

PAK bombshell and two-faced U.S. policy on arms

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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GANDHI'S GAME PLAN

- Taming the Tiger
- Simultaneous De-escalation
- International Pressure
- Counter Embargo
- Palk Straits Confrontation
- Final Warning ?

— *Mervyn de Silva*

WAR AND POLITICS

Referendum Report and Sirima's Denial Strategy

Militant Madness in Madras — *S. H. Venkatramani*

Tamil Pressure Moves ● Soaring Defence Costs

The New Nama-Gama Game — *Rukman Dehigaspe*

K. M. de Silva on Mismanaging the Language Issue

Needed: A Regional Studies Centre — *C. Suriyakumaran*

Also: U. Karunatilake's "DRAGONS",
Peasant Agriculture **and**
Dogs of War in Sri Lanka

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GARADS

DOGS OF WAR

"ASIAWEEK" published the picture in its issue of Feb. 8 and captioned it "Athulathmudali and British mercenary" in Jaffna. The HINDU, no great friend of the National Security Minister, filed it away thoughtfully to use it with deadlier effect nearly a month later when the DAILY NEWS, London, got its scoop — an interview with a KMS instructor who had helped run the Katukurunda STF training camp. Nonsense, replied the Minister via the Media Centre. The picture was taken in December at Nuwara Eliya and the bald-headed bloke giving Mr. Athulathmudali a helping hand as he alighted from a Bell helicopter no mercenary.

British, Fijians, Israelis, South Africans, Americans. ALL mercenaries claim the Eelam Information outfits overseas. Filipinos, turbaned Sikhs, Arabs... yell back the local media, accusing the Eelamist rebels of using mercenaries themselves. The counter-charge came after a SL AF plane was shot at near Palaly airport. Now the Media Centre has denied that Arabs are helping the 'Tigers'. As the war gets more messy and brutal, the agitprop begins to get dirtier.

WATCHDOGS

Meanwhile the war of words grows nastier abroad too, even in respectable fora like the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, where the Argentians still smarting from our UN Falklands vote team up with India to flay our human rights record. The Indian delegate Mr. Veerendra Patil accused Colombo of conducting military operations "ostensibly against the militants but with civilians as the main targets" and of taking the extraordinary and unprecedented step

COVER:

The picture on our cover shows LTTE chief Prabhakaran inspecting his 'troops' somewhere in the North.

of imposing an economic blockade against its own civilians".

Sri Lanka's chief delegate, Dr. H.W. Jayewardene, who is also boss of the Human Rights Centre in Colombo, trained his guns not only on "my country's good friend India" for casting 'unwarranted aspersions' but on international human rights agencies. He called them "self-styled Human Rights Watch-dogs".

LOWEST PAID

The Free Trade Zone, the flagship of the 'open Economy' has been dubbed lowest paymaster in Asia by the I.L.O. A FTZ worker gets only Rs. 3.27 per hour below the Philippines where the average wage is Rs. 4.68. Both are way below South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong wage rates — Rs. 16, Rs. 22 and Rs. 29 per hour respectively.

As for our domestic salary scales, recent World Bank statistics prove how badly the public servant in Sri Lanka is treated when compared to equally qualified personnel in the private and corporation sectors.

The average monthly salaries of Chief Executives in large commercial firms, commercial banks and medium-size private companies are Rs. 30,000, Rs. 23,000 and Rs. 15,000 whereas the head of a big government department or state corporation is about Rs. 5,000.

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TRENDS
+
LETTERS

The Sinking Ship

I am not a communalist or a communist. Not a emotionally charged person either. Leave aside all 'ISMS'. At a glance anybody could say our beloved country is on the verge of a total moral collapse and an economic disaster.

Go and see for yourself. To any leading Colombo Government School during closing hours. Buses are there for various destinations with different name boards upto even thirty miles radius. It is a well known secret among "capable" or "affluent" parents the magic of producing an electricity bill, a Bank receipt and getting their name in the electoral register. I deliberately used the term 'capable' or 'affluent' as all of them could not be categorised as capitalist. In any case, here, the parents teach children the first lesson in a corrupt society.

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Based on the results of advanced level examination, (I confine myself to the field of medicine) the ideal solution has to be to admit the best hundred or 125 as the case may be, to the state sponsored medical faculty. If the need for having a private medical college has arisen, in view of the limited funds to accommodate more students, why not have a look at simple options available. The next one hundred students in order of merit could have been properly channelled, not the next one hundred fifty who could afford to pay a huge sum by handing over the sponsorship to drug companies! This means each firm is handling the responsibility of five to ten students.

Also this would help to end the questionable interview system which is outdated.

Pay a visit to any government department. You can never get a thing done unless there is somebody known to you. More often than not money does the trick faster than any intimacy cultivated through friendship. Not that these things never happened before. But it has increased a thousand fold now. A patient having cancer requiring an urgent operation has to join a hospital waiting list unless privileged enough for nursing home surgery. A small-time G.P. like me is not immune. So the patient has to die. We are supposed to be offering the best free health services in a Third World country!

People are transported in "spineless" buses. Whether it is the people who haven't got the spine or the buses is another matter!

Cost of living goes up day by day. What about the cost of drugs? Asked why he did not prescribe a particular drug instead of the other one a physician told me. 'Even I can't afford to buy it. So how can I prescribe it to this poor man.'

Then the million rupee question. What is the reaction of the people? SLBC Sinhalese national service considered to be the most elitist had to close down its 'Your choice' programme. Now the junior announcers select

songs for masses who simply do not want to listen. There is "time" only for moralistic fantasies and the philosophical pulp of the politicians.

Even if thousand people die tomorrow weeping and tears would be restricted to only their kith and kin. This equally applies to both sides of the fence. This brings us to the well discussed topic of terrorism. Is it a result or a cause? The Sinhalese people always respected and treated Tamils as equals, though there have been periodic outbursts of racialism, generally instigated by politicians and their hooligans.

I personally feel it is only Tamil people who have shown some kind of resistance to injustices perpetrated on them, whereas the Sinhalese people are in a helpless stupor.

Dr. Ranjith Wickremasuriya
Kandana.

Iran-Iraq War

Mr Ebrahim Rahimpur, the Iranian delegate IOMAC meeting in Colombo in an apparent attempt to justify his country's aggression against Iraq (Lanka Guardian 1.2.87) has given a garbled version of events that led to the break out of armed hostilities between Iran and Iraq and the reasons for its continuation.

Mr Rahimpur apportions blame on Iraq for the War. Nothing can be further from the truth. Iraq is the country which gave sanctuary to Khomeini since 1964 and the overthrow of the Shah was hailed by Iraq. On the occasion of the declaration of the Islamic Republic, Iraq sent to Khomeini a note of congratulation underlining Iraq's desire to establish fraternal relations. Khomeini was coached with hostile language. For reasons that subsequently became clear the new regime harboured ill-will against Iraq and was hatching plots to destabilize it. Iranian agents and mercenaries were employed to engage in terrorist acts inside Iraq while in the north of the country Barzani

bandits were encouraged and assisted to wreck the tranquility that prevailed in that part of the country.

With the slogan for the export of the so-called Islamic Revolution there occurred increased hostile activity against Iraq. The aim of the Iranian rulers was to ferment sectarian religious strife in the country and then to exploit the resulting situation to foist a government of its own liking. Border clashes less than two weeks of Khomeini's arrival in Tehran were begun and increased. There were no less than 57 violations of Iraqi air space by Iranian military aircraft between February 23 1979 to May 28, 1980. Iraq's efforts to diffuse the tensed situation that was developing evoked no response from Tehran. In fact the Iraqi Government sent 293 official memoranda to the Iranian Government prior to September, 4, 1980.

Iraq's insistence of dialogue and settlement by peaceful means were misread by the Iranian rulers as a sign of weakness in political and military terms.

The aim of Khomeini is to bring Iraq under his sectarian religious tutelage so that it (Iraq) could serve as a springboard for an "Islamic Empire". Secular Iraq posed a threat. So he set Iran to enter into a collision course with Iraq. This is the situation.

The former Shah converted Iran into an outpost of American imperialism and its interests in the Arabian Gulf, the Indian ocean and part of the Middle East. He acquired for Iran the most modern weaponry. When the present Iranian regime commenced its war of aggression against Iraq it was in possession of arms several times the amount Iraq possessed and in many sophisticated varieties than Iraq owned. Iran has an area three times that of Iraq and its population is in the range of 40 million, more than 3 times that of Iraq. These facts truly give an apparent Iranian supremacy over Iraq but the valiant

(Continued on page 9)

GANDHI CONSIDERS THE OPTIONS

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

Gandhi gets his Act together" announced the L. G. cover on Feb. 15. Perhaps a bit too prematurely. It has taken what the usually well-informed G. K. Reddy calls a "strategy session" to produce the outlines of a script. In fact, Mr. Gandhi has been consulting his top foreign policy advisers twice in the course of a week. The first lasted four hours, the longest session

over which he had presided since taking office in late 1984. Interestingly, the meeting was attended by Service and Intelligence chiefs. Then came a session of the Political Affairs Committee of the Cabinet, the Indian government's highest policy making body.

Mr. Gandji's provocative remark in the Rajya Sabha (4/3)

FLASH

As we go to press, Mr. DINESH SINGH, the former Indian Foreign Minister arrived in Colombo. Mr. Gandhi's special envoy met President J. R. Jayewardene on Saturday night and conveyed to him the decisions of the Indian Cabinet's Political Affairs Committee (PAC). He also brought a personal message from Prime Minister Gandhi. The meeting lasted over an hour.

'India wouldn't watch mutely if Jaffna is seized militarily'

"India is not going to remain a mute witness to any new bid by the Sri Lankan Army to regain control in the Jaffna peninsula through an all-out military campaign", states a New Delhi date lined front page news item appearing in Saturday's 'Hindu'.

The Government of India will exert every possible pressure to prevent such a hazardous gamble because it would have grave repercussions across the Palk Strait in the adjoining Tamil Nadu districts. It would also land India with a serious refugee problem, the report said.

The 'Hindu' adds that New Delhi still has no idea about its dealings with different Sri Lankan Tamil groups. At the moment the Indian mediators do not even know which of these groups should be contacted if President Jayewardene were to agree to the three-point Indian plea.

The newspaper report also stated that the great impor-

tance Mr. Gandhi is attaching to the Sri Lanka tangle is evident from the fact that Wednesday's meeting lasted more than four hours, a record for any strategy session held in his office. It is seldom if ever that he had devoted so much time at a single meeting to a single problem.

