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P'RAYA
87 RUE DE COLOMBES
92600 ASNIERES SUR -
SEINE ; FRANCE

TAMIL GUARDIAN

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TAMIL GUARDIAN is published monthly by the Eelam People's Information Centre (EPIC) which is the official news outlet of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF). It publishes news and developments about the struggle of the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka. The EPRLF is a secular democratic political party working for the attainment of the right to self-determination of the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka. It also struggles against chauvinist, authoritarian tendencies and all forms of oppression.

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THOSE GUILTY MEN

Countless civilians - men, women and children - in the North-East of Sri Lanka have been snuffed out of the earth. Innumerable people have been rendered homeless, refugees fleeing their beloved land to distant and alien destinations. Tamil speaking people are streaming out of the North-East leaving their loved ones, homes and belongings. They are even flocking, ironically to Colombo the capital of Sri Lanka, deserting their homes which was once considered a safe haven from the communal holocaust of yesteryears. Many public buildings, hospitals and places of worship have been reduced to rubble paying mute testimony to the havoc. Sri Lankan Forces continue to unleash its atrocities in the guise of fighting LTTE. In a macabre attempt to instill fear among the people, death is celebrated in various forms by the new overlords of Jaffna. It looks as if the entire Tamil nation is preparing itself for a suicide. Parents make panic sale of their possessions to pay for the flights for their children to foreign countries to escape the wrath of the war. Incalculable damage has been done to the psyche of children, the effects of which would continue to affect generations to come.

"Let us get out - somewhere out from here.." seems to be the inescapable thought in the minds of the Tamil speaking people. Family units have been shattered; The Tamil society is disintegrating.

The lives of those remaining in the North-East have been reduced to one of primitive age where only jungle law prevails. They face atrocities of the Sri Lankan Forces and the harassment by the armed youths who claim to "control" the besieged population.

What is this war for ? Who are we fighting for ? What are we fighting for ?

This tragedy could have been averted if only LTTE had not sought to undermine the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord and had instead allowed our people to use the Accord as a spring board for further consolidation of the Tamil position. All this destruction could have been halted if only LTTE had not antagonised the Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) under one pretext or the other. All this mayhem could have been avoided if the IPKF had only left Sri Lanka after ensuring the safety and the security of the people in the North-East.

The direct involvement of India in the Sri Lankan affairs as a guarantor of an agreement particularly in

the context of Sri Lankan intransigence was a historic opportunity for the Tamil speaking people to achieve their political aspirations. But that was not to be. LTTE, assuming the self-appointed role of saviours of Tamils, with its obsession for hegemony over the Tamils and myopic political vision, did everything to sabotage it and led our people into the abyss of political history.

Before Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in July 1987, when brute force of the Sri Lankan Forces sought to wipe out the Northern sector of Vaddamarachi and conducted a similar assault on Jaffna, India sent a signal to Sri Lanka by sending its Air Force to drop food parcels - a symbolic gesture to warn Sri Lanka not to proceed with its programme of genocide of the Tamil speaking people.

During the Pre-July 1987 days, when human rights were trampled upon by Sri Lanka, India exerted its political clout to curb the atrocities by taking the just cause of the Tamil speaking people at all levels of International Forums. During the pre-1987 days, when the human rights violations were perpetrated, all the Human Rights organisations voiced their opposition to the Sri Lankan Government.

What do we have now ? What have we achieved ?

Atrocities and human rights violations against the Tamils are unleashed by the Sri Lankan Government on a larger scale than the pre 1987 days and India has become a silent spectator. International organisations have become apathetic. We are even being denied sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, India.

Never before was sympathy for the hapless Tamils of Sri Lanka absent as it is now. Never before did the Tamils suffer enmasse as they do now.

It is time that the Tamil people ponder: who is responsible for this pitiable plight of the Tamils ? Who is responsible for distancing sympathy and support from India and the International Community ? Who is responsible for sabotaging the steps of EPRLF for Tamil unity, safety, security and consolidation of the North-East Administration ? Who conspired with the Sri Lankan Government to undermine the first Tamil Provincial Government ?

