

EPRLF NEWS BULLETIN



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Compiled by the Information Department, of
Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front.

OUR PERCEPTION ON SOME OPTIONS PERTAINING TO THE "TAMIL QUESTION" IN SRI LANKA.

(A Background Document Prepared by the Department of Information of the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front-EPRLF)

1. OUR POSITION AS REGARDS THE INDO-SRI LANKAN ACCORD.

*1.1. On Why We Decided To Extend Our Support To
The Indo-Sri Lankan Accord:*

Despite certain deficiencies and inadequacies in the manner in which the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord was effected, in particular the inadequate consultations with representatives of the Tamil polity, the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) took the decision to support the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord of July 1987. The reasons were as follows:

(i) Given the intensification of the "genocidal war" that the Sri Lankan security forces had unleashed against the Tamil-speaking People, following the

unilateral abrogation of the "December 19" proposal by the Sri Lankan Government and culminating in the May 1987 Offensive, the Government of India had to be directly involved in ensuring the safety and security of the Tamil-speaking people. In this regard, the air-dropping of food supplies and the subsequent deployment of the IPKF were, both, necessary and unavoidable. (Note: The Sri Lankan Government on its part saw the IPKF as solely an instrument of disarmament of the Eelam Resistance - an interpretation that we categorically reject.)

(ii) Since the "residual" matters pertaining to the "devolution" of power to the Provincial Council, envisaged under the Accord, were to be sorted out in the post-Accord period, and in view of inadequate consultations with the Tamil polity, it was imperative that the Government of India be brought in as the guarantor of the Accord. The past experience of our People, since Independence, with broken pacts and unkept promises by successive Sri Lankan Governments was also a determining factor.

(iii) We also considered the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord as an instrument which could provide "platform" from which to create the necessary "internal" conditions for the restoration of peace, and the furtherance of the struggle for democracy and social progress for the entire island. The fusion and the strengthening of a broad

Sinhala and Tamil secular and a democratic consensus, was hence, seen as a necessary task.

(iv) Finally, we saw in the annexure to the Accord, which addressed the question of the presence of military-intelligence agencies of regional (i.e. Pakistan) and extra-regional (i.e. Israel, Britain and the U.S) powers in Sri Lanka, a means by which Sri Lanka could revert to the principles of non-alignment - and cordial relations with neighbouring India.

In sum, although the EPRLF did not see the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord as the sole basis for a just and rational resolution of the "Tamil Question" in Sri Lanka, the national and the geo-political situation that prevailed at that time led us to extend our qualified support.

1.2. On why We Decided To Contest The Election To The North-Eastern Provincial Council.

In accordance with the obligations of the Sri Lankan Government, as stipulated in the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord, elections were held on November 19, 1988 for the North-Eastern Provincial Council. This followed the Presidential proclamation merging the Northern and Eastern provinces into a single administrative unit and the passage of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution on the powers to be devolved.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) declined to contest. The LTTE which had embarked on a megalomaniacal path of hegemony by attempting to annihilate the other Tamil organizations, prior to the Accord, and had succeeded in subverting all attempts at restoring peace and democracy, following the Accord, issued a call for boycott. Pamphlets were distributed threatening all those who partake in the electoral process with death. To give weight to these threats the LTTE escalated its orgy of violence in which many civilians, Sinhalese as well as Tamils, were massacred.

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) succumbed to these acts of intimidation and decided not to field any candidate. In a statement issued by the Secretary-General, the late Mr. A. Amirthalingam, the TULF expressed disappointment at the failure of the LTTE to respond positively to the ceasefire offer by the IPKF. The statement further added that "this failure by the LTTE had created a situation in which it was difficult for an unarmed, non-violent political party like the TULF to field candidates. The TULF, however, appealed to the Tamil-speaking People to extend their "full support to the efforts to activate the democratic process" since it was the "necessary means to consolidate the gains to the Tamil-speaking People obtained through the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord".

