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LANKA

GUARDIAN

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— Mervyn de Silva

Vijaya: J.R's comrade

— Piyal Gamage

NON - ALIGNMENT

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the
90's**

Nana Sutresna

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WAR AND PEACE

Can we end the War?

— R. A. Ariyaratne

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— K. M. de Silva

**Investigative
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— G. L. Pieris



Black Knight
It's your move

CHANDRIKA BITES THE BULLET

Mervyn de Silva

Although another round of peace talks has been announced, the war goes on. But on the home front, four-star General Hamilton Wanasinghe, Defence Secretary and former Army Commander is the top target of the privately owned media, the Firing Line.

The editor of the island's newest newspaper, the *SUNDAY LEADER* and his wife Raine Wickrematunga are beaten up by a gang of thugs. An accusing finger is firmly pointed at a newly appointed "Media Consultant" who promptly pro-

tests his innocence. The Police have been ordered to investigate the whole sordid affair, on which the widely circulating Sunday papers turned the spotlight. The media policy of the Peoples Alliance was in a mess, with the government's credibility seriously damaged.

On Monday, Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike argues strongly against the privatisation of profit-making State enterprises like the Insurance Corporation, the Petroleum Corporation etc. On Wednesday, the deputy finance minister of the P. A. government presents this list of public enterprises to Parliament:

Ceylon Petroleum Corporation
Sri Lanka Telecom
Ceylon Electricity Board
Air Lanka Ltd.
Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation
Ceylon Government Railways
Galle Harbour Development
Colombo Katunayake Highway
Colombo Matara Highway
Management of State sector Plantations

The final item on this "Hit List" is a catch-all "Any other public enterprises referred to the Commission". Prof. G. L.'s list includes the profit-making ventures mentioned by Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike, the mother of President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who is Minister of Finance.

A renowned expert on international law and former Colombo University V. C. Prof. Pieris is her deputy. After his maiden budget, he is now known, not just to the UNP opposition, but to the trade unions and student groups as the I.M.F.'s "Hit man"

Meanwhile, the former Army Commander and Defence Secretary, Lt. Gen. Hamilton Wanasingha will be summoned by the Special Presidential

Commission recently appointed by the P.A. (Will the I.G.P. also lose his post? The question was raised by a Sunday paper).

The undeclared war is the heart of the Sri Lankan crisis since defence spending makes it an all-pervasive social-political-economic problem. For this reason, the Wanasingha affair is more than Sunday sensation. It introduces the role of the army as a major actor in the unfolding drama, and makes the vote of the Defence Ministry (second only to the Finance Ministry) a key factor in the big equation.

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Next to the army would come the trade unions. Not ONE major trade union has cheered Deputy Finance Minister G. L. Pieris, and this is an "Alliance" that includes ALL the parties of the broad Left, the traditional ally, if not the patron, of the urban working class. All the leading unions in the key sectors of the national economy have reacted strongly, stressing most of all the material hardships that would necessarily follow.

THE QUESTION THEN IS CAN THE PEOPLES ALLIANCE IMPOSE A TWO-YEAR WAGE FREEZE?

A rightwing UNP government, certainly a regime led by an authoritarian patriarch like J. R. Jayawardena, could. A strong-willed President like the populist Premadasa would have been smart enough to get the IMF-WB to accept, (perhaps with a warning from these all-powerful agencies) some welfarist schemes that cushioned the poorest of the poor. The P. A. alternative has not impressed any of the important trade unions.

On this issue at least Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, (TULF) is an intelligent neutral. His focus is the ethnic conflict. But he has understood that no Sinhalese regime that has alienated the Sinhala working class can possibly mobilise the political strength to negotiate a peace settlement and end the undeclared war in the north. "It is clearly one of the most comprehensive programs of divestiture envisaged so far by the government of Sri Lanka. It covers airline, telecommunication, petroleum, shipping, transport and railways".

One would anticipate an equally positive response from the private sector and certainly the employers' federations, the trade chambers. Mr. Patrick Amerasinghe says:

"Basically this budget does not provide any particular benefit to the small and medium scale entrepreneurs and the private sector as well... this budget will badly affect the manufacturers". He mentions bicycle manufacturers... The government expects the private sector to provide more employment opportunities. But under the present situation the private sector will not be able to do so... As a nation the fundamental things that we have to aim at is to create more jobs and increase productivity. The budget will not help either.

The Chairman of the National Chamber of industries, Mr. Nihal Abeysekera says "industries set up to manufacture tyres, refrigerators, deep freezers, bicycles have all expanded... these industries will have serious problems competing with imports at reduced tariff rates.."

Of course this is global economics and little Sri Lanka has been caught by its neck

and forced to line-up and march in step with other under-developed countries. The recruiting officers are the Fund and the Bank, the faceless duo in a triumvirate now known as the WASHINGTON CONSENSUS, a sole superpower U.S. that really lacks the will and the strength to run the world and must necessarily work through and together with the all-powerful IMF and World Bank.

The attack on Mr. Lasantha Wickrematunge, Editor of the 'Sunday Leader' and his wife Raine, herself a journalist on the same newspaper, by thugs which have caused the couple to be hospitalised should be strongly condemned by those who believe in the freedom of the press and the freedom of expression. Let us say straightaway that the 'Observer' has been outspokenly critical of the editorial style of the 'Sunday Leader', particularly its appetite for cheap political gossip. But it is one thing to criticise a newspaper on grounds of good taste on a matter of principle. But it is something altogether different to get thugs to beat up its Editor.

The 'Island' which reported the

assault yesterday ended its story with a parting shot. 'Attacks on journalists were a common occurrence during the last UNP regime', it said. Too true. One had thought that such villainies would have no place under a new dispensation and this is why it is necessary that the Government should express its concern over the incident and allow the Police a free hand in conducting the investigations into the matter.

Those who read newspapers know that the 'Sunday Leader' has been the principal critic of the Government among the English language newspapers in Sri Lanka.

Sunday Observer

The Minister read out a list of institutions which the government intends to privatise, they included Air Lanka, Petroleum Corporation Milco etc.

At this stage Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe sent a note across to Labour Minister Mahinda Rajapakse, which read:

"Are you all mad?"

Nobody knows what Mr. Wickremesinghe meant by it. Perhaps he thought it was unwise to name the institutions, it could unleash labour unrest.

The UNP feels the PA has borrowed privatisation from it. But Minister Mangala Samaraweera retorted, "We borrowed all the good things from you other than thuggery and fraud - let those remain with you".

Mr. Samaraweera is however facing Opposition from the Trade Unions of the Sri Lanka Telecom over the decision to privatise Telecom and other enterprises.

The TUs feel SLT is doing well and there is no need to privatise it. The Minister says he wants SLT to do better and has asked the TUs to make alternative proposals, but they have not responded.

The Minister says the demand will rise to 500,000 telephone connections within the next two years and already there are 183,000 on the waiting list. In a strong reaction he telephoned Post Master General Ms. Kotakadeniya and told her to ignore the picketing campaign by the Telecom workers.

Let them have some fun, he said, insisting the government would go ahead with the privatisation of SLT, as stipulated in the PA's maiden Budget.

Although the Budget failed to provide any relief to people, the Sri Lankan delegation which toured the US to ask for increased garment quotas was quite successful.

Ending of the war in North and East

R. A. Ariyaratne

In the period immediately before and after the Parliamentary General Elections (August 24, 1994) leading up to the Presidential Polls (October 9, 1994) Sri Lanka's traditional pre-hustings sloganeering underwent a clearly discernible qualitative change. The primacy of economic issues, such as the steep rise of the price of food and other essential items, gradually began to give way to a primarily political imperative; viz., the need to realign political forces to rid the frazzled society and the bewildered polity of the twin evils of state tyranny with all its attendant aberrations and the seemingly never ending war in the North and the East of the country.

There is something approaching universal consensus among the political parties and pressure groups of all hues and complexions on the desirability of dismantling the Executive Presidential form of government, and the accomplishment of it is already within the realm of possibility, barring the supervention of some unforeseen procedural impediments.

Not so the festering sore of the civil war fought between the government security forces and the Tamil separatist guerrillas. Indeed, the Peoples Alliance's leadership was wont to dub the North-East war "a beggar's sore", accruing immense financial benefits to a grotesque combine of businessmen and certain security service personnel.

In fact, a number of fraudulent transactions of purchasing military hardware came to light prior to and during the Presidential elections campaign. The craving for the "filthy lucre" was perceived to have moved in a spiral course: the ill-gotten fortune whetting the appetite of the officer corps to amass more wealth by perpetuating the war while they themselves remained in the safety of the cantonment, which,

in turn, resulting in inept troop deployment and operational blunders at the battle-front thus paving the way for ignominious defeats at the hands of the LTTE. With traumatic memories of such harrowing setbacks like the Pooneryn fiasco, in which over five hundred soldiers lost their lives, still fresh in mind, the Southern psyche recoiled into a state of phlegmatic resignation of the inevitability of the armed conflict triggering-off further confrontations with no end in sight. The one-time popular slogan "fight it to a finish" began to lose its elan and the traditional rousing appeal even among the high military circles and, before long, was relegated to no more than a lone cry in the wilderness.

The rising tide of militant pacifism engulfed a cross section of the Sri Lankan society, submerging indiscriminately the petulant outbursts of the ivory-tower intellectual hawks, vested interest warmongering as well as the passionate entreaties of the ordinary citizens of the land to avert a possible dismemberment of a large part of the country. Likewise, *bona fide* reservations expressed against making a formal debut into the peace arena without a well-planned follow-up strategy were more often than not dismissed as attempts at sabotaging the entire peace process.

Spurred on by this chorus of peace, the P.A. pledged themselves to explore the feasibility of coming to an amicable settlement with the estranged Tamils in the strife-torn North and the East. At the General Election held in August 1994. The P.A. failed to get a clear mandate in terms of the number of seats it received. Nevertheless, undaunted by the threadbare majority it had in the Parliament and buoyed by its superior showing at the polls (48.94%), the P.A. swiftly and unilaterally decided to initiate the peace process — a decision which the post-1977 JR Jayawardena government did not dare take even with a four-fifths majority in the Parliament. The first move in this direction was the partial lifting of the embargo that had been imposed by the previous UNP regime on the transportation of twenty

eight items to the war affected areas. While the general public watched the new development with cautious optimism, "too much, too early" was the reaction of many security forces personnel who are at the receiving end of the LTTE attacks. Conscious of their apprehensions, Col. Anuruddha Ratwatte sought to allay their fears by undertaking a tour of the operational area whereupon he reassured the soldiers that:-

"The ban on several items was lifted after consultations with the Heads of the Armed Forces. Weapons cannot be made from those goods. Permission was not granted for the transport of items that can be made use of to make weapons" (The Inland. 5.9.1994)

Not surprisingly, the insouciance with which PA launched the peace mission was hardly matched by the reception it awaited at Jaffna. For Liberation Tigers the Government's peace overture was proof of its sincerity of purpose but, that apart, was not a good enough reason to compromise their stance on separate existence. Already their victories in the battle field and the achievement in setting up an alternative civilian administration in the Peninsula, if not in the outlying localities, had been so impressive for them to contemplate any shifting from their stalking posture along the Southern defence perimeters in a bid to reciprocate the government's peace initiative. After all, the ultimate insult that can be hurled at a militant liberation movement is that it is selling the struggle for a plate of porridge.

