

## Text des Friedensvertrags zwischen Rajiv Gandhi und J.R. Jayawardene - Indo-srilankisches Übereinkommen zur Wiederherstellung von Frieden und Normalität in Sri Lanka -

Der Präsident der demokratischen sozialistischen Republik von Sri Lanka, seine Exzellenz Mr. J.R. Jayawardene und der Premierminister der Republik Indien, seine Exzellenz Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, trafen sich am 29. Juli 1987 in Colombo, und haben, da sie der Pflege, der Vertiefung und Kräftigung der traditionellen Freundschaft zwischen Sri Lanka und Indien äußerste Wichtigkeit beimessen, und die zwingende Notwendigkeit erkannt haben, das ethnische Problem und die sich daraus ergebenden gewalttätigen Auseinandersetzungen zu beenden, sowie die Sicherheit, das Wohlergehen und den Fortschritt der Menschen aller ethnischen Gemeinschaften in Sri Lanka zu garantieren, am heutigen Tage die folgende Übereinkunft erzielt:

### Im Zusammenhang,

1.1. mit dem Wunsch, die Einheit, Souveränität und territoriale Integrität Sri Lankas zu bewahren,

1.2. mit der Feststellung, daß Sri Lanka eine "multi-ethnische, multi-linguale und pluralistische Gesellschaft" ist, die unter anderem aus Singalesen, Tamilen, Moslems (Moors) und Burghers besteht,

1.3. anerkennend, daß jede ethnische Gruppe eine eigene kulturelle und linguistische Identität besitzt, die sorgfältig bewahrt werden muß,

1.4. ebenso anerkennend, daß die Nord- und Ostprovinz historisch gesehen der Lebensraum des srilankischen tamilisch-sprechenden Volkes ist, das in diesen Gebieten zu allen Zeiten mit anderen ethnischen Gruppen zusammengelebt hat,

1.5. und im Bewußtsein der Notwendigkeit, die Kräfte der Einheit, der Souveränität und territorialen Integrität Sri Lankas zu stärken, und den Charakter einer multi-ethnischen, multi-lingualen und multi-religiösen pluralistischen Gesellschaft zu bewahren, in der alle Bürger in Gleichheit, Sicherheit und Harmonie leben und glücklich sein können und ihre Vorstellung verwirklichen können,

2. wird erklärt:

2.1. Die Regierung von Sri Lanka schlägt vor, daß es aneinandergrenzenden Provinzen gestattet sein möge, sich zusammenzuschließen und eine eigene Verwaltungseinheit zu bilden oder sich auch durch ein Referendum zu trennen, wie es der Nord- und Ostprovinz erlaubt sein soll, wie unten beschrieben wird,

2.2. Während der Zeit, die als Interimszeit angesehen werden soll, d.h. vom Zeitpunkt der Wahlen zum Provinzrat an, wie sie in Artikel 2.8. genauer beschrieben werden, bis zum Tag des Referendums, wie es näher im Artikel 2.3. beschrieben ist, werden die Nord- und die Ostprovinz, so wie sie zur Zeit bestehen, eine eigene Verwaltungseinheit mit einem gewählten Provinzrat bilden. Diese Verwaltungseinheit soll einen Gouverneur, einen Chiefminister und einen Ministerrat haben.

2.3. Am oder vor dem 31. Dezember 1988 wird ein Referendum abgehalten, das der Bevölkerung der Ostprovinz die Möglichkeit gibt, zu entscheiden, ob:

a) die Ostprovinz mit der Nordprovinz als Verwaltungseinheit verbunden bleiben soll und weiterhin, wie in Artikel 2.2. beschrieben, gemeinsam mit der Nordprovinz regiert werden soll, oder ob

b) die Ostprovinz eine eigene Verwaltungseinheit bilden soll, mit einem eigenen Gouverneur, einem Chiefminister und einem Ministerrat.

Es steht im Ermessen des Präsidenten, das Referendum zu verschieben.

2.4. Alle Personen, die wegen ethnischer Auseinandersetzungen oder aus anderen Gründen ihren Wohnort verlassen mußten, haben Stimmrecht bei diesem Referendum. Die notwendigen Bedingungen zur Rückkehr in die Gebiete, die sie verlassen mußten, werden geschaffen.

2.5. Wenn das Referendum stattfindet, wird es von einem Komitee unter Vorsitz des Obersten Richters, einem Mitglied, das durch den Präsidenten beauftragt und von der Regierung Sri Lankas vorgeschlagen wird, und einem weiteren Mitglied, das ebenfalls vom Präsidenten beauftragt und von den Vertretern der tamilisch-sprechenden Bevölkerung der Ostprovinz vorgeschlagen wird, überwacht.

2.6. Die einfache Mehrheit genügt, um dieses Referendum zu entscheiden.

2.7. Vor dem Referendum ist es gestattet, Versammlungen durchzuführen und auf andere Art und Weise zu werben, soweit dies mit den Gesetzen des Landes zu vereinbaren ist.

2.8. Wahlen zu den Provinzräten werden innerhalb der nächsten drei Monate abgehalten, in jedem Fall vor



dem 31. Dezember 1987. Für die Wahlen zu den Provinzräten in der Nord- und Ostprovinz werden indische Beobachter eingeladen.

2.9. Der Notstand wird in der Nord- und Ostprovinz am 15.8. aufgehoben. Innerhalb von 48 Stunden nach der Unterzeichnung dieses Vertrages werden die Feindseligkeiten auf der gesamten Insel eingestellt. Alle Waffen, die jetzt im Besitz von militanten Gruppen sind, werden einem vereinbarten Vorgehen entsprechend an offizielle Stellen übergeben, die von der Regierung Sri Lankas benannt werden. Nach dem Einstellen der Feindseligkeiten und der Waffenübergabe werden die Armee sowie andere Sicherheitskräfte in die Armeelager zurückgezogen, die am 25. Mai 1987 bestanden. Der Prozeß der Waffenübergabe und die Rückführung des Sicherheitspersonals in die Armeelager soll innerhalb von 72 Stunden nach dem Einstellen der Feindseligkeiten beendet sein.

2.10. Die Regierung von Sri Lanka wird zur Durchführung der Gesetze und zur Aufrechterhaltung der Sicherheit in der Nord- und Ostprovinz dieselben Regierungs-Organisationen und Mechanismen benutzen wie in den übrigen Landesteilen.

2.11. Der Präsident von Sri Lanka gewährt politischen und anderen Gefangenen, die jetzt unter dem Gesetz zur Verhinderung des Terrorismus (PTA, Prevention of terrorism act, d.Red.) oder anderen Notstandsgesetzen inhaftiert sind, sowie Kämpfern und anderen Personen, die nach diesen Gesetzen angeklagt, belastet oder überführt worden sind, eine Generalamnestie. Die Regierung von Sri Lanka wird sich besonders bemühen, militante Jugendliche mit dem Ziel zu rehabilitieren, sie wieder in das gesellschaftliche Leben zu integrieren. Indien wird dabei behilflich sein.

2.12. Die Regierung von Sri Lanka wird die obengenannten Bestimmungen akzeptieren und sich daran halten und erwartet von anderen, es ihr gleichzutun.

2.13. Wenn die Grundbedingungen für die Lösungen akzeptiert werden, wird die Regierung von Sri Lanka die relevanten Vorschläge ohne weiteren Verzug in die Tat umsetzen.

2.14. Die Regierung von Indien wird die Bestimmungen unterschreiben, garantieren und bei ihrem Umsetzen mitarbeiten.

2.15. Diese Vorschläge sind abhängig von der Annahme der Vorschläge, die vom 4.5.86 bis zum 19.12.1986 verhandelt wurden. Probleme, die während dieser Verhandlungen nicht vollständig ausgehandelt wurden, sollen nun innerhalb von sechs Wochen nach der Unterzeichnung dieses Vertrags zwischen Indien und Sri Lanka geklärt werden. Diese Vorschläge sind auch für die Regierung von Indien bindend, die der Regierung von Sri Lanka direkt dabei helfen wird,

sie in die Tat umzusetzen.