Who pressed for the withdrawal of the IPKF before the implementation of devolution to the Provincial Government ?

The blame for this unfortunate sequence of events which have resulted in the agony that the Tamil speaking people are now facing clearly rests with LTTE.

We the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) had all along, in the larger interests of the people, accepted the Indo-Sri Lanka accord despite its shortcomings, as a foundation through which the national aspirations of the Tamil speaking people could be realised. EPRLF throughout maintained that, in the face of intransigence of the Government and the inability of the opposition parties to prevail upon it left the Tamil speaking people with little choice. In this context India as an immediate neighbour should be the guarantor of any agreement reached with the Sri Lankan Government.

It is because of this objective assessment of reality, EPRLF contested the elections and relentlessly worked toward the dawn of peace and democracy in the North-East. And then at that crucial moment, LTTE leadership along with a misguided section of the Tamils overreached to thwart the process. LTTE and its cohorts scuttled the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord and alienated India, playing into the hands of the Sri Lankan Government.

This was an act of perfidy on the part of these people because they had betrayed their own cause. This was an act of ingratitude on the part of these people because India was the foremost nation that had helped the Tamil cause. This was an act of naivety on the part of these people because they were relying on Premadasa Government which had all along conspired to negate all the good aspects of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord.

LTTE leadership, in the facade of Tamil Nationalism is guilty of this catastrophe. Equally so are some misguided "intellectuals" and "professionals" living in the smugness of the West espousing a form of high voltage Nationalism which defy reason.

We remember with disdain the big "Tamasha" that was enacted in the name of "International Conference" where an assorted group from Indian Polity whose sole purpose was to get a free jaunt to cities of the West and motives merely anti-Rajiv Gandhi and anti-Congress, were lined up masquerading as the protectors of Tamils. This array of people has only pretensions to the Tamil cause and use the Tamil people for their selfish political pursuits. They are minions who are prepared to ride rough shod on the people to achieve personal glory. With their skewed thought process they were taken up by hollow claims of LTTE powers and the conjuring up of visions of victory. They have all severely damaged the Tamil cause.

The time has come for the Tamil people to resolve to consign the miserable leadership of the LTTE to the dust heap of political history; to denounce the so called "intellectuals" and "professionals" who have been supportive of the suicidal policies of LTTE and who have not still realised the gravity of their fault; to reject those who thwarted the EPRLF attempts to bring peace and democracy to the Tamil people; to denounce those who have led us into this quagmire. We, the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Front (EPRLF), are vindicated for our principled stand in favour of the implementation of Indo-Sri Lanka Accord and the necessity for the presence of the IPKF in Sri Lanka until the safety and security of the Tamil speaking people are ensured and an acceptable political structure for them is worked out.

When history compiles the list of guilty men responsible for the recent tragedy of the Tamils, it will include not only the names of LTTE leadership, but also some so called intellectuals, professionals and politicians who have directly or indirectly contributed to the Tamil homeland of North-East of Sri Lanka becoming a wasteland, for loss of thousands of innocent Tamil civilians, and the collapse of the Tamil psyche and morale.

We are confident that the Tamil speaking people will eventually achieve their political goals, and true peace and democracy will return and when that happens it will not be because of those men; it will be in spite of them.

EPIC

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NEWS

TOWARDS UNITED ACTION

The Sri Lankan Government has proposed to distribute Rs75 as festival advance to the plantation workers in the upcountry. It was revealed that this money has been deducted from their wages without their knowledge. This fraudulent action was vehemently condemned by NSSP and EPRLF.

A joint statement issued by 14 trade unions called for a one day token strike on 27th February 1991 demanding their wage rise as promised in this year's budget.

Four political parties CPSI, LSSP, EPRLF, BNP (Bahujana Nidhas Peramuna) convened a meeting on 25th February 1991 at the Communist Party headquarters, Colombo to discuss the North-Eastern situation and the Tamil National Question. They decided to work with mutual understanding in their future political actions.