The centre seems to be relying on the personal influence of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran to persuade the LTTE to adopt a more reasonable attitude towards other groups, without claiming to be the sole champion of the Tamil cause.

The report also said those dealing with the issue in Delhi have still no idea how they should go about tackling it, without appearing to take sides in the international power-struggles of the Tamil militants. Not much thought has been given to the question of assigning their rightful roles to the TULF, LTTE and other Tamil groups in negotiating an eventual settlement.

— Sun

that he had "some action" in mind but could not disclose the details started it all. Reporting this, the *Hindu's* Delhi correspondent admitted "that those dealing with the crisis.... did not seem to have a clear idea of what can be done to exert the right degree of pressure...." on the Sri Lankan government.

However the same report did in fact suggest quite strongly that a clear idea, had emerged. It said: "The whole Indian approach is aimed at applying the principle of simultaneity to bring about a cessation of hostilities by both the Tamil militants and the Sri Lankan security forces while working out the necessary procedures for a resumption of talks".

There is no discernible change here on substantive issues — a revival of Colombo's December 19th proposals being the main question — but there is a significant shift in Delhi's broad approach in its crucial, if now 'suspended' role as mediator. Sri Lanka's oft-repeated and principal grievance has been that all the pressure was exerted on one party, not both. You cease military operations and lift the blockade, and we'll get the militants to stop fighting 'was the gist of Delhi's message to Colombo.

And Colombo in turn was telling the militants, you lay down arms and agree to talks, and we'll resume negotiations after stopping the present offensive.

"Simultaneity" can bridge that gap.

President JR's statement to the DWC delegation that the government could approve the idea of a simultaneous ceasefire, despite the reservation about combating 'terrorism', may well be a response that takes note of Delhi's shift of stance.

What if 'simultaneity' doesn't work? Evidently, *NEWS TODAY*, also a Madras daily, carried a more informative report based on what it called 'despatches' It said (7/3)

"It now appears certain that Delhi will bring maximum pressure to bear on the L. T. T. E. to stop its line of adventurism Delhi will make it clear to the

LTTE that it will NOT recognise it as the sole agent of the Tamils and there must necessarily be a joint command which will keep India's commitments in the coming days".

This point is re-emphasised in the concluding paragraph of the same article:

"New Delhi is sending word to the LTTE to stop its operations against other Tamil groups. It is being made clear to the LTTE that so far as Delhi is concerned it wants the unity of all Tamil groups on the basis of democracy and tolerance. Such unity is a 'must' for India in taking action against Colombo, the LTTE is being told"

If that indeed is the starting point of Delhi's emerging strategy, identifying precise options would be the next task. The report outlines the following choices:

(a) Yet another warning to Colombo that its military operation and economic blockade must end, with a much clearer reminder that the failure to do heed the warning would leave Colombo wholly "responsible for the consequences".

(b) Another choice is to "strengthen the resistance of the Tamil people to the killing thrust of the Sri Lankan troops" i. e. arms supplies and other types of assistance.

(c) a third option is to "mobilise world opinion". The debate at the meeting of the U. N. Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, is probably a prelude to a more concerted campaign of international pressure. (*News Today* notes the use that can be made of the disclosures about atrocities and inhuman killings published in the London *Daily News* on the basis of an interview with K. M. S. personnel who served here.)

(d) Another option is a trade embargo, especially on food and fuel. 'Such an embargo' says the report 'can be justified because the Sri Lanka government itself has imposed a blockade on a section of its own people'.

Finally, the report comments on 'the geo-political overtones' of current Indian policy decisions and choice of options.

"India cannot turn a blind eye" the report observes "to Sri Lanka becoming a foreign base. In the past Sri Lanka earned the nickname of being a 'floating base' for anti-Indian forces. Now it has become the base for Israeli and South African intelligence operators. India's vital strategic interests lie in keeping Sri Lanka a friendly and neutral nation. What is happening is in the opposite direction. There are reports of US Sixth fleet warships calling at Colombo port. The Sri Lanka government is anxious to rid the eastern region of the Tamil population so that Trincomalee, which was the watchtower of the Alliance during world war 2 is thrown open to the U. S. and its strategic allies. This would spell imminent danger to Indian security".

The report has a professional touch which experienced newspaper readers recognise as a clear 'signature' of an 'inside source'. On the subject of a firm 'ultimatum' to Colombo, a senior Minister is quoted as saying 'There are several ways in which India can act to make its role felt by the other side'.

The next lines reads '**The Prime Minister nodded his agreement with this proposition**'.

While nothing is known of the threatened landing in Kachchativu by Dr. Subramaniam Swamy, the part-time Harvard teacher, former MP and well-known US-Israeli lobbyist, Mr. C. Subramaniam, the country's former Finance Minister, has appealed to Mr. Gandhi to send urgent food, fuel and medical supplies to Jaffna on 'humanitarian grounds', after giving due notice to Colombo. This appeal has in turn given birth to the idea of a 'naval corridor' in the waters separating India and Sri Lanka!

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Sirima's strategy of denial

Muslim consensus against the Dec. 19 Ampara formula and an all-party anti-Indian consensus have been the UNP's chief tactical aims in the past fortnight, and certainly since the Indian *demarche* and the Sri Lanka government's equally curt riposte. The UNP achieved the first quite comfortably after talks with the Council of Muslim leaders (Dr Baduidin Mahmud, Mr. A. Aziz and Co.) who in effect backed the position taken by the Muslim MP's of the eastern province, all UNP members. In fact, there is a total (sans Tamil) consensus on the proposal that "emerged" from the last round of talks with Messrs Natar Singh and Chidambaram i.e. detaching Ampara district from the East leaving the eastern province to the Tamils and the Muslims. Since the Muslims are Tamil-speaking, this idea moves towards the "single linguistic region" concept advanced by the TULF and some of the militant groups, although it still does not meet the LTTE's demand for a North-and-East "merger".

The LSSP joins the UNP, the Muslim representatives and the SLFP in opposing the Ampara formula, while the CP and the SLMP, constituent members of the Left alliance, have not made their position clear. So it does look as if the Ampara compromise is something of a non-starter.

What of a common anti-Indian front? Again, the UNP government was in search of consensual support, even more keenly as the Delhi-Colombo 'war of words' hotted up. A news item in the ISLAND headlined LEFT BACKS GOV'T ACTION ON ETHNIC CRISIS suggested strongly that the 3-party alliance agreed on that issue too. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva was quoted as saying "we have come to a state of affairs in which all the time one side (the government of Sri Lanka) is told

what to do... it is time that the Eelam organisations and others concerned in the matter came forward with their own proposals outside of 'Eelam'. However the "joint statement" which the ISLAND spoke of was not forthcoming. What was clear is that the LSSP believes that Indian pressure is exerted only on Colombo and not on the Tamil organisations. Mr. Vijay Kumaratunge, the SLMP stalwart, was quoted by another paper as backing Mr. Gandhi's demands on the two other key issues — ending military operations in the North, and the "economic blockade".

The crucial meeting of course the Government-SLFP encounter on March 2, the day on which President JR left for a State visit to Maldives. The need to "brief" the Opposition parties, especially the SLFP leadership, had been stressed by many ministers at the Cabinet meeting held on Feb. 25. The talks did not go beyond the briefing, and no SLFP support was formally canvassed, although other matters such as by-elections (Trinco and Padiruppu) were discussed, informed sources indicated.

Her hand considerably stengthened by the Election Commissioner's disclosures in his report to Parliament on the December 1982 Referendum, Mrs. Bandaranaike has made the demand for a general election her main theme at countrywide rallies. Unless the SLEP's constant fear of another Referendum is erased and a parliamentary election — at least in 8 provinces — is publicly guaranteed, Mrs. Bandaranaike is unlikely to extend any support to the UNP in its current confrontation with India.

Once again, it is becoming increasingly clear that the Referendum was the turning point in Sri Lanka's political crisis just as the July 1983 riots was the critical point in what is

popularly called the ethnic conflict. The Referendum threw the Sri Lankan political system out of gear. It may have caused the violent conflict that is now ravaging the country but certainly reduces the chances of a negotiated settlement, while making almost impossible a durable, Sinhala consensus-based, solution. Mrs. Bandaranaike's strategy of denial forces the UNP to go it alone losing Sinhala votes each passing day, not only because of the wasting war in the north and east, or its economic costs, but also because of unemployment, inflation, the stink of top-level corruption and sheer exhaustion of the electorate with a 10 years regime that seems determined to overstay its welcome in the eyes of a highly vote-conscious national constituency.

So the UNP had to be satisfied with the full backing of its own parliamentary group on March 7.

Govt. Group backs military action where necessary

The Government Parliamentary Group at its meeting today presided over by President J. R. Jayewardene unanimously passed a resolution supporting the Government's efforts to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Sri Lanka where necessary by military action.

The resolution moved by Mr. Harendra Corea, Deputy Minister of Public Administration read as follows:

"The Government Parliamentary Group supports the Government in its efforts to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Sri Lanka where necessary by military action, specially in the North and East against the Eelamist separatist and terrorist groups.

"Sri Lanka like any other democratic country in the world should not tolerate the activities of a section of its people who take up arms and declare a particular part of its territory as their own.

"The Group disagrees wholly with the request of the Government of India that Sri Lanka should halt its military action unilaterally. This request is hardly that which should be made by a mediator.

"The Group supports the Government's continuing commitment to finding a political solution to the problem".

Mr. Corea also read out a news item appearing in the daily Observer of March 5th, 1987. The report states as follows:

"Rural Industrial Development Minister Suamyamoorthy Thondaman has strongly defended the Government's military operations against Tamil separatists in the North and East.

"Mr. Thondaman now on a visit to his native village in Pasumpon Muthuramalingam district has said that no country in the world would tolerate, if a section of its people took up arms and declared a particular part of its territory as its own.

"Mr. Thondaman's views on the recent military operations particularly against the LTTE, contrasts sharply with the position taken up by the Indian Government which has said that it should not continue its mediatory role unless the Colombo Government halted the operations.

"Mr. Thondaman told the 'Indian Express' newspaper that no one could find fault with the Sri Lanka Government for taking action to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. The Minister has said that the Govern-

Defence bill to go up by Rs. 5b

The Government's defence and security budget for 1987 which already amounts to Rs. 10 billion will be enhanced by a further supplementary Estimate of Rs. 2 billion. Defence-related expenditure is also expected to amount to about Rs. 3 billion pushing defence and security spending by another Rs. 5 billion, it is reliably understood.

