further 1,000 are held in Sri Lankan jails, all for protracted periods and without trial.

**We demand that these operations and arrests be halted forthwith, and all political prisoners be released immediately. The Sri Lankan army should be confined to barracks as provided for in the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, and the size of the Indian army presence should be reduced drastically, to allow civilians to recover from the atmosphere of chronic fear.**

Headquarters,  
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam,  
TAMIL EELAM.

8 April 1989

On behalf of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam I send greetings to the World Federation of Tamils Second International Tamil Conference to be held in London on the 29th and 30th April 1989. I wish the Conference every success.

The Conference held last year had succeeded in enlightening the whole world on the deplorable situation faced by the Tamil-speaking people of Eelam. I am confident that the present Conference, while throwing further light on the racist atrocities that are continuing to be perpetrated on our people on our own soil, will examine at the same time ways and means by which it can assist us in strengthening our resistance against the perpetrators of these atrocities.

There are today more than 300,000 Tamil-speaking refugees scattered in foreign countries because they are not able to live in their own country. Families have become separated and family ties broken. What is the need for all this? The children of Tamil-speaking people are becoming a lost generation belonging neither to their own country nor to the countries of their present domicile. Why must such a situation be allowed to become permanent?

If conditions in countries of their present domicile should undergo unexpected adverse changes overnight, should not these people have a Homeland to return to in such a situation?

The fate that befell the people of Indian origin in Uganda may well befall us. It is sad that Sri Lanka and India have shown that they share a common interest in denying the Tamils a Homeland of their own.

India has shown not the slightest hesitation in attempting to destroy us in the cause of her own national self-interest. Today our country is being destroyed by Indian armed aggression. Our land is being subjected to continuing Sinhala colonisation. Up till now 1110 of our freedom fighters have laid down their lives in battle against this combined Indo-Sri Lankan aggression against us. During the past 18 months of the Indo-Tamil Eelam war 479 of our soldiers have lost their lives.

But we have not been destroyed by them yet. On the contrary we have gained more strength. We have acquired more than 400 weapons alone from the Indian aggressors. We need the support of the expatriate Tamil community scattered throughout the world to achieve a quick victory in this war.

In what ways can such support be given to us? The expatriate Tamil community can publicise throughout the whole world the sacrifice we have made in furthering our cause. Apart from this, experts in the fields of technology, engineering, medicine, agriculture and other fields, from among the expatriate community, instead of serving foreign interests and eventually getting lost, can contribute their expertise to serve our people and to train our younger generation and thus help in the further development of our struggle.

We are not fighting this war with the support of any world power. We are fighting it with only the support of our own people. Therefore, we can hold our heads high. The sixty million Tamil people living throughout the world have no country to call their own. Tamil Eelam as a concept is a practical objective. We will never allow any power to block our path in the achievement of this objective. Our people are our strength. Let us fight together to achieve this objective which will become an established fact tomorrow. (Translation)

V. PRABAHARAN  
Chairman LTTE

## GREETINGS FROM C J ELIEZER - Patron, The World Federation of Tamils & Chairman, Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations

While unable to join you at this Conference, we hasten to send greetings from Australia, and express solidarity with you all. Our people in Eelam continue to live in the midst of much suffering, unhappiness and uncertainty. But they show great fortitude and patience, and remain steadfast on ultimate goals. From the early eighties, young men and women in militant groups have endeavoured to defend home and kin from savage onslaughts. Their sacrifices will remain for ever in the hearts and minds of the Tamil people. Tragically, the inability of some groups to work together is now having serious consequences.

### Some questions suggest themselves:

1. As the IPKF continues to function as an Army of Occupation, and as the months drag on, is it too much to hope that the Indian Government may be amen-

able to negotiation, and to reach an understanding with the Tamil people?

2. With new leadership in the Sri Lankan Government and negotiations talked about, is there hope for a sensitive approach to human affairs, and a belated recognition that the Tamil people desire to live in peace managing their own affairs?
3. Will the Tamil people continue to be subject to those violent periodic pogroms which killed many people, destroyed many homes, and transformed so many into refugees, scattered over Sri Lanka and over various parts of the globe?

These questions and more will engage the attention of the Conference. We wish you successful deliberations.



**Ajit Mahatiya (left) and Yogi (right) are the LTTE representatives nominated by Prabakaran (centre) for talks with President Premadasa**