It is in view of the above developments that the

EPRLF took the decision to come forward and contest the elections to the North-Eastern Provincial Council and not give the Sri Lankan Government any pretext to abdicate its obligations as per the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord and the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. The decision was also taken to use the electoral process as an instrument of mass campaign based on the slogan "Peace, Democracy and Unity" - despite the use of terror by the LTTE in which many of our cadres and sympathizers were brutally killed. In its election manifesto, the EPRLF while reaffirming its commitment to creating an egalitarian and just society in Sri Lanka, in which the Tamil-speaking people could live in peace with the Sinhalese People on the basis of equality, similarly issued a warning to the forces of Sinhala chauvinism that they would be paving the way for the creation of an independent "Eelam", if they continue to subvert the process of provincial autonomy for the Tamil homeland.

The 19th of November witnessed an historic event. Despite the threats and acts of violence by the LTTE, the Tamil-speaking People in the Eastern Province turned out in large numbers to cast their ballot. The average turn-out in the entire Eastern Province was 63%, while it exceeded 80% in the Tamil and Muslim dominated areas. In this regard, the role of the IPKF in ensuring security to those who wished to exercise their democratic rights needs to be highly commended. Polls were not held in the Northern Province, in view of a

no-contest pact between the EPRLF, ENDLF and TELO and the absence of any other political party coming forward to contest.

The EPRLF won the majority of the seats and was called upon to form the first North-Eastern Provincial Government. The EPRLF also secured 7 Parliamentary seats at the General Elections, held a few months later - 5 of which were from the Northern Province. Despite securing an absolute majority in the North-Eastern Provincial Council, the EPRLF opted to form a coalition Government and share the ministerial portfolios with the ENDLF, a Muslim member of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka and a Sinhalese member of the Movement for Socialist Democracy.

2. ON THE CHALLENGES AND TASKS OF THE EPRLF - LED NORTH - EASTERN PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT.

2.1. On Devolution of Powers.

The North-Eastern Provincial Government, headed by a Chief Minister nominated by the EPRLF, gave top priority to its immediate task of securing all powers vested in it under the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. In addition, in view of the chicanery employed by the Sri Lankan Government in excluding

from the 13th Amendment to the Constitution many elements agreed upon by New Delhi and Colombo during the period May-December 1987, and in view of inadequate consultations with the Tamil polity during this period, the Provincial Government expressed its intentions of reopening negotiations for further improvements to the "devolution package".

The Sri Lankan President, Mr. Premadasa, on his part requested for more time, citing the Sinhala chauvinist lobby and bureaucratic inefficiency as the main reasons. The North-Eastern Provincial Government took the decision to give the Colombo regime more time to fulfill its part of the obligations - failing which to expose it. In due course, it became clear that the Sri Lankan Government was merely playing for time and that it lacked the political will to concede to the Tamil-speaking people, their minimum demands. Whatever that was conceded to the Provincial Government was more in the form of decentralization of the bureaucracy, rather than provincial autonomy as a solution to the nationality problem within a united Sri Lanka.

2.2. On Security.

The main threat to the security of the Tamil-speaking People of the Northern and Eastern provinces today is the logistical and material support that

has been extended to the LTTE by the Sri Lankan Government - and the deployment of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces and the Para-military Special Task Forces (STF) to areas from which the IPKF have been "deinducted". The legally-constituted Citizens Voluntary Force (CVF), which was entrusted with the task of maintenance of law and order in the Tamil-speaking areas, has now come under a combined military assault by the Sri Lankan security forces and the LTTE. By this act, the Sri Lankan Government has contravened its obligations under the Joint Communique of September 18, 1989 signed by the Governments of India and Sri Lanka and the decisions taken at the level of the Security Co-ordination Group Committee. Despite the assurances given by the Sri Lankan Government that it would strengthen the provincial administration and use its good offices to bring the LTTE into the proposed Peace Committee, it has failed to do so on both counts. It has, instead, embarked on an adventurist and a dangerous game of deliberately creating the conditions for a bloodbath in the Northern and Eastern provinces by using the LTTE as its "proxy"

It is under these conditions of combined acts of terrorism and violence by the Sri Lankan security forces and the LTTE, that the people's defense militia and the various Tamil organizations represented in the Tamil National Council took the decision to engage in armed

resistance. In view of the continuing armed hostilities, there have been heavy casualties amongst combatants on both sides, as well as civilian casualties. In addition, thousands have been rendered homeless thereby creating a refugee problem, which once again threatens to spill over into the south Indian State of Tamil Nadu.

3. WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

The nexus between LTTE and the Colombo regime is clearly shortsighted and adventurist in nature and does not constitute a viable basis for a just and a lasting solution to the "Tamil Question" in Sri Lanka. To the LTTE, this alliance is essential to expedite the withdrawal of the IPKF and prevent the EPRLF-led North-Eastern Provincial Government from consolidating and further expanding on its social and political base. It appears that the LTTE is more bent on imposing its hegemony over the Tamil polity, rather than defend the fundamental democratic and political rights of the Tamil-speaking People. To the Colombo regime, the LTTE had to be strengthened militarily in order to destabilize the North-Eastern Provincial Government, abort the process of provincial autonomy and subvert the formation of an indigenous security system for the Tamil-speaking areas.

History has, however, shown that aims and tendencies do not necessarily coincide. What the LTTE

must realize is that once the UNP-military oligarchy consolidates its hegemony in the Sinhala areas through the process of annihilation and co-optation, it will turn to the Tamil areas in pursuance of a military solution to the "Tamil Question" - after having created the conditions for a bloody internicine conflict between the LTTE and the other Tamil organizations. If the LTTE does not extricate itself from its megalomaniacal pursuit for hegemony and engage in a dialogue with the other Tamil organizations, the destruction of the Tamil homeland and the massacre of the Tamil-speaking people is inevitable.

On the other hand, the Sri Lankan authoritarian state must realize that in so far as it fails to satisfy the fundamental democratic and political rights of the Tamil-speaking people, the struggle for their inalienable rights of self-determination will continue - with or without the LTTE - thus plunging the entire island into a bloodbath. It must also realize that in so far as the pauperization and the ensuing social discontent amongst the Sinhala masses continue, movements that challenge state-power will continue to emerge - with or without the JVP.

We, the EPRLF, will exercise all options available to us to avoid any unnecessary bloodbath. It is in this context that we feel that the following minimum conditions must be satisfied at the earliest.

- (i) The Sri Lankan Government must devolve all powers to the Provincial Government, as per the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, and reopen negotiations for full provincial autonomy to the North - Eastern Province in consultation with all Tamil Organisations.
- (ii) The LTTE must accept basic democratic and civilizational norms and enter into a dialogue with the Tamil National Council and the North-Eastern Provincial Government.

If the Colombo regime and the LTTE continue with their dangerous and adventurist policies presently being pursued, then the EPRLF will be compelled, on its part, to pursue other options.

DECEMBER 1989

PRESS RELEASE

MADRAS
22.12.1989

AN APPEAL MADE BY MR. K. PATHMANABA, SECRETARY GENERAL, EALAM PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY LIBERATION FRONT TO ALL FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN SRI LANKA.

It is our responsibility to inform the international community through you the real situation and plights in which the Tamil speaking people of North-East of Sri Lanka are suffering. Since independence, the successive Central Governments never developed our language, culture and economy the way it should have done. Our struggles were ruthlessly put down and all our efforts for meaningful self-rule within the framework of United Sri Lanka were humiliated and repressed by the parties and Governments that ruled Sri Lanka up to now and if we allow this status-quo to continue, it will not undergo any change even well after the 20th century is over.

Still the armed forces and the police of this multi-national country are being represented by more than 99% Sinhalese. During the last 4 decades, as far as

the legitimate struggles of the Tamil speaking people are concerned, these police and armed forces were used to brutally put down these struggles, and as these armed forces and police behaved like the genocidal and the chauvinistic army and police of the Sinhala majority, we had to resort to arms and demand a separate state to realize and establish the inalienable right of the Tamil Speaking People for self-determination.

When the elements in our midst like LTTE wanted to establish its hegemony murderously, brutally and ruthlessly over that of others fighting for the fundamental rights of the Tamil speaking people, we were virtually subjected to near extermination by the Sinhala chauvinistic Sri Lanka Government, when it was easy for it to silence the militant Tamil movements weakened by the treacherous LTTE actions.

India intervened and saved Sri Lanka from insecurity and instability. We, in the interest of peace, democracy, regional security and stability accepted the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord and joined the democratic National political stream.

Right through the history of post independent Sri Lanka, the rulers were trying to remain in power or come back to power exploiting only the vehicle of Sinhalese chauvinism. This is the history even after the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord which put a stop to the civil war that was

prevailing in the country.