This would mean that about 35 per cent of the domestic budget excluding foreign aid and local loans will have to be allocated for defence and security this year.

Faced with this quandary the Government will have no alternative but to reduce the capital expenditure this year by re-ordering and re-phasing its debt priorities.

Finance and Planning Ministry sources estimate that an immediate 12 1/2 per cent cut in capital expenditure will be necessary to meet this defence expenditure.

The situation is said to have been further compli-

cated by the fall in prices of our principal export commodities like tea, rubber and coconut which has seriously eroded Government revenue.

While the prices of our export commodities remain depressed, the prices of some of our major imports such as crude oil has risen sharply. A barrel of crude oil which was selling at nine US dollars last year has now doubled as a result of the recent OPEC Agreement.

The severe drought now prevailing will have further adverse repercussions on agricultural production, incomes and personal consumption. It is expected that this would reduce anticipated collection of revenue from Income Tax and BTT.

There will also be additional expenditure on drought relief which will further reduce funds available to the Treasury.

The repayment of commercial loans raised by Air Lanka, the Shipping Corporation, the Cement

Corporation and others will also cost the Treasury a further Rs. 2 billion.

Most of these loans were raised against the advice of the Finance Ministry. Due to the Tamil conflict and the drought, Sri Lanka's growth rate which had been maintained at a very impressive five per cent may also come down to three per cent this year, the lowest growth rate recorded since this Government came into power.

The debt service ratio is also rising and is likely to be around 30 per cent this year due to the bunching of the repayments due on commercial loans. This means that 30 per cent of foreign exchange earnings of Sri Lanka will have to be utilised for repayment of these loans.

The Finance Ministry is now preparing the Public Investment Programme 1988 to 1992 which has to be presented to the Aid Group meeting in Paris in June this year.

— Observer

ment would be prepared to stop its military action if the Tamil separatists agreed to lay down arms.

"He has told the newspaper that the Sri Lanka Government's recent operations, in which the LTTE admittedly suffered major military reverses, was not against the Tamil civilians but only against the armed separatists. "The Minister has said that the problem with the separatists was their stand that they were not prepared to accept anything short of an independent "Eelam".

"Mr. Thondaman has stressed the need for creating a climate conducive to the resumption of negotiations between Sri Lanka and Indian Governments"

Prime Minister R. Premadasa explained to the Government Parliamentary Group the decision of the Cabinet to amend the Local Government Elections Ordinance.

The Group unanimously approved the amendments to the Local Authorities elections Ordinance which enable the voters to indicate their preference up to three candidates nominated by the political party of their choice.

Every voter can cast a vote for the party of his choice by marking opposite the party symbol on the ballot paper as it is provided for now.

In addition to this each voter can cast three votes to three party candidates of his choice in the list of candidates.

The amending bill also provides for postal voting facilities for the first time in respect of Local Government elections.

Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe, Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Employment, Mr. Percy Samaraweera, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Chandra Ranatunga, M. P. for Mawanella, Dr. Wimal Wickremasinghe, M. P. for Eheliyagoda, Mr. Merryl Kariyawasam, M. P. for Agalawatte, Mr. R. M. Karunaratne, M. P. for Uva Paranagama, Mr. Jabir A. Cader, Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Mr. A. M. R. B. Attanayake, Deputy Minister of Higher Education represented matters before the Group.

Heathrow and the Human Rights Dimension

Somebody called it 'the Heathrow Ha-Ho'. 'An all male strip-tease act' snoted a UNP politician. Neither the levity nor the sneer can possibly hide the government's acute embarrassment at what went on in Geneva when the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHCR) met for its 43rd sessions.

Its not just good enough to say that Argentina is settling scores over the Falklands issue where Sri Lanka, a founder member of NAM and one-time Chairman broke ranks with the entire Third World, the Socialist community and a majority of western states' including the US, and put up our hand at the General Assembly for Britain. Never was Sri Kotha's notoriously myopic view of world affairs and its scant regard for Sri Lanka's foreign policy interests exposed so plainly to put Sri Lanka in the humiliating company of Oman and Belize!

But Argentina however big nor any other country in fact can muster sufficient support to embarrass a fellow UN member if there had not been adequate evidence on which to found a formal resolution. And that was done, the resolution including a request to the International Red Cross and UNHRC to send observers to this country. It is absurd to suggest that the government was not sensitive to this international moral pressure. It rushed Foreign Minister himself to European capitals to do some eleventh hour lobbying.

And it is this pressure together with Indian dipomatic pressure that made the Cabinet at its meeting on 11/3 to decide to

relax the economic blockade and release several hundred Tamils held under the PTA. (SEE RELIEF)

Just as the Heathrow drama, crude but effective, put the Tamil refugee back into the international limelight, the aid-package that is now being wrapped in time for the Paris consortium (the World Bank's Mr. Hopper was here recently for a 'recce') is a major policy consideration for a country that is financing half its butget with foreign aid, and is now getting heavily into debt.

National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali told the L.G. the day after the Cabinet decision: "Firewood supplies will be resumed. The LTTE was using it for their ordinance factories but these have been bombed and destroyed. We are preparing a petrol rationing scheme and coupons will be issued. Petrol can be collected at depots at Elephant Pass and some other points. But all vehicles must have 1987 licences. Some petrol might get into the hands of LTTE but it won't be much".

Asked about the release of prisoners, he mentioned two categories (a) all over 40 and (b) all those who have made self-incriminating statements but which the A.G. thinks may not be admissible under the law . . . for instance, if these don't comply with the requirement an A.S.P. must take down the statement".

The number of those likely to be released would be several hundreds.

Language problem mismanaged for 40 years, says P'deniya Don

The late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike may have made use of the language issue for political purposes in 1956 but he was genuinely concerned about the Sinhala language. The UNP, would have been defeated in 1956 for any number of reasons but language was the major ones.

This was said by Professor Kingley M. de Silva, Department of History, University of Peradeniya, in a lecture titled, Language and Politics in Sri Lanka — Rhetoric and Reality. The lecture was one in a series organised by the Kandy German Cultural Association in collaboration with the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Kandy.

The lecture was held at Queen's Hotel, Kandy. Mayor Tilak Ratnayake presided.

Professor de Silva referred to the late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in the course of an answer to a question from the audience.

Professor de Silva said that everybody else at that time even though they did not know the Sinhala language well were all much concerned about their language. Mr. Bandaranaike may have thought that he would make use of the language issue with the awareness of the public response but he was genuinely concerned about the use of the Sinhala language.

Professor de Silva expressed his concern over the lack of written material on the language problem of Sri Lanka. There was one major work by Professor Reginson written in 1960. In 1967 there was another American who wrote a lighter work.

Apart from that there had been no study of this major problem in Sri Lanka's politics said Prof. de Silva.

He said "We cannot blame the foreigners if they do not understand the position with regard to the language in the country because they do not get enough information on the problem".

Professor de Silva said: From what has happened during the past thirty or forty years we can see that we have mismanaged the language problem. But it is important for us at the end of three or four decades to sit back and reflect on it. We must look at the issue in way it emerged and to see how far the objectives of those who agitated for the changes in the language policy have been achieved.

The issue of the language, if we look back we see that had emerged in every country when they regained independence. It became an issue when those countries wanted to have their own language to substitute the language of the colonising power. The problem arose in India and in Pakistan, just to name two, of course, the Canadians have a longer history squabbling over language.

What is different in Sri Lanka from other countries is that Sri Lanka had taken a major policy decision on the use of language in the most important areas such as language in the public domain that is the language in the administration, in the courts and in schools.

Forty three years ago, or more, the present President of Sri Lanka, who had just entered the National Legislature as a member of the State Council for Kelaniya gave notice of a motion. The motion simply said, that

Sinhalese should take the place of English as a language of the country. A few months later in the same year he moved it as a resolution. The resolution in full is: That with the object of making Sinhalese the official language within a reasonable number of years this council is of the opinion; (a) that Sinhalese should be the medium of instruction in all schools; (b) that Sinhalese should be made a compulsory subject in all public examinations (c) that legislation be introduced to permit the business of the House be conducted in Sinhalese; (d) that a commission be appointed to translate important books in other languages into Sinhalese; (e) that a commission be appointed to report on all steps that need to be taken to effect the switch from English to Sinhalese. That was forty three years ago.

The mover was attacked from within and outside the House. The attack was focussed on one thing, that the mover was excluding Tamil. When that resolution came up for debate in 1944 all that was done was to add the two words "and Tamil" wherever the word Sinhalese was used in the motion. The first sign that the language policy was going to be a major issue came in 1951 with the establishment of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's decision to leave the cabinet. But what he said on that occasion was not Sinhala only. What he asked for was a hasty switch from English to Sinhala and Tamil. That is important.

Mr. K. V. N. de Silva, Secretary, Kandy German Association, made the welcome speech. Mr. Fred E. de Silva proposed the vote of thanks.

— Island

Non-Political Centre for Regional Development Studies

Prof. C. Suriyakumaran

- I. With the impending formation of a Provincial Councils System over the Country, as instituted political entities, and in order to serve the equally important but less addressed economic uses of these Councils, a proposal has emerged to institute a focal point or centre, which will undertake Studies in Regional Development for the various Provincial areas and formulate development ideas, policies and proposals, for use by all who may be interested.
- II. Such a Centre (functioning as a single identity or a network of centres in each Province) will be entirely non-political and purely professional and technical. All assistance received shall be entirely without pre-conditions.
- III. Its only premises of political relation will be:
 - that Government (Central & Provincial) supports the development priority;
 - that the lack of an economic programme, or prior thinking on it, could be a sure cause of political failure of the instituted Provincial Councils;
 - that its work is not dependent on any chosen

political framework of devolution as may be decided by the political process, so long as the development imperative is recognised and the scope for its expression is not inhibited; and

- that it does not preclude inter-provincial planning or co-operation. (In purely technical terms, not simply inter-provincial but multi-provincial co-operation may be involved).
- IV. It is proposed to set-up a modest temporary office or operational point in Colombo to start with, as soon as the necessary capacities for it are organised and the procedures completed.
 - V. This Notice is, therefore, to invite the interest and possible participation or support of competent members of all communities and from various parts of the country (only excluding, in keeping with accepted practice, government servants and those engaged in the political field).
 - VI. The main functions of the proposed Centre would be to:
 - (i) Undertake Area Resource Surveys of human and natural resources

- (ii) Prepare Techno-Economic Studies of potential development resources
 - (iii) Formulate Programme and Project proposals that foster productive Investments (including encouragement of participatory Capital bases of investment, as distinguished from those solely dependent on general borrowing or public debt)
 - (iv) Promote the 'development priority', generally and in specific ways, with the Provincial Councils
 - (v) Support all Provincial and Governmental initiatives that serve the purposes
 - (vi) Support collateral social and cultural programmes developed in the regions, including co-operation programmes, as part of overall development of economic and social well-being and prosperity.
- VII. Those who may be interested in the proposed Centre, in particular by virtue of their deep commitment or their professional/technical expertise in the implied areas of work (including interested Institutions), are respectfully invited to respond.