In an attempt to drive a wedge between the EPRLF and other Tamil Muslim parties the Government supported press described this meeting as an attempt by the EPRLF to solicit support for a federal form of Government.

In a joint communique, six political parties, EPRLF, ENDLF, TELO, TULF, PLOTE and ACTC said that they have decided to send a proposal to set up an interim Political set up in the North-East to look into the refugee rehabilitation and the protection of Tamil speaking people.

In an interview to the "Island" Mr. Premachandran, the Secretary General of EPRLF, has said that both ruling and the opposition parties do not have the political courage to solve the Ethnic Question. He also stressed that the All Party Meeting failed to show any considerable improvement and so far they have been talking only about the North Eastern merger and not about the devolution of power.

INDIAN PROPOSAL.

Mr.N.N.Jha, the Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, put forward a proposal to Sri Lankan Government to stop the war in North Eastern Province and to open a dialogue by setting up an Interim North Eastern Provincial Council with the participation of

all the Tamil Muslim Parties until the North Eastern Provincial election was held again.

Mr.Premachandran, the Secretary General of EPRLF, in an interview with Sunday Observer, Colombo, accused the Government of being only interested in military solution to the Tamil National Question. He pointed out to the Government that for the Tamil speaking people the need of the hour is a political solution and not a military one.

Seven Tamil Political Parties, EPRLF, TULF, PLOTE, TELO, ENDLF, ACTC, and EROS, decided to convene a joint meeting to discuss the Indian High Commissioner's proposal. The Secretary General of EPRLF, on talking about the joint meeting, told that he demanded that the Government should repeal the amendment to the constitution which gave the power to the President to dissolve the Provincial Councils. He added that if this amendment was repealed it would help the Provincial Government to function as before and would encourage all the Tamil Parties which were not taking part in the Provincial Council before, to take part in the Provincial Council.

Mr. Ranjan Vijeratna, the State Minister for Defence, said in his press meet on 28 February 91 that there was no concrete official proposal from the Indian High Commissioner and there was no need for the repeal of the amendment because Governor's rule was already in effect in North and Eastern Provinces. One of the SLMC leaders Mr. Sheik Saladeen declared that his party supported the Indian Proposal.

India has expressed its dissatisfaction on the decision of Sri Lankan Government to evacuate Tamils in large numbers from Vavuniya and Mannar Districts.

NEWS FROM THE SOUTH.

Mr. Anura Bandaranayake, in a meeting held at Kegalle Town Hall, declared that his Party at its policy level has accepted that the Tamil Question should be solved and that the Tamils should be given more autonomy.

Minister Renuga Herath tried to organize a Women's Front consisting of the Women from the families of the Government Officials and the families of the killed

Army Personnels. She intends to organize this front against the Mother's Front which is supported by the Opposition Parties.

The General Secretary of MULF, Mr. Mohideen, in a statement, said that his Party no longer wished to take part in the dialogue with the other Tamil Parties. The Political observers believe that the UNP has pressurized the MULF to take this decision.

The Political Committee of the Muslim Congress has asked its M.P. Mr. Hisbulla (Batticaloa) to resign. This decision of the Muslim Congress was followed by the rumour that Mr. Hisbulla was planning to defect to the UNP.

Mr. Ranil Wikramasingha reported the decision of the Government not to take part in the future meetings of the Committee for the Proceedings of the Parliamentary affairs because the Opposition Parties failed to act according to the decision of the Committee. Political observers believe that this was a counter attack on the Opposition Parties which boycotted the Parliamentary Meetings.

RANJAN'S DEATH AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

On 2 February 1991, state Minister for defence Mr. Ranjan Wijeratna was killed in a car bomb blast when his car was passing through Dhummula junction in Haverlock Road, Colombo. He was killed when he was on his way from his residence to attend a meeting to be held at Gramothaya Sangha Building, Kolpitty. Along with him, his four body guards, a car driver and twenty four public were also killed. Eyewitnesses say that human bodies scattered everywhere in the streets and the roof of a car was hanging on a lamp post nearby. Nobody has claimed responsibility for this bomb blast, so far. However, a possible involvement of JVP, LTTE, or sections within the Government is suspected.