In terms of this Accord we laid down arms for the following reasons:-

Firstly: The content of the present Eelam struggle changed to be one of the extensive devolution in the form of Regional Autonomy within the frame-work of United Sri Lanka.

Secondly: Because of the sanguinary deviation of the Eelam struggle by the LTTE the people of North and East wanted to proceed the struggle in the atmosphere of peace and democracy, and

Thirdly: The long suffering masses of Sri Lanka to be made to understand that their social emancipation is closely interconnected and inter-related to the National emancipation of the Tamil speaking people.

The other important reason that made us to lay down our arms was that both Sri Lanka and India told us that Sri Lanka will give us a viable alternative to Eelam in the form of Provincial Government, enjoying at least the minimum of the powers enjoyed by a linguistic State in India.

The part played by Sri Lanka Governemnt in the post Indo-Sri Lanka Accord period was not encouraging. It agreed to disband the notorious S.T.F.(Special Task

Force) and sever the relationship of Israeli lobby out of the Island, but upto now it had not done so. Sri Lanka Government agreed to give a Provincial Government based on extensive and deep-going devolution where as what it gave us in the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lanka Constitution is nothing but peripheral decentralisation which is only a political loan given to the Tamil speaking people by the Sinhalese dominated Parliament (even the meagre benefits of the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution can be readily withdrawn with 2/3rd majority in Parliament of which 5/6th membership is Sinhalese who are still suffering from an age old Mahavansa phobia and mania centering around the Tamil speaking people)

The worst state of affairs is that the Cabinet Ministers and their permanent Secretaries interpret the 13th Amendment the way they want and stand in the way of the smooth flowing of the devolution from the Centre to the Provinces, specially to the North-East Province as the politico-moral responsibility of the party that control power in the Province of North-East is historical and dynamic.

North-East Provincial Government was established on the 10th December 1988. So far the Sri Lankan Government has not yet created the relevant administrative processes and institutions and devolved powers envisaged in the 13th Amendment. Despite our requests for the speedy realization of the powers of the

13th Amendment from the Government by the beginning of May this year the Government has started to negotiate with the LTTE who have neither renounced violence nor accepted national reconciliation so far and has not stopped killing administrators and politicians who wanted the people of North-East to come back to the normal life through rehabilitation and reconstruction. Sri Lankan Government went against us who are for the position that the national emancipation of the Tamil speaking people is within the framework of united Sri Lanka. Before creating the relevant institutions and handing over the relevant powers to the Chief Minister of North-East Province to look after the law and order and the Government has not yet made any realistic attempts to reflect the National ethnic proportions, in the National armed services and police. At the same time, the Sri Lankan Government treacherously continued with uninterrupted Sinhala colonisation of the Tamil speaking areas. It made all attempts in an effectively calculated manner to usher in state managed Sinhala - Tamil and Tamil - Muslim riots in the North-East. The Sinhala - Tamil riots of Trincomalee in April 1989 and the Muslim - Tamil riots of Kinniya and Sammanthurai in May/June 1989 are examples of this manipulation.

When the IPKF left Amparai district, security co-ordinating group (Sri Lankan Government North-East Provincial Government, IPKF and the Police and Security Forces in Sri Lanka) was to combine the Sri Lankan

police and the Citizen Voluntary Force to maintain law and order institutions and the police functions of the public order in the North-East under the control and supervision of the Chief Minister. There was another agreement to recruit and train an additional cadre of C.V.F. to be inducted in the services. This proposition is consistent with the agreement reached between India and Sri Lanka on the 18th of September 1989.

In the early hours of 5th November the Tamil Youths in Thirukkoil and Thambiluvil in the Amparai district, who were waiting to join C.V.F. were treacherously attacked by a combination of LTTE and STF. Our Chief Minister rushed to the spot and cited the relevant agreement to the Sri Lankan defence authorities and questioned the moral and political responsibilities of the Government of Sri Lanka. Using these disturbances as a pretext the Government of Sri Lanka ordered the pan-Sinhala armed forces including the S.T.F. to move into Tamil speaking areas in the Amparai district. We wish to point here that according to the 18th September 1989 agreement the consent of the Chief Minister is necessary precondition to move the Sri Lankan armed forces into the Tamil speaking areas. Only the President can do it and not the State Minister for Defence or Minister of Foreign affairs. Sri Lanka Government has created chaos and anarchy by violating this agreement. It has made thousands of people homeless due to the repetition of what SLA and STF did before July 29th 1987. Now these Tamil