Letters . . .

(Continued from page 2)

people of Iraq have been able to withstand, endure and score success after success.

From the beginning Iraq expressed its willingness to end the conflict, through peaceful means. It responded positively to the numerous appeals and initiatives of the International community. The Iranian rulers spurn and reject all attempts at mediation.

To the question of a peaceful settlement Mr Rahimpur poses

the preposterous conditions laid by his rulers: — Punishment of the Iraqi President, overthrow of the Ba'ath regime and its replacement with a regime akin to its character etc. The aim of the Iranian rulers are very clear. They seek to plant a pliable regime on the people of Iraq by force with military assistance received from the Great Satan and the Zionist Entity. In a desperate bid to salvage their dwindling fortunes within and outside the country, Iranian rulers have mounted yet another offensive with the declared aim of annexing Basra.

This latest attempt too has been successfully blocked by the gallant forces of Iraq.

Iraq while conducting a defensive war is in relentless pursuit of peace on the basis of — (1) unconditional withdrawal to the international borders; (2) exchange of prisoners of war; (3) a peace and non-aggression pact between the two countries; (4) non-interference in the internal affairs of each other's country.

Ismat Siddiq
Press Attache
Embassy of Iraq
Colombo.

MGR, TULF — strong appeals

MADRAS, March 9

The TULF poliburo today appealed to the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi to take action with utmost urgency in view of the situation worsening day by day in the Tamil areas in Sri Lanka. It said that the lives of eight lakh Tamil civilians were in imminent danger unless the Indian Government took immediate action to stop the killing of the Tamils.

In a message sent to the Prime Minister, the TULF stated that the much-dreaded military offensive by the Sri Lankan armed forces was in full swing, resulting in the death of more than 30 innocent Tamil civilians including two nurses and a police officer of the Jaffna General Hospital and injuries to 100 persons on Saturday and Sunday. Houses, shops, temples and hospitals had been destroyed.

The island's armed forces were strafing from helicopter gunships and bomber-planes. They also fired artillery and mortar from the army camps into crowded residential areas and business centres. Several thousands of people were fleeing their homes in panic. Top military officers, aided and assisted by foreign mercenaries, were directing their operations in Jaffna.

The TULF thanked the Prime Minister for his statement in the Rajya Sabha that India was contemplating some further action to deal with the escalating military offensive and the continuing economic and communications blockade of the Jaffna peninsula.

The TULF decided to meet the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. G. Ramachandran, the leader of the DMK, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, and leaders of other

political parties and impress on them the need for immediate and urgent action to save the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

Halt brutal attacks: MGR

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. G. Ramachandran, has urged the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, to take immediate steps to halt the Sri Lankan army's brutal attacks on innocent Tamils in the island.

In a telegram sent to the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramachandran pointed out that the people in Tamil Nadu were grieved and shocked at the killings of their brethren in the Jaffna and Vavuniya areas in the last two days by the aerial bombing and military offensive of the island's armed forces. In panic the Tamils had fled to forests for safety. The army actions demonstrated that the Jayewardene Government wanted only a military solution to the ethnic problem and destroy the Tamils.

— Hindu

Delhi's patience running out

New Delhi

The Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, will be presiding over yet another high-level strategy session tomorrow to review the Sri Lankan developments and work out the options open to India in this rapidly deteriorating situation.

This strategy session will be followed by a meeting of the political affairs committee of the Cabinet to provide formal approval for any decisions taken by it.

MGR's message

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. G. Ramachandran, has sent an urgent message to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi urging firm action by the Government of India to save the citizens of the Jaffna peninsula from starvation and also protect them from the marauding Sri Lankan security forces.

The two Ministers of State dealing with Sri Lanka, Mr. K.

Natwar Singh and Mr. P. Chidambaram, conferred with senior officials of the External Affairs Ministry this evening to look at this tragic situation from the political and diplomatic angles in preparation for tomorrow's strategy session. There is no doubt that the Government of India's patience is running out in the wake of the Sri Lankan bombing of civilian targets, leading to a widespread demand for firm action.

The Government is thinking more immediately in terms of organising humanitarian relief to meet the basic needs of the besieged people who have been subjected to different forms of economic blockade. It remains to be seen how the Sri Lankan Government would react to any Indian decision to organise relief measures with its cooperation, if possible, or even without it.

The next 24 hours are considered crucial for India arriving at a well considered decision on

how to deal with this worsening situation. The Prime Minister and his advisers intend to devote the better part of tomorrow to the Sri Lankan problem.

The Indian plea to the Sri Lankan Government to call off the military operations, lift the economic blockade and reiterate its readiness to negotiate with the Tamil leaders on the basis of the Dec. 19 proposals still open, if only Mr. J. R. Jayewardene and his advisers are prepared to avail themselves of it. There can be no resumption of the Indian mediation so long as the Sri Lankan army is bent on utilising any pretext for carrying on offensive operations.

The reports reaching the Government of India from its own sources speak of the grim plight of the civil population in the Jaffna peninsula which has been deprived of the basic necessities of life for the last two months with varying degrees of economic blockade.

— Hindu 9/3

The Militant Menace

S. H. Venkatramani

Kandasamy Durairaja, 49, a Jaffna Tamil and formerly a prosperous merchant from Trincomalee, took refuge with his family in Madras about two years ago. Last month, Durairaja was returning to his flat in Mylapore in the heart of Madras, when he was abducted by armed youths. The kidnapers demanded Rs 6 lakh as ransom for his release. Durairaja was forced to write letters to his wife imploring her to somehow raise the money and give it to the boys, otherwise he would be killed.

Three weeks earlier, a gang of revolver and sub-machine-gun wielding militants had stormed their way into the posh Anna Nagar residence of Thamodharam Manivasagam, a rich businessman hailing from coastal Valvettithurai town in the Jaffna peninsula, now a director in a Singapore shipping company, and spirited him away. The boys demanded a ransom of Rs 25 lakh from his family. His wife paid up Rs 3.5 lakh.

Yet another bunch of armed Tamil youths whisked away another rich Jaffna businessman, Sinniah Kadirvelu Mohandas, from the same Anna Nagar locality, and demanded Rs 5 lakh for his release. Mohandas was tortured by his kidnapers, and left to spend his nights in a mosquito-infested toilet. In yet another similar incident around the same time, Suryakumar, a Sri Lanka Tamil travel agent operating now from Madras, was also kidnapped from his Arumbakkam residence on the outskirts of the city.

The families of these kidnapped Jaffna businessmen preferred not to lodge formal police complaints. The reason adduced was that they had been warned of militant reprisals in case they chose to do so. But top police officials

had been privately informed and the cops had spread their dragnet.

On the morning of February 16, events came to a head. Durairaja's captors had told his wife that they were prepared to show her husband to their 11-year-old son, Mayuran, if the boy was brought to a prominent hotel in central Madras. There was an unofficial police trap laid for the militants at the hotel. As Mayuran was picked up and taken in a car by the kidnapers, a plainclothes policeman got into an autorickshaw with Durairaja's wife and gave chase. Luckily, the speeding car hit a scooter in west

Tamil militants are now kidnapping rich Jaffna businessmen — who have taken refuge in Madras — to acquire much needed funds.

Madras, and as the public closed in on the car Mayuran shouted that he was being kidnapped.

Two of the four kidnapers managed to escape while the public caught the others. Police subsequently identified them as Selvam, 24, and Subramaniam, 25, belonging to the Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), headed by Uma Maheshwaran.

Based on the information extorted from the two PLOTE militants, police parties fanned out into different areas of west Madras and rounded up 40 PLOTE members of the Uma Maheshwaran group. The same night Manivasagam was released by his gaolers. Subsequently, the shipping company director's relative who had handed over Rs 3.5 lakh to

his kidnapers was able to identify the recipient, another PLOTE member. And, thanks to the large-scale round-ups, Durairaja was also set at liberty the following morning.

But Mohandas had yet to be traced. The police crackdown on the PLOTE did not bring about his release, so it was obviously another group that was holding him captive. Luckily, a couple of days later, an anonymous telephone caller ordered Mohandas' wife Bhagavathi to produce Rs 5 lakh in half-an-hour, and hand the money over to her husband's kidnapers near the Ayyappa Temple at Anna Nagar. Policemen, who had tapped her telephone, asked her to plead for a little more time, which was granted.

Well before the appointed hour, over 25 policemen in disguise had surrounded the rendezvous, some as Ayyappa devotees and others vegetable vendors. At the scheduled time four men appeared on the scene. As the money changed hands, policemen pounced on the four, all of whom turned out to be important members of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO). Following the arrests, the police were able to free Mohandas that night from a hut in Koyambedu on the fringes of Madras city. Forty-five TELO members were also taken into custody.

The police have concluded, after all their investigation, that groups like PLOTE and TELO, which have started disintegrating as a result of serious internal factional quarrels, are facing an acute shortage of funds and are getting increasingly tempted to resort to kidnappings for ransom. In November last year, Point Pedro (in Jaffna) businessman K. T. Rajasingham and travel agent K. Jayarathinam were kidnapped by

(Continued on page 19)

Ethnic conflict — what of the future?

N. Ram (Hindu)

Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, Minister of Lands, Land Development and Mahaweli Development, is one of the politically most prominent and active members of the UNP Government in Sri Lanka. He is at the helm of a powerful Ministry concerned with development activity — and the major venture, the Accelerated Mahaweli Programme (launched in 1978), characterised officially as “being at the core of the UNP Government’s development strategy”.

Very much in the mainstream of Sinhala politics, with an identifiable, mainstream Sinhala political base — including a UNP originated plantation workers’ union that is a rival to Mr. S. Thondaman’s Ceylon Workers’ Congress, which is clearly the Number One trade union organisation in the island — Mr. Dissanayake is a Cabinet Minister who is clearly seen to have a future.

Mr. Dissanayake, a Kandyan, made a political name for himself during the 1970-77 period: he was elected one of the eight UNP Members of Parliament in the face of a political landslide for the SLFP-led coalition. His parliamentary constituency is Nuwara-Eliya. He is regarded as one of the most effective Sinhala orators in the island’s politics.

