

Statement by L. Ketheshwaran of EPRLF on the 12th July 1985 at Thimpu talks.

We are a liberation movement which was compelled to resort to the force of arms because all force of reason had failed to convince the successive Sri Lankan Governments in the past. Further, under conditions of national oppression and the intensification of state terrorism and genocide against our people, the demand for a separate state of Eelam became the only logical expression of the oppressed Tamil people. Our armed struggle is the manifestation of that logical expression. However, if the Sri Lankan Government gives any indication of a return to sanity and reason, then, our people would only be too willing to consider any proposals for a peaceful solution; this is because they are a peace-loving people.

The proposals of the Sri Lankan Government placed before us at this table by its delegation unfortunately gives absolutely no indication of a return to sanity and reason. Firstly, the leader of the Sri Lankan delegation has very clearly stated that the proposals placed before us are based on the position taken by the Sri Lankan Government in the final stages of the All Party Conference. We wish to state categorically that we do not recognise the All Party Conference for the following reasons:

Firstly, as the TULF had already stated immediately after the collapse of the APC, the APC proposals do not come anywhere close to the regional autonomy that would be acceptable to the Tamil people. Secondly, we the liberation movement charge the Sri Lankan neo-fascist State of having used the APC as a smoke-screen to pursue a military solution to the Tamil national question.

Further, the proposals placed before us at this table do not in any way give an indication that the Sri Lankan Government has understood the genesis of the 'eelam' national question. The reasons are as follows:

- (1) The proposal does not recognise the notion of a homeland of the Tamil peoples'. Instead, it takes the District as a basic unit for any devolution of power, which is totally unacceptable.

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(2) The proposal does not recognise the right of self-determination of either the Tamil people or the Sinhala people by seeking to avoid a referendum or a plebiscite on the proposals. The Government seeks to ignore the will of the people by insisting on a simple amendment to the Constitution which would require a two-thirds majority in parliament. In this process the Sri Lankan Government seeks to impose its constitutional dictatorship on the peoples of Sri Lanka.

I do not wish to go any further but merely wish to emphasise the point that the burden of presenting a rational and a just solution to the problem lies entirely with the Sri Lankan State, since we hold it responsible for the present state of affairs. In the name of peace, we wish to make an earnest request to the Sri Lankan Government delegation to come back with ~~the~~ proposals worthy of our consideration.

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