2.16. Diese Vorschläge sind für die Regierung von Indien bindend, die folgende Schritte unternehmen wird, falls irgendeine militante Gruppe, die in Sri Lanka tätig ist, dieses Grundgerüst an Schlichtungsvorschlägen nicht akzeptiert, d.h.

a) Indien wird alles Notwendige unternehmen, um sicherzustellen, daß indisches Territorium nicht für Aktivitäten genutzt wird, die der Einheit, Integrität und Sicherheit Sri Lankas schaden.

b) Die indische Küstenwache wird mit der srilankanischen Marine zusammenarbeiten, um zu verhindern, daß Aktivitäten militanter Tamilen Sri Lanka verletzen.

c) Im Falle, daß die Regierung von Sri Lanka die Regierung von Indien um militärische Hilfe bittet, um die Vereinbarungen in die Tat umzusetzen, wird die indische Regierung kooperieren, indem sie der srilankanischen Regierung solche Hilfe gewährt, wenn und wann diese es wünscht.

d) Die indische Regierung wird die Rückführung indischer Staatsangehöriger, die in Sri Lanka wohnen, ebenso durchführen, wie die Rückführung srilankanischer Flüchtlinge aus Tamil Nadu.

e) Die srilankanische Regierung und die indische Regierung werden zusammen für die Sicherheit und körperliche Unversehrtheit aller Volksgruppen, die in der Nord- und Ostprovinz leben, Sorge tragen.

2.17. Die Regierung von Sri Lanka sichert allen Wählern aus allen Volksgruppen der Nord- und Ostprovinz freie, faire und gleichberechtigte Teilnahme an den Wahlen zu, die in diesem Vertrag bezeichnet sind. Die indische Regierung wird in dieser Hinsicht völlig mit der srilankanischen Regierung zusammenarbeiten.

2.18. Die offizielle Sprache Sri Lankas soll Sinhala sein. Tamil und Englisch werden auch offizielle Sprachen sein.

3. Dieser Vertrag und der dazugehörige Anhang sollen nach der Unterzeichnung in Kraft treten.

Zum Zeugnis dessen haben wir unsere Unterschrift (set our hands, d.Red.) und Siegel gesetzt, hier in Colombo, Sri Lanka, an diesem, dem neunundzwanzigsten Juli des Jahres eintausendneunhundertsechzig in zweifacher Ausfertigung, beide Texte sind gleichermaßen authentisch.

Junius Richard Jayewardene  
President of the Democratic  
Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Rajiv Gandhi  
Prime Minister of the  
Republic of India



## Anhang zur Übereinkunft:

1. Seine Exzellenz, der Premierminister von Indien und seine Exzellenz, der Präsident von Sri Lanka kommen überein, daß das Referendum, welches in Abschnitt (2) angesprochen wird, von einem Vertreter der indischen Wahlkommission beobachtet werden wird, der von seiner Exzellenz, dem Präsident von Sri Lanka eingeladen werden wird.

2. Gleichfalls stimmen beide Staatsoberhäupter darin überein, daß die Wahlen zum Provinzrat, wie in Abschnitt 2.8 erwähnt, durch einen Vertreter der indischen Regierung, der durch den Präsident von Sri Lanka eingeladen wird, beobachtet werden.

3. Seine Exzellenz, der Präsident von Sri Lanka, stimmt zu, daß die "Home Guards" aufgelöst und andere paramilitärischen Kräfte aus der Ost- und Nordprovinz zurückgezogen werden, um Bedingungen herzustellen, die zu fairen Provinzratwahlen führen. Der Präsident soll nach seinem Ermessen jene paramilitärischen Kräfte auflösen, die wegen der ethnischen Auseinandersetzungen innerhalb der regulären Sicherheitskräfte entstanden sind.

4. Der Premierminister Indiens und der Präsident von Sri Lanka stimmen überein, daß die militanten Tamilen ihre Waffen an offizielle Stellen abgeben sollen, die vom Präsidenten Sri Lankas benannt werden. Die Waffenübergabe soll in Anwesenheit je eines hochrangigen Vertreters des indischen und des srilankanischen Roten Kreuzes stattfinden.

5. Der Premierminister von Indien und der Präsident von Sri Lanka stimmen überein, daß eine gemeinsame indisch-srilankanische Beobachtergruppe, bestehend aus qualifizierten Vertretern der indischen und der srilankanischen Regierung, die Einstellung der Feindseligkeiten überwachen soll.

6. Der Premierminister von Indien und der Präsident von Sri Lanka stimmen auch darin überein, daß entsprechend den Abschnitten 2.14. und 2.16.(c) des Abkommens, ein Kontingent an indischen Friedenstruppen durch den Präsidenten von Sri Lanka eingeladen werden kann, um die Einstellung der Feindseligkeiten zu garantieren und zu stärken, wenn es für notwendig gehalten wird.

## Weiterhin ist folgender Briefwechsel Bestandteil des Vertrages:

Präsident von Sri Lanka  
29. Juli 1987

Exzellenz,  
Bitte nehmen Sie Bezug auf ihren Brief, datiert vom 29. Juli 1987, der sich wie folgt liest:

Exzellenz,  
Angesichts der seit mehr als zweitausend Jahren

zwischen unseren beiden Ländern bestehenden Freundschaft, und in Anerkennung der Bedeutung, diese traditionelle Freundschaft weiter zu pflegen, ist es unabdingbar, daß beide - Sri Lanka sowie Indien - die Entscheidung bekräftigen, ihre jeweiligen Territorien nicht für Aktivitäten zur Verfügung zu stellen, die die Einheit, die territoriale Integrität und die Sicherheit des jeweils anderen Landes bedrohen.

2. In diesem Sinne haben Sie während unserer Gespräche eingewilligt, auf einige Interessen Indiens Rücksicht zu nehmen:

I) Ihre Exzellenz und ich werden zu einem gemeinsamen Verständnis in Bezug auf die Relevanz und die Beschäftigung von ausländischem Militär- und Geheimdienstpersonal kommen, um sicherzustellen, daß solche Präsenz nicht die indisch-srilankanischen Beziehungen beeinträchtigt.

II) Trincomalee oder andere Häfen in Sri Lanka werden nicht zur militärischen Nutzung an ein anderes Land freigegeben, wenn dies die Interessen Indiens verletzt.

III) Die Arbeiten zur Wiederaufnahme und Betreuung der Öl-Tankanlagen in Trincomalee werden gemeinsam (joint venture, d.Red.) von Indien und Sri Lanka durchgeführt.

IV) Die zwischen Sri Lanka und ausländischen Radiogesellschaften abgeschlossenen Übereinkünfte werden überdacht um sicherzustellen, daß die von ihnen aufgebauten Einrichtungen in Sri Lanka ausschließlich zivilen und nicht militärischen oder geheimdienstlichen Zielen dienen.

3. Im selben Geiste wird Indien:

I) alle srilankanischen Staatsangehörigen deportieren, die in terroristische Aktivitäten verwickelt sind oder Separatismus oder Sezession propagieren.

II) Ausbildungsmöglichkeiten und militärische Lieferungen für die Sicherheitskräfte Sri Lankas zur Verfügung stellen.

4. Indien und Sri Lanka sind übereingekommen, durch Konsultationen die beide Länder betreffenden Angelegenheiten, wie sie in Artikel 1 festgeschrieben sind, zu überdenken und besonders die Umsetzung der anderen, in diesem Brief enthaltenen Angelegenheiten zu überwachen.

5. Bitte bestätigen Sie, Exzellenz, daß oben Erwähntes die zwischen uns erzielte Vereinbarung richtig wiedergibt.

Bitte nehmen Sie meine Hochachtung zur Kenntnis.  
Rajiv Gandhi

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Die Linksparteien Sri Lankas ("Communist Party of Sri Lanka", "Lanka Sama Samaja Party", "Nava Sama Samaja Party") sowie die liberale "Sri Lanka Mahajana Party" begrüßen - trotz unterschiedlicher Bewertung - das Friedensabkommen. Nachfolgend veröffentlichen wir ein Interview mit dem Präsidenten der "Communist Party", Peter Kueneman. Stellvertretend für die "Tamil United Liberation Front" beantwortet der ehemalige Abgeordnete der Partei, Neelan Tiruchelvam, Fragen eines Journalisten. Beide Interviews erschienen in "Mainstream", New Delhi, 19. und 26.9.87.

**Mainstream:** There is a very strong opposition to the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement in Sri Lanka. How do you view this opposition?

