

Before you proceed to place before us the so-called proposal of the Sri Lanka Government, the Tamil delegation wishes to seek clarifications on two matters. Your response to these two issues will determine whether the Talks can continue or not. I, therefore, urge you, Gentlemen, to listen carefully to what we have to say and treat it with utmost seriousness.

The first issue pertains to the legitimacy of the Tamil delegation present at Thimpu. The statement of 12th August 1985 by the leader of the Sri Lankan delegation which was, no doubt, prepared largely for domestic and international consumption, refers to the Tamil delegation as "Six groups representing interests of certain Tamil groups in Sri Lanka." We wish to state emphatically that the six organisations comprising of the Tamil delegation at the Thimpu Talks are not mere negotiators representing a clientele - we are a liberation movement who are the sole legitimate representatives of the Tamils of Eelam or Tamil Eelam. In short, we represent the Tamil Nation. We also wish to point out that a liberation movement does not drop from skies; it grows in response to the widening and deepening of national oppression against a people and is in turn nurtured and sustained by the support and confidence that it enjoys from the people. We the Eelam Liberation Movement who are committed to the liberation of our people from National oppression and repression took to arms, not for the love of arms. We resorted to the force of arms because all force of reason had failed to ~~ENNA~~ convince the successive Sri Lankan Governments of the need to resolve the Tamil National question. Further, under conditions of the widening and deepening of national oppression and the intensification of state terrorism, the demand for a separate state of Eelam became the only logical expression of our proclamation of the inalienable right of self-determination and our armed struggle, the concrete manifestation of this logical expression.

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Gentlemen, your presence at this Table is the direct result of our armed struggle, and your Government's request to talk to us is because it knows fully well that we the six organisations represented here together comprise the sole legitimate representatives of the Tamil people. But it is not enough that these realities be known to just the two of us. The Thimpu talks have acquired an international dimension and it is absolutely essential that the realities become manifest in the peace talks.

On this point, I wish to highlight another practical problem. How is your Government going to explain to the international community that it is seated across a table trying to arrive at a negotiated settlement with a "Group" which does not represent the entire Tamil people or a Tamil nation? How are we going to explain to our people that we are seated across a table with a hostile government which does not recognise us as their sole legitimate representative? This is a practical problem that needs to be resolved if the talks are to continue and the burden of resolving this practical problem lies with you -- because it is a problem that was created by you. In any event, we can pose another reasonable question. What right have you to question our legitimacy when you seek to run away from the will of your people by seeking a referendum? But we do not wish to make an issue of this right now since most governments of the world today which ruled through constitutional dictatorship like your government, do not enjoy the support or confidence of its people.

We now come to the second issue that we ~~xi~~ wish to raise before we proceed. The leader of the Sri Lankan delegation yesterday indicated an eagerness to present certain proposals as regards land settlement. We have pointed out time and again at the first round of talks that we have absolutely no intentions of discussing subjects without coming to an agreement on the overall system of

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Government and unit of devolution of power. The framework that was presented by the Sri Lankan delegation at the first round of talks was duly rejected and the reasons cited. We are, therefore, puzzled as to why the Leader of the Sri Lankan Delegation should persist on presenting proposals as regards a given subject (that is, land settlement) without presenting a comprehensive set of proposals or a political solution with their objective of finding a just and a lasting solution. We, therefore, strongly urge the Sri Lankan Government delegation to stop this dilly-dallying and proceed to presenting your political solution after giving due recognition to the Tamil delegation as the sole legitimate representatives of the Tamil people.

L. KETHEESWARAN

Thimpu (Bhutan)

14 August 1985