Nevertheless, for two reasons they could turn a complete blind-eye on the "knocking at the door". Firstly, they knew only too well that a freer flow of goods into the areas they controlled would slowly but surely make the civilian inhabitants — their power base — look askance at the severe economic hardships imposed on them by the exigencies of war. Also it was clear that the peace effort could go in some way to strengthen the hand of the Tamil moderates and nonconfirmist intel-

Prof. Ariyaratne Phd. (Cambridge) is Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo. He visited Jaffna recently in a semi-official capacity.

lectuals who are advocating a negotiated settlement with the government in the South. The strategy chosen by the LTTE to sail past these uncertain undercurrents is one designed to "kill two birds with one stone". i.e., while welcoming the decision to lift the ban imposed on twenty eight commodities they now called for the complete lifting of the embargo of transporting goods, closing of the military camp at Pooneryn and declare a ceasefire in order to "create a climate for peace" (The Island 14.9.1994, Reuter Report). This was to serve as a doubleedged weapon pruning possible dissent that might emerge in Jaffna had the peace move been brazenly cold-shouldered by them, at the same time making their reciprocity conditional on further substantial concessions which are undoubtedly unpalatable to the majority of the Sinhalese people, unacceptable to the government military establishment and capable of sending shock waves across the Palk Straits.

Such a nonchalant attitude could have served the LTTE's short term strategy but in the long run it would have left them open to charges of being sully — rejecting a piece of bread because it is not the whole loaf. Alternatively, an innocuous reciprocal gesture entailing neither substantial erosion of their writ in the North and the East nor loss of face in political reckoning was bound to placate the would-be-critics. Torn between these two options, the Tiger high command resorted to a popular ploy in card games., i.e. when in doubt play the longest suit, which in this context meant opening the doors for negotiations. Their formal announcement to this effect immediately put the government at ease and the Colombo peace lobby, on its toes. The war-weary ordinary people on both sides of the divide heaved a huge sigh of relief.

The stage thus seemed all set for the peace "game". Almost imperceptibly, though, the conflict management dynamics had entered into an inevitable and perhaps immutable phase where rhetoric needed to be replaced by a concrete action programme. Ironically, this meant two different things to the two parties to the conflict. Dictates of democratic politics held that whatever action that the government side proposes to implement should be accountable to the constituents who elected it to power. Axiomatically, therefore, just as much as successful handling of the situation could enhance

its popularity, a tactical blunder will almost instantly earn the wrath of the public. It would then send reverberations through influential political circles whose notoriously ephemeral party loyalties can easily be manipulated to upset the precariously arranged PA apple cart in Parliament. It is not that the majority of the people in the South are prone to overreact to setbacks in political wheeler-dealing but they have been once taken for a ride and ferociously bitten by the Tigers during the Premadasa regime.

At this crucial stage, neither side appears to have had a clear perception of a practical formula for the cessation of hostilities leave alone positive step-by-step plan for tackling the contentious core issue of the Tamils' claim for self-determination. From an abstract speculative level, it was imperative to come to grips with the basic incongruities of the aims and aspirations of the two sides in the fray even to get the negotiations off the ground. As for the government, the only option open to it was to gradually reduce the military presence in the areas where the Tigers held sway, accompanied by further relaxation of the war of attrition on quid pro quo basis. At some stage of this process, of course, serious "stock taking" will become necessary to gauge whether greater concessions would encourage or forestall secession.

In marked contrast, the LTTE had a wider choice ranging from:-

1. To confine their military operations to defence surveillance of the areas coming under their control and desist from attacking the government security forces when not provoked by them.
2. To facilitate the restoration of civil administration in the North and East, in particular, the conduct of the Presidential polls scheduled for September, 1994.
3. To carry out devastatingly effective forays into selective government targets with a view to dictate terms to a demoralized government from a position of superior strength at the negotiating table.

The South's hopes of securing a breakthrough in the deadlocked relations were pinned, in varying degrees, on the possibility of the LTTE deciding in favour of the

first and/or second of these options. But, to the surprise of many yet in keeping with the record of ruthlessly pursuing their primary objective with religious zeal, the Tigers had no compunctions in opting for the last choice, thereby completely ruling out the first and leaving no more than a fleeting chance for the second option.

In the early hours of September 20, 1994, when the country, by and large, had been mesmerized into believing that a political settlement to the ethnic problem is in the offing at long last, the Tigers struck and destroyed the Sri Lankan Navy's inshore patrol craft "Sagarawardena" manned by a forty two member crew who were either killed or taken captive. A few days later, the government security forces launched presumably a retaliatory attack, code named "Jayahanda", on LTTE forward defence lines encircling the Palaly base camp. Only a few weeks later the "Sea Tigers" struck again off the Vettillai-kerani beachhead east of Elephant Pass on "MV Ocean Trader", a vessel chartered by the Commissioner-General of Essential Services, relieving the ship of its entire consignment of general cargo. Later on, the Deputy Minister Ratwatte disclosed in Parliament that there had been eleven separate confrontations between the LTTE and the security forces between September 7 and October 2, 1994 (CDN, October 24, 1994).

These stumbling blocs in the way of smooth passage to a political settlement naturally dampened the spirit of the Southern peace constituency. Meanwhile the political opponents of the PA, and the proponents of military solution combined their forces to unleash a joint propaganda attack on what appeared to be the government's inept handling of the situation. Amidst such gloomy prognostications, the government leadership took a bold decision to take the "bull by the horns" and sent a hurriedly arranged team of emissaries to the lair of the Tigers, Jaffna. They were received with "official honours" and greeted by enthusiastic crowds wherever they were taken on conducted tours. Whether or not this cheerful civilian response was spontaneous or stage-managed will remain a moot point. Not that it would have mattered much in view of the fact that the purpose of this friendly encounter was largely cosmetic — to break the ice of ossified animosities which had hitherto precluded a meaningful appraisal of each other's position on possible cessation of

hostilities. The substance of these preliminary discussions was not lowered to public gaze. In any case it would not have been realistic to expect the government delegation which did not include a single high-ranking minister, or, for that matter, a Member of Parliament to dwell on core contentious issues at the negotiations. The LTTE supremo, Prabhakaran, himself was conspicuously absent at the talks.

Nevertheless, the peace talks were hailed in the South as a successful prelude to further negotiations on substantial issues in the months to come. The second round of talks was scheduled for October 25, 1994. But in the early morning of the day before (24th) the UNP Presidential candidate, Gamini Dissanayake, was assassinated along with over fifty others at an election rally, allegedly by a LTTE suicide-bomber squad. Though opinion differed as to the motive of this dastardly act, both anti-government groups as well as the much embarrassed government itself agreed on the need to put off the proposed round of peace talks indefinitely, at least until after the Presidential elections. It looked as though the peace "game" was back to square one.

However, there appeared on the not too distant horizon a ray of hope for the peace process in the form of Presidential polls scheduled to be held on November 9, 1994. Paradoxically, the overriding theme of the pre-polls campaign was to elect a President to abolish the Executive Presidency, but for the PA, in general, the election presented a much-needed chance to seek a fresh mandate from the people. In particular, a convincing victory for its candidate was bound to strengthen the hand of the government in so far as the incumbent Executive President could steer the day-to-day affairs of governance clear of any obstacles that may emanate from the legislature where PA, on its own, did not even possess a simple majority. Besides, owing to the convergence of multiple policy permutations on a single electoral contest, ample leeway was left to interpret a favourable outcome of the election to vindicate any policies adopted in their brief tenure of office or to justify those proposed to be implemented in future. Where the PA was in dire need of such a value-loaded interpretative approbation was on its lackluster performance in dealing with the Eelam issue.

The Presidential election results reco-

rded a landslide victory for the PA candidate who received 62.28 as against 35.91 obtained by her rival UNP nominee. This presented a potent combination of a popular Executive Presidency being backed by a government group with a working majority in Parliament and, along with it, an ideal vantagepoint to take a fresh look at the thorny ethnic conflict. But the inescapable question on the lips of everyone concerned with the peace process was "Quo Vadis"?

The options open to the government in this respect can be summed up as:-

- 1). Further relaxation of restrictions on the transport of goods to the North and the East by removing more items from the embargo list.
- 2). Opening the main roads leading to the Jaffna peninsula civilian traffic.
- 3). Agree to a conditional bilateral ceasefire.

It is indeed one thing to hold out sanguine expectations that these options are tried out one by one in this, or in different, order eventuating in complete cessation of hostilities. Undoubtedly such a situation would be immensely preferable to the perpetuation of the atrocious ethnic war. But it is another to delude oneself into believing that such an exercise per se is the final solution to this much-maligned conflict. Only a cursory glance at the low-intensity conflicts that have sprouted all over the Post-Cold War world will show that ceasefire at best ensures containment of the conflict under certain parameters given, but does not necessarily and automatically solve the core issues that had given rise to the conflictual situation in the first instance. Unless the government on its part has recourse to a mapped out strategy to deal with the post-ceasefire scenario it will soon find itself in a treacherous terrain.

A protracted ceasefire will almost certainly find its own legitimacy. Inevitably then containment strategy will become the all-absorbing obsession of the politician and the soldier alike, thereby backstaging conflict management strategy. When diplomacy, the fine art of managing the insoluble, is rendered otiose a minor skirmish anywhere in the ceasefire border could rekindle hostilities with a vengeance. In any event, a pronounced military

role could relegate politics to the position of a dependent variable in this context which in turn may discourage any attempt at venturing beyond the ceasefire line. If, by any chance, matured containment strategy separates itself from the on going political intercourse, as Clausewitz admonished, "all the threads of the different relations are in a sense broken, and we have before us a senseless thing without an object".

Also in another sense an indecisively enforced suspension of hostilities could pose a positive threat to the overall authority of government. Curiously enough, the very term "ceasefire" gives positive expression to a negative line of action. When deglamorised, all it is capable of doing is to prevent fresh outbreak of fighting, but does not ensure the retention of the status quo with regard to the then existing military balance or the political authority that each contending side exerted within its own sphere of influence as well as vis-a-vis each other. In both respects not only that when not winning the government loses, as General Wallace Nutting has aptly put it, a guerilla militia against whom it is pitted wins when not losing.