He has been an active President of Sri Lanka’s Cricket Board since 1981; it is the game with the most popularity and following in Sri Lanka, including rural areas. During his visit to India during the recent tour by the Sri Lankan cricket team, Mr. Dissanayake had political discussions connected with the status of the December 19 proposals worked out between the Governments of Sri Lanka and India (which have not so far been discussed officially with the representatives of the Sri Lankan Tamils).

A lawyer by training and very much a home-grown produced in terms of education and political development, Mr. Dissanayake has origins that notably diverge from those of other prominent Cabinet colleagues — for example, the Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa, or the Finance Minister, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, or the Minister of National Security, Mr. Laliith Athulathmudali.

In mainstream Sinhala politics, where chauvinism has clearly been a determining political constituency as well as a platform, there are very few who can be considered chaste in relation to the Tamil question.

Although they clearly started out from different points on the ‘ethnic conflict’ and although the alignments reportedly used to be different, Mr. Dissanayake and Mr. Ronnie de Mel are generally now regarded by close political observers in Colombo as being quite close within the Cabinet on how Sri Lanka’s principal national problem or crisis should be handled — and this involves, vitally, relations with India. (The Prime Minister, Mr. Premadasa, has recently kept himself away from the frontline and details of this question, as it has had to be faced within Mr. Jayewardene’s Cabinet; his specific position is a matter of political speculation and some uncertainty in the current period.)

N Ram: What is your assessment of the current situation? It seems, looking at Sri Lanka’s ethnic crisis or conflict from India, very difficult and very complex. What are your

suggestions for a way out — for a methodology or direction which could be pursued? The positions of the two sides are well known; the situation on the ground is very tense and disturbing; and

India’s good offices have been involved since 1983. And yet people generally see no way out, in terms of a negotiated package or settlement. What do you think lies ahead?

Mr. Gamini Dissanayake: First of all, I would like to look at it from the point of view of the parallels that India and Sri Lanka can share on this issue. As you said, it is an ethnic issue or a ‘racial’ problem where one ethnic group feels dissatisfied with the *status quo* — in relation to the legal system, in relation to a system of Government, and in relation to fundamental rights which they should possess.

You get this situation in India also. It’s fundamentally manifesting itself in Punjab, and you find it manifesting itself in various other forms and different degrees in other parts of India — that is a matter which you well know. Similarly, in Sri Lanka we have this in the North and, to a lesser extent, in the East. It is an ethnic issue. Now the method of Government in both countries is democratic; whatever the rationalities, through the franchise we elect Governments from time to time. And we feel that there is something sacrosanct in this process.

What has made things difficult in both countries in my view, looking at it very objectively, is the rise of militancy — some call it “terrorism.” “Terrorism” has a methodology where you eliminate those who don’t agree with you, where you gain a physical power or a control through the process of being embattled by force of arms. That prevails in India and prevails in Sri Lanka also, in the North.

Now, those are all common factors which we can understand. Likewise, the whole process can also be looked at from the point of view of a law-and-order question *simpliciter* — the Government’s writ must run,

there must be law enforcement, revenue has to be collected, and various modalities of Government will have to flow. In both our countries there are certain problems and there is an inability to understand here in Sri Lanka the Indian Government's contention on many matters — that some of the practices which they resort to for the purposes of maintaining law and order are, for some strange reason, considered to be unacceptable, unethical (when) done by the Government of Sri Lanka. That's a very serious misunderstanding between the two countries and a *problem*. If it is an ethnic connotation in India, it must be an ethnic connotation here also.

The modalities of facing, confronting and resolving it must also have certain commonalities. Of course, legally speaking, jurisprudentially speaking, you come up with various distinctions. But the basic right on the one side, and, on the other side, the duty — even by the minorities — to maintain the peace, the stability, the integrity and the sovereignty of the country and the Government is something which the Government cannot renounce.

Insofar as Sri Lanka is concerned, it has been with India as a mediator from 1983 onwards, having a number of conferences with the most representative Tamil group available at the time — that is the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). That group, because it could not face the militancy of the militants and because some of its members have been exterminated, is no longer considered to be relevant, to be the group who should negotiate on behalf of the Tamil people — for the simple reason that it has ceased to function as a representative organisation.

What is relevant, from 1983 up to now, is that through a series of steps, the Government has agreed, to implement a package of Proposals which basically mean a provincial system of administration. And in my view, in a small country where there has been substantial cent-

ralised Government for the last three centuries, it means very fundamental devolution — right up to the December 19 proposals. It means a very fundamental devolution of power, of administration, of election.

Every provincial unit will have a Chief Minister. Every provincial unit will have a Cabinet of Ministers. Law and order — except in relation to capital offences, offences against the unit and the integrity of the country — will all be the responsibility of the provincial Governments.

This provincial system of Government, which has been on the table and which is the subject of negotiation, falls short of certain things which the Indian Government itself has always stated to be non-negotiable. And what are they? They say it should not be a federal system of Government, because it will change the unitary nature of Sri Lanka's constitution — which means that it has to go before the public for a referendum. And before that, the Indian Government has always said it can never underwrite *Eelem* or a separate state. So these two are out. The Indian Government has said a further thing: that the concept of a Tamil homeland is not something to which they would subscribe.

So, if these three factors are not in a serious sense subjects which are negotiable — and I think any Government of Sri Lanka which was elected to preserve the unitary nature of the constitution, the unity and the integrity of the country, which says it is proposing to solve an ethnic problem on the basis other than what has been stated to be non-negotiable will find it very difficult (a) to get it through Parliament and (b) more fundamentally, to get it through the public — or (c) they might be out of office! I personally feel that a Government which goes beyond the mandate that they got will, in all sincerity, have to go before the public — that would be my view. I don't think we can go and negotiate

something which we have never got a mandate to negotiate.

But provincial councils — as the moderate Tamil leaders have always wanted — is something which, in my view is *just*, is something which we feel is eminently necessary in a country, however small that country might be. For example, Switzerland has got ten cantons. What people want is a sharing of power; a desire to have their own priorities worked out in their own areas; that the natural resources of those areas should be used, managed and developed according to the wishes of the people of those areas — which is something which is very valid, which is very relevant.

And because of the ethnic problem, which gave rise to a rationalisation which led to the evolution of this system of Government, many people in the other provinces also have been told: "Look, this anyhow is even to your benefit! Why must you go to Colombo for everything? Why should all the patronage, even in your areas, be dished out from the Centre? Should only 160 Members of Parliament elected for six years, be the sole repositories of power, patronage and office in a country where there's 92 per cent literacy?"

There has been a very fundamental social, political change even in the Sinhalese people — due to the struggle of the ethnic minority. And we've got to accept it, we've got to face it.

I think if you really look at and analyse the personalities and the social-ideological complexes of the youth who constitute the back-bone of the militant movement — in fact, which you can call the LTTE (there have been other groups, TELO, EROS and other splinter groups, but they are all Tamil youth). . . . perhaps there may be only a microscopic minority of people, like Kanagaratnam, who may have come to Colombo and mixed around — mixed about and associated with the majority community.

Thanks to Mr. (SWRD) Bandaranaike's policies, where he really divided the two streams so

that each group started to go its own way! I don't think, inasmuch as a boy from the South wouldn't know what Tamil society is, *they* (the Tamil youth) wouldn't know, for all practical purposes, the psychology of the Sinhalese. For all practical purposes they have been living in a mental *Eelam*. And as somebody said, behind a Cadjan Curtain (made of coconut leaf), like the bamboo curtain.

But unlike the Sinhala leaders, say in the UNP (United National Party) and, to a lesser extent, in the SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party), who kept on pointing out the nature of the international situation in which we have to adjust ourselves, that there is no possibility of employment unless the whole country develops, the economic and the social tribulations were blamed by Tamil leaders who sought the people's support through the vote almost exclusively on racial grounds. And it suited them to do so. They said: We will deliver what you seek — employment, educational opportunities mental, psychological, human development — if we get *Eelam*? So they (the Tamil youth) became protagonists of this struggle and they found that their own leaders apparently were not as serious as they were! Or, may I say, that they were 'flexible', that they were willing to look at a different scenario after 1977, leaving these young people out of the mainstream — in other words, telling them, "you wait, you have patience." But by that time, already, the processes of destabilisation, the processes of finding alternative systems had been embarked upon, for the simple reason that the Southern youth themselves had risen up in 1971!

What I see happening in the North is the other side of the coin of the '71 scenario. And it was just one decade which turned out to be the great divide. Because in '71, just nine months after the United Front Government, so-called, came, these boys burst out, attacking police stations, attacking the army, trying to kidnap politicians all over the country. And just ten

years later, '81, the Tamil movement was also in full swing.

Inasmuch as the Sinhala leaders were to blame in '71 for giving — and they said so, in '71 they jolly well said so — "false promises... they (the Sinhala youth) said: "You painted a vision of a socialist society where there was going to be equality, where there was going to be the eradication of class privileges." Having come to power, they (the Sinhala political leaders) were nicely sharing the spoils of office! Just ten years later, an identical situation in my view came up in the North — except that, being far away from Colombo, the connections that existed, the interactions that took place between rural Sinhala Sri Lanka and the Centre were totally absent in relation to Jaffna.

The other important consideration that you must have in mind is that the Sri Lanka army was never meant to be a fighting army. Until 1980 or so, we were priding ourselves, we were very happy that we were spending less than one per cent of our budget not on our defence but on our entire forces — the army, navy, air force and the police. We were very similar to Lichenstein, though not exactly in the same situation! And, suddenly, this army is asked to go and carry out operations, get involved in a battle; and, for all practical purposes, to indulge themselves in a guerilla war! The Government has not been driven easily to the conclusion that we recruit more soldiers — we have to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of this country. And the Indian Government always persists in asking question: "Why are you having training from Pakistan? Why are you getting assistance from Israel?" The President has said: You've got to get assistance from wherever you can.

From '83 onwards, there was tremendous emotionalism displayed in India, particularly in Tamil Nadu. I was the first Minister to go to Delhi after the 1983 problems. I met most of the enlightened groups, the former High Commissioners to

Sri Lanka, then people from the Gandhi Foundation of India, senior politicians who had anything to do with Sri Lanka. And I told them that in '83... they were trying to paint the picture that Mr. Jayewardene was very happy with what had happened and that he had let loose the army etc. ... but in '83, he was the saddest man you could find in Sri Lanka. Because he was working with the TULF. But coming from that age of politics, very profoundly influenced by Gandhi, he was not willing to deal with the militants — he is reluctant to do so even now. All that he had tried to do was damaged, went up in flames as it were.

