



THAMILEELAM

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Tamil peace talks near collapse

THE GUARDIAN

Sri Lanka was plunged back into the grip of terror at the weekend when Tamil delegations walked out of peace talks in the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan after renewed reports of massacres by security forces in the Tamil northern and eastern provinces.

Later, the Indian Government mediators said they had persuaded the Tamil side to return to the negotiating table.

The Tamil negotiators in Thimpu, the capital, said they had walked out because "no useful purpose would be served in participating in the talks." They accused the government team of sticking to "inadequate, unacceptable and three-decade-old proposals" in reply to the minority community's demand for greater regional autonomy.

Tamil sources in the south Indian city of Madras claimed that 400 civilians had been "slaughtered" by security men and "armed hoodlums" in two attacks on Friday and Saturday at Vavuniya in the northern province and the port of Trincomalee in the east. The Government has disputed the scale of the killings, but not the fact that they took place.

The island had been rumbling with violence before the peace talks resumed a week ago, with Tamil guerrillas laying mines, attacking army patrols and placing a time bomb on a train, and the security forces retaliating in kind. It reached a new level at the weekend with reports of troops running wild in Vavuniya and Trincomalee and thousands of Tamils fleeing to Colombo.

In Thimpu, neither side was prepared to soften its stance. The Tamils insisted on recognition as a nationality, respect for their "traditional homeland" in the north and east, recognition of their right to self-determination, and citizenship rights for Tamils who chose to live in Sri Lanka, including those (representing 5.6 per cent of the total population) who came from India to work in the tea plantations.

All four points were rejected out of hand by the leader of the government team, Mr Hector Jayewardene, who insisted that Sri Lanka was the homeland of all its peoples and that separatism and division would never be countenanced. He repeated the Government's offer of district councils, which might be linked on a provincial basis — an offer which has been consistently rejected for the past year by even the moderate Tamils.

The collapse of the talks represents a setback for Indian mediation. The Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, has been pressing both sides to compromise. The permanent head of the Indian Foreign Ministry, Mr Romesh Bhandari, has been shuttling between Delhi and Colombo. When the Thimpu talks appeared deadlocked last week, Mr Bhandari flew there to try and save them.

India is the only foreign power capable of influencing the Government and the Tamils, but Mr Gandhi seems reluctant to exert his full leverage. In the end, he wants a Sri Lankan solution, not an Indian one. Both sides have felt free to go their own way, breaking last month's fragile ceasefire and refusing to bargain.

President Junius Jayewardene appeared more amenable when he met Mr Gandhi in Delhi in June, but he has been shaken by a revival of Sinhalese Buddhist fundamentalism and continued sniping by his political rival in the majority community, Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike.

The Tamil militants, for their part, saw little hope in negotiations. An official of the Revolutionary Marxist People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (Plote), said in Delhi last week that they were more interested in fostering divisions within the Sinhalese community than reaching a compromise. He contended that they were negotiating for a ceasefire (he dismissed the

present truce as unilateral on the part of the Government), not a settlement. Their target was still a separate Tamil state.

Whether or not they were controlled from Colombo, the killings in Vavuniya and Trincomalee have demolished the Thimpu conference. Even the relatively moderate Tamil United Liberation Front joined the five militant groups in walking out. They said there was no point in continuing while innocent Tamil civilians were being murdered.

Extra

Tamils take 15 in rail hijack

Colombo - The night mail train from Manner in Sri Lanka's Northern Province was hijacked by separatist Tamil guerrillas on Saturday but a derailment thwarted their plans security sources said.

Officials said the plan may have been to attack the sacred city of Anuradhapura, but the railway authority had the train shunted on to a disused track where it was derailed. The guerrillas took about 15 hostages.

Tamil flare-up

At least 21 Tamils died in fighting after an army convoy narrowly escaped destruction when a landmine blew up in the north of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka talks expected to resume despite Tamil delay

The talks aimed at settling Sri Lanka's communal strife are expected to resume later this week despite the departure yesterday from Thimpu of several Tamil representatives.

They are returning to Madras, the militant group headquarters, for consultations, but Indian diplomats confidently expect them to be back in the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan on Thursday.

After further alleged violation of the ceasefire in Sri Lanka the Tamils demanded that the Government withdraw its security forces from the northern and eastern provinces and outline its proposals for granting autonomy to Tamils.