**Peter Kueneman:** Opponents of the accord probably never read the document. The (Sri Lankan) Government's handling of the publicity has been very ineffectual.

Many think that Eelam has been conceded. On the Sinhalese side, there are hard-core racists and they are for giving as little as you can. They think that too much has been given. That is really the vociferous crowd.

Then there is the crowd that is not against the accord but is against Jayewardene and the Government.

**Mainstream:** They belong to the SLFP?

**Kueneman:** Well, I think the greater part of the people who are shouting are more against the Government than against the accord. And they feel that any stick is alright to beat the Government with. That is because the Government is very much disliked and with good reason.

So this crowd feels that the accord might strengthen the Government politically and make it more difficult to defeat it. So they don't like the accord. They are not the ones, who are actively and aggressively against it. But they don't like it.

**Mainstream:** The SLFP men would come under this category of people?

**Kueneman:** The SLFP supporters. Both groups are in the SLFP but the majority in the SLFP would be of that type.

**Mainstream:** And the hard-core racists are represented by the JVP?

**Kueneman:** The JVP is very much hard-core racist. And they are a lot of individual people. They are not organised all over. They work in different organisations. The JVP is a sort of our equivalent to the RSS.

**Mainstream:** With a Marxist or Maoist garb?

**Kueneman:** No, no, pure Neo-Fascist. And they use certain anti-capitalist slogans. But nowadays it doesn't even talk about Marxism.

Then one advantage is that the Left - the mainstream Left, the lousy Left (laughs), the ultra-Left -

all forms of the Left parties and groups, in spite of criticism of the accord on this point or that point, are basically for the accord. And a majority of the Left-oriented trade unions, I think all, except the SLFP trade unions, are in favour of the accord.

Even in our party, we have certain detailed reservations about the accord, but the accord is very important and in the overall context we support it.

**Mainstream:** Why is the Left supporting it?

**Kueneman:** Well, the Left is supporting it for various reasons. First, it brings peace. We were in a situation where there would have been total chaos and total destruction.

Secondly, this ethnic civil war had submerged all other questions, that is, questions about prices, wages, class questions, democracy and so on. One of the consequences of the war has been a big attack on democracy including trade union rights, political rights, arrests of people, not merely Tamil militants (of suspected terrorist leanings) but even the Left people.

They are supporting it as they feel that it is a reasonable and viable compromise on which the country can develop.

The third reason is that there would be a very considerable decentralisation of authority and that would strengthen the democratic process in this country. That is one of the main reasons.

The fourth is that its cutting edge is in favour of Non-Alignment, an independent foreign policy and particularly against American imperialist aggressions and intrusions here. That is say, the Voice of America, the Trincomalee question, Mossad, Israel, the connection with the Pakistan military training - all of these have been a big infringement of national independence and are pushing us into the imperialist camp and particularly its intrigues in the region.

Next is that it restores the traditional good-neighbourly relations with India, which is very crucial for us. It is not possible for us to embark, where we are geographically, on a policy of animosity with India, on a collision course with India, on a confrontation with India. That is what we were driven to. You know we had come to a position of almost military clashes. That's reversed. At least, the course

has been reversed. That's a very good thing and we are in favour of it.

The whole concept of regional cooperation, which started with SAARC, will be strengthened by this type of accord.

**Mainstream:** Is it also not a fact that it is the Left which, has always upheld that Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious, secular country?

**Kueneman:** Always.

**Mainstream:** But the very acceptance of that position...

**Kueneman:** That has always been the position. Whatever the other differences among the Left, there was no difference on that question.

**Mainstream:** What I am wanting to know is whether the very acceptance of that fact by Jayewardene takes the wind out of the sail of the argument that Sri Lanka is a Sinhalese-Buddhist country?

**Kueneman:** Well, they don't so much talk about Sri Lanka being a Buddhist country, they talk much more about Sri Lanka being a Sinhalese country; and therefore a Buddhist country.

**Mainstream:** But won't JRJ have to contend with these contradictions?

**Kueneman:** Indeed, Because these are very strong there inside his own party, inside his own Government.

And you know, another reason why the Left welcome the accord is that this is a very good example of how neighbouring countries can settle conflict situations through dialogue and without outside interference. Because this is one of the big problems now in the sub-continent. Particularly the American interference in Pakistan is one of the main reasons for the, shall I say, confrontationist positions that exist between your country and Pakistan. In the same way, we are finding such situations in the Middle East. This is a good example that it is possible for big countries and small countries to settle differences through negotiations, through some method other than clash. And of course, that is very important in today's world.

**Mainstream:** Now what is the perspective of implementing the accord? A lot of problems are there. How do you visualise the process of implementation?

**Kueneman:** The first and most important thing is to let people know what the accord is.

**Mainstream:** You mean to say that it has not been publicised?

**Kueneman:** It has been published but people must realise it in their lives, not as a technical thing. Because you see, if you look at the people campaigning against the accord they are not on specifics. Now, for instance, some of our differences are obvious. We don't want to play this up at the moment because that's not the main question. We don't think that English should be made a national language. We feel that only Sinhalese and Tamil that should be made national languages.

**Mainstream:** What is the reason behind this?

**Kueneman:** Because, you see, in a small country like ours these two languages are quite enough to be official languages.

**Mainstream:** And there is no need for any link language?

**Kueneman:** The link language can be one of these. Both can be learnt. What's the difficulty in learning each other's language? In actual fact, a number of Sinhalese people do speak Tamil and vice versa.

English was the language of the colonial administration. We are not against the English language. It's a very good language with a rich culture. We feel that it should be taught in schools. But why make it the official language? Because that will benefit only a small class of elite, who for years have been trying to keep down the national language.

However, that is not the main question as long as Tamil is made the national language.

Secondly, we don't think that these para-military organisations like home guards and private armies should be abolished only in the north and the east. We would like to see them abolished right throughout the whole country. But the accord only speaks about the north and the east in this regard.

Then the accord does not mention two other matters. One is the abolition of the Prevention of Terrorism Act under which a lot of anti-democratic things have been done. That Act is still there. It was introduced on the grounds of terrorism. Now on the ground that terrorism has been stopped, it should not exist. But it continues to exist.

The third is that the question of the virtual expulsion of Tamils from Parliament through the Sixth Amendment of the Constitution is not mentioned in the accord. That should also be abolished.

These are, of course, detailed questions. But whatever its drawbacks on this or that matter, the overall position of the accord is positive. It should be supported. In fact, it's very positive. And I think its geo-political positiveness is even more important than its domestic character.

**Mainstream:** We will come to that a bit later. But how do you view the problems of implementation?

**Kueneman:** Well, as I said the first is to place it before the people.

Secondly, I think that gradually people are beginning to realise that normalcy has been restored. Trains are now running to Jaffna, food is coming, buses are running. You open the papers now and there is no report of so many people killed here and so many people killed there, shot here and shot there. And bit by bit, people have realised how very close to the brink of disaster we were.

**Mainstream:** Politically and economically?

**Kueneman:** And militarily. Economically now the Government admits that if the war had gone on for another six months we would have collapsed absolutely. We had come to a position where even the Government's friends were refusing to keep up their aid when 25 per cent of our revenue was being spent on just killing each other. We were in this position when prices were going up and democratic rights were being curtailed.

And if we had persisted with this attempt to have a military solution, it would have bound to have led to clashes with India and those clashes would not have been only verbal.

**Mainstream:** Even if clashes did not take place



peace could not have been restored.

Kueneman: No, peace would not have been restored.

Mainstream: And by opting for a military offensive, the alienation of the Sri Lankan Tamils would have been complete?

Kueneman: Oh yes, I don't know whether that has been preached. They have been alienated no doubt. And they haven't been brought back yet into the mainstream. It had reached a saturation point as a result of the previous policies of the Government.

Who would have benefited from such a clash? One of the big issues now is to hold this *International UN Conference on turning the Indian Ocean into a Peace Zone*. What would have been the position if the biggest country in this region — India — and one of the two originators of this proposal (to turn the Indian Ocean into a Peace Zone) — Sri Lanka — fought each other? It would have looked ridiculous before the rest of the world.

Mainstream: But here JRJ is taking a different stand on the question of holding of the Conference. At least sometime back he was.

Kueneman: No, no, now he is for the Conference. He is more for the Conference than your Government.