Nonetheless, there can be no gainsaying of the intrinsic merits of a mutually agreed ceasefire, although the degree of the benefits likely to be accrued will be predicated on a wide array of variables. The immediate impact of it will be to reduce the general atmosphere of tension all over the country. Even a temporary suspension of aerial strafing over the Jaffna Peninsula will bring immense relief to the civilian population there. The government security forces personnel deployed along the defence front line as well as the helpless village-folk inhabiting the North-Eastern borderland will have a respite from the shadow of death constantly lurking behind them.

Such salutary effects notwithstanding, a ceasefire situation is fraught with the risk of lending itself to sharpen the contest for territorial supremacy unless a mutually agreed political settlement package is implemented simultaneously. Predictably, each sides of the ceasefire line will take advantage of the breathing space to augment its military might vis-a-vis the other, and the ongoing post-Cold War free flow of lethal weaponry could stack their respective arsenals at brisk pace.

(To be Continued)

Eight - Fold Path to Peace

Proposals for devolution and reservation of powers in a Unitary Constitution have been put forward in the Peace Proposals of the World Solidarity Forum for Justice and Peace in Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Group (WSF/SL). Proposals for devolution and reservation of powers in a Federal Constitution have been put forward in a Draft for a Federal Constitution by the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE). Then, there are the Proposals of the Parliamentary Select Committee. These or similar proposals have to be the subject of negotiation.

Above all, there has to be mutual understanding and trust and the political will to turn possibilities into realities. Without this no fair constitutional arrangements could be made or, even if made, they would not be implemented.

It must be remembered here, as pointed out earlier, that the securing of secular rights alone would not be sufficient. In fact, secular issues are intimately connected with the religious context and vice versa. So the constitution should be firmly grounded in the indigenous religious and cultural traditions of the country. Just as Buddhism should have special place, so the religions of the minorities, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, should have their due place, and Sinhala and Tamil should be the official languages.

Here it may also be mentioned that the idea that the State should be absolutely neutral on matters of religion may appear to be possible when considered in the abstract. But what could happen and what in fact has happened in practice is that irreligion or the "religion" of consumerism and the dehumanising and alienating values of the inter-national economic and political system and the dominant class to a substantial extent determine state policy. So it is important that the social and political realities of a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society be taken seriously in any constitutional arrangements. Thus the work of the Ministry of Culture would be of crucial importance and should set certain guidelines for other key ministries as well.

In the past, there has been an unhealthy and unbalanced pre-occupation and agitation on religious issues. But that is no reason for ignoring just and vital religious issues. **Now there may well be a danger of reaction from religious bigotry to an**

unhealthy and unbalanced concern with secular issues alone. In this connection, a warning by a Swiss academic, whose understanding of secular concepts cannot be questioned, is worth heeding:

"You cannot simply wish away ethnicity and ethnic identity as only a convenient construct. In earlier theories the way in which ethnicity (and culture) was defined made it manipulable and the hope that members of ethnic groups could somehow suspend their identities for the common good was almost credible. In the 90s and particularly in Sri Lanka, cultural and ethnic identity cannot and must not be voluntarily suppressed but must be taken as central to any future constitutional arrangements....."

Sri Lankan political scientists, unless they enjoy skiing, should strike Switzerland off their itinerary and instead remain at home from where any workable solution can be found."

(Chris Mc Dowell, University of Zurich, Tamil Times, December 1993)

So any workable solutions have to take seriously the complaints, grievances, claims and expectations of all ethnic and cultural groups and evolve constitutional and governmental arrangements that would enable their articulation and fulfilment.

English

While Sinhala and Tamil should be the official languages, the English language also has to be given due recognition in the constitution. Its importance is beyond question. However, it has come to be known among the masses in Sri Lanka as the "Sword" ("Kaduwa"). This is because it is one of the most powerful instruments used in alienating and excluding the poor from the plums of office as well as from many of the ordinary benefits of civil society. So, while the top priorities must be Sinhala and Tamil, English must also have its due and proper place. Barriers which make it an instrument of exclusion must be broken down and there must be a strong and consistent effort to extend the teaching of English among the masses and make its benefits available to them.

Democratic Rights and the Peace Process

"Whatever the mode of government (the present or a revised Executive Presidency, the old or a revised "Westminster System"), whatever the

model of devolution, certain fundamental rights must be made non negotiable, and must be enforceable throughout the country. There must also be provision to challenge legislative or administrative acts of a devolved unit if they transgress fundamental rights. Devolution must mean more, not less, democracy; it must mean enhanced, not weakened, protection of fundamental rights.

In order to make this acceptable to the devolved units, it is essential that the central government itself makes its own actions in the area of human rights reviewable. All legislation must be reviewable by the courts to see if it is inconsistent with the Constitution, not merely as now at the Bill stage. The Government must sign the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and other like instruments which enable an individual who claims his fundamental rights are infringed to appeal to an international tribunal as a last resort. And, of course, the fundamental rights provisions in the Constitution must be amended to bring them into line with our obligation under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Freedom of expression and association, in particular, recognition of the right to dissent, must be assured in fullest measure both in law and in practice."

Democratic Rights and the Peace Process, Civil Rights Movement Statement. 25 September 1994.

"Recognize the right of all people to live in peace without terror. Ensure the human rights of all peoples. Repeal repressive legislation. Enact suitable constitutional restraints on the excessive powers of the Executive Presidency or consider reversion to a parliamentary system. Restore normal democratic processes to all the peoples, including multi-party system and elections. Release immediately all political prisoners both in the North and the South, against whom there is no real evidence to institute criminal proceedings."

From Peace Proposals. World Solidarity Forum, Sri Lanka Group, March 1994

Positive Steps

The voting at the Provincial Council Election in the Southern Province in March this year and the voting at the General

Election, which followed in August, gave a clear mandate to the Government to negotiate for peace. Thus the Government had a clear duty and responsibility to take positive steps towards peace. This it proceeded to do without any delay first, by lifting the embargo on most essential items to Jaffna and then by sending a four-man Peace Delegation to Jaffna. These steps must be welcomed by all sections of the people and the follow-up process looked forward to.

Open-ness and Transparency

However, it is essential that there should be a basic open-ness and transparency in the whole process of peace-making.

Then, while negotiation between the Government and the LTTE is of crucial importance and due emphasis must be placed on it, it is essential that all concerned parties and sections of the people should be drawn into the peace process and participate in it as fully as possible. It is essential that peace proposals and constitutional arrangements should have the consent of the people as a whole, for leaders and people have to cooperate with understanding if these are to be implemented successfully.

Further, it has already been mentioned that there may be a danger of reaction from religious bigotry to an unbalanced concern with secular issues alone. For a true middle path between two extreme positions there has to be an open and free dialogue between different points of view.

Terror

For all this there has to be freedom of expression and free media. Repressive legislation has to be repealed and political prisoners against whom there are no criminal charges have to be freed by both the Government and the LTTE. Normal democratic processes have to be restored both in the North and in the South. A reign of terror gathered momentum in Sri Lanka over a period of time and reached its peak in 1988-1990. State terror and terror of militants struggled for supremacy. Ultimately democratic forces got the upper hand. **But the terror has left its mark on the nation.** Through the Provincial Council Election in the Southern Province and the General Election, which followed, a marked change for the better has been brought about. Though the actual election day in the General Election was comparatively incident-free, there was considerable violence during the election campaign and a certain amount of violence continued after the Election. The atmosphere of violence and repression in the country as a whole has by no means completely disappeared and, of course, there is still a war going on. It will not disappear auto-

matically. It is only through continued conscious and sustained effort that genuine freedom and peace can be achieved.

Consent of People

A basic principle should be accepted by all that plans and arrangements for peace and constitutional reform should receive the consent of the people through a referendum or an election. This is not likely to be possible at the out-set. It may have to await the return of normal conditions for the restoration of democracy, including the multi-party system, in all parts of the country. Till then certain interim arrangements may have to be set up through consultation, which could be tested in practice first and later put to the vote.

The Media

The people will accept the whole concept of devolution of power both in the North-East and in the rest of the country — its meaning and purpose — if it is explained to them simply through the various media — press, T.V., radio, etc., — by representative persons in authority whom they have confidence in and respect. The WSF/SL has found ample evidence of the desire for peace and the readiness to listen and dialogue on the path to peace and accept reasonable conclusions, among the masses of the people in the country in countless discussions, seminars and meetings conducted at the grass-roots during the last four years, in many parts of the country. There are many other organisations, too, who are involved in similar activities and have found similar evidence of the desire for peace and commitment to peace.

In the past, WSF/SL has found it extremely difficult, with a few exceptions to get publicity in the media — especially in the Sinhala media — for its activities, views and peace proposals, despite the fact that there was strong and responsible representation in these activities from all religions and races in the country. One top executive of a newspaper company, when approached, said he could not touch anything on the "merger". Another from another company promised to publish but did not do so. Several others lower down the line promised but did not publish. It remains to be seen whether it will be different under the new dispensation. Many articles and views on peace are being published now. But it is possible that certain contributions that may be deemed to be embarrassing to the authorities engaged in the peace process may be excluded. However, **it is essential that all representative persons and organisations that put forward their views responsibly should have free access to the media. That is a test of democratic freedom.**

Executive Presidency or Parliamentary System?

A subject of crucial importance is the Executive Presidency. It is commonly thought that the issue is one of abolishing the Executive Presidency and reverting to the Westminster Parliamentary System. This is what the People's Alliance promised. There is no doubt that the Executive Presidency, as it has operated in Sri Lanka with its excessive powers, has contributed in a big way to the erosion of democracy in Sri Lanka. But, at the same time, there have been certain advantageous features in it also. This has been found to be so in other countries, too, where a Presidential System prevails. So, though there should be a reversion to an essentially Parliamentary System, it would be wise to consider whether certain features of the Executive Presidency should be retained. There should not be any rigid dogmatism here. It should be subject to serious study and dialogue. The proposed Constituent Assembly will have to go into this carefully.

Proportional Representation

The system of proportional representation also needs to be gone into carefully. Basically, the decision to adopt this system has been correct. But certain undesirable features have emerged in the way it has operated in Sri Lanka. The poster-mania is one example. The way the preferential vote operates is another. The cost of electioneering has increased by leaps and bounds, and the poor person is now even more marginalised from the election process. The role of big business has a determining effect and this brings in its wake thuggery and corruption. Then, there is now not only competition between parties but also competition between members of the same party and the link between the member of parliament and his constituency has become weaker. Thus certain modifications in the system are necessary.

To summarize, the background of violence and terror that prevailed in recent times has affected the media and the electoral processes and there has to be continuous and sustained effort to work towards free media and fair electoral procedures. Only so could the real issues of peace come to be surfaced, understood and acted on by the people at all levels.

Participation

On the basis of mandates from the people through elections and, may be, through various representations and demonstrations, the leaders have the responsibility of making certain initiatives, taking decisions and passing laws and regulations, including constitutional amendments, for bringing about peace. But for

these to be effectively implemented, as they have to be continuously over a long period of time, there has to be a growing awareness of the people of the whole peace process and active participation in it of the people, at every stage and at many levels, in different ways.