Although the Colombo delegation, led by Mr Hector Jayewardene, the President's brother, was still in Thimpu last night it would not be surprising if some representatives returned here for consultations about the future of the talks which appear close to breakdown.

Meanwhile, in Sri Lanka, the Japanese Embassy is seeking

clarification from the Government about an incident at Pottuvil, 30 miles south of Batticaloa, in which a Japanese citizen was shot dead by police at a road checkpoint.

Yuji Takehira, aged 27, was in the rear seat of a car in which he was travelling with two friends when he was shot.

A post mortem examination has been delayed while the Japanese Government awaits its own expert's arrival. The men in the car when the shooting occurred are being questioned by police.

Amid further reports of violence on the island, the Government has put all security forces on alert and extended the state of emergency introduced in 1983.

The latest incident allegedly occurred near Trincomalee when Tamil guerrillas kidnapped 10 Sinhalese after hijacking their van. According to the Government all 10 are now dead.

THE TIGER

DEMOLISH ALL REPRESSION

தமிழ்த் தேசிய ஆவணச் சுவடிகள்

Leading a people's war

From Nilima Sinha in New Delhi

"The total emancipation of the Tamils of Eelam has always been our principal demand... we wish to initiate a protracted people's war," says the manifesto of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), one of the groups of Tamils in Sri Lanka fighting ceaselessly against the Sinhala Government for a separate Tamil state. But no matter how just the demand, no government will stand for mutiny among its ranks, as the Tamils have found to their cost. The losses are not one sided either as is evidenced in the Lankan presence in Bhutan. So they all went to Thimpu to find an end to the long fight for self-preservation conducted through different modes of self-expressions, all ending in civil war, economic disruption, a ravaged countryside and a ravished people. The change from a non-violent struggle to a violent one has left none immune, including India, but all those involved now feel that it is time to pick up the threads of civilised behaviour through a negotiated settlement. So Thimpu talks began.

Uma Maheswaran, the Secretary General of PLOTE, summed up the reactions of all the protagonists by saying that even if no permanent solution acceptable to all was found, at least the Tamil agitators would meet the Lankan government eye-to-eye in a cordial atmosphere, however shortlived. The 38-year-old leader said that both sides were suspicious of each other where dishonouring the ceasefire was concerned. But the Thimpu meeting was a step in the right direction because it brought to a rational level, the violence which had assumed animal proportions. The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), the one time recognised representative of the mass Tamil discontent, came a cropper through the diplomatic passivity of Mr Amirthalingam and others, while the Tigers headed by Balasingham and Prabhakaran went through unleashing terror and therefore had limited support not only in Sri Lanka but also in India. So moderation, as symbolised by PLOTE has once again come to the fore. As the man who has seen both sides of the coin, Maheswaran is now emerging as an important force whom both the Sri Lankan and the Indian Governments amply acknowledge.

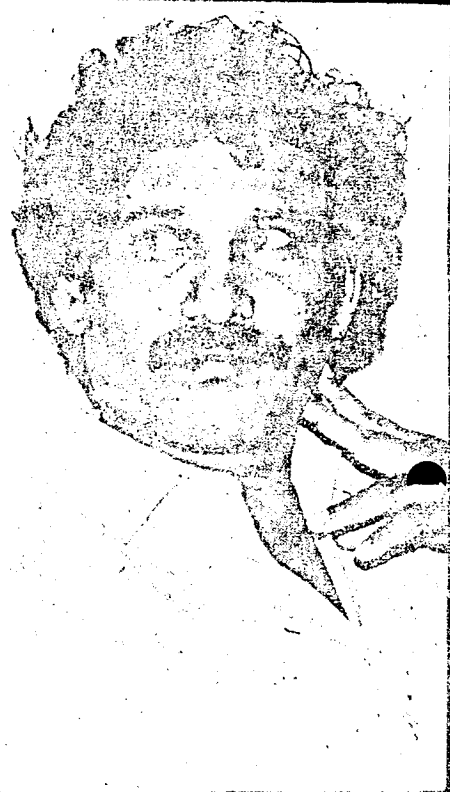
Uma, as he is commonly known, began his political career in 1974 as one of the TULF secretaries attached to Colombo. He recognised the Sri Lankan strategy of taking away land from the Muslim Tamils supposedly for sugarcane cultivation and giving it to the Sinhalese cultivators. He agitated for the return of these lands wrested unfairly from the Muslim Tamils, through non-violent hartals and demonstrations. By 1977, he was convinced that a struggle through non-violent means was not enough. So he joined the Liberation Ti-

gers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) then known as the Tamil new tigers, a group which came into being a year earlier. The Tigers sent him for a six-month guerilla training course in Beirut through the arrangement between Yasser Arafat's PLO and the leader of the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation, Mr Ratnasabhapati. At present the foreign championing of the Tamil cause has been taken up by the popular front for the liberation of Palestine. One important facet of this training included attacking vital installations. This became one of the bones of contention between Mr Prabhakaran and Mr Maheswaran.