Because at the last meeting of the IOPZ, when it was proposed that the Conference be postponed till 1990 instead of 1988, our people were not in favour of it.

Perhaps, a staggered Conference is taking place now, but I think that our position was better than yours (laughs). I don't know what the reason is. Maybe JRJ wants to have it next year, which is the election year.

As for the implementation of the accord, there are certain legalistic things that are to take place. Devolution of power. The Council must be set up. But those are all in the accord. Release of detenus, etc., are taking place.

Mainstream: But release of detenus means only the Tamil detenus, not the Sinhalese detenus, who were arrested for sympathising with the Tamils?

Kueneman: The accord speaks of the Tamil detenus. But they were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Mainstream: Not the Sinhalese?

Kueneman: No, the Sinhalese — a lot of them — were arrested under the Emergency. These were the people, who were carrying out trade union activity. But what I was saying, the Government is trying to link the release of the Tamil detenus with the handing over of arms.

Nevertheless, although there are snags basically the implementation is going forward.

There are troubles in both the Sinhalese and Tamil camps. There are troubles within the militant camp itself because some of the small groups are frightened that if they hand over their arms and the LTTE doesn't, then the LTTE will finish them up. However, the LTTE is reported to have substantially laid down arms. It is for JRJ now to release the detenus.

Mainstream: But what about the referendum that is to take place in the eastern province after an year

on the question of linkage with the north? Don't you think that if the people in the eastern province reject linkage we are back to square one?

Kueneman: Not necessarily. The eastern province is not a Tamil province, it is a mixed province. There is no problem with regard to Jaffna, where ninety-nine per cent are Tamils. Tamils in the eastern province are in fact a minority. So, the democratic principle must be observed.

Mainstream: How do you look upon the role, efficacy and duration of stay of the Indian peace-keeping force in Sri Lanka?

Kueneman: I hope they will do their job and leave as early as possible. They have become a necessary part of the accord.

Mainstream: Do you accept the view which is being propagated by certain sections of Sinhalese opinion that the presence of these troops amounts to bartering away, to some extent of Sri Lanka's sovereignty?

Kueneman: Not necessarily. This was done at the request of the Sri Lankan Government. After all, who invited India? India didn't force itself into this. India was first invited here as a mediator and then as a negotiator. By whom? By our Government. And Indians were running from here to there to solve this question.

Both sides felt that there must be some guarantee for the accord to be observed. Especially, when both sides don't speak to each other.

I think that now it is difficult to maintain their positions purely on the constitutional and internal administrative arrangements. They are, thus, concentrating on anti-Indian propaganda and particularly the Americans are really interested in that. So they will like to play up the anti-Indian confrontationist idea.

Mainstream: As it was earlier?

Kueneman: Well, this is a continuation of the same thing.

Mainstream: You mean, now they are backing the Sinhalese chauvinists?

Kueneman: Oh! yes.

Mainstream: At the same time, JRJ happens to be very close to the Americans.

Kueneman: Yes, he is.

Mainstream: And he is claiming that when he approached the Americans, the Americans were quite reluctant to offer him help...

Kueneman: That's what he says.

Mainstream: And asked him to go to India.

Kueneman: Maybe that's true. But now the Americans are coming in with loans and money and so on and so forth because they are frightened that India's influence in this area would grow and for the first time, if you read the American papers, *Wall Street Journal*, etc., they are all saying that America made a big mistake in Sri Lanka; You have pushed Jayewardene into India's hands and, therefore, into the Soviet hands. That is the sort of line they are plugging.

Mainstream: That is ridiculous.

Kueneman: I am not talking of the rights or wrongs — so they are saying.

Mainstream: But could he (JRJ) have taken this

step (of signing the accord) without consulting the Americans?

Kueneman: No, you see, the Americans became irrelevant in one sense. Because the Americans did not do what he wanted.

Mainstream: Or should we look at it in a different way that Sri Lanka was not that relevant to them (the Americans) strategically as say the Gulf is, Pakistan is; and in the context of their (the Americans') retention of the bases in the Philippines, Trincomalee also lost that importance, which was accorded to it earlier in the US strategy?

Kueneman: You see, the Trincomalee question came up for several reasons. First, the Americans were not sure of the situation in the Philippines. They didn't know what's going to happen there after Marcos' departure. And so they wanted to fall back. And we had in Trincomalee a reasonably good fall-back position. Secondly, Diego Garcia is too small and there are too many people on it. In their calculations, Trinco was excellent in every way, as they were very keen at one stage. But later on, they were less keen when the situation in the Philippines stabilised in their favour, and when they got permission to come in and out of the harbour to refuel, etc. They didn't get R & R. They are coming to any harbour now.

Mainstream: Not only Trincomalee?

Kueneman: No, no, any port. Thirdly, they were really interested in R & R because all they wanted in Trincomalee was the oil tank — a big store of it — because otherwise you have to go back to the Philippines.

Mainstream: But that has not been given.

Kueneman: No, no, it's specifically not been given under the accord.

They made two attempts. Fortunately our party played a big role in this — we exposed all these things and it became not only a local scandal, but an international scandal.

Mainstream: You mean the holding of the...

Kueneman: Dummy companies.

Mainstream: The Singapore companies.

Kueneman: Not really Singapore, they were all Washington companies (laughs). They were tiny small companies. But our pursuance of the operation scotched it.

Mainstream: It was done in India as well.

Kueneman: Well, all over the world. But most of the exposure was done by us on the spot. Because we got access to that. And it became such a hot potato.

Mainstream: You wanted that the oil tank farm should be given to India?

Kueneman: We didn't want that it should be given to America. We were not in favour of giving it to anybody. But India at least is a friendly country.

Mainstream: Now coming back to Sinhalese opinion, what is the position of the vast sanctions? Have they been swayed by the chauvinists' propaganda or are they remaining passive onlookers?

Kueneman: I would say confusion is greatest. Dislike and distrust of the Government is a very big factor. And secondly, there is confusion about what has actually happened.

Mainstream: Do you feel that it is the JVP, which is exploiting the distrust of the Government?

Kueneman: You see, the JVP is the striking force. They are not a very big force. But there are strong hoodlum elements in it.

Mainstream: But they hold a lot of influence?

Kueneman: No, what has happened is that when other forces, which really have influence gather, these fellows jump in front and say: 'Come along, let's explode this, let's explode that.' And in the actual destruction that took place, the leadership was given by the JVP though the mass support for it was provided by two other forces, as I said, one by some SLFP forces although the SLFP itself played a very small part in any destruction of that type; they dissociated themselves from it. And then the destruction in Colombo was largely done by the supporters of the Prime Minister (R. Premadasa).

Mainstream: Would you say there is a kind of unholy alliance between the JVP, the SLFP and a section of the NUNP?

Kueneman: No, I don't think that as far as the SLFP is concerned there is any alliance with the JVP. No. But the JVP has penetrated into the SLFP. A lot of penetration has taken place. Mrs Bandaranaike hates the guts of the JVP although her son speaks mostly the language of the JVP despite being an extreme Right-winger.

Mainstream: You mean Anura?

Kueneman: Yes. Mrs Bandaranaike had particular experience of the JVP. JVP is a Neo-Fascist organisation. It preaches total racism, not just dislike of Tamils and Indians.

Mainstream: Quite different from the LTTE?

Kueneman: They are very similar in many ways. The both have this highly nationalist ideology.

Mainstream: You mean, national-chauvinist?

Kueneman: Yes, national-chauvinist. They both have militaristic organisations based on the command systems. There is no democratic functioning at all.

Mainstream: Do they have links with the Americans?

Kueneman: They have links with somebody. I cannot prove that (links with Americans) but if you ask me to deny, I will not deny it.

Mainstream: But when you say that vast sections of Sinhalese opinion are confused there must be a substantial section that is silently supporting the accord?

Kueneman: Of course.

Mainstream: Apart from the Left?

Kueneman: Well, most of the business people are for it because they say that everything was falling to pieces. They are traders, tourists, people, who were expecting money from banks, small industrialists. That sort of persons.

Mainstream: But there was also a section which was thriving due to the war.

Kueneman: That section is opposed to it. Particularly the people involved in selling arms, the commission agents of arms.

Mainstream: What would be their percentage?

Kueneman: Oh, they are a very small section of people, but at the same time very powerful having



access to the Government. These people very much dislike the accord.