Struggle for Justice

Then, peace has to be built on the basis of justice for all sections of the country, especially the weaker sections. This involves a movement, may be a struggle, against the forces of injustice. There are strong forces of injustice, both local and international, that bolster the war and stand in the way of peace. To put a stop to the war and set in motion the whole process of devolution of power and implement it effectively is no easy task. The forces that stand against it are likely to abdicate their power easily. The powers-that-be have come to accept the advanced democratic concept or method of devolution of power not out of a feeling of benevolence but from sheer necessity. It has been the struggle of the deprived masses over a long period, sometimes through legitimate peaceful means of elections, demonstrations and satyagraha and sometimes through other means of violence and terrorism that have brought the powers-that-be to negotiation and the conference table. Sometimes concessions have been made and pacts entered into without real will to implement or not strong enough will to implement. So it is essential that the initiatives and actions of leaders who make progressive moves be supported at various levels by people with understanding - intellectuals, professionals, business community, religious establishments, NGOs, workers, peasants, women, students and other peoples' organisations.

The issues of peace - ethnic, social, economic, political - have to be discussed, the voice of the people for peace articulated, support given for progressive actions for peace of the leaders, and reactionary and divisive actions of chauvinist racist forces exposed and opposed. WSF/SL has been involved in such actions for several years and booklets and documents that have been produced and used in these activities are available. Various other organisations have also been engaging in similar activity. Such activity has to be intensified in the days ahead.

Campaigning

People of all religions, races, parties and groups should join in campaigning to build a mass movement for peace on the basis of justice for all. Public meetings, fasts, marches, satyagrahas, poojas, services, seminars and discussions should be held in temples, kovils, churches, mo-

sques, meeting-halls and in the open-air. It is unfortunate that clergy and lay leaders often stand in the way of such actions. But, increasingly, some clergy and lay people see the need of such actions. It is up to them to take the initiative and go ahead and others will follow.

Plural Character

Here, the plural character of the Sri Lankan State needs to be mentioned. Sinhala, Tamils (including plantation Tamils), Moors, Malays, Burghers, and other smaller communities, too, and all the 4 major religions - Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam - as well as secular philosophies have contributed to and thus shared in the building of Sri Lanka. This plural character of the Sri Lankan State - the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious reality of Sri Lanka - needs to be recognized and accepted by all.

Encounter and Sharing

One reason why there is so much incomprehension of the issues of war and peace is the lack of sufficient meeting and encounter between the various racial groups. So there is a great need for exchange visits and programmes not only within particular areas but between different areas where people visit other areas and get to know one another and each others' day to day problems, and communicate the results of this dialogue to other people in their own areas. The people in the south need to get to know at first-hand the problems of those in the north-east, and the people in the north-east need to get to know at first-hand the problems of those in the deep south. Families in both areas that have lost fathers and sons and where mothers and daughters have had to bear unbearable burdens need to hear each others' stories and share their grief. The whole country must share in the task of rehabilitating the bereaved, the disabled and the refugees, who are still suffering from their loss and resultant trauma. This is an immense task. Getting financial resources for this from the Government or abroad is a very small part of this task. Deep human resources are needed to re-build broken human lives and heal broken human relationships. These resources are there deep in our peoples' traditions. They have to be understood and mobilised by imaginative leadership.

Strategies

Finally, a word about the strategies of a People's Movement. These have to be carefully worked out with clear recognition of the realities of the present situation. The present Government has committed itself to certain radical policies but it has to work in the context of a world system heavily oriented towards open-market policies. It has to be pressed to live up to the expecta-

tions of the masses but it has also to be protected from illegitimate attempts of reactionary forces to overthrow it.

Development Alternatives

A people's movement must not be content with doctrinaire slogans against the open-market and multi-nationals. The harmful effects of such policies and the resultant pauperisation and violent conflict are clearly evident. But certain benefits they bring and certain expectations they arouse, even if they are largely illusory, make for a fairly wide measure of acceptance, which has sometimes been seen in unexpected results at elections. So there are no shortcuts to change. There must be a real search, with the participation of the people, for realistic development alternatives and the working out of development strategies. There has to be research and experiment for a new development model, with roots in our indigenous culture, yet open to modern scientific advancement and technology. There have to be demonstrations in practice through pioneering projects.

There must be a dialogue between different view-points, free of dogmatism whether of the so-called free-market variety or the so-called socialist variety.

For instance, a recent comparative study of certain Asian economic successes and Latin American failures in the 1980's, where the open-market has been operative, has shown that the cause of the comparative success of the Asian economies has been state intervention and control: "An examination of the longer term development strategies of the east Asian economies reveals that the state in these countries did not follow the World Bank's revised formulation of a 'market friendly' approach to development. Rather the governments in Taiwan, South Korea and Japan played a vigorous economic role and pursued a highly active industrial policy. The state did not supplant the market altogether as the 'command' planning of production of the (former) Soviet type did. But nor did it simply follow the market. Instead a whole plethora of government measures were used to guide the market towards planned structural change. Similarly, the east Asian countries did not seek or practice a close integration with the world economy during their periods of rapid growth: they integrated only in the directions and the extent to which it was useful for them to do so" (Ajit Singh, Cambridge University. Article in *International Review of Applied Economics*. Vol. 7 No. 3, 1993)

So there has to be creative thinking and action to evolve a development model that will suit Sri Lanka's needs and enable her peoples to live together in peace with justice.

Investigative Journalism

G. L. Pieris

Some of the most difficult problems connected with investigative journalism in modern times involve controversial value judgments in respect of conflicting priorities. For instance, in sensational murder trials such as those of Pauline de Croos,¹² Jayalal Anandagoda¹³ and Matthew Peiris the wide publicity that was given in mass media, particularly the newspapers, to the details of the crimes during the stage of the police investigation elicited public responses which shed light on the circumstances of the crimes and the identity of the probable criminals. In the Shayama Dedigama murder case the relative obscurity of some of the matters connected with the slaying disappeared as a sequel to fuller evidence which was obtained largely in consequence of the initiative taken by the newspapers. However, in all these cases, the widespread publicity, while assisting the course of justice, is also fraught with an unfortunate danger. This is the risk that the person who is eventually indicted for the crime may not have the benefit of a fair and impartial trial because of the intensity of the prejudice which is generated against him. This risk was thought to be so great in the Matthew Peiris case that the Chief Justice thought it proper to order that the accused should be tried not by a jury but by three judges of the High Court at Bar. The anticipated danger was that members of the public who would ultimately serve on the jury would not bring open minds to bear on the case because of preconceived notions which they would have formed in consequence of what they had read in the Press. This highlights the delicate balance which needs to be struck in these circumstances. On the one hand, mass media have an essential task to perform in regard to the discovery of facts which make the administration of justice effective. On the other hand, it is equally important to ensure that speculation and comment in the Press before or during a criminal trial does not result in the essential legal issues being obscured by emotional overtones. The desirable balance between these objectives is essentially a matter of journalistic ethics and responsi-

bility, but the enforcement of the relevant standards is assisted by principles and mechanisms of the law.

Some of the governing rules of law find their setting in the notion of contempt of court. It is a well-known principle that any behaviour or comment which is likely to impair in any way the integrity of pending judicial proceedings would involve liability for contempt of court. The objective underlying this form of liability is that witnesses should have every opportunity to present their version of the facts without any type of hinderance, direct or oblique, and that the court or jury should be free to evaluate the evidence adduced clearly and objectively, and to come to a conclusion on the basis of that evidence alone.¹⁴ The very idea of a form of penal liability for an attempt to interfere, even unwittingly, with the proper course of the administration of justice underscores the need for journalists to resist the temptation to have recourse to sensationalism, notwithstanding the pecuniary incentives which may reward such an approach. The principles governing contempt of court in this area underline the gravity of the responsibility which devolves on those who take it upon themselves to ascertain the facts relating to matters which are likely to culminate in litigation, and to essay comment on these matters.

The work of journalists in situations such as these may sometimes involve a conflict between moral values and economic interests. The perils attendant upon the use of particular drugs, especially if they have been put on the market recently, have frequently been exposed as a result of vigorous investigative journalism. For example, the risk that the use of talidomide by pregnant women may result in injury to the foetus, and that the child could be born without limbs, came to light in England largely as the product of persevering attempts by journalists to evaluate the attributes of the drug and the potential consequences of its use. Wide publicity given to the possible hazards of use of the drug will obviously entail substantial

economic loss to the manufacturers of the drug in view of the disincentive offered to the public in regard to purchase and consumption. There is, accordingly, the likelihood that a publication which seeks to denigrate a commercial product by pointing out the dangers of its use will involve those responsible for the publication in litigation instituted by the makers of that product. However, scientific evidence meticulously garnered to establish in a convincing manner the reality of the hazards warned against will serve to exonerate those initiating the publication from liability, on the ground that the disclosure of these dangers was necessary for the protection of the public interest.

The initiative of journalists is of great value in circumstances such as those surrounding the Union Carbide disaster in India. For a long period there had been adverse comment in the Indian Press regarding the inadequacy of the precautions which had been adopted by the local management of Union Carbide Ltd., to guard against the danger of escape of noxious fumes from their chemical plants. It was naturally in the interest of the owners and managers of the plants to belittle these initiatives, since it was to their advantage to endeavour to persuade the administrative authorities as well as the public that the existing precautionary measures were sufficient and so to avoid the necessity for enhanced investment on more satisfactory protective measures. An aggressive journalistic campaign which highlights the possible danger to human life, to ecology and to environmental conditions could well arouse the hostility of powerful vested economic interests, so that expensive litigation is always a possibility. But there are situations in which the evolving law has necessarily to reconcile economic interests with more fundamental interests involving life and the natural habitat of posterity. In structuring a coherent response to this challenge, modern courts have understandably accorded precedence to the latter group of values which are basic to the preservation of life, health and security.

Techniques of modern journalism have played an important part, particularly in the West, in alerting the public to certain categories of industrial risks and the mechanical unreliability of commercial products. An example may be taken from civil aviation. Companies like Boeing and Rolls Royce which are active in turning out new models of engines and aircraft parts may sometimes tend, for reasons connected with commercial profit, to be experimental in their approach to production. It had often fallen to the lot of journalists, on the basis of their own investigations, to alert the public that the history of use of a particular type of machine suggests, even tentatively, some inherent defect which aggravates the degree of risk. For instance, it has been largely as a result of the

work of journalists that the realization has dawned on the international community that the Lear jet may not be a dependable mode of air transport because of its chequered history. Journalists have pointed out persuasively that a series of accidents in the United States, and also in recent years in South Asia, envelope in serious doubt the commercial acceptability of the machine. While an enterprising journalist would be ill-advised in these circumstances to rush into print with his incipient convictions at a time when the evidence in support of these convictions is slender, the law certainly sees to it that if the exposure which he is resolved to make is buttressed by evidence of demonstrable strength, the journalist's communication to the public enjoys the fullest protection of the law.