However, Mr Maheswaran had to pay the price for opting for the non-violent path. He was jailed on three different occasions and was also hunted, not only by the Sri Lankan Army but also by his erstwhile companions, the Tigers whom he had left to form his own group, PLOTE, in 1980. Another difference of opinion between LTTE and PLOTE was that of the revolutionary role of violence which to the former had become the ultimate end while for the latter it was only a means of achieving a political end. Strangely enough, it was the two opposing ideologies of the TULF and the LTTE which combined to leave him with no other option but to form his own grass-root level party. There was friction between Prabhakaran and Uma

on the issue of supporting the TULF in the formation of the district development councils. LTTE insisted on giving all support to TULF on the issue but Uma found that between 1977-79 no progress was made. The issue of raising a private army also came to nought. Uma's argument was that development should come after a political settlement. By 1980 Uma's disillusionment with the TULF and LTTE was complete with the crowning event of a shoot-out between LTTE and him which resulted in the death of one of his aides in Madras.

Since then Uma has been busy with matters within his group. There are refugee camps in Tamil Nadu to look after besides continuing with the mass contact programme in Sri Lanka and the military training of his men. So far, about 150 of his men have been trained in Beirut and Syria who returned to Lanka to train more men. In Tamil Nadu, though he is a little tired of being dangled as an emotional bait before the Indian Tamils, he continues his effort to mobilise public opinion on a national level. While worried at the economic disintegration of the refugees in India, he is also keen that the Tamil refugees in Europe should not return to Sri Lanka until it is safe for them to do so. In India alone, there are as many as one lakh Tamil refugees who are living on Indian charity alone. They belong to the



Mr Uma Maheswaran

fishermen community and as such cannot return to it in India as the Tamil fishermen in India resent their encroachment. The PLOTE has now adopted a two pronged direction to their struggle. One is to inform the Sinhalese majority that the hostility is directed not against them, but only toward fulfilment of Tamil demands. The other is to expand the membership of PLOTE to include more and more women as they are the worst victims. They not only suffer at the hands of the armed forces but also at the hands of Tamil chauvinism. While more than 60 per cent of the female population is already active in politics, the aim is to train women also in guerilla warfare. As of now, a few women are merely trained to defend themselves.

Uma concluded by saying that even though the Thimpu talks may not yield too many results, the ice has been broken and the ceasefire has succeeded in making the Sinhala people realise that peace was any day better than war. For, when the Lankan Tamils had been displaced economically, the Sinhala people had also suffered. If they can be met halfway and convinced that the Tamil struggle is not against the majority may be they can pressurise the Jayewardene Government into reaching some sort of consensus with the Tamils.

NEWSMAKERS

தமிழ்த் தேசிய ஆவணச் சுவடிகள்

OPINION



The British Colonial Regime, as a measure to entrench their capitalist policies, annexed our mother land Thamil-eelam with Sri Lanka in the year 1833. When independence was promulgated in 1948 they, eventhough promised, failed to deal with the Tamil problem and guarantee their rights in the independent unified state.

Eversince, the successive governments have been doing everything in their power to portray the Tamils as a separate and inferior nationality, forcing them to embrace secession to determine their own fate and dignity.

The People's Liberation Organisation of Thamil-eelam (PLOT) is staunch in the aim of total emancipation and liberation of our people from the fetters of Sinhala chauvinism and optimistic of the establishment of the People's Democratic Republic of Thamil-eelam.

In the struggle for the establishment of Thamil-eelam, PLOT has clearly identified two phases. The first phase is a democratic revolution via National Liberation Struggle; whereas the second phase is the consolidation of the first phase and the continued class struggle leading the establishment of a socialist state.