Member of Parliament for Colombo District Mr. Srisena Korai and Mr. D.B. Wijayatunge have been appointed by the President as the General Secretary of UNP and the State Minister for Defence respectively.

The newly appointed Minister of State for Defence said that Government would continue the anti-terrorist activities as scheduled. The minister also said that

the best way to solve the problems and to achieve peace would be only through negotiations for which the doors were always open.

SPLIT WITHIN LTTE

The people who fled Amparai District reported that the LTTE leadership in Amparai District has split into two groups. Two LTTE cadres Lal and Mathan who refused to accept the leadership of the new leader Mr. Ram, together with sixty more cadres are now functioning as a separate group.

On 22 February 91 there was a gun battle between the two factions and as a consequence, LTTE's former regional leader Mr. Castro committed suicide by swallowing the cyanide capsule.

NORTH-EAST KILLINGS:

On 24 February 91, Broker Nagalingam Panjalingam from Urumpirai, was found dead mysteriously near Kandasamy Temple in Vauniya.

Following the military actions in Vaharai Batticaloa District, the Army has set up two more camps in Panichankerni and Vaharai.

On 27 February 91, three bodies were found in a field near Valaiyiravu Bridge, in Puthur, Batticaloa District. They were identified as Saravanamuthu Anatharasa of Navatkadu, Somasundaram Ketharaniyam of Unnichai and Arulampalam Gurusamy of Kothiyavala who were missing since 24 February 91. Another man, known as Mathiah, who was also missing since 24 February 91 has not yet been located.

It is reported that two people were killed during an aerial bombardment which started on 26 February 91 in Paravippanjan in Kilinochi District.

On the evening of 26 February 91, Chelliah Amarasingam, Aged 48 and a father of six children and a fisherman, was shot dead by unidentified persons in Arayampathay in Batticaloa District.

On 28 February 91, Puvaneswari Ravindran of Ward No 1, Mulliavalai, a woman aged 20, was severely injured when she was caught in the middle of the clash

between LTTE and the Army in Thandikkulam area in Vavuniya. She was admitted to Vavuniya hospital but later died when she was taken to Anuradhapura hospital. She had been married for only three months. It is reported that about 7500 people have gone missing during the clashes between LTTE and the Government Troops since June 90. The report also says that the details of these missing are being collected. During the aerial bombardment on 27 and 28 February 91, in Kilinochi District ten people in Vaddakachi, twelve people including a co-operative society security in Paravipanjan and one man in the junction of Karradippokku were killed. During this attack, more than ten people were injured.

LTTE released eleven muslim traders who were kept by LTTE for seven months as hostages. Selladurai Periasori, K.Sarvanandaraja, Khristopherpillai Babu and M.Paramanathan were shot dead by LTTE on 3 March 91 in an area between Batticaloa and Kalmunai because they had refused to support LTTE. Three more women and two men were also shot dead by LTTE in Irakkarai, Trincomallee District for the same season.

During an aerial attack on the evening of 7 March 91, a woman was killed and fifteen more people were injured.

During a clash between LTTE and PLOTE on 9 March 91 at about 10.30 A.M. in Thandikkulam area in Vavuniya, three PLOTE members Ariyadas, Deepan of Trincomallee, and Nathan of Nochchikkottei Vavuniya District were killed and two more PLOTE members Suthan and Thilaku were injured. During this clash, four public, Iyampillai Erambamuthi(30) of Depot Road, Kilinochchi, Subramaniam (48) of Karunkerni, Karainagar, Thangavelu(41) of Omanthai Malaiaddikkulam and Muthu Theivendram (43) of Urelu, had suffered serious injuries and were admitted to the Anuradhapura hospital. It is believed that there would also have been casualties on LTTE's side during this clash which lasted for about half an hour.