A vexed problem in modern times concerns the confidentiality of sources of information which are made use of by journalists. It often happens that the facts relating to public scandals can be discovered and exposed only if journalists have access to information emanating from sources wishing to remain anonymous. There may be credible information available to a journalist that illicit felling of timber is taking place on a large scale at the instigation or with the connivance of some powerful personage.

Notes

- (12) (1968) 71 N.L.R. 669
- (13) (1960) 62 N.L.R. 241 (C.C.A.)
(1962) 64 N.L.R. 73 (P.C.)
- (14) *Reginald Perera v R* (1951) 52 N.L.R. 293
Weersamy v Stewart (1941) 42 N.L.R. 481

PRESS

The Lake House Take Over

K. M. de Silva

The legislation prepared by the former government to establish a Press Council, and to establish a government control over the national press, was jettisoned. But the then opposition had not reconciled itself to abandoning the measures it had prepared and its policy of establishing government control over the national press when its turn to govern the country would come, at some future date, the next general election scheduled for 1970, to be precise.

In 1968 opposition groups established a new and broader center-left coalition. The SLFP was to remain its core, but on this occasion all elections of the LSSP and the CP accepted prominent roles in what came to be called the United Front coalition. Its program for the future included measures to control the press. Nevertheless there was reluctance to make specific provision for this as prominently as it had done in the past. And then the unexpected happened.

In September 1969 Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake and the government confronted a huge scandal, one that had less to do with politicians linked to the UNP than with the Lake House directorate. A disgruntled employee based in London

leaked to the opposition - Dr NM Perera, the LSSP leader, in particular - information about a tangled web of foreign exchange transactions conducted in transgression of the laws and regulations governing foreign currency holdings.¹⁴ The documents that came into Dr Perera's possession provided overwhelming evidence of breaches of the law. As the leader of party which actively opposed the Lake House press and called for its nationalization, he exploited this unexpected political advantage, to the great embarrassment of both Lake House and the government, in a powerful speech in Parliament on 1 September 1969. Dudley Senanayake's niece was married to Ranjith Wijewardene who had succeeded to his father's position as head of Lake House. Investigations began with the income tax department, looking at avoidance of taxes on illegal profits, then moved to the exchange control authorities. The Lake House directorate had presented their political enemies with an array of weapons which could be used against them on a future occasion, and, above all, had acutely embarrassed a beleaguered Prime Minister at a time when his government was facing other difficulties, especially problems relating to foreign exchange for the country's normal import requirements.

The fate of Lake House and the national press was now sealed in the event of the defeat of the UNP at the general election scheduled for 1970. Of the three important newspaper groups, the Independent Newspapers of Ceylon group - the Sun group - had turned against the UNP and was supporting the United Front coalition even before the election. Once the election began Lake House and the Times of Ceylon supported the UNP in knowledge that should the UNP lose, they would be at the mercy of an opposition intent on resuming from where they had left off in 1964. In the event the UNP lost the general election of May 1970.

Even before the post-election restrictions on meetings and demonstrations were officially over, huge crowds gathered in the city of Colombo and marched to Lake House, the symbol of reaction as their leaders saw it, bent on wrecking it and where possible beating up some of the more prominent journalists who were associated with the UNP. The mobs were led and egged on by prominent left-wing members of the victorious coalition. Even as the would-be victims cowered in fear and were taken out by some colleagues, the mobs stormed in intent on burning the place down. They did not succeed in this,

or in damaging the printing machines, but they did set fire to the library. The police did nothing to prevent this attack and, in any event, they were too few in numbers to be really useful in preventing the continuation of the attack, even if they were inclined to do so. By the time increased security was sent to Lake House and the fire engines appeared, the library was still burning. Surprisingly the whole library was not engulfed in the flames. Nevertheless some parts of it were consumed by the fire, including unfortunately some of its more valuable holdings of press cuttings, going back to the earliest days of that institution's establishment.

The attack on Lake House was meant to intimidate both the UNP and the directorate of that newspaper group. From the moment the election results began to come in, indicating a resounding victory for the then opposition, the Lake House directorate realized that their control over their newspapers would soon be over. The revelations about the infringements of foreign exchange regulations by them had rendered their position hopelessly vulnerable to the pressures of the government, which had never concealed its aim of establishing control over those newspapers and the assets of the company. Esmond Wickremasinghe had supported the SLFP on this occasion, but even he realized that at best he could only postpone the inevitable take over of the establishment. Almost as soon as the new government had assumed office, the Lake House directorate had an offer from the government, an offer that it could not refuse. They were told to appoint a new editor for the *Daily News*, who could also take on the job of editor-in-chief of all the Lake House newspapers. The Lake House directors had no choice, but even this sop only ensured a stay of execution, not a reprieve.

IV

Nationalization of the press, 1970-74

From the time the UF government came to power in May 1970 the owners of Lake House and the Times group were aware that it was a mere matter of time before the state took over their newspapers. The main target, of course, was Lake House. A Commission of Inquiry was appointed to investigate charges laid against the Lake House directorate on illegal foreign exchange transactions and the maintenance of illegal bank accounts in the UK.¹⁵

The Commission was also instructed to investigate whether Lake House funds had been used to bribe MPs to crossover to the opposition during the vote of no-confidence of December 1964. No evidence of the latter was found, but there was some evidence on the main charge relating to illegal foreign exchange transactions.¹⁶ The government had gone ahead with the establishment of a Press Council, despite strong opposition to it within Parliament and more widespread opposition outside the legislature. Legislation to nationalize the press had been prepared, and a Colombo lawyer associated with the government had been identified as the "competent authority" to take control of the affairs of Lake House. Dudley Senanayake, the leader of the UNP, had led the opposition to the Press Council bill, and to the government's plans to bring Lake House and the Times group under state control, and JR Jayewardene now leader of the Opposition - had joined him in this agitation.

At the time Dudley Senanayake died suddenly in April 1974, Lake House was in all but name a government organization. Some vestiges of autonomy were still maintained but there were influential voices within the government, and very soon within the Prime Minister's own family circle, who were anxious to eliminate even the residue of independence that Lake House still retained under its new Editor-in-Chief. The newspaper coverage of Dudley Senanayake's death and funeral put an end to that.

There was no shortage of advocates of nationalization of the press within the government, but they lacked the influence with Mrs Bandaranaike that her family were soon to have in putting the case for completion of the process of nationalization of the press. It was argued that the extensive coverage given to the funeral ceremonies was largely responsible for attracting the enormous crowds that had gathered. If evidence was at all necessary, of the power the press still wielded on behalf of "reactionary" anti-government causes, it had been provided in good measure now.

Control over Lake House was obtained when the National State Assembly approved the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon (Special Provisions Law) No 28 of 1973 which converted the informal but powerful influence that the government had over that institution into formal control.

Through the law the government became the main shareholder of the reconstituted Lake House, with as much as 75% of the shares. The state was represented on the board of the new directorate by the Public Trustee who, at that point, was a brother of Mrs Bandaranaike. The government proclaimed that its objective was to break up the monopoly established by the family group which controlled Lake House; this objective was to be achieved by a re-distribution of shareholdings. Nothing of the sort was done. In fact, in less than of a year of introducing this legislation, government control over the new directorate of Lake House was strengthened.¹⁷ Once Mrs Bandaranaike's government nationalized the Lake House and Times groups of newspapers, only the Sun group, the Independent Newspapers of Sri Lanka, remained outside the control of the government, the only means, thereafter, for the expression of opposition views.

JR Jayewardene revived the campaign for the boycott of Lake House newspapers which Dudley Senanayake had started but in his hands it became a more spirited exercise and a means of bringing the party leadership and cadres out into the streets, walking from shop to shop to persuade newsagents and others to stop selling Lake House newspapers. Next they expanded their campaign into a house to house operation that covered the city of Colombo and its suburbs. From there they took it into the provincial towns, beginning with Galle and Kandy, and then into the smaller towns in other parts of the country. The campaign did have an impact on the sales of Lake House newspapers, which dropped substantially. For Jayewardene, there were other advantages in this campaign, especially in keeping the party leadership in close touch with the rank and file. It was also a means of testing the efficacy of the reforms of the party machinery that he had begun to introduce after he took over the leadership.

The final phase in the process of the government control of the media came in April 1974 when the Sun group of newspapers was banned and its printing press sealed. This step was taken against the background of massive island-wide propaganda onslaught prepared by the opposition led by the UNP against some unpopular measures in regard to transport of rice announced by the government. Earlier there had been several austerity measures announced by the government, and the opposition was intent on exploiting

the unpopularity that this generated for the government. The Prime Minister declared an island-wide curfew to be enforced on the day the meetings had been scheduled. She also used emergency regulations to ban all public meetings of the UNP. The decision to muzzle the newspapers of the Sun group followed, since those newspapers were seen to be backing the opposition in this political campaign. Previously the government had taken the unusual step of using emergency regulations to threaten legal action against "rumour mongers" if the rumours they spread could cause public disgust and public disorder. The government's control over the media was now complete. The Lake House journals which had long been criticized for their partisanship on behalf of the UNP a new phase in their career as partisans of a government opposed to the UNP.

V Postscript

Anyone who believed that the return to power of the UNP in 1977 with an overwhelming majority would result in a restitution of the *status quo ante* 1970 in the form of the former owners getting back control of the Lake House and Times groups were in for a disappointment. Indeed among the first acts of the new government was the use of the Business Acquisitions Act of 1971 to get control of the Times newspapers from a pro-SLFP group who had secured it under the former regime. The original shareholders and directors of these newspaper groups and of the Independent Newspapers of Sri Lanka were offered compensation for losses suffered in the period July 1974 to July 1977, both from loss of business and damage to machinery. The former owners of Lake House declined to resume their control of that institution and its newspapers, and preferred to take compensation for losses suffered. Lake House thus continued as a government owned and government controlled newspaper business. Efforts to keep the virtually bankrupt Times group afloat failed eventually: the goodwill and rights to some of the newspapers were acquired by Ranjith Wijewardene, who gave some of the Sinhalese journals of the group a new life, and began publishing a Sunday edition of the once dynamic *Times of Ceylon*. The newspapers of the Sun group began publication again.

One of the more positive developments of the post-1977 era, was the establishment of a new newspaper group, the

Island newspapers, by a wealthy businessman with political ambitions, Upali Wijewardene, a nephew of D R Wijewardene. These soon established themselves as energetic competitors to the Lake House newspapers. Part of their early success could be explained by the opportunities created by the collapse of the Times group, but more importantly by the crash of the Sun group whose newspapers went out of production, because of squabbles among the family group who controlled it, and from mismanagement of its resources.

The new economic environment helped the newspaper enterprises because of a great increase in advertising revenue. With the liberalization of the economy, and the availability of new products for sale, there was return to the situation prior to 1960 when there had been free imports of a wide range of consumer goods, and importers of products well known brandnames had engaged in advertising campaigns and new products were introduced in a blaze of publicity to the great advantage of the newspapers. Undoubtedly the "freeing" of the economy in 1977-78 helped the Island newspapers, but not to the same extent that it helped Lake House in its return to financial viability, and to profitability.