The PLOT has a clear vision of this strategy. When an oppressed nation fights against its oppressor, the social groups and classes within that nation, jointly form a single class - the "oppressed". Any other class difference at this stage will weaken the struggle. Once the primary oppression is eliminated, the struggle will merge into the second phase in which the traditional class struggle continues, consolidating the gains of the first phase and leading to the establishment of a socialist state.

To guarantee the success of the liberation struggle in both phases the leadership of the struggle will always be taken by the peasants and working class of our people.

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CLOSER TO CIVIL WAR

The second round of peace talks to settle the deeply entrenched communal rift in Sri Lanka collapsed in discord last week. It had been expected that they would provide the framework for a resolution of the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict. Instead they became lost in the cavernous divide that separates the two sides.

Worse still, with the entailed embarrassment of the Indian government, which had sponsored the talks, the best remaining hope of resolution has faded. Now Sri Lanka is not just back to square one but very possibly on the brink of civil war.

The primary responsibility for this outcome rests with the authorities in Colombo. At the June summit between Sri Lanka's President Jayawardene and Mr Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, which laid the foundations for the three-months ceasefire and the Bhutan negotiations, the Sri Lankans appeared to be willing to accept reality and make meaningful concessions to the Tamils. It was understood that these would include a substantial devolution of power. In turn the Indians cajoled the Tamil guerrillas, based in South India, into forsaking their demand for an independent Eelam.

Yet when the two sides met in Thimpu for their first set of talks the Sri Lankan team failed to match that expectation. The peace process was saved by an adjournment and by the time the second round began earlier this month, the Indians had secured reconfirmation from President Jayawardene of his willingness to compromise. Indeed on this occasion the president even went on record claiming that he was confident of "good results". But, back at the negotiation table, his delegation once again had little to offer, and as tensions on the island flared up with the massacre at Vavuniya, the Tamil delegates walked out of the talks.

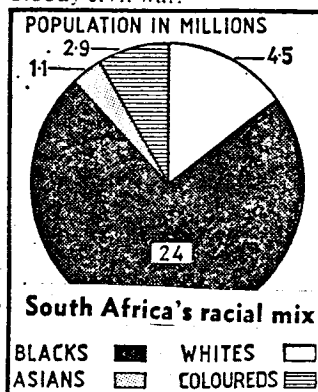
The Tamils, it is believed, would have settled for control of finance, education and law and order. Certainly Mr Rajiv Gandhi had repeatedly and publicly committed himself to supporting no more than the sort of devolution given to the States in India; which he explained, was "considerably less than the American federal system". If President Jayawardene had offered as much Mr Gandhi could have seen to its acceptance. But the Sri Lankan president was unable to defy his own right wing

and the Buddhist clergy, both of whom have refused to countenance any real devolution of power. Consequently, all that was offered was a repackaged version of the district council scheme already rejected by the Tamils in 1984. In the circumstances it was bound to be unacceptable.

For their part the Tamil guerrillas did not assist a solution by formally tabling what they called a "liberation charter". In it they demanded from President Jayawardene recognition of a distinct Tamil nationality, of a Tamil homeland and of their right to self-determination. On the face of it, these claims contradicted any willingness to compromise.

Yet while the peace process was on the Indian government could have reined in Tamil demands. With its collapse India's capacity and perhaps its willingness to do so could now be in doubt. With a fifty-million strong Tamil population of his own to consider, at best wary of Mr Gandhi's pressure tactics, he cannot easily repeat his strategy even if Colombo has a sincere and convincing change of heart. Perhaps this is why he has chosen instead to expel some of the more belligerent guerrilla leaders. It may be a way of putting fresh pressure on the Tamils to make their own concessions, but that is unlikely. Instead, it would suggest that Mr Gandhi is washing his hands of the problem.

This leaves the Sri Lankan government to face the Tamil guerrillas on its own. Already the island is effectively split between an embittered Tamil north and east and an unrelenting Sinhalese south and centre. The present flood of refugees towards the areas where their respective communities dominate will further exacerbate this divide. And with the guerrillas having called off the ceasefire, the possibility advances of protracted and bloody civil war.



News Round-up

JULY 1, 1985.

FAMILY COMMITTED SUICIDE.

A son of Krishnasamy Sangarappillai of Kilinochi was accused of a bicycle theft by a gang of youths and fatally beaten-up by them. Distressed by this Sangarappillai, with his wife and four children committed suicide.