So from '83 onwards, we had been going on with these negotiations, discussions, and I've been trying to rationalise (as far as I could) the past in relation to the Government's policies.

You asked me about the future. I think we should enter into a meaningful dialogue with all the Tamil groups, including the militants, on the basis that they're citizens of Sri Lanka. I welcome India's mediation always — particularly in 1983, there was very little choice for Sri Lanka, because all the affected groups and the leaders were in Madras. But now, three and a half years later, the TULF (I'm very sorry to say) has been severely dented as a political organisation. Other groups have been eliminated from all the spheres of influence and there's only the LTTE.

I feel that the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE must recognise that there is not going to be a military solution — though there might be military 'victories — and they must negotiate. And I don't think the Government of India should have any reservations about direct negotiations. But they would always be welcome as an interested party for two reasons: first, that Sri Lanka is a neighbour; secondly, that they have built this movement in Tamil Nadu.

(To be concluded)

— Courtesy: Hindu

Large numbers of Tamil youths detained in 1986

— U. S. State Dept.

Due to the deterioration of security conditions and civil administration in the areas where most of the disappearances have taken place, the Government has found it difficult to investigate. The Government criticized the AI report because it is based on affidavits which have not been subjected to cross-examination in court and denied the general thrust of the report, which is that many of the "disappeared" were arrested by Government security forces and died while in custody. The Government has suggested that many of the "disappeared" may have left the country, joined the Tamil militant groups, or are in detention centers under assumed names, making them difficult to trace. It challenged those concerned to file *habeas corpus* proceedings on behalf of those who allegedly had disappeared. At year's end, 20 such cases had been filed and were pending.

According to Government statistics, 108 Sri Lankans were kidnapped by the Tamil militants in 1986. The Government believes that most of those abducted were killed by the militants

(c) Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The Constitution guarantees that "no person shall be subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment," and in 1982 the Government submitted to the U.N. a unilateral declaration opposing the use of torture. However, there have been persistent reports that the military and police have tortured or mistreated persons detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the emergency regulations.

In 1986 a group of Tamil prisoners at Welikade Prison who previously had been held in a large, overcrowded detention center at Bussa in the South, wrote an open letter describing

the poor conditions and mistreatment which they had suffered there and called for an impartial investigation. Government investigators who checked on conditions at Bussa found no evidence of mistreatment of prisoners and found the prisoners conditions generally acceptable. They criticized the sanitary conditions, however, and prison authorities have been instructed to make improvements. Also in 1986, the Government initiated a rehabilitation program to provide vocational training for prisoners.

The Government has stated that it does not condone torture of detainees or prisoners, adding that it has been unable to investigate charges of torture since the various allegations generally do not identify individual victims. There have been no convictions of police officers accused of causing physical harm to persons in custody.

(d) Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The Constitution stipulates that no person "shall be arrested except according to procedure established by law" and that an arrested person must be informed of the reason for his arrest. Within 24 hours, an arrested person must be brought before a magistrate who may authorize bail or, for serious crimes, continued detention. A suspect may be detained up to 3 months without bail, or longer if a court so rules.

There are exceptions to the normal rules for a person detained under the emergency regulations or the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Under the state of emergency, first declared in May 1983 and renewed monthly by Parliament since then, the President reissues the emergency regulations by gazette notification each month. The regulations give extraordinary powers to the police to use preventive detention on persons suspected

of planning to commit offenses or to arrest individuals suspected of having committed a wide variety of crimes. Detainees under these emergency regulation can be held for up to 90 days on orders of the Attorney General, after which time the suspect must be produced before a magistrate. The magistrate is not empowered to investigate the case, but under the regulations he "shall" remand the detainee to a prison, where he can be held indefinitely. Bail may be granted at the discretion of the Government.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) provides that any person arrested under this law must be produced before a magistrate within 3 days unless the Minister of National Security orders the suspect to be detained for a period of 3 months. Such an order may be renewed for a period of up to 18 months. The terms of detention are set out in this order; detainees do not have the same rights as other prisoners regarding visits by family, access to lawyers, food, and other conditions of incarceration.

The PTA and emergency regulations were used extensively in 1986 to detain large numbers of persons, mostly Tamil youths, from the North and East and Sinhalese allegedly belonging to radical political groups. Some Sri Lankans allege that between 3,000 and 5,000 detainees are being held under the PTA and emergency regulations. The Government has said 2,526 persons were in detention under these laws at year's end, 67 under the emergency regulations and the rest under the PTA. The Government said 67 detainees were Sinhalese and the rest were Tamils. The Government stated that 126 detainees had been enrolled in the Government's new rehabilitation program. As in 1985, there were reports of several persons who had been

held without charges longer than the 18 months legally permissible under the PTA.

In 1986 the security forces continued their practice of rounding up young men in areas of suspected Tamil militant infiltration. Many of those taken into custody are held for short periods for questioning and released. Those not released are taken to detention facilities. Relatives may write to the Ministry of Defense and ask that the case of their family member be reviewed. The review is conducted by a 3-man advisory board which considers the evidence, interviews the police and the detainee, and makes a recommendation. Although it frequently takes several months for the cases to be reviewed many reviews have led to a recommendation of immediate release.

Unless a review of the detention is requested, detainees can remain for long periods without being charged, or informed of the provision of law under which they have been detained. It is not unusual for detainees to be held incommunicado and, especially for PTA detainees, to be denied ready access to their attorneys. Bail may be granted at the sole discretion of the Attorney General's office.

Persons may challenge the legality of their detention either by filing a suit in the high court, or in the Supreme Court by charging the Government with illegal violation of an individual's fundamental rights as they are enumerated in the Constitution. Some observers claim these legal remedies are time-consuming, expensive, and beyond the means of the average detainee, limiting their effectiveness. Fundamental rights suits, for example, must be prepared and filed with the Supreme Court within 30 days of the alleged first violation of fundamental rights, a requirement with which it is often difficult for detainees to comply. Relatives of persons arrested under the PTA or the emergency regulations have initiated legal challenges several times in recent years. In no instance where the court inquired

into the detention and subsequent disappearance while in police custody of a suspect detained under these measures have the results been publicly released.

There is no forced labor in Sri Lanka, but criminals may be sentenced to "rigorous imprisonment" (hard labor) under which they are required to work.

(e) Denial of Fair Public Trial

Generally speaking, an accused person is entitled to a fair trial in open court, is represented by counsel of his choice, and is informed of the charges and evidence against him. Accused persons tried in the high court are provided an attorney if they need one, but no attorney is provided by the Government for defendants tried in other courts.

Although public trial by jury is the custom, juries are not provided in trials under the prevention of Terrorism Act on the grounds that jury members could be intimidated. Like others convicted of crimes under Sri Lanka's laws, those convicted of violations under the PTA or the emergency regulations have the right of appeal, although attorneys are not provided at public expense for cases in the appeals and Supreme Courts.

The independence of the judiciary is constitutionally guaranteed. The Chief Justice is a Tamil. He and all judges of the Supreme Courts of appeal and high courts are appointed by the President. The Chief Justice and two Supreme Court judges comprise a judicial service commission which appoints, transfers, and dismisses all lower court judges.

In the northern Jaffna Peninsula, the judicial system has virtually ceased to function due to intimidation by the Tamil militants. Outside the Jaffna Peninsula, Sri Lanka's judiciary demonstrated its independence in 1986 by handing down acquittals in two well-publicized cases of detainees who had been held under the PTA and the emergency regulations. In one case, the Government chose not to appeal the acquittal. In the other case, concerning Father Aparnam Singarayar, the Tamil

Catholic priest accused in February 1983 of two counts of withholding information from the police, the Government has decided to appeal the acquittal on the first charge. The trial on the second charge was under way at year's end.

Hundreds of other PTA detainees were brought to trial during 1986. Virtually all of the detainees had been held for long periods. Most of them were sentenced to short prison terms in exchange for guilty pleas to lesser charges, thus obviating the need for lengthy trials.

However, in many cases, such as that of the Tamil student Ramanujam Manikkalingam, there have been long delays on the Government side in completing its investigation and preparing charges. Manikkalingam, arrested under the PTA in March, had not been charged with any crime 9 months later.

Estimates of political prisoners vary widely. Sri Lankan human rights activists, counting only those convicted under the PTA and currently serving prison sentences, estimate that there are 30 political prisoners. If less restrictive definitions are used, the number could be much higher.

(f) Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home or Correspondence

The Government respects individual privacy and the sanctity of the family and the home. The judiciary has a good record of upholding rights to privacy in those cases which reach a high court. Ordinarily, search and arrest warrants are required in order to enter private premises. Under the PTA, however, police officers above a certain rank and less senior officers authorized by them in writing may, without a warrant, enter and search any premises and seize "any document or thing" when there is a presumption or evidence of support for, or involvement with, unlawful activity. Critics claim that police and military personnel often enter the homes of Tamils without cause. Monitoring of telephones is not known to be a

common practice, despite allegations by some critics of the Government that it taps their telephone lines.

Section 2 — Respect for Civil Liberties, including:

(a) Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution guarantees "freedom of speech and expression including publication," but it also permits these guarantees to be restricted "as may be prescribed by law in the interests of national security."

In contrast with the previous year, there was no formal press censorship in Sri Lanka in 1986. Although the Government controls the country's largest newspaper chain and owns the radio and television services, variety of independent newspapers and journals provide a full range of viewpoints on foreign policy and and domestic matters. Many small circulation periodicals published by opposition political parties operate in an unrestricted manner.

Foreign and Sri Lanka-based journalists generally encountered less difficulties in 1986 than in 1985, when journalists' work was screened before visas were issued. However, in 1986, the Government penalized one foreign journalist for reporting it considered too pro-Tamil by refusing to renew his visa and requiring his departure.

Sri Lankans are generally free to express their views in private but may be prosecuted under the emergency regulation for making certain kinds of remarks in public. A Canadian citizen of Sri Lanka, the chairman of the Citizens Committee of the town of Kalmunai who had been charged with sedition under the emergency regulations for repeating to a foreign journalist information he had given to the police about an alleged atrocity by the Government security forces was tried and acquitted of the charge in 1986. Also in 1986, there were hundreds of arrests of alleged members of a proscribed political party, the revolutionary Marxist

Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP), in southern Sri Lanka for alleged disruptive activities, including antigovernment public statements.

Academic freedom is generally respected. Responding to student boycotts and other disruptive activities, the Government closed affected universities for short periods. Generally, however, 1986 was a year of relative student peace.