The long campaign for state control over the print media, and the eventual nationalization of Lake House had a deleterious effect on journalism as a profession. The effects were worse on the English language press than on the vernacular press. Some of the best known journalists at Lake House emigrated, a few to work in newspapers in other parts of the world, especially South East Asia, and others moved to administrative positions abroad. Similar opportunities were not available to those in the Sinhalese and Tamil newspapers. Professional standards in journalism inevitably declined, partly a reflection of the politicization that followed nationalization, partly a reflection of the failure to attract young talent to the newspapers because of this politicization. The financial rewards in journalism were not good enough in a market where public sector employment offered better salaries and other perquisites of office and had, in addition, the inestimable advantage of greater job security. It will be many years, perhaps decades, before the Sri Lankan press recovers from the trauma of state control.

(Concluded)

Endnotes

1. H A J Hulugalle, *The Life and Times of D R Wijewardene*, (Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd.) Colombo, 1960.
2. *ibid.* p.1
3. *ibid.*, p.3
4. *ibid.*,
5. He married Ruby Meedeniya, the daughter of Meedeniya Adigara Kandyana aristocrat, and an influential member of "traditional" element of the colonial administration. His wife's sister Adeline was married to AF Molamure, who was for many years Speaker of the State Council as the National legislature was called under the Donoughmore Constitution of 1931-1947. He was the first Speaker of the post-independence legislature, and a very influential politician by virtue of being one of the most trusted political associates of D S Senanayake.
6. Hulugalle, *The Life and Times of D R Wijewardene*, op. cit., p.2.
7. See K M de Silva and Howard Wiggins, *JR Jayewardene of Sri Lanka: A Political Biography*, Vol. I (Quartet, London, 1988) pp. 250-260.
8. *Sessional Paper (hereafter SP) IX of 1964, Interim Report of the Press Commission*.
9. *ibid.* pp. 20-32.
10. *ibid.*, p.32
11. *ibid.*, SP XI of 1964, *Final Report of the Press Commission*.
12. See, K M de Silva and Howard Wiggins, *JR Jayewardene of Sri Lanka: A Political Biography*, Vol.II (Leo Cooper, London, forthcoming December 1994, pp. 133-141, for these details. For a brief account of the political infighting on this occasion from a knowledgeable source see Hugh Fernando, *The Inside Story: Some Aspects of my Parliamentary Experience* (Colombo, 1965) Fernando had been elected Deputy Speaker in July 1960 and was unanimously elected Speaker in 1963. He held this post at a critically important period.
13. The owners of the Independent Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd. was the family firm of MD Gunasekara & Co. publishers and booksellers.
14. *Hansard* [House of Representatives], 1969, Columns 803 to 820, Dr N M Perera's speech. Subsequent to this debate Dr N M Perera's speech was published in the form of a pamphlet of 64 pages. The Pamphlet, entitled *Why Lake House seeks to destroy the Coalition*, also contains the text of the speech made on this same occasion by another senior LSSP politician Leslie Gunawardena. The pamphlet does not bear a date of publication but from a reading of the introduction it appears to have been published in early 1970.
15. On 10 January 1970 the then opposition had moved a resolution in Parliament urging the appointment of such a commission but the UNP government had refused to do this, arguing that official inquiries were being conducted by several government departments.
16. SP XI of 1973.
17. On July 2 1974, a mere fortnight before the first annual general meeting of the company an amendment to the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon (Special Provisions Law) 28 of July 1973 was moved by the Prime Minister as an urgent bill "in the national interest". There were strong objections from the opposition they had less than 2 hours in which to study the bill. The amendment permitted the government to sell 240,000 shares to government corporations. The government was thus able to appoint two new directors to the board with the support of the government controlled corporations.

NAM in the Nineties

Nana S. Sutresna

I feel greatly honoured and privileged to be able to share with this distinguished international gathering a few of my observations and thoughts on the significance of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the closing decade of this century. I gathered, examined and refined these observations and thoughts during a period of deep personal involvement with the Movement, starting from the time I began to directly take part in Indonesia's intensive preparations to host the Tenth Summit Meeting of the NAM in Jakarta in 1992, through the past two years until today while serving as Head Executive Assistant to the NAM Chairman, H.E. President Soeharto. As such I enjoy an excellent vantage point for observing the workings of the Movement but it is also possible that sometimes I get too close to the action and thus lose some perspective. In those instances where my view may be too close, it is my hope that it will acquire a better perspective from the observations and insights that you will also bring into the discussion.

Also for the sake of perspective, I feel that we should start with a brief glance backward. Non-Alignment as a philosophy is more than four decades old for it grew out of the struggle of peoples of the developing world to rid themselves of the chains of colonialism and to achieve independence. Indonesia is one example. Right after it achieved independence, when the Cold War was just about to start, Indonesia adopted what our first Vice-President, Mohammad Hatta, described as "an active and independent foreign policy" — which is in the essence of Non-Alignment. Although it was in 1961 that the Non-Aligned Movement was formally founded with the holding of its first Summit Conference in Belgrade, as early as 1955, the principles and ideals of Non-Alignment were already articulated in the *Dasa Sila* or Ten Principles that emanated from the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung in 1955. The spade work for the Asia-Africa Conference was completed in a Preparatory Meeting convened in Bogor in December 1954. One of the five Asian prime ministers who attended that meeting was

Sir John Kotalawala, then Prime Minister of Ceylon as Sri Lanka was known at that time. The others were the prime ministers of Burma, India, Pakistan and Indonesia. The press sometimes referred to them as the Five Colombo Powers for the simple reason that they had met before in Colombo and in Kandy to exchange views on the political turmoil that the world was going through at that time. It was in these early meetings that the idea of an Asia-Africa Conference was first formally brought up. Sri Lanka, therefore, has been one of the pioneers of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Through the years since the time that the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was formally founded, it remained faithful to its avowed principles and ideals and thus consistently struggled for a world of true independence, peace, justice and shared prosperity.

In the course of that struggle, the Movement was instrumental in the triumph of a good number of worthy causes. Thanks largely to the impetus that the NAM gave to the worldwide decolonization process, colonialism, at least in its classical form, has been virtually eradicated. The NAM spearheaded the drive against institutionalized racism as exemplified by the abhorrent system of *apartheid* and today we can safely say that *apartheid* is dead. The Movement pushed hard for the long overdue process of nuclear disarmament which is finally underway, bringing the world a few steps back from the nuclear abyss. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the bipolar structure of world politics in the late 1980s, the Non-Aligned Movement stood vindicated as bloc politics yielded to multipolarism, to democratization and political pluralism both within and among nations. That is why the NAM has come to be regarded as the greatest and most successful peace movement in history.

Not too long ago, however, the question arose: With the Cold War already behind us, and the bipolar structure of world politics relegated to the past, is the Non-Aligned Movement still relevant? By the time that we in the NAM were preparing for the Tenth NAM Summit in Jakarta, we had already articulated the definitive answer to that question.

And the answer was that it was up to the Members themselves whether the Movement would recede into irrelevance or rise to the challenges and the opportunities of the changing times and thus would not only remain relevant but would also become an even more active and crucial player on the international scene.

For with the advent of the decade 1990s we have reached a most critical time in the history of the human race, a time of rapid transition and fundamental change. The map of Europe has been radically altered. The security situation in Asia has metamorphosed. The old international order had begun to crumble and the contours of a new order are just to emerge but its final shape is yet to crystallize. This is therefore a time of great promise and grave challenge, a time of profound contrasts and pervasive uncertainty. If there is anything certain, it is that, for better or for worse, the world, after passing through the crucible of this decade, will bear little resemblance to what it was during the era of the Cold War and bipolar confrontation.

Faced with such a complex global reality, the Non-Aligned Movement had the choice of whether to allow the ongoing changes to proceed on their own momentum, without coherence and direction but with all attendant risks of instability and upheaval — or to seek, in all sincerity and goodwill, to engage the international community in jointly directing these changes, rationally and equitably, towards a new order that is more in harmony with the ideals and principles Non-Alignment, one that is based on mutual respect, social justice and a love of freedom and peace.

At the Tenth NAM Summit in Jakarta, the Leaders of the Movement made their choice. They gave the realities of the world situation the clear-sighted and rational assessment that is the necessary prelude to resolute and effective action. They then declared that, as a political coalition representing more sovereign states than any other grouping in history, the Movement should not be a mere spectator and should not resign itself to being sidelined in the currents of historic change. The Movement, they stressed, must dynamically adapt to these currents by setting new priorities and reordering old ones, by devising new approaches and new strategies.

The writer, Ambassador-at-large of Indonesia, Head Executive Assistant to President Soeharto, NAM Chairman. He presented this paper at the BCIS sponsored conference in Colombo.

Acknowledging that stereotyped responses would fall short of the demands of the time and that the mere cataloguing of grievances, anxieties and hopes would be an exercise in futility, the Movement proceeded to craft the concepts and modalities that would be the basis and the framework of the concrete programmes to which the members would commit themselves. At the same time it girded itself for a vigorous advocacy that would place the views and concrete proposals of the Movement into the mainstream of international thought and action. Knowing that the Movement cannot increase the effectiveness of its external action if it cannot improve the efficiency of its internal functioning, the NAM Leaders also felt that they must attend to important housekeeping tasks such as the establishment of effective organizational mechanisms, guidelines and procedures. And they stipulated that all these should be done on the basis and within the framework of NAM's fundamental principles and purposes which have lost nothing of their validity and relevance, even in today's vastly changed world.

Without neglecting to address the political concerns that have gripped the world and continues to grip the world today, the NAM Leaders took one of the most significant decisions that they have taken in a long time: they decided to restore the issue of economic cooperation to the top of the Movement's agenda.

Much was accomplished during that Summit, but perhaps its greatest single accomplishment is not reflected in the decisions taken nor in the resolutions passed, but in the fact that when its Leaders emerged from their deliberations, whatever doubts might have lingered before the Summit about the relevance of the Movement had completely vanished. The Movement came out of the Summit reinvigorated, strengthened in its resolve and clear in its purposes. Many international observers who were habitually skeptical of the Movement might have been pleasantly surprised: for the first time they observed a Non-Aligned Summit that was not acrimoniously dwelling on grievances but was instead seeking a constructive dialogue and offering to engage the developed world in cooperation in all fields. This became known as the NAM's new orientation, its new approach to solving the interlinked global problems of our time. The old approach which was dogmatic and adversarial had not worked and so the NAM Leaders decided that it be abandoned. At the same time, they committed themselves to giving this new and flexible approach ample chance to work.