JULY 5, 1985.

JEWELLER ROBBED.

A group of 12 armed youths robbed the Kandiah Jewellery Stores, situated at Kasthuriar Rd., Jaffna.

JULY 6, 1985.

COMRADE UMA BLAME SRI LANKA.

The Secretary General of the People's Liberation Organisation, (PLO) Comrade Uma Maheswaran, in a news interview blamed the Sri Lankan government for violation of the cease-fire agreement. He also stated that he would speak to the Indian Authorities regarding this before the Buttan Conference.

JULY 10, 1985.

SOLDIERS RAPED MARRIED WOMAN.

On the 6th day of July, ten Sri Lankan soldiers attached to the Poonegari Army Camp intruded a house situated near the camp and tried to rape a girl who was in the house. The girl escaped from their clutches and fled to safety. Thereafter the soldiers forced their way into a house in the neighbourhood and raped a married woman in the house. This woman is now admitted to the Jaffna Hospital and receiving treatment.

JULY 11, 1985.

EXPLOSIVES NEAR PRESIDENT'S PALACE

Two explosives one of 50 Kg. and the other of 75 Kg. were found near the Presidential Palace and some important government building respectively. Two youths were arrested in Kotahena and one escaped arrest in connection with this.

COURT-HOUSE DAMAGED BY EXPLOSION.

On the 9th of July, there were two explosions in Jaffna near the Municipal park. The nearby District Court buildings were damaged as a result. On the same day some unidentified persons kidnapped one Theivakumar of Vavuniya who is a son of a wealthy businessman with another youth named Ajit.

SRI LANKAN PROPOSALS REJECTED.

The proposal of delegating powers at Provincial and District levels, submitted by the government at the Buttan Summit, has been rejected by the liberation organisations, saying that they would comment on this within two days time.

JULY 13, 1985.

SINHALA MOBS THREATEN TAMILS.

Sinhalese mobs from the nearby Sinhala villages are entering Mullaitivu with weapons and intimidating and threatening the Tamils living there. They are living with fear of persecution.

JULY 14, 1985.

ARMED STRUGGLE WILL NOT BE ABANDONED.

At the Buttan Summit, the representatives of Thamileelam Liberation Organisations have clearly stated that their participation in the talk would not in any way mean that they have abandoned the demand for Thamileelam or prepared to lay down the arms completely.

CONDITIONS FOR THE RESUMPTION OF TALKS.

The Tamil delegates have laid down the following conditions for the resumption of the adjourned Buttan Conference. They are:-

1. To recognise Sri Lankan Tamils as an independent nation.
2. The traditional home land of the Tamils in Sri Lanka should be identified and accepted.
3. To accept the Tamils as a nation, who are capable of being recognised as an independent state by the world.
4. The civil and fundamental rights to all Tamils who have accepted Sri Lanka as their home land, should be guaranteed.

JULY 15, 1985.COM. UMA SPEAKS OF SUMMIT.

In a news conference summoned in respect of the Buttan Summit, Comrade Uma, the Secretary General of PLOT has stated that we could not expect anything constructive from the present regime in Sri Lanka. The participation in the conference would enable the People's Liberation Organisation of Thamilleelam to be recognised by the world, as a political power in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has reiterated that he would not accept any solution which deprive the rights of the Tamils.

JULY 16, 1985.PLOT'S VIEW OF THE SUMMIT.

The Sri Lankan regime has not come to any political solution so far. We have not accepted anything. However, we have no doubt that any solution that would be put forward by the government will never give us the right of self-determination. Until self-determination for our people is achieved the fight for liberation will continue, so stated a publication of the PLOT.

JULY 19, 1985.PUBLIC DISSATISFIED WITH TALKS.

Several protest marches, strikes and demonstrations were conducted by the people of Mannar on the 17th, in solidarity to display their opposition to Buttan Summit. The participants carried banners with the wordings 'Government is strengthening its military during cease-fire' and 'Govt. is trying to demoralise the Tamils to divert their attention from liberation'.

FINANCE MINISTER'S GENEROSITY.

The Sri Lankan Minister of Finance Mr. Ronnie de Mel has announced that only ten and a quarter million Sinhalese are fighting the Tamil militants who are supported by more than 60 million Tamils around the World and as such he is prepared to release any amount of money to counter them.