(b) Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution guarantees freedom of assembly and association and the right to form and join trade unions. Sri Lanka has an abundance of private associations, devoted to the promotion of business, professional, educational, religious, charitable, and humanitarian causes, which are free to maintain ties with international bodies. However, there are a few restrictions on free assembly and association. One leftist political party, the JVP, has been proscribed since 1983.

Under the emergency regulations, the President (or his designee) is empowered to prohibit public meetings which would be "likely to cause a disturbance to public order or promote disaffection." In practice, the police issue permits for outdoor, public meetings or processions and special permission is required for use of a loudspeaker. The question of whether to issue a permit is left to the discretion of the superintendent or assistant superintendent of an area, who may refuse a permit if he anticipates a breach of peace.

Worker rights are recognized and protected by law. Any seven workers may form a union, draw up their own procedures, elect their own representatives, and formulate programs. Workers are expressly granted the right to bargain collectively. When workers and employers are not able to resolve a dispute, there is an arbitration system which involves Labor Department officers. These officers are

stationed throughout the country to assure that employers fulfill their legal and contractual obligations to workers and to be available for arbitration in minor local disputes.

Excepting public service employees, workers are free to strike in Sri Lanka and have done so frequently. Under the emergency regulations, the President may declare any business to be an essential service, making a strike illegal. During 1986, the Government used this power to terminate strikes or other job actions several times. In the case of public service employees as well as workers in "essential services," the Government generally agreed to discuss grievance with a labor representative.

About 1,000 labor unions and federations together represent about one-third of the 5.5 million-strong labor force; 80 percent of the organized work force are in the plantations. Workers in nonplantation agricultural sectors and most of those employed in small businesses, as well as workers in the free trade zone, are not represented by unions. Employees in the zone participate in labor-management company associations.

Although there are few independent unions, most of the largest worker organizations are affiliated with political parties, frequently operate as arms of those parties, and play a significant role in the political process. Despite constraints arising from their political affiliations, Sri Lankan unions have been effective in improving conditions for workers. Many unions maintain ties with international labor federations and trade secretariats.

(c) Freedom of Religion

Although the Constitution establishes Buddhism as the official religion and requires the Government "to protect and foster" Buddhism, it also guarantees the right of all Hindus, Muslims, and Christians to practice their religions freely. Most members of the majority Sinhalese ethnic group are Buddhists, while most Tamils are Hindu. There are Christians from both groups.

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MINISTRY OF LANDS & LAND DEVELOPMENT

(Translations by Lanka Press Monitor of reports in the Sinhala and Tamil press)

Jaffna and Nallur areas under siege

Government security forces have intensified offensives against Tamil extremists in the Jaffna city and its neighbouring areas. Offensives have been continuing during the last two days. Mortar shells are launched in addition to attacks from bomber aircraft and gunship helicopters.

People of Jaffna and Nallur areas are fleeing their homes to villages where there are no army camps.

The main bazaar where commercial establishments, modern market, shops and bus stands were located resembled 'graveyard' Buildings were devastated due to shelling and it was reported that many buildings were still burning.

It is said in the offensive started on Saturday more than 30 civilians were killed and more than a hundred were injured. The offensives was started on Saturday morning with bombing by three aircraft. Shelling was launched continuously from the Jaffna Fort camp. Including the Jaffna hospital and the Nallur Kandasamy Temple, many houses and shops were damaged.

Attacks started at 6.30 a.m. on Saturday March 7th.

Bombing from aircraft uprooted palmyrah and coconut palms as well. Livestock were also killed.

At 6 p. m. on Saturday a volley of 20 shells was launched from the Jaffna Fort camp killing 30 civilians and injuring about 60. Many shops, houses and the hospital were extensively damaged. Shells that struck the hospital killed a welfare officer and a police officer. 15 persons waiting near the hospital were injured. Shops on the KKS Road caught fire. Shells instantly killed three civilians near Raja Theatre and four people were electricuted when live electricity wire fell on them due to the

shelling. Five employees of the Raja mini-theatre were seriously injured. Seven Muslims of one family were killed in Mosque Lane. 300 families fled the area.

500 families in Kottady area fled their homes. Jaffna was plunged into darkness since electricity wires were damaged due to shelling.

— *VIRAKESARAI*, Independent Tamil daily (9/3)

Is the Beggar's Sore to be kept Festering?

Boasting is easy. Solving a problem is difficult. If boasting is stopped and a sincere attempt is made, it may not be impossible to solve Sri Lanka's ethnic problem. One factor has to be clearly understood: without India's goodwill no lasting solution is possible. If India's assistance was enlisted at the beginning this wound need not have been allowed to fester. Even though we need not stooge or subjugate ourselves to any other nation, big or small, it is a fact of geopolitical life that small nations in any region must co-operate with the big powers of the region.

Yet what happened here? From the time the ethnic issue took a turn for the worse, the leaders here adopted an attitude of "hit if you dare". The Prime Minister threw this challenge at India and boasted that the Sinhalese would die to the last man rather than submit (his son who is in England is not included). Before that the President boasted that we would not be frightened by even four or five Indias. Leaving aside four or five Indias, we can imagine how they will run if even one battalion of Indian Gurkhas arrive here.

So, we ask the Government to at least now stop all this idle boasting and come down to earth.

— Editorial, *ATHTHA*, Sinhala daily (6/3)

The Militant . . .

(Continued from page 11)

Tamil militants and released only after realisation of the demanded ransoms. After the Liberation Tigers proved their domination of the militant struggle, donations from expatriate and other Sri Lankan Tamils to the other militant groups started thinning down and they are now struggling to even sustain themselves. Corroborated Durairaja: "I found that my kidnappees were having only bread for breakfast, lunch and dinner on most days".

The latest series of kidnappings and the fact that desperate Tamil militants belonging to the smaller groups have begun to openly come out in the streets of Madras toting guns has come as the proverbial last straw for the people of Tamil Nadu. Said Madras Police Commissioner Walter Dewaram: "Sri Lankan Tamil refugees here should realise that they are our guests and have to behave themselves to continue to enjoy our hospitality." PLOTE spokesman A. S. Skanda says blandly: "We did not kidnap Durairaja. We arrested him because we had given him money for safe-keeping and he has not returned it." While Srikant, the TELO spokesman, says that certain irresponsible members of the group were responsible for the Mohandas kidnapping and they have been expelled. But the militants are now under considerable public pressure.

However, the militarily-most powerful militant group, the LTTE, and the Eelam revolutionary organisers who have recently been working in close cooperation with the Tigers still enjoy public support. Otherwise Tamil Nadu's sympathy for the cause of the Tamils of Sri Lanka would have by now been drowned in disenchantment with militant misbehaviour.

— *India Today*

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US and the 'Islamic Bomb'

The world press has named it the 'Islamic Bomb'. In fact, it is the Pakistani Bomb of course. The SUNDAY OBSERVER (London) carried the Kul-dip Nayar interview with the maker of this bomb, the Pakistani nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, and so did the privately owned Pakistani newspaper the MUSLIM. An evidently embarrassed Mr. Khan quickly denied the statement attributed to him as high-level Pakistani officials, sensitive to the fact that US Congress would be discussing a huge economic-and-military aid package to Pakistan the next week, burst out with even angrier denials. But Mr. Nayar, former editor of the STATESMAN in Calcutta, stuck to his story. More interestingly, the editor of the MUSLIM, Mr. Mushadid Hussein, resigned, his publisher accepting the resignation "most regretfully".

While a Senate Committee urged President Reagan to withhold the 1.7 billion dollar military aid (the total package is 4.2 billion) Senator John Glenn warned that a "Pakistani bomb has the potential of starting a nuclear arms race in South Asia" in a letter he wrote to Mr. Reagan.

Two American scholars who gave evidence before the Solarz committee also expressed serious misgivings. One of them, Mr. Leonard Spector, senior associate of the Carnegie Foundation, is the author of a book "Going Nuclear" published last month in the US. Mr. Spector who has spent ten years studying nuclear proliferation said Pakistan now possesses all of the components needed to manufacture the bomb or remains just short of this goal".

The U.S. is 'increasingly entangled in a morass of conflict

ing mutual policy objectives in south Asia', Mr. Selig S. Harrison senior associate of the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace, has said.

Testifying before the Solarz Sub-Committee, the Congressional panel discussing a \$ 4.02 billions aid package for Pakistan, during the weekend, Mr. Harrison said that in the name of helping Pakistan defend itself against Soviet and Afghan forces, the U.S. was giving Islamabad sophisticated military equipment. It was in fact primarily suited for deployment on the Indian border and not the western sector.

This policy directly conflicted with the American objective of reducing Indian dependence on the Soviet Union by liberalising exports of high technology, including military-related technology, high-tech exports to India would not bring a geopolitical play-off if India focussed military aid to Pakistan continued, Mr. Harrison added.

Meanwhile, senior Pentagon official has said India too can ask for AWACS or Hawkeyes and that the U. S. would be glad to discuss the request if made.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Near East and South Asian Affairs, Mr. Robert H. Pelletreau Jr. and other officials gave the impression during the panel's hearings that Pakistan would get either Boeing AWACS or Grumman Hawkeyes.

Noting the thrust of their replies, Congressman Stephen Solarz asked whether India could also obtain AWACS or Hawkeyes.

Mr. Pelletreau replied, "it seems to me that this would fall well

within the (ongoing) dialogue (with India) and the type of discussion we are trying to develop". To Mr. Solarz's question whether an Indian request would be sympathetically considered, he replied, certainly, discussing it with the Indians'.

Providing another angle on Pakistan's nuclear programme, Mr. Leonard Spector of the Carnegie Foundation told the hearing, "an administration source has informed me that there is evidence Pakistan has attempted F-16s for use with nuclear weapons. "But he would not give any details on the matter and indicated that in this instance the Pakistani efforts had been thwarted.

Mr. Spector said Pakistan was not known to have given the U.S. any explicit assurances that the U.S. supplied F-16s would not be used for nuclear purposes. "Nor, I believe, has the Reagan administration sought such assurances".

Mr. Spector also said that nuclear developments in Pakistan had set the stage for a "major nuclear weapons build-up in the sub-continent".

If the Indian nuclear plants operated as planned, India would have little trouble producing 10 to 16 nuclear weapons annually. In only a few years India would have an arsenal of over 50 atomic bombs.

Mr. Spector said Pakistan's Kahuta facility would shortly be able to produce "enough nuclear weapons material for several Hiroshima-size weapons annually. Six years from now, Pakistan could possess a *de facto* nuclear arsenal of nearly 20 devices, a substantial nuclear force, indeed, in the South Asian context".