speaking people are suffering without shelter food, clothing and medicine. This is the result of the de-induction of IPKF in one district. Experience will tell you what would be if IPKF leaves Sri Lanka without proper arrangements to safe-guard Tamil Speaking people. Now we only hope that you will understand that the de-induction of the IPKF and the devolution of powers to the North-East provincial Government is organically linked. But the Sri Lankan Government and a highly considerable section of the sinhala majority still beleives that the National Unity means something that should be achieved only at the expence of the security and self respect of the Tamil speaking people.

This is the history of our irony and the paradox of the National Unity and the realization of the establishment of the inalienable National rights of the minorities in a multi-National Country like Sri Lanka. The leaders of the sinhala majority speak of National Unity, but only through the total elimination of the National minorities. We will be sending a military bulletin consisting of the past and present achievements of the Sri Lankan security forces and that of ours. If the Sri Lankan Government is going to continue like this the socio-economic life of Sri Lanka is going to be a stale-mate. We shall be very much thankful to you if you can please advice your respective governments to send consultations to the Sri Lankan Government not to pursue the path of pre Indo-Sri Lanka accord, because it

will endanger peace and security in and around Sri Lanka and will create a genocidal situation in Sri Lanka.

PRESS RELEASE

MADRAS
21.12.1989

CONFERENCE ON INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE TRINCOMALEE AND SUPER POWER SCHEMES

The decision of the United States of America, France and Britain to withdraw their respective membership from the adhoc committee on "The Conference on the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace" to be held in Colombo, and their voting against the Conference are strongly condemned by the North East Provincial Government of Sri Lanka.

This decision of these super powers will increase tension in Africa, Asia and the Pacific region and will go against the struggle of the people of Asia and Africa for peace, security and social progress.

In view of this alarming decision the Tamil National Council calls upon all the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean to find out ways and means aimed at their collective security in view of the continuing and resurging nuclear activity of these powers in the Indian Ocean.

These naval and nuclear activities around Sri Lanka whose eastern Harbour city of Trincomalee was the main South-East Asian Naval Head Quarters of the British during the IInd World War will definitely coincide with the imperialist designs of disintegration and destabilization in the region of South Asia composed of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka.

The North-East Provincial Government of Sri Lanka requests, His Excellency R. Premadasa, the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka make all diplomatic efforts for the successful convening of this conference.

**North-East Provincial Government,
Trincomalee
SRI LANKA.**

PRESS RELEASE

MADRAS
05-01-1990

**PRESS STATEMENT BY MR. M.K. ABBU YUSUF,
INDUSTRY AND TRANSPORT MINISTER,
NORTH-EAST PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND
MEMBER OF THE POLITBERO OF THE SRI
LANKAN COMMUNIST PARTY, AT TRINCOMALEE:**

Suffering masses of this Nation are wondering what would happen to them in a situation like this today, in which the whole Nation and her people are in the grip of violence and insecurity. In this disturbed and uncertain circumstances all the leftist, plantation proletariat and the organised working class must act with courage, ideological clarity, vigour and determination.

All the Marxist - Leninists must understand that the well being and social liberation of the people of this country irrespective of caste, creed, race, language and religion is linked to the national emancipation of the Tamil speaking people of this country.

The leftist leaders have critically accepted that they had committed mistakes in the past, based on Sinhala chauvinism, as a result of their consideration that the

problems of the national minorities are only intellectual. Communist parties are the vanguard parties of the National minorities also. But here they have increased their distance with the National minorities by falling prey, knowingly or unknowingly to the tactics of Sinhala chauvinism, as demanded by the necessities of the parliamentary struggles. All the Sri Lankan Communists are historically and dialectically forced to meet the critical and complex challenges this Nation is facing today with uncontaminated working class consciousness and scientific and ideological clarity. They can not escape the grip of this logic, today. It is the duty of all Communists to extend unconditional support and express solidarity to the Eelam People Revolutionary Liberation Front which amidst difficulties and hardships, is making tremendous sacrifices and is surging forward.