JULY 20, 1985.SOLDIERS RAPE TEENAGE.

In Eastern province, a young girl aged 14 of Kathiraveli refugee camp was kidnapped by some soldiers and taken into a nearby Sinhalese owned tile factory and been molested.

TAMILS DRIVEN OUT.

At Pavatkulam in Vavuniya district several Tamil families have left their homes and living in the near by forests in fear of persecution. They have been threatened by armed Sinhala mobs continuously. The Sri Lankan government is actively engaged in evacuating the Tamils and settling Sinhala mobs in the area.

JULY 22, 1985.CEASE-FIRE VIOLATION

In violation of the cease-fire agreement, the army clashed with the freedom fighters at Polikandy Point Pedro and as a result several army personal including an officer were killed.

COMMUTER SHOT DEAD BY ARMY.

At Karainagar, a commuter was shot dead by a convoy of army on patrol when they fired on a group of Thamilleelam Freedom Fighters who were wall-postering.

JULY 23, 1985.MONKS OPINION.

The Buddhist monks have urged the government to gain the support of the people to any solution for the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka.

JULY 26, 1985.REMEMBRANCE OF BLACK JULY.

In remembrance of the Black July 1983, the schools and business establishments in the Northern Region were closed

JULY 30, 1985.THIMBU TALKS.

The Sri Lankan government has denied reports that they were not satisfied with the Thimbu Talks and emphasised that talks would be resumed.

Tamil Stand at Thimpu

Despite a ban on day-to-day press coverage at Thimpu during the talks between the representatives of the Sri Lanka Government and the delegation of the Tamil organisations, the Sri Lanka media reported extensively on the talks. As the Tamil point of view has hardly got adequate notice, Mainstream publishes here two statements made by the Tamil delegates at Thimpu. —Editor

STATEMENT MADE BY THE TAMIL DELEGATION CONSISTING OF LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM (LTTE), TAMIL EELAM LIBERATION ORGANISATION (TELO), EELAM PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY LIBERATION FRONT (EPRIF), EELAM REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION OF STUDENTS (EROS), PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ORGANISATION OF TAMIL EELAM (PLOT) AND TAMIL UNITED LIBERATION FRONT (TULF), ON JULY 12, 1985 AT THIMPU.

HAVING carefully considered a set of proposals put forward by the Leader of the Delegation of the Government of Sri Lanka on July 9 and 10, 1985, we the Members of the Tamil delegation consisting of LTTE, TELO, EPRLF, EROS, PLOT and TULF have unanimously decided to reject these proposals, since they do not even remotely meet the aspirations of our people.

2. These proposals, purporting to deal with the devolution of power directly at the District and indirectly at the Provincial level are none other than the old scheme announced by President Jayawardene on December 14, 1984 at the penultimate stages of the All Party Conference held in Colombo. All sections of the Tamil people strongly condemned and totally rejected the above scheme of President Jayawardene. With callous unconcern for the wave of repression let loose on the Tamil people since December, 1984, the revival of the defunct proposal of President Jayawardene clearly indicates that the Sri Lankan Government has no serious intention of finding a fair and just solution to the Tamil issue by peaceful negotiation.

3. We had resolved to participate at this Conference to discuss primarily the violations by the Sri Lankan

armed forces and the non-observance by the Government of the truce agreement and to demand the implementation of the set of pre-conditions stipulated by us. We wish to express our deep dissatisfaction at the explanation given to us by the Sri Lankan Government Delegation with regard to the above matters. We wish to reiterate that the Sri Lankan armed forces continue military atrocities in several areas in the Eastern Province in breach of the truce agreement. The armed forces are not confined to barracks in these areas but are engaged in search and arrest operations and, thus, harass the civilian population. We also wish to point out that the so-called homeguards who in fact are armed Sinhala civilians continue rampaging in Trincomalee and Muthur areas committing arson and murder. We, therefore, demand that the Government of Sri Lanka should take immediate steps to confine the armed forces to barracks and to disarm the 'homeguards'.

4. We have found these proposals unacceptable but if the Sri Lankan Government through this delegation places any new proposals that come up to the expectations of our people, we shall consider them. (July 12, 1985)

STATEMENT MADE BY THE TAMIL DELEGATION CONSISTING OF PLOT, EPRLF, EROS, LTTE, TELO AND TULF ON THE CONCLUDING DAY OF THE THIMPU TALKS, JULY 13, 1985.