The STF had arrested 92 people and taken to the camps during a search in Pandiruppu area in Batticaloa District on 8th March 1991. Later 82 people were released when the citizen committee intervened. However ten more people are still in custody for interrogation.

NEWS AND VIEWS

NEWS: The Government said that it was prepared to talk with LTTE but wanted its leader Prabakharan to attend. Lawrence Thilakar of LTTE responded from Paris "No way, our leader won't be involved. The people won't allow it. Actually our main concern is Prabakharan's safety."

VIEWS: Bombarded by Sri Lankan Air Forces, harassed by the armed youths, suffering the life of primitive age, the embattled Tamil speaking people in the North-East of Sri Lanka are going through their grimest hour in their history. Yet, LTTE declares: "Actually our main concern is Prabakharan's safety" and as usual under the presumptuous claim "The people will not allow it."

Are the Tamil speaking people to be sacrificed for the sake of Prabakharan's safety? Should not the main concern be Tamil speaking people's safety and a political solution in the interest of the people at large? How can people in the North-East express what they really want when only jungle law prevails?

NEWS: Many civilians were killed when LTTE opened fire at a check point established by PLOT in Vavuniya district. The civilians were on their way to Colombo leaving their homes in the embattled North of Sri Lanka.

VIEWS: The suffering inflicted on innocent individuals in the tussle for power between rival organisations is deplorable. Those killed, left their homes to escape their harrowing experiences only to lose their lives, not at the hands of the Sri Lankan Forces but by the very people who claim to have taken up arms only to protect them.

What a tragic irony! When will this indiscriminate and cold blooded killing, this vicious and wanton orgy of blood end?

WITHOUT COMMENT:

An interview by RITA SEBASTIAN

"LTTE has a strong hold on Tamil psyche whether by fear or affection, I don't know. But as long as it is there, there can be no lasting solution" : Anura

COLOMBO, Feb 15th Mr Anura Bandaranaike was appointed chief organiser of the island's main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) last fortnight. In appointing the 42-year-old Anura Bandaranaike, who enjoys the distinction of being the son of two former prime ministers, the party leadership seems to have finally bowed to the popular will of "Young Turks" in the party who see Anura as the legitimate heir to the throne.

The much-coveted post in the SLFP, the only credible alternative to the ruling United National Party (UNP), lands Anura with a formidable task ahead. Over the years he has gained political maturity and refrains from mouthing empty rhetoric. Excerpts of an interview in which Mr Bandaranaike answers questions on such controversial issues like North-East merger and the resolving of the national question.

Question: The SLFP has not been very clear on how it would resolve the Tamil question. Could you spell it out?

Answer: In the Democratic Party Alliance (DPA) manifesto during the presidential election, we stated our position. We have come a fair distance from where we had been earlier. Now the party has accepted as a matter of principle that the Tamil problem has to be settled, that a greater deal of autonomy has to be given, and that you cannot take a communal line on the issue. Within these parameters we are trying to work out how best to solve the problem.

I believe my mother has been talking to various Tamil groups based in Colombo. She has also been talking to other anti-UNP Left and Sinhala parties. So you see a totally non-communal approach from the SLFP. That is very vital. We are prepared to find a political solution and go beyond what we have gone so far to that end.

Q: The LTTE claims to be the sole representative of the Tamils. But the other Tamil groups believe the LTTE can be politically marginalised by offering an acceptable package to the Tamil people to resolve the Tamil question. And secondly do you think the LTTE can be defeated militarily?

A: The Tamil political parties outside the LTTE believe that if they work out a solution with the UNP and the SLFP, it can be offered as a basis for a solution to the Tamil speaking people, a viable alternative to what the LTTE is offering them. As to how far that is going to be effective with the Tamil people I don't know. However, it is a laudable attempt.