**Mainstream:** They were connected with the security forces also, the foreign military advisers, Mossad, etc?

**Kueneman:** Yes, some of them were. *Well, Mossad and SAS and this crowd would be totally against this.*

**Mainstream:** But the accord does not specifically say that Mossad and SAS would be expelled from Sri Lanka. It only wants their activities to be conducted in such a way as not to be prejudicial to India's interests.

**Kueneman:** *The accord is between two Governments. It must deal with their relations. It cannot deal with the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. The kicking out of Mossad is not India's business. It is our business. We should do it. Irrespective of even if India doesn't like it (laughs) we should do it.*

But what India is legitimately interested is that Sri Lanka should not become a base for encirclement of and intrigue against India threatening its strategic interests. That's quite reasonable. *And we are also probably interested that they should not be used for any purpose against it. But internally I don't think it is for India to tell us whether this or that group should be here. That would amount to interference.*

**Mainstream:** Do you think that it was proper on the part of India to play this kind of an active role, actively involved in the negotiations?

**Kueneman:** I could see of no other way. He (JRJ) could not have succeeded without taking Jaffna by storm. To take Jaffna by storm would have meant a terrific bloody business in which not only the Tamils, but also the Sri Lankan troops would have been killed. The military advisers of the Government were also not for this. First of all, because of the slaughter that would take place and secondly, because of the international reaction to this. So it became clear that he couldn't go any further.

**Mainstream:** But he tried his best?

**Kueneman:** Yes, he went as far as he could but he couldn't do anything more.

**Mainstream:** Is it true that the Pakistanis were egging him on?

**Kueneman:** I don't know who was egging because these fellows — Mossad, Pakistan — would do so to sell more arms. And even our own Security Minister was anxious to go down in history as the glorious vanquisher of the enemy.

**Mainstream:** When that failed....

**Kueneman:** Well, there were two other factors. The economic situation: where we had come to an absolute break-down point. *And as Ronnie de Mel, the Finance Minister, has now admitted, in another six months we would have collapsed.*

**Mainstream:** Collapse means what?

**Kueneman:** Collapse in the sense that he said he would have had to cut wages, retire lots of people, close down schools. No Government collapses like that. But because of all these, politically the Government's whole position would have collapsed. And economically we couldn't have a stable budget for the last four years. Good or bad we chopped and changed all the time. *Because when 25 per cent*

*of your revenue is spent on just killing, what do you expect?*

**Mainstream:** But what is the economy of this Government? Isn't it a borrowed economy?

**Kueneman:** Yes, of course it is a borrowed economy. That's the next point. He (Ronnie de Mel) came back with the message that there won't be any more money unless you settle the conflict because the foreign investors don't like this kind of climate, they want a quieter climate for investment. And these people had been promising a settlement but nothing happened. So Jayewardene was told that there won't be any more aid. Some of them like the Scandinavians pulled out altogether and stopped aid. The others said: nothing further. So all these things compelled Jayewardene. He had no other option. Either he would have had to get a massive military victory irrespective of the slaughter or carnage....

**Mainstream:** Was he also facing the prospect of a military coup in the event of failure of the military offensive and the continuance of the war?

**Kueneman:** Well, I don't know. The military brasshats....

**Mainstream:** General Ranatunge?

**Kueneman:** Not only he, but some of the others also were saying that *it was a unwinnable war.*

**Mainstream:** Was it only Lalith Athulathmudali, who wanted them to go on with the offensive?

**Kueneman:** No, there were also other forces, who liked to continue it.

**Mainstream:** But JRJ's stability was also at stake?

**Kueneman:** His stability has always been at stake. He has always been a tight-rope walker.

**Mainstream:** But was he facing threats from outside or inside the party?

**Kueneman:** Well, there was a section which was telling him that you must solve the problem one way or the other. Because elections are coming and we can't go to the people with wage-cuts, increased prices and so on and so forth. But the real crisis came with the hardline military option fellows — they were happy about the situation, they didn't raise these problems — when things began to reverse, the problems arose.

Apart from the Left, there was growing within Sri Lanka a big demand for a political solution — *stop the fight, have a political solution.*

**Mainstream:** Basically the Sinhalese people are peace loving. Probably that's the reason.

**Kueneman:** Yes. We haven't fought many wars (laughs).

**Mainstream:** But don't you think that it would have been much better if both the Sinhalese and the Tamil populace were given the chance to be prepared for this kind of an accord? It came very suddenly, the whole process of last-stage negotiations lasted barely four-five days.

**Kueneman:** It would have been so much the better if you could have prepared the ground. But preparing the ground would also have meant unleashing the dogs of war who were taken by surprise. Prime Minister Premadasa was asked two days before the signing of the accord about the

proposed agreement in Japan and he said he didn't know.

**Mainstream:** Even Lalith didn't know.

**Kueneman:** But in the speeches of the two leaders, even your Prime Minister, there is a reference to the fact that suddenly they saw the opportunity which suddenly arose.

**Mainstream:** Why was it so?

**Kueneman:** That is connected to their relations.

**Mainstream:** According to you, it was not related to the airdropping?

**Kueneman:** Well, that's one of the reasons.

**Mainstream:** There were the internal compulsions of Rajiv Gandhi?

**Kueneman:** Yes, he had those internal compulsions. Secondly, it is alright dropping some food packets. But then you have to make up your mind about sending in your troops. And that's big step.

**Mainstream:** That signal was given?

**Kueneman:** *The signal was given and the signal was understood.* Jayewardene got the message alright. So what was to be done?

And we were told, I have no authentic information on this, that the biggest problem was that the Government was frightened of losing air superiority. And if the Tamil militants by some means got hold of the ground-to-air missiles, those Rambo stuff slung on the shoulders, and knocked down helicopters, then all chances of capturing Jaffna would have gone because that could have been possible only with superior air power. Both sides realised that they were fast coming to a situation where the only way out would have been a clash and that clash would not have been in either's interest.

**Mainstream:** You don't think that the Sri Lankan Government is buying time to launch some other kind of offensive? That is, to embark on something while trying to placate the Sinhalese chauvinists to undermine the accord?

**Kueneman:** But what can they do?

**Mainstream:** You mean, their options are also quite limited.

**Kueneman:** Yes, exactly. Now you see, there is no need for a military offensive because the other side is handing over arms.

**Mainstream:** But the prospect of Indian troops staying on in Sri Lanka for a considerable length of time....

**Kueneman:** That would also be a constraint on the sort of thing that you envisage. That is to say, if you start that sort of thing, then the Indians will stay on here for a longer period. *And they are not a joke army, they are a serious army.*

**Mainstream:** Given the pressures from the Sinhalese side, it appears that although the Left had supported the accord it is not waging a consistent campaign in favour of the accord.

**Kueneman:** Now the Left will start.

**Mainstream:** You are planning something?

**Kueneman:** *After our party's statement, we are calling for implementation of the accord.* We regard that one of the main questions at present is to have the accord effectively implemented.

**Mainstream:** You also have understanding with

some of the Tamil groups?

**Kueneman:** We have no connections with the LTTE. Some of the others have spoken to us from time to time. *We have no formal connections, but we know them. We also know the TULF quite well.*

**Mainstream:** How do you assess the TULF?

**Kueneman:** Well, one should take away the guns from the situation and when it comes to vote they are not a negligible force in the north.

**Mainstream:** And democratic in their tradition?

**Kueneman:** They have no other tradition. They don't know anything other than political manoeuvre.

**Mainstream:** Definitely better than the LTTE?

**Kueneman:** More realistic. They don't have to hire lawyers to represent them!

**Mainstream:** What about organisations like the EPRLF and PLOT? Have they links with you?

**Kueneman:** Well, they are interesting organisations. They are very small organisations and to some extent they are a bit intellectual. But what is interesting is that they are now seeing that the socialist solution is the only solution of the nationality problem. They are looking at it theoretically but, let's put it, that's an advance.

Secondly, they are saying that it is necessary to have some kind of connection with the Left movement on the Sinhalese issue, although upto now they have had connections with the most cockeyed and idiotic ultra-Left groups.

**Mainstream:** Who are themselves splintered?

**Kueneman:** *Not even splinters, fragmented splinters (laughs).* You, know, groups consisting of about ten or twelve people, that sort of thing. Most of them are now in Jayewardene's jails.