IT is our considered view that any meaningful solution to the national question of the Island must be based on the following four cardinal principles:

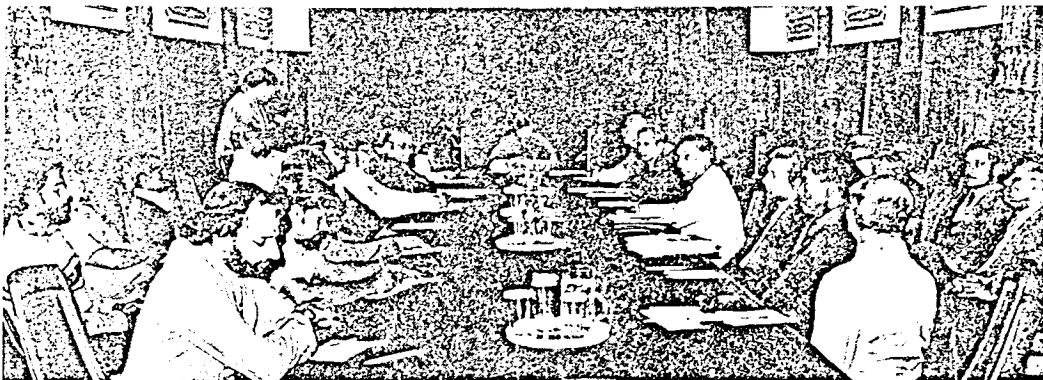
(1) Recognition of the Tamils of Sri Lanka as a distinct nationality;

(2) Recognition of an identified Tamil homeland and the guarantee of its territorial integrity;

(3) Based on the above, recognition of the inalienable right of self-determination of the Tamil nation;

(4) Recognition of the right to full citizenship and other fundamental democratic rights of all Tamils, who look upon the Island as their country.

Different countries have fashioned different systems of Governments to ensure these principles. We have demanded and struggled for an independent Tamil State as the answer to this problem arising out of the denial of those basic rights of our people. The proposals put forward by the Sri Lankan Government Delegation as their solution to this problem is totally unacceptable. Therefore, we have rejected them as stated by us in our statement of July 12, 1985. However, in view of our earnest desire for peace, we are prepared to give consideration to any set of proposals in keeping with the above principles that the Sri Lanka Government might place before us. □ (July 13, 1985)



This was Phase I at Thimpu, capital of Bhutan..... the two delegations, the official and the Tamil, across the table. Among others are H. W. Jayawardene, leader of the official Sri Lankan delegation, A. Amirthalingam, TULF leader, and representatives of the militant Tamil organisations.

'250 killed' claim as Sri Lanka talks fail

ETHNIC violence exploded in Sri Lanka yesterday as talks between the Government and leaders of the Tamil separatist movement collapsed.

Separatist guerrillas reported—and the Government denied—that troops had killed 250 civilians on an island near the town of Trincomalee.

The Eelam National Liberation Front, an alliance of four separatist groups, said in a statement that Sri Lankan soldiers stormed into a village on the island of Sambaal Thivu, six miles from Trincomalee at 3 pm.

"They lined up its residents on a road and gunned them down," the statement said.

A Defence Ministry spokesman in Colombo and Commodore D. Jayasuriya, military co-ordinating officer for the Trincomalee region dismissed the report.

Tamil sources in the Indian city of Madras said soldiers arrived with armed Sinhalese "musclemen" at the villages of Sampantivu and Arankatti, pulled people out of their homes, lined them up and shot them.

1,300 flee town

In Thimpu, capital of Bhutan, Tamil representatives walked out of peace talks accusing the Sri Lanka Government of genocidal intentions.

About 1,300 people fled from the town of Vavuniya where there were conflicting reports of 22 people killed by a guerrilla land mine blast and 100 civilians killed in an army atrocity.

About 1,500 Tamils headed north by train to the guerrilla stronghold of Jaffna while 300 Sinhalese residents rushed south by car, witnesses said.

A Vavuniya hospital official, who asked not to be named, said 22 bodies lay in the mortuary, and about eight people had been admitted in serious condition.—Reuter, AP.

21 killed in Sri Lanka as Tamil families flee

From Vijitha Yapa, Colombo

Twenty-one people have been killed in the Northern province of Sri Lanka in the latest bout of fighting in the troubled area.