But come to the second part of the question, you see as long as the LTTE has guns, is present in the North-East and remain as powerful as they are, they will obstruct any solution that does not meet with their demands. So we are caught up in this syndrome that as long as the LTTE is powerful militarily, they will reject all peace moves. That is evident by their past performance.

My personal view is that as they refuse to negotiate with the rest of the political parties, and stick adamantly to what they believe in, there is no alternative but to defeat them militarily. What arises from that is, how are you going to defeat them militarily. I feel the LTTE cannot be totally wiped out. To equate the LTTE with JVP, in my mind, is futile.

As far as the LTTE is concerned, if they are militarily marginalised to some extent, and they are convinced that they cannot pursue their objectives through the gun, then they would be forced to the negotiating table. That is the most desirable thing. I still believe the LTTE has a strong hold on the Tamil psyche, whether by fear or affection, I don't know. But as long as it is there, there can be no lasting solution.

Q: What is the SLFP's position on the North-East merger?

A: Its position on the merger is what it always was. There should be a referendum. If the people in the East want to link up with the North then by all means let them do so. But the Sinhalese and the majority of the Muslims don't want merger. So one has to find a

way out of it. A referendum as stipulated under the provisions of the Indo-Lanka accord is the best answer. For the present, we are totally against forced merger.

Q: What do you think of the power-sharing arrangements in the North-East provinces agreed on by the Tamil groups and some of the Muslim parties?

A: That is a demand made by the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress. I don't know how much of the Muslim community the SLMC carries with it. The Muslim of the UNP and the SLFP, as far as I know are totally against the agreement worked out by the Tamil parties and the SLMC. The UNP and SLFP Muslims together I think might be a bit more than the support commanded by the SLMC in the Eastern province. As for the Tamil parties, how far do they represent, the Tamil people. But if they can work out something, it might help in formulating a solution outside the LTTE.

Q: If a consensus is reached on the Tamil-Muslim package to be presented to the all party conference will the SLFP go along with it?

A: The Government adopts a wait-and see policy with regard to the SLFP to see how much the SLFP is going to compromise itself, so that they can do one better than that. We must try and move out of that and find a lasting solution to the Tamil question. We don't trust the Government, so we have to wait and see how earnest the Government is to find a solution. We will not sabotage any move to find a lasting solution, but we are wary of rushing into areas where earlier we learnt bad lessons.

(Courtesy INDIAN EXPRESS 16th February 1991)

A POINT OF VIEW:

By Keerthy Ranjan Shah.

In Colombo things are moving fast. Various political forces are jockeying for a place from which they can manipulate the unfolding events. With the sudden demise of the strong man Ranjan Wijeratne one thing is emerging very clear, the hawks of the ruling UNP regime backed by the top brass of the military are being pushed to the back seat. The others who have a different approach to tackle the LTTE, are making noises about another round of talks and privately accusing the army of sending wrong signals.

On the other hand LTTE gradually lost ground in the Eastern Province and are unable to come out of the political stalemate. The inability of the LTTE to neither force a military solution nor take a political initiative is becoming more and more evident. For almost one year the suffering of the people continues unabated.

With mutual need to come out of this stalemate, the scene is set for another round of talks. Political observers here believe that something will be expected in place before the June 1991 Aid Consortium meeting scheduled to be held in Paris.

It is reliably learnt that the Government is getting ready to make public the secret "agreement" it had reached with the LTTE leadership before June 1990, as a new Government proposal aimed at a "political" solution to the ethnic crisis. This package is said to have envisage almost total control of the LTTE in the Northern Province and thus effectively delink the merger of North-Eastern Province.

However one other factor which will have influence over the events is the inner party feud within the ruling UNP and who takes the upperhand. It was very much evident in the notorious UNP primary elections to choose candidates for the Local Government. Mr. Ganeshalingam is said to be a compromise candidate for the prestigious position of the Mayor of Colombo. There are also talks of bringing back Mr. Gamini Dissanayake as the speaker of the Parliament because the present Speaker has identified with the democratic demands of the parliamentary opposition.