The Name Game "Nama Gama"

Rukman Dehigaspe

Reeling under today's incessant media barrage of grandiose "inaugurations" of 'X'-gama or 'Y' mawatha I have been reflecting on the sad transformation of Sri Lanka's national psyche as exemplified by our attitude to place names.

Even the most superficial study of our traditional place names shows that they had been bestowed by a people with a close and vital relationship with nature. Almost every village — and we were a nation of villages — derives its name from a distinctive natural feature such as a tree, a rock, an animal or a stream. Read our road signs or browse through any

map and, once you let the scales of familiarity fall from your eyes, the bucolic charm of our village names will enchant you. Trees take pride of place in having places named for them. I wonder whether any other country has such an extraordinary number of villages named after trees. This phenomenon gives credibility to the recent thesis presented (at the Institute of Traditional Studies) by Gunapala Senadheera that the Sinhalese of pre-Buddhist Sri Lanka were worshippers of tree gods. Old customs rarely fade away. But today the abodes of our ancient deities sadly fall to the sacrilegious axe in this age of dwindling forests and burgeoning timber barons.

A brief list of old place — names, some famous some obscure, will illustrate my tale —

Andarawewa	— reservoir of 'andara' trees
Botale	— hill side of 'bo' trees
Dikwella	— long beach
Embilipitiya	— plain of 'embili' trees
Gonaduwa	— sambhur island
Hikkaduwa	— 'hik' tree grove
Ittapana	— procupine rock
Jambugasmulla	— 'jambu' tree corner
Kurundu-gaha-hetekma	— cinnamon tree mile (post)
Loolkandura	— stream of 'loola' fish
Meegahapandura	— forest of 'mee' trees
Narammala	— mandarine blossom
Oruwela	— field of canoes
Pundul Oya	— stream of leeches
Randenigala	— golden marsh (fields) rock
Sapugaskanda	— hill of 'sapu' trees
Tiruwanaletiya	— rocks of quartz
Uswetakeiyawa	— place of tall pandanus
Veyangoda	— termite heap
Walahanuwa	— island of bears
Yahalatenna	— plain of 'yahala' trees.

This is but a random list and any reader can readily compile his own.

Surprisingly, the place names of our cosmopolitan metropolis are redolent of the charming cluster of little villages it once was long, long ago. 'Colombo' itself is said to derive from Kolontota the ferry of 'kolon' trees. Among its suburbs we discern the now-forgotten villages of Thimbirigasyaya (fields of 'thimbiri trees), Narahenpita (place of mandarine orchards), Borella (spread of 'bo' trees), Kotahena (little chena), Bambalapitiya (place of 'j/bambola' trees), Ibbawela tortoise field), Wellawatte (garden by the beach), Dehiwela lime tree field) and Galkissa (rocky reef). Battered by the bustle of our polluted metropolis one grows nostalgic for these forgotten villages of its fragrant past.

What is most notable about these names of town and village, mountain and stream, is not only their closeness to nature but also the characteristic modesty of the people who first named them. Not one perpetuates a personal or family name. It is a proud reflection that not one of our greatest monarchs of yore named (or re-named) any city after themselves. The capital city that presided over our golden age for over a thousand years was named after Anuradha, the chieftain of King Pandukabhaya's court, who founded it. No King, however, great, ever sought to usurp this singular honour or erase Anuradha's name. After a few centuries of being modestly known as Anuradha-gama the urban reality of the royal capital was accepted and the name up-graded to Anuradhapura — and so it remained to this day and age, an object lesson in modesty and in giving credit where it is due, instead of rewriting history.

This is surely a sobering thought to leave with our leaders of today who arrogantly bestow on every little cluster of garishly daubed cottages, or dusty road, within their area of influence own so-forgettable names or those of their kith and kin.

Is it, perhaps, too late to remind them of Sri Lanka's traditions of modesty and anonymous benevolence?

Part II

Capital and Peasant Production — A Review

S. Sathananthan

Resort to 'protected' tenure was a response to a contradiction between the economic need to expand the commodity economy, to facilitate accumulation by foreign capital, and the political imperative of preventing proletarianization, which results from the consequential factor mobility of land and labour. This contradiction persisted and crucially influenced the agrarian policies of successive colonial States.

Despite juridical safeguards through 'protected' tenure, class differentiation among producers cultivating 'cash crops', i. e.

those engaged in production primarily for the market, appears to have continued because, at the inception of its rule the Dutch colonial State passed a regulation 'forbidding' the purchase or taking in mortgage of the last property of any person¹³.

Class differentiation within the expanding commodity economy gave rise to pro-classes of propertyless workers and entrepreneurial farmers engaged in the cultivation of cinnamon, coffee, arecanut, tobacco and coconut¹⁴. These classes continued to expand under the British,

who introduced legislation to extend private property and implemented fiscal policies, in particular a further monetization of rent and taxes; and the Colebrooke-Cameron reforms favoured a *laissez faire* approach. Except to intervene to settle unemployed villagers on Crown land as a crisis response during periods of high unemployment, the British colonial State did not intervene to arrest proletarianization.

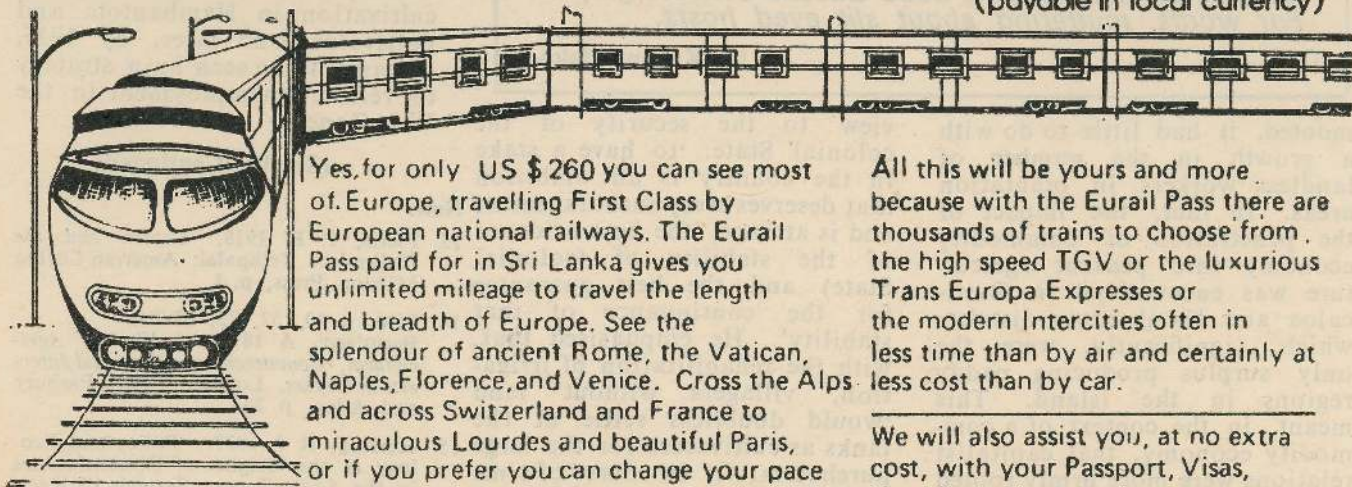
iii) Colonial State and underdevelopment

When the idea of a systematic land colonization was first

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On the Wall the White Jade Queen walks

Seeing the ghosts of her Empire stalk

Pale beside your Emperors and Queens.

But you envy now these dull shopkeeping skills

That took your tithes and tribute

Even those suddenly amiable Japanese

Who strut their cameras on the Wall

You forget when

They swarmed in with tank and bren

More sinister than old nomads of the North,

This wall held back. Now merely ornamental

Over old hills the Great Wall twists forth

While borderlands are past ten thousand li

Beyond the broken gorges.

PLA men whose only aim

Was help their families till their lands in peace

Are poised like hawks over glaciers

Months away to the West

Beyond uranium deserts where dragons teeth

Once hurled fierce scimitared horsemen.

Padded tigers prowl the wind honed passes

High in the sky above blue bamboo groves

Of mountain kingdoms once suzerained to her Raj

Convoys growl and bristle caravan routes

With guns and plots to hold the new Empire.

Uneasy, on the Wall the Jade Queens consort grapes

For words, muttering about slit eyed hosts.

— U. Karunatilake

mooted, it had little to do with a growth in the number of landless workers in plantation areas. In fact, the impact of the penetration of commodity economy into peasant agriculture was encountered in Batticaloa and Hambantota districts which, significantly, were the only surplus producing paddy regions in the island. This meant, in the context of a commodity economy, that capitalist relations were more firmly rooted in these districts and concern over rising proletarianization, and a fear of the political implications of a growing working class, was in fact voiced in respect of these districts. In 1867, the Assistant Government Agent (AGA), Hambantota, explained the advisability of setting dispossessed direct producers on Crown land with a

view to the security of the colonial State: 'to have a stake in the country is an ambition that deserves every encouragement and is at once, the best evidence of the stability of (colonial State) and the best guarantee for the continuance of that stability'. He emphasised that, with the rehabilitation of irrigation, villagers without land 'would doubtless settle at the tanks as cultivators for the large purchasers. . . . In course of time they would accumulate sufficient means to become themselves purchasers of smaller plots'.¹⁵ However, operation of this 'trickle-down' mechanism does not appear to have compensated for proletarianization.

By the early decades of this century, the operation of market forces in peasant agriculture tending towards the dispossession of

direct producers became particularly marked in the same relatively less populous Dry Zone districts of Hambantota and Batticaloa. By 1920, what Bernstein later called the 'simple reproduction squeeze'¹⁶ was already evident in Batticaloa.

The Government Agent (GA), C. V. Brayne, noted in a 1920 memorandum that 'the peasant proprietor. . . is steadily being crushed out of existence by the money lender and the large capitalist' and 'reduced to a condition of serfdom'; but he did not recommend the elimination of the 'large capitalist', for he concluded: 'raise the condition of the labourer and the capitalist cannot make both ends meet' (sic). Instead, he emphasised the need to arrest this process of proletarianization by 'putting the peasant's land permanently beyond the reach of the money lender and the capitalist' and proposed the creation of a 'peasant proprietor system'.¹⁷

The point here is that systematic land colonization was first proposed in the context of proletarianization among direct producers engaged in paddy cultivation in Hambantota and Batticaloa; and later, by 1935, it came to be seen as a strategy to relieve unemployment in the Wet Zone.

(To be Continued)

Notes

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