The application of that new approach is never more evident than in the Move-

ment's current advocacy and pursuit of a global North-South partnership as well as an intensified South-South cooperation for development. Soon after convening a meeting of the Standing Ministerial Committee for Economic Cooperation in Bali in May 1993 to thresh out ways and means of moving the North-South and South-South processes forward, President Soeharto, as NAM Chairman, seized the opportunity to extend the Movement's "Invitation to Dialogue" to the Leaders of the Group of Seven on the eve of their Summit Meetings in Tokyo. The positive response of the Leaders of G-7 to our Movement's offer of cooperation and constructive dialogue, which they articulated at the conclusion of the Tokyo Summit and then again after the Group's Summit in Napoli the following year, has since been carried further by the NAM. Working with the Group of 77 and other like-minded countries, including developed countries, the NAM initiated a draft resolution entitled, "Renewal of the Dialogue on Strengthening International Cooperation for Development through Partnership." That the resolution was adopted by consensus clearly indicates that the international community supports the basic strategy of the NAM for achieving a new and more just international economic order.

An important aspect of the resolution was a request to the Secretary-General to present the forty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly with recommendations on how the envisioned North-South dialogue could be promoted in a way which would reflect the ongoing work on an *Agenda for Development*. In this regard, The Secretary-General has issued his report on *An Agenda for Development* which we hope will bolster the prospects for balanced global economic growth. Our NAM Coordinating Bureau, working with the Group of 77, is playing an active role in the deliberations on that Agenda. The NAM is also very much involved in high level discussions in the General Assembly to spell out further how the North-South dialogue should be conducted. In this process, the Movement has once again shown a pragmatism and a flexibility that have struck a positive chord among its intended dialogue partners. For example, the Movement has made it known that it is ready and willing to dialogue on matters of common interest with the developed countries of the North in any forum which is mutually acceptable. This is a far cry from the position it had assumed some years ago that it would only engage in dialogue in certain specific forums.

The same kind of pragmatism and flexibility could govern the approaches of the Member Countries of the Movement to

international financial institutions. In contrast, many Member Countries used to apply a double standard in dealing with these institutions: they regarded these institutions as politically disagreeable, but bilaterally, none of these countries could do without these institutions. We the countries in the Non-Aligned Movement are probably making greater use of these institutions today with this difference: because of our non-confrontational, cooperative approach, there has been no occasion for us to antagonize them politically. I believe this will work well for the international financial institutions and for the Movement. Knowing that Non-Aligned Countries have no political agenda that is adverse to them, the international financial institutions might indeed become more receptive to the views of NAM members.

A start has thus been made in redefining the relationship between the developing countries in the Movement with the international financial institutions. I think that this should be followed through with a concerted effort on the part of NAM countries to take active part in the forthcoming review of the Bretton Woods institutions. It is important that developing countries, such as the NAM membership should be able to arrive at a common approach on how to improve the efficacy and efficiency of these institutions which, after all, have a special role to play in the South-South process. The NAM is mindful of the fact that many projects of great merit within the framework of South-South cooperation could have withered on the vine if it were not for a third party, often an international financial institution, which came to the rescue.

Cognizant of the reality of the intertwined fate and fortunes of the North and the South and realizing fully that we are entering a new era after the end of the Cold War, we are all confronted by the imperative to make mutual adjustments. For its part, the Non-Aligned Movement has gone the "extra mile" in order to make the appropriate adjustments by adopting an entirely new orientation and a new approach to its relationships with the rest of the international community and with international institutions. This, I believe, is no mean contribution to the relaunching of a more earnest and effective global dialogue. The responses to this radical change in style has not been at all discouraging.

There is a growing recognition on the part of some of the major developed countries that the NAM has indeed adopted a moderate approach and is now greatly imbued with the spirit of conciliation and cooperation. Some governments in the West have even shown a greater appre-

ciation of the goals that the Movement is trying to achieve. What seems to be lacking, however, is that there is no corresponding reappraisal of the NAM by the international media, particularly those that are based in Western countries. This is a concern that I feel the NAM should address seriously in the days ahead so that the new orientation and approaches taken by the NAM would finally be reflected in the media of those countries so that there would be more vigorous public opinion support for these governments in cooperating with and supporting the goals of the NAM.

Meanwhile, South-South cooperation within the Movement has indeed broadened and intensified since the Tenth Summit. The NAM addressed the problem of hunger through an Ad Hoc Advisory Group of Experts which has submitted a proposed Action Programme that was adopted by the Conference of the Ministers of Food and Agriculture of the Non-Aligned Movement and other Developing Countries in Bali last October.

Also being implemented within the framework of South-South cooperation is the NAM initiative on the issue of population. A group of experts has likewise been put to work making in-depth studies on this issue and their recommendations have been submitted. One of the results of this effort is a report titled *"NAM Support for South-South Collaboration in the Field of Population and Family Planning"* which is based on Indonesia's experience.

Another major burden that the developing countries have to bear is the external debt crisis which constitutes a major drain on the resources of developing countries and has often frustrated their endeavours at development in spite of various strategies tried out by international community to alleviate crisis. The NAM therefore decided during the Tenth Summit to continue its consultative process on the external debt on a high intergovernmental level and to formulate policy guidelines that would bring about a comprehensive and durable solution to the problem. In compliance with this decision, the Chairman hosted three meetings of experts on external debt. The result of these meetings was the formulation of a *"Memorandum on Urgent Actions on Bilateral, Multilateral and Commercial Debt of the Developing Countries"* which was subsequently presented by the NAM Chairman to the Leaders of the Group of 7 through their Chairman on the eve of their Tokyo Summit.

Another action-oriented strategy that has been adopted by the Movement is that of self-propelling growth. It has been found effective and appropriate for pu-

rsuing South-South cooperation and for achieving sustainable development. Founded on self-reliance, this strategy promotes community-based economic growth as well as the right of the poor to participate in and benefit from development. To further propagate this grass roots approach, Indonesia is going to host the Open-Ended Joint Meeting of Experts and Decision-Makers of Developing Countries on Development Schemes this coming March.

Perhaps the South-South initiative of the NAM that has had the greatest impact is the Asia-Africa Forum which was held last month in, most appropriately, Bandung. In this forum, a follow-up to the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), the developing countries of the Far East which have impressed the world with their dynamic growth shared experiences, observations and insights with the developing countries of Africa. The forum has resulted in the establishment of a solid foundation for promotion of development cooperation between Asian and African countries. Now often referred to as the Bandung Forum, it could serve as a model for future South-South cooperation efforts: indeed the discussions were down-to-earth but insightful, and the representation was balanced with Africa learning from Asia as much as Asia learning from Africa.

Since there will be more such initiatives in South-South cooperation in the future, the question of coordination has to come up. There is need for coordination, too, in the endeavours of the countries of the South to hold dialogue and negotiations with the countries of the North. In view of this need for coordination, the NAM, through its Coordinating Bureau and working with the Group of 77, expedited the operationalization of the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) early last year. As a result, the terms of reference of the Joint Coordinating Committee were put into practice soon after the NAM Ministerial Meeting in Cairo, also last year. Thus the two major bodies of developing countries are now able to harness their collective strength to effectively and efficiently pursue various development projects within the framework of South-South cooperation as well as dialogue with their counterparts in the developed North.

Among the countries that regard the NAM as a positive force for dialogue on international economic issues and with which the NAM will need to be in constant consultation are the newly independent countries which used to belong to the East European Group Countries. Described today as the "countries in transition," they have had a profound impact on the deve-

loping world for they do compete with other developing countries for scarce international resources for development. To the Non-Aligned Countries, this is a matter of concern. But the political importance of these countries and the contributions that they could make cannot be overemphasized. We realize also that if there is a deterioration in the situation of these countries, the whole international community will be affected. From a historical perspective, even while they were within the exclusive sphere of influence of the former Soviet Union, these countries in general have often been sympathetic to the developing world. After the breakdown with the Soviet Union, it would seem that these countries, because of their disillusionment with Communism and their urgent need for development resources, have become more orientated towards the West in terms of political values. They do need help and the international community should provide that help, without, however, sacrificing the aspirations of the rest of the developing world.

Realizing that social and economic development can only be secure in a regime of peace, the Non-Aligned Movement continues to be seized with political issues as well as the tensions and conflicts which attend these issues. My personal observation is that during the past two years, the NAM has been growing in importance and effectiveness as an instrumentality for the solution of international political disputes or conflicts. The NAM has played that role primarily through the sending of Special Emissaries of the NAM Chairman to the countries in conflict, most of the time working behind the scenes. The Movement's advocacy for the peaceful solution of conflicts is also being carried out in the forums provided by the workings of the United Nations.

The Movement remains firmly committed to its long-established position that a new international order can only be achieved through the central instrumentality of the United Nations. Moreover, we in the Movement feel that any new international order can only be generally acceptable if it is consistent with the principles and ideals enshrined in the UN Charter. Consequently, a judicious restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations remains in the highest priority of the Movement. In the endeavours to improve the working methods of the General Assembly, the NAM has been an active participant. Further work, however, needs to be done to define a clear concept of the role of the General Assembly so that it can exercise the powers given to it by provisions of the Charter.

(To be Continued)

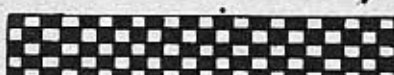
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The NAM in the 90's

Rolando Lopez del Amo

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disappearance of the Warsaw Pact Treaty some analysts think that the NAM has no role to play because the Cold War is over and the world is not divided any more into two antagonistic blocks. In our view, such assertion is totally wrong because it takes into consideration only one of the various aspects of the Non-Aligned approach to international relations and ignores the history behind the inception of the movement and its activity till today.

The validity of the NAM, its importance for the so called Third World Countries has been highlighted by the decision to hold a next summit conference in 1996 in Colombia, a country of a region that had only one member attending the first summit in Belgrade in 1961.

It is difficult to deny the fact that the Non Aligned Movement is the result of a process that started in Asia under the sponsorship of some newly independent countries and could be traced to the Colombo powers conference held in 1954 that gathered later in Bogorand Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955 adding the African participation. Later in 1961 the Belgrade conference gave birth and name to the movement as it is today and a world-wide dimension to the previous meetings with the participation of one European country, the host Yugoslavia, and a Latin American country: Cuba.

Reading the final declaration of the Sixth Summit Conference held in Havana in September, 1979 I found this assessment that is as valid as then for the NAM (Quoth) "The fundamental principles of Non-Alignment, their universal value and the persistent struggle of non aligned countries for equitable relations among countries and peoples provide, due to their permanent nature, inspiration to peoples and countries in their struggle for a world of independence, equality and justice".

A paper presented by the Cuban Ambassador at the BCIS sponsored conference in Colombo.

The same document stated the following concerning the principles of the movement: "Taking into consideration the principles on which non alignment has been based and the elaboration of those principles through the successive summit conferences held in Belgrade, Cairo, Lusaka, Algiers and Colombo, the Sixth Conference reaffirmed that the quintessence of the policy of Non-Alignment, in accordance with its original principles and essential character, involved the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, apartheid, racism including Zionism and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference or intervention, direct or indirect, and of all pressures, whether political, economic, military or cultural, in international relations".