**Mainstream:** But are they now having links with you?

**Kueneman:** I don't know what their present position is because we haven't had discussions with them recently. But there is room for dialogue.

**Mainstream:** You want to have dialogue for what? To launch a joint campaign for implementation of the accord?

**Kueneman:** Including that. Even with the TULF.

**Mainstream:** But when are you planning to launch this campaign?

**Kueneman:** *We are already at it now.*

**Mainstream:** Among the trade unions?

**Kueneman:** We start with the trade unions, we start with the political parties. I spoke at a meeting on this subject yesterday.

**Mainstream:** You have not able to draw any support from any section of the SLEP? You were very close to the SLEP, you were in alliance, also in Government with them?

**Kueneman:** That was ten years ago (laughs).

**Mainstream:** But still there may be individuals in the SLEP?

**Kueneman:** No, no, we have contacts with the SLEP.

**Mainstream:** Are they confused?

**Kueneman:** *Inside the SLEP there's another particular group.* They are not confused, they are very realistic unlike Mrs Bandaranaike.

They are not very strong, but they take this position: now that Jayewardene has got himself in trouble, let him face the music; don't go and complicate this.

**Mainstream:** By what?

**Kueneman:** The idea is: try to keep the matter open so that if we come to power we'll have to deal with it. Don't settle it now.

**Mainstream:** That means fight against the accord?

**Kueneman:** *Just denounce it but don't necessarily do anything against it.* Don't keep the thing going, protest, etc, or say that we would have handled it differently, we would have



settled it differently. But don't say that we are going to reject this accord.

The most important election here is the Presidential Election in 1989. It's going to be the first election (since the last Presidential Election in 1982). Twenty-five to twenty-six per cent — say one-quarter of the voters — are Tamils. So you've got to start with a solid block against you. And though Jayewardene formerly wouldn't have got a single Tamil vote, now he will get a substantial number of Tamil votes. If you don't get the Tamils, you cannot be sure of the Muslims because they are divided. And the Sinhalese are also divided. So the chances of becoming a President (laughs) are out of the question. And even in the Parliamentary Elections unless you can get 70 to 80 per cent of the Sinhalese votes you will not get a majority under the present electoral system. And even if you, by any chance, happen to form a Government you can't scrap this accord, because this accord is not a law. Secondly, it's open-ended, it's not for the time being. And then nobody's going to have a two-thirds majority. All the laws to be implemented must have a two-thirds majority. And everybody agrees that under the present circumstances nobody will get a two-thirds majority. So whatever you do, you won't get anywhere. What happens then? You displease the Tamils and get nothing in return. So, they argue, let Jayewardene handle all this, and attack him on other matters. Say what you must but don't try to put forward the view that even we would change it, so runs the argument.

Well, there's a division in the SLFP.

Mainstream: On this question?

Kueneman: Yes. Most of them like to see that they can get big support among their people. But I think Mrs Bandaranaike is more shrewd. She is not going the way of this idiot son of hers. She has not quite made up her mind as to what line she should take. She took a very strong line in her letter to Amrithalingam. But she is taking the position that when we come to power we will re-negotiate this with India, so as to remove the portions in the accord, which are undesirable. She takes that line mostly in relation to the Tamils, not in relation to the Sinhalese. On the Sinhalese, she is taking the stand that this is a national betrayal, that India is imposing its foreign policy on Sri Lanka.

Mainstream: But when you launch a campaign you'll have to fight this trend?

Kueneman: Oh yes, definitely.

When you talk about launching a campaign, you must know that it is difficult to launch a campaign now for two reasons. One, all meetings are banned. The Government is not allowing mass meetings.

Mainstream: How then would you seek to begin the campaign?

Kueneman: Well, we are doing small meetings.

And then there's censorship. Of course, we are not so much affected by the censorship, but still we are. Of course, our campaigns are mainly preparing the base, going to the trade unions, going to our own people, going to outsiders, having seminars and so on and so forth. It'll take a long time because you are meeting with deep-rooted prejudices very often.

Mainstream: And they are quite strong among the workers?

Kueneman: Well, our workers here are first generation workers mostly. They come from rural areas bringing all their prejudices.

But Ronnie de Mel says, 'Because of peace we can give you a wage increase.' And he is promising a wage increase of rupees two to three hundreds.

Mainstream: This will be helpful?

Kueneman: You see, all these are practical questions. It is not the theoretical arguments but the impact of the accord on the lives of the ordinary people that is important.

There is no other way. And the Sinhalese people would have to be convinced about this.

Look at the history of this country. Both the Sinhalese and the Tamils have lived here for more than two thousand years. This big argument about who came first, who had more — I am not going into that. But all the fights that the two have had started much less than a hundred years ago (laughs).

Mainstream: So you are more or less convinced that you would be able to overcome this division?

Kueneman: Well, I don't know, but we'll have to battle

against it. What is notable is that the trends are moving more and more in the positive direction. I think bit by bit the situation is improving.

First of all, the JVP violence has put off a lot of people. The behaviour of the Indian troops is also going to be an important matter.

Mainstream: That leads us to the next question: How do you look upon the part played by India in the recent events in Sri Lanka? What is your assessment of India's role?

Kueneman: On the whole positive. We in fact came out against the airdropping (of Indian relief supplies in and around Jaffna on June 4). Apart from all this question of sovereignty and so on — not a big question of sovereignty was involved — but nevertheless, it was a very risky gamble if it had not paid off. Fortunately it paid off. If it hadn't what would have been the consequences — for India, for us, for the region? Who would have benefited? Only the Americans.

Mainstream: What is the reason behind Americans not wasting any time to welcome the accord?

Kueneman: You have to study very carefully what the Americans said. What is it in the accord that they favoured? They welcomed the internal ethnic settlement. But the other part of the accord — the geo-political part of the accord — they didn't welcome. Now they have got extremely worried about it. And there is debate starting in the United States about this question: whether they let this thing go by default and pushed Sri Lanka into the Indo-Soviet orbit.

Mainstream: But given the orientation of Jayewardene, how could he really accept this geo-political part?

Kueneman: I don't know about Jayewardene, but one thing is that in the last few days they (the Americans) are rushing with a lot of aid.

Mainstream: To Sri Lanka?

Kueneman: Yes. And they are pushing the Japanese, also. That is to counter the Indian influence. Maybe it is their position that whether he likes it or not, Jayewardene is committed on a line that he cannot go in a particular way and in any case nobody knows for how long Jayewardene is going to last. But Sri Lanka has got committed on a line which goes in a particular direction.

Mainstream: Which is very positive?

Kueneman: Oh yes, it really strengthens non-alignment.

Mainstream: It is also being said that the Soviets took quite sometime before coming out in support of the accord and welcoming it, compared to the Americans.

Kueneman: The Soviets have always taken the position quite correctly that this ethnic question is an internal affair of Sri Lanka. And they absolutely refused to take sides one way or the other except to say that they hoped the problem would be settled peacefully.

Secondly, they were concerned over the situation that developed between India and Sri Lanka. When they found that the accord met these things, they welcomed it.

There is the domestic aspect, the regional aspect, and the international aspect of the accord. You have to see it in its totality. Regionally and internationally it is, of course, very very positive. Internally it is a compromise on basic principles. In that compromise no one is going to be totally satisfied. It is a compromise. It's a realistic compromise, a viable compromise, a necessary compromise.

We have always taken the position, our party, that our basic line is an united Sri Lanka with regional autonomy for the Tamils. But we are ready to support partial solutions.

Mainstream: Which means that you are accepting federalism?

Kueneman: No, no, regional autonomy.

Mainstream: How is it possible in the context of the unitary nature of the Sri Lankan Constitution?

Kueneman: You can have an unitary constitution and you can have a region. One or two regions.

The political parties' conference did come up with some such proposals. They didn't go as far as we would have liked but nevertheless, we said that any agreement on those lines we would support.

Peaceful settlement is the most important question — not using military means — either state terrorism or (individual) terrorism.

Mainstream: Do you think that on the whole the accord would strengthen the democratic and Left forces in Sri Lanka?

Kueneman: It must. If you bring power from a highly centralised bureaucracy very close to the people, that very strengthening of democracy strengthens the Left.