An army convoy returning to Vavuniya from Jaffna yesterday escaped being blown up by a landmine when an alert soldier found a wire stretched across the road.

Soon after, the bomb exploded and sources in Vavuniya said Tamil guerrillas and civilians were killed in the battle which followed. Eighteen more people were injured, though no security force casualties have been reported. About 200 Tamil families have fled to Jaffna, the northern city, while about 1,000 Tamil refu-

gees are at a church in Vavuniya.

Among the dead are the wife and parents-in-law of the co-ordinator of the Sarvodaya Movement, a service organization.

Security forces also said a bomb had been discovered near a refugee camp in a Buddhist temple in Vavuniya, where 250 Sinhalese are housed.

In the Eastern province, 37 burnt bodies of Sinhalese fishermen who were abducted last Monday have been found. They were fleeing from their village on the eastern coast near Trincomalee when their lorry was hijacked by Tamil rebels near Kuchacheveli.

Helicopters hound guerrillas

Peasants suffer in fierce air war

In the first of two articles on the struggle for power in El Salvador, John Carlin reports on the fast-expanding air war.

El Salvador's American-supplied Air Force, easily the most powerful in Central America, has doubled in size in the last year, a decisive factor in what is widely perceived to have been the most damaging period for the left-wing guerrillas in nearly six years of civil war.

Salvadorean military chiefs, looking increasingly complacent about the way the war is going, delight in the knowledge that President Reagan plans still more deliveries of helicopters, bombs and combat aircraft.

But the Roman Catholic Church, to which most Salvadoreans belong, is less pleased. More rockets, bombs and machine-gun bullets are raining down on El Salvador, Latin America's smallest country, than ever before.

The Church, backed by international human rights groups, says that it is now not the guerrillas so much as civilians, mostly peasants, who suffer most from the air bombardment.

The formidable aerial threat has forced the guerrillas to break up into small fighting units, abandoning the sort of massed attacks against army positions that gave them so much success in late 1983, the

one point in the war when the government Army seemed likely to collapse.

"The Air Force has obliged us to go on the defensive", a recently-captured guerrilla field commander said in an interview at army headquarters in San Salvador.

"With so many helicopters they can move to any part of the country very quickly. They're on top of you in no time at all."

Other guerrilla leaders, as well as Salvadorean and American military officials, agree that the government forces' new power in the air has in great part compensated for the Army's notorious sluggishness on the ground.

The Air Force has 43 combat "Huey" helicopters of the type used in Vietnam, six helicopter gunships and 21 planes with machine guns, rockets or bombs.

The Church, human rights groups and the guerrillas say the Air Force is more than just a military instrument, they contend that it has become an instrument of political terror, designed to drain the guerrillas of their civilian support in the countryside. The Government denies the claim.

"What the death squads did on the ground, the Air Force now does from the air," says Señorita María Julia Hernández, who runs the human rights



monitoring office at the archbishop's office in San Salvador.

Señorita Hernández gave an example of "the aerial death squads", the case of a 35-year-old peasant woman killed last month by a rocket from an A-37 jet near the disputed town of Suchitoto, 30 miles from San Salvador.

Later the same day, her brother, aged 45, was tracked down and machine-gunned to death by an army helicopter.

The Church says at least 100 civilians were killed in air attacks in the first five months of this year, while the number of refugees streaming into the capital from the war zone has been alarmingly high.

A British Jesuit who works with refugees said the reason people gave, again and again, for fleeing their homes was their fear of the Air Force.

Colonel Carlos Avilés, chief spokesman for the armed forces, asserts that "in the conflict zone there simply don't exist any civilians." His view is that if you live in a guerrilla zone you are there because you choose to support the guerrillas, an argument also put forward by the American Embassy and President Duarte.

But Señorita Hernández points out that the Geneva Convention stipulates that the lives of unarmed civilians must be respected, whether they choose to live in a war zone or not, and independently of which side in the conflict they support.

A WUNDERFUL ASSERTION

Hail, Shankaranna!

What is your opinion about Helder's assertion that the representative of the liberation organisations & T.U.L.F. are not dategote, & recognised by the Tamils?

Probably... he must be thinking that for someone to represent Tamils he must not only be recognised by the Tamils but also by at least 50 per cent Sinhalese as Mahanimsa says the Sinhalese are descendants of Prince Vijaya and his Tamil wife!