The movement always insisted in the respect of basic principles such as national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, sovereign equality and free social development of all countries, peaceful coexistence, non interference and non intervention in the internal and external affairs of other countries, freedom of all states to determine their political economic and social systems. Non use of force or threat of use of force in international relations, right of selfdetermination, indivisibility of peace and security for all, a new international economic order based upon equity and directed to promote development and eradicate hunger and poverty.

Reading this principles is easy to find how close they are to those envisaged in the UN Charter but with a particular Emphasis in the problems and needs of the newly independent countries and those still under foreign domination. It wont be wrong to say that the NAM was - and still is - the expression of the national liberation movement in international relations. Its members always considered the NAM as "an independent global factor" as "an important step in mankind's search for freely established, peaceful and equitable relations among nations, irrespecti-

ve of their size, geographic location, power or social system".

If the 7 biggest industrial powers of the world from North America, Asia and Europe have their regular meetings to coordinate their global policy, why the developing world is not going to have its own tested forum where to reach a consensus in coordinating their policies and looking after their interests with a global perspective?

It is true that today there is not the confrontation between two military blocks. But it is also true that, while one of the blocks, namely the WARSAW Pact, ceased to exist, the other, NATO is still there. The NAM always asked for a world free of block policies, no matter there were two blocks or one. That's why even this aspect of NAM objectives has not yet been accomplished, not to mention the majority of the rest.

The world we are living today is still a world far from the hopes of the founders of NAM. The gap between developed countries of the north of the planet and the poorest countries of the south is growing with a few exceptions.

The northern developed countries are leading or ruling the world both politically and economically. Even in the united nations, the body where decisions are compulsory for all the member countries and deals with the most sensitive issue of war and peace, I mean the Security Council, is being controlled by a group of powers who are permanent members and imposing the decisions taken by the strongest powers representing the views of the only military block: NATO.

From the economic point of view those powers have a decisive influence in fixing world market prices and export quotas for the products of the South, where two thirds of humankind lives.

Developed countries also have the biggest agricultural and industrial outputs and the main control of scientific and

technical research and implementation of the results achieved in those areas.

They rule the world in terms of finances, trade and commerce and, to reduce the ill-effects of their own economies, they discharge their burden on the shoulders of the South countries. Because of all these reasons, the developing countries need its own "independent global factor".

It is true that nowadays there is a strong tendency to favour regional groupings in terms of economic and political relations. It seems that the most successful has been the European union. Other Attempts are mainly of economic nature, with the exception of Asean that has a broader scope. But in spite of this regional integration, the world cannot be separated in parcels alien one to each other. If one takes the "Four Asian Tigers" as an example of successful economic development can see how this economies have been close connected with American economy, besides Japanese and European. Japanese economy itself can't be divorced from American economy, a fact that seems won't change much even with the creation of NAFTA and the enlarging of its membership with other Latin American countries.

Without denying merits and importance of regional grouping, ours is an every passing day more interrelated world and a global perspective is essential to guarantee the survival of our planet and its inhabitants.

Worldwide flow of news, ideas, goods, money and people is the contemporary trend.

In such circumstances is advisable for the countries of the South to keep their own forum where to discuss issues and problems, reach a consensus and have a coordinate position vis a vis the also coordinate positions of NATO and 6-7 countries.

Since its inception the NAM provided an adequate framework to discuss political and economic issues of common interest and to come out with a common approach reached through consensus.

The NAM always preferred to work on such basis instead of taking decisions through balloting (voting) Because the

consensus - that does not mean unanimity - provides a better opportunity to take into consideration minorities views.

The NAM is composed of a diversity of countries with a different level of development, a big variety of cultural traditions, religious beliefs and socio economic and political structures. This diversity is a very important element because enriches the discussions on every subject leading to a common balanced approach based upon reality.

Unfortunately, from time to time we have been eyewitness of conflicts and confrontation, even military confrontation, between Non Aligned countries. But the NAM must not be blamed by such happenings that run against the very NAM principles. In fact, on every occasion that conflicts between Non Aligned countries have arisen, the movement has deploy a lot of efforts to cool down the situation and reach fair and honourable solutions.

It would be said that the NAM have yet to play a dual positive role both, in the relationship among its members, and between them and the former colonial powers.

No one can deny the historic contribution of the NAM to safe-guarding world peace, promoting disarmament, putting an end to colonial and imperialist domination, fostering independence and protecting the right to self-determination, fighting against apartheid in South Africa and defending the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Today the NAM is playing a key role in relation with the democratisation of international relations including the work of the United Nations system as a whole and its Security Council in particular.

The NAM is the only international political factor that can coordinate the positions of the majority of the UN members to strive for that purpose. Among the Security Council memberships there are 7 non permanent members belonging to the NAM. When that caucus have a common stand its voice cannot be ignored in that body. But its influence is more larger in the GA where enjoys a clear majority.

The Non Aligned Countries have been wise enough to resist the temptation to over-organise the movement, to give to

it a rigid structure with a permanent secretariat in a single country or to make a charter or too many rules. The flexibility of the NAM organisation, with a style of work based upon free democratic discussions and through them reaching a consensus have safeguard the unity of the movement in spite of the differences, sometimes very sharp among the member countries.

The conferences of heads of state or government every 3 years provide the medium term guidelines for the NAM. The ministerial meetings in the half of that period, allowed to check the work done and update the consideration of important issues. But the essential day to day work, the one that test the capacity and effectiveness of the MOV, is the functioning of the coordinating bureau in NEW York. That is the more practical tool of the movement to implement its decisions and policies. That is the key factor that can spread the influence of the NAM in the UN system including the Security Council.

Summarising the NAM have resisted the test of time. More than 34 years of existence and the continuous increase in its membership are clear evidence of the *raison d'etre* of the movement. There is not other option better than the NAM for the developing world to reach a common approach on global issues in front of big powers led blocks policies.

Till the world becomes free of block policies and all nations could really be united, till the world remains divided into two categories of nations, the NAM will have a role to play as the expression of the needs and views of one of those two categories.

That's why in the Nineties the NAM still have a very important role to play and the very fact that the next summit will be held in Latin America shows that the ideas that started to take shape in Colombo in 1954 and evolved through the Bandung conference in 1955 to the first Non Aligned Summit in belgrade in 1961 are still alive. The march from Colombo to Colombia in 1995 shows that the cause of the big majority of humankind will be voiced with more strength and maturity and the principles and objectives of the NAM will be again a factor of unity, a noble banner to follow in the path to a better world for all.

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J. R's latest

Now we've heard everything: J. R. and Vijaya were good friends

Who says so? Why, J. R. himself, in an interview with Roshan Peiris of the *Sunday Times*. We recollect that Stalin and Trotsky too were close friends. It is true that Stalin got one of his hatchmen to bury an ice-pick in Trotsky's brain. Apart from that however, they were friends.

In that interview, J. R. explained that Vijaya was imprisoned by his government because "the process of the law had to be the same for all". He added: "I rarely, if ever, talk about the fact that Madam Bandaranaike took my son into custody and jailed him". Of course when J. R. says "Madam Bandaranaike" took his son into custody he can hardly mean she herself personally did it, just as J. R. did not himself personally take Vijaya into custody. J. R.'s son's case was just another instance of "the process of the law being the same for all". By mentioning Mrs. B. by name, instead of her government, J. R. appears to imply that the two cases are not all fours. But they are.

Though he "rarely, if ever", talks about it, on one famous occasion, he did talk about the arrest of his son. This was long after Mrs. B had been deprived of her civic rights. The late Kosgodha Dhammawansa, head of the Amarapura Nikaya, led a delegation of Buddhist monks before J. R. to ask him to relent and restore Mrs. B's civic rights. J. R.'s reply to the startled group of monks was that it was Mrs. B's government that had taken his only son into custody during the 1971 insurgency and given him his meals in a tin plate. The Chief Monk asked whether it was, then, an act of revenge to take away her rights. J. R. did not reply. But the delegation did not get what they came to ask for.

J. R. also told Roshan Peiris that he got the idea for the Jayawardena Centre from America where F.D.R. established a centre to house the gifts and documents he had accumulated. But there is a slight difference. Roosevelt did not use public money to buy back his childhood home for his centre. J. R. did this, and made a further attempt to acquire his ancestral property in Grandpass with taxpayers'

money but this was frustrated by President Premadasa who reversed the proceedings and handed back the property to the owners. F.D.R. did not do such things.

But the most interesting part of the interview is when he claims: "Since I took over the leadership of the UNP in April 1973, I have won every form of islandwide elections and not lost a single one from 1973 to 1988, be it referendum or elections to Parliament". To read these words one would not think they are spoken by a man ruled this country **without holding a single parliamentary general election for close on 12 years!** The 1977 general election was a clean one, held by Mrs. B., which J. R. won by making a large number of very attractive election promises, not one of which he implemented, or had the slightest intention of implementing. While not implementing a single of

the promises for which he received a mandate, J. R. did many things for which he had no mandate, including making himself "deemed-to-have-been-elected" executive president and making himself free from all suit.

As for the referendum it was won with intimidation and thuggery as pointed out by no less a person than the Commissioner of Elections himself. During this referendum we saw, for the first time in our history, senior government party men intimidating polling staff inside the polling stations with guns! Had the Commissioner of Elections the power to do so, he would no doubt have declared the referendum null and void. That J. R. can mention the referendum as one of his triumphs without blushing is impressive. Somebody should tell him it is time he stopped making public statements about his achievements.

Piyal Gamage

Waiting - 3 Gal Vihare

*Ananda with folded arms
Holds back his grief
But the pain wracks tears from stone,
Distills
The Buddha's Truths of Sorrow.*

*But is Ananda's great Sadness
That of the parting of this great Bond
Or does he with folded arms
Dwell on their Journey together
From cousin childhood to his own Search
Through the simple joys and hardships of his Pilgrimage
To Sainthood unattained,
Until the memory that melted this Stone
Lit up the Sutras, leading him to Bliss?*

*We too have arrived here as Pilgrims many times
Through childhood and afterwards in sweeter Bonds.
And now with the Worlds attachments not yet shed
Death sculptures Grief for one on this Pilgrimage.*

U. Karunatilake



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Why there's sound of laughter in this rustic tobacco barn....

There is laughter and light banter amongst these rural damsels who are busy sorting out tobacco leaf in a barn. It is one of the hundreds of such barns spread out in the mid and upcountry intermediate zone where the arable land remains fallow during the off season.

Here, with careful nurturing, tobacco grows as a lucrative cash crop and the green leaves turn to gold... to the value of over Rs. 250 million or more annually, for perhaps 143,000 rural folk.

Tobacco is the industry that brings employment to the second highest number of people. And these people are the tobacco barn owners, the tobacco growers and those who work for them, on the land and in the barns.

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