It's one of the contradictions of Jayewardene that he has been forced to do this. □

## INTERVIEW WITH NEELAN THIRUCHELVAM

Mainstream: You have all along adopted a very balanced position in relation to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. How would you dissect various parts of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement?

Neelan Thiruchelvam: Well, as far as the Accord in many respects represents a threshold in the struggle of the Tamils for equality and justice within Sri Lanka, there is no turning back from this threshold. There are many elements in the Accord which caused concern to the Tamil groups. But I think the Accord must be assessed in terms of its totality and durability.

There are two dimensions to the Accord. First, the impact of the Accord on what has been described as the national question in Sri Lanka. Here one has both the conceptual element in the Accord and a programmatic element. The conceptual aspect of the Accord relates both to the recognition that Sri Lanka is a plural society, where the Tamils have a distinct identity. This is significant particularly in the context of the preferred position that the Constitution of Sri Lanka has accorded to Sinhalese as a language and Buddhism as a faith. This acknowledgement that Sri Lanka has been a plural society is a conceptually significant one.

Conceptually there is also a reference to the Tamil demand for recognition of the Northern and the Eastern provinces as being their traditional homeland. Now the Accord only obliquely deals with this aspect by acknowledging the historical habitation of the Tamil-speaking people in the North and the East. This falls short of an acceptance of the homeland, but nonetheless it is a recognition of the ethnic preponderance historically in the Northern and the Eastern provinces. So in these two aspects conceptually the Accord is significant.

In terms of the political demands of the Tamils in relation to power-sharing we have a scheme of devolution envisaged in the July-August 1986 discussions. In recognising the Accord there are residual issues in that scheme relating to the lists of subjects, scope of devolution, residual powers of the Centre in relation to the provinces which are being worked out in the current negotiations.

But in regard to the devolution what is significant in the Accord is the acknowledgement of the Northern and the Eastern provinces as being a single region to which power would be devolved. This has been the most intractable question on which the entire negotiating process was stalled in the earlier discussions.

The December 19, 1986 proposals envisaged the possibility of a merger of the Northern and the redefined Eastern provinces through a referendum. The procedure envisaged in the December 19 proposals was in fact reversed in the Accord: you would have a merged unit in the first phase of the Provincial Council exercise and then a referendum would be held before the expiry of one year. This acknowledgement of a single linguistic region as a unit of devolution is an important aspect of the accord. No doubt it is qualified by the referendum provision with which I will deal with later.

Then the other aspect of the Accord which must be referred to is the foreign policy aspect. The foreign policy provisions are contained in the Annexures to the Accord. Perhaps it was originally envisaged that these Annexures and the Exchange of Letters between the Prime Minister of India and the President of Sri Lanka would remain confi-

dential documents and not be disclosed to the public. But this decision was reversed around July 28, 1987 and they have now become part of the public record. There are many people who wonder whether it was really necessary to link the foreign policy issues to what would in any event prove to be a somewhat controversial political arrangement requiring a fairly basic redefinition of Sri Lanka's polity. However, they do form part of the Accord. They are different not only in terms of their substance but they are also different from the main elements of the Accord in that they represent statements of intention as opposed to binding legal obligations which is the language of the political accord.

The elements of the foreign policy package relate to a reversal, in my view, to a policy of stricter non-alignment from which Sri Lanka as a nation drifted from 1977 onwards. We moved away from a foreign policy based on principle, solidarity with like-minded Third World nations to a foreign policy based on expediency. Such a foreign policy resulted in the very doubtful and very suspect bilateral linkages of Sri Lanka forged with Israel, in intelligence activities, in arrangements that it worked out with regard to military training and in the procurement of arms. To the extent the Accord reflects a shift back to these old concerns of strict non-alignment, to that extent it is responsive to some of the concerns that our party (the TULF and many of the Left parties have expressed for many years.

The importance of the specific provisions particularly relate to the reiteration of the non-aligned character of Trincomalee port. We have always believed that the Trincomalee port should not be used for any strategic or military purposes which would compromise the non-aligned character of this port. Although this has been an important plank in the foreign policy concerns of specific governments, there is a growing apprehension that these facilities could in fact be bartered away to the super power in the West. This concern is considerably allayed by the undertaking in the Accord to preserve the non-aligned character of Trincomalee port.

There is also a reference in the Accord to the review of the broadcasting facilities which are in Sri Lanka to ensure that they are not abused for intelligence or strategic military purposes. There is another provision in the Accord with regard to the exploitation of the oil tank farms, which have remained redundant—and to that extent economically useless—resource. These may possibly be put to productive use as a consequence of the Accord.

By and large these foreign policy concerns are responsive to the aspirations of the progressive forces of Sri Lanka with regard to the basic orientation of Sri Lanka's foreign policy. But nonetheless there has been considerable criticism in the south of Sri Lanka that these elements within the Annexures and Exchange of Letters cumulatively result in a tilt towards India, a recognition that the foreign policy of Sri Lanka cannot be one which is confrontational towards India and a kind of "Finlandisation of Sri Lanka."

This question was specifically posed to the (Sri Lankan) President at the press conference that took place after the Accord was signed. He dismissed these concerns by arguing that these foreign policy



statements merely expressed the historic and traditional friendship between India and Sri Lanka.

Nonetheless, there has remained articulate opinion within Sri Lanka that the foreign policy concern of Sri Lanka should not be one which is confrontational towards its largest neighbour and that Sri Lanka as a nation but pursuing a policy of strict non-alignment, would manage its external linkages with a considerable measure of autonomy consistent with its national sovereignty. And I don't myself share the fears and apprehensions which have been expressed in even intellectual circles about the so-called "Finlandisation of Sri Lanka."

Finally, it must be said that as far as Tamil opinion is concerned, the importance of the Accord lies in the fact that it is for the first time an arrangement between two governments; and for that reason it enjoys a status above the domestic political arena and is not vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the Sri Lankan domestic polity and the bile fluctuations that we have experienced in the past. As this Accord is an agreement between the governments it is binding on successive governments and if any future government abrogates this Accord the consequences won't be limited to the domestic politics of Sri Lanka, it will clearly have other international implications.

In addition to that move rather than the legal language and legal content of the Accord, what is convincing to Tamil opinion is the physical presence of the Peace-Keeping Force. It is convincing in terms of India's commitment to the fair and full implementation of the Accord. The Peace-Keeping Force's presence in Sri Lanka performs three important functions: on the one hand, it has effectively in the last 30-40 days maintained peace between the (Tamil) militants and the security forces of the Government of Sri Lanka; secondly, the Peace-Keeping Force has served as a buffer between the armed homeguards largely of the Sinhalese and Muslim villagers in the Eastern province and the Tamil villagers with whom they have frequently had difficulties and encounters in the past; thirdly, the Peace-Keeping Force has been effective in making peace between the different militant groups who have become polarised from each other.

So the successful maintenance of peace in the Northern and the Eastern provinces is largely related to the presence of the Peace-Keeping Force.

**Mainstream:** What do you feel about the process of implementation of the Accord in the month that has elapsed?

**Neelan:** One of the aspects in regard to the time-frame for the implementation of the Accord which was quite unusual related to the laying down of arms. The militants were very deeply concerned that they were called upon to lay down their arms within 72 hours of the signing of the Accord and thereby end the armed struggle while the Government of Sri Lanka would have retained its military options for a much longer period. In other words, the Tamil militants were compelled to lay down their arms before they could in any way be satisfied that the Accord was being reasonably and

faithfully implemented on the other side. The Accord, therefore, foreclosed, as its very inception, both the armed struggle and the demand for a separate state.

In some respect this expectation of a complete laying down of arms process within a very short time-frame of 72 hours was unrealistic. In an armed struggle the laying down of arms is the final act both in symbolic terms and in terms of concrete expectation. Accordingly, the conditions under which the laying down of arms were to take place is a matter which would have been naturally a matter of concern particularly to the militant groups engaged in the struggle. And this process has taken a much longer period than had been envisaged. By and large the Sinhalese opinion in the south is also reasonably satisfied that this process has been proceeding at a reasonable level.

There were other time-frames envisaged in the Accord, such as the lifting of the public emergency. August 15 was the date stipulated in the Accord for the lifting of the emergency in the Northern and the Eastern provinces. This hasn't quite taken place.

Similarly out of the 5400 political prisoners, who were to have been released about 1700-1800 have till now been released. So I think although from a very technical perspective we have exceeded the expectations raised in the Accord, with regard to some of its aspects, we have, however, fallen short of the expectations of the Accord in relation to some of the time-frames envisaged.

Nonetheless, one has to substantively express satisfaction that there is an effective cease-fire, the process of laying down of arms has taken place to a very significant extent, the process of finalising the Provincial Council elections is proceeding, the process of normalising the restoration of a civilian government is taking place; and despite some short-fall in expectation, I think the process has been a satisfactory one.

**Mainstream:** Well, there are several imponderables which have to be tackled. First of all, there is a feeling that the Accord, above all, hinges on one person, one individual, that is, the President of Sri Lanka. So what happens when he departs from the scene? Does the Accord also fall through? Then, besides the possibility of a majority of the residents in the Eastern province rejecting linkage with the North in event of a referendum after about a year, there is also the apprehension that once the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka calls for a referendum on the legislation on the Accord, the Accord itself could be rejected through that referendum. So how could such imponderables be overcome?

**Neelan:** I think your question is very important one. There are no doubt many political landmines on the way which can explode this very fragile Accord.

You refer first to the very extraordinary importance that has been accorded to the personal role of the (Sri Lankan) President in ensuring that the legislation is implemented, in seeing through the different elements of the Accord. I think this is largely true.

President Jayewardene has become the key actor in forging the consensus within his own party and within the Sinhalese community at large in relation to the Accord. But it is an agreement which binds the Government of Sri Lanka and he is not alone in the Government's public endorsement of the Accord, his advocacy of the Accord as the only road available to Sri Lanka as a nation. If Sri Lanka is to remain united, there is no alternative for Sri Lanka except to follow the process of peace and reconciliation which is envisaged by the Accord. So the implications of the Accord, I think, are appreciated by influential sections within the Sri Lankan Government who want to see a measure of continuity which transcends the career of President Jayewardene. Although while saying that one has to acknowledge that he remains and will remain a fairly critical factor in this whole process.

The second point you have mentioned relate to the question of the attitude of the Supreme Court (of Sri Lanka) in the event that the Provincial Council legislation is challenged. Now we have in Sri Lanka provisions in the Constitution which are entrenched. H.W. Reed, Professor of Law in Oxford, apparently stated that in Sri Lanka you have the most bizarre forms of entrenchment. Even the national anthem is entrenched there can be no change introduced into the national anthem without a national referendum. The national flag is entrenched. But for our purposes what is significant is the unitary character of the state. Now the concept of an unitary constitution or unitary state and a feudal constitution are basically political concepts, concepts of political science. It is very rare that you find in any Constitution concepts entrenched and embodied into a kind of binding legal language that you find in the Sri Lankan Constitution. But in Sri Lanka we have a provision in the Constitution that the unitary character of the Sri Lankan state is entrenched. Which means that if you seek to interfere with the unitary character of the Sri Lankan state, Parliament would not only require a special majority but also require that legislation to be approved by the people at a referendum.

Now the political package which you envisage is one, in the view of many Constitutional lawyers, which does not create a federal polity; it is an institution to which legislative and executive power would be devolved within an unitary state. So the distinction between an unitary state and a federal state is one of degree. There can be an unitary state as contemplated, for example, in Great Britain. A similar kind of devolution of legislative and executive power is available to Scotland and Wales. Great Britain can also devolve legislative power to Northern Ireland through a similar scheme of devolution. So I submit that if the legislation is objectively analysed the Court should come to the conclusion that it is not one which offends the unitary character of the state and accordingly upholds the constitutionality of the legislation.

But it is ultimately a matter for the judges and you are right that if the judges take a different view and call for a referendum then the whole exercise could be placed in jeopardy.

The third point that you mention relates to the referendum provision in the Accord. It is envisaged that within a year a referendum would be held in the Eastern province. Here again there are some doubts among Constitutional thinkers as to whether you can have a referendum in a single province. The provision for a referendum in the Constitution envisages a referendum for the whole country. But I think that's not an entrenched provision, it can be amended by a special majority of Parliament.

However, from a political point of view if the outcome of the referendum is negative, then, as is implied in your question, whatever gains the Tamils may have obtained by a large unit being acknowledged in the Accord, would be erased by the referendum. This point has been made by Prabhakaran that the promise in the Accord of a single region is a conditional promise, a temporary provision.

But I would like to broach the referendum in a more constructive spirit. I think that much would depend on how the Provincial Council functions in the North and the East region

during the first year of its operation and its capacity to give confidence to the minorities who live in the North and the East region. You will find that for the first time in Sri Lanka both the Tamils and the Sinhalese would be minority in different political arrangements. The Sinhalese will be minority within the North and the East region and the Tamils will be minority in the rest of the country. And this is, I think, a good thing because it will then enable each community to accept the restraint of a majority and also the responsibilities of a majority towards the minority. I think there is promise in this and it again provides opportunities particularly for the Tamils, the Tamil-speaking people, to utilise the situation in such a manner that in the event of a referendum, such a referendum would uphold the integrity of the North and the East region. I would thus like to broach the referendum issue more constructively, optimistically than is implied in your question.

**Mainstream:** If I have understood you correctly, when you are referring to the individual role of the personality of President Jayewardene you feel that even if President Jayewardene is not on the scene the Accord, regardless of the complexion of the Government in Sri Lanka, would be implemented.

**Neelan:** Would need to be implemented. It would certainly be legally binding and would need to be implemented purely from a political perspective if Sri Lanka is to remain a united sovereign country.

**Mainstream:** But that possibility at the moment seems to be slightly remote because of the feelings which have been whipped up among the Sinhalese people. And that is why what is being suggested is that the Accord would be unworkable as long as a majority of the Sinhalese opinion remains opposed to it.

**Neelan:** There are two aspects to it. One is: will the Accord be binding on successive governments? And the answer to that is: yes.

**Mainstream:** Legally binding?

**Neelan:** Not only legally binding, but it will also be politically binding. Because I do not see that even if Sirimavo Bandaranaike is returned to power she would precipitate the kind of political crisis which would arise by merely abrogating the Accord. She would endeavour, in my view, to work within the framework of the Accord.

Now the second issue that you raise is: can any accord of this nature bring about genuine reconciliation between the Sinhalese and the Tamils if large segments of Sinhalese opinion remain bitter and hostile to its implementation? I think that's a very important concern. My own perspective on this is that the Accord provides merely the bare bones of a framework. The flesh and blood must be supplied by the resolve of the two communities to live together and to work out political accommodation, the compromises which are necessary to make a plural society a reality in Sri Lanka. And unless there is this resolve no legal arrangement, even of an international character, can supplant the determination of the two communities.

No doubt there is a vehement opposition to the Accord in powerful sections of the Sinhalese people. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party has expressed its opposition to the Accord. Powerful sections of the Buddhist clergy are opposed to the Accord. There is also JVP which is opposed to the Accord.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that there are influential sections of Sinhalese opinion who also seek peace, an end to bloodshed, who believe that the national question must be resolved in such a manner that Sri Lanka could begin to recover from this crisis and develop itself, so that there could be prosperity and justice for all the communities of the country. So I think one has to bear in mind that the Sinhalese opinion has also important and influential sections who support the Accord. And the future lies in trying to allay some of the concerns that the more extreme exponents of the opposition to the Accord have articulated.

Much of the initial opposition arose out of genuine ignorance of the contents of the Accord. There was very little intelligent debate or systematic effort to explain the terms. When this was to some extent done through the media the fears of many important sections were partially allayed. This process must go on.

But finally the Sinhalese opinion must ask itself the question: what are the consequences of the Accord not succeeding? If the Accord is aborted what would be the consequences of Sri Lanka as a nation? If it confronts this question then res-



possible Sinhalese opinion will realise that the nation had no other alternative.

**Mainstream:** Does this section of Sinhalese opinion which is now veering round in favour of the Accord together with the other sections which had in the past supported it, constitute at the moment a majority of Sri Lanka's population? Or, are all these sections still a minority?

**Neelan:** Well, I think that it is very hard to say if they constitute a majority or not. There are moments in the history of any nation when a somewhat enlightened minority articulates progressive views on divisive emotional issues something ahead of the mainstream opinion. You have had that in important phases of Indian history also. But ultimately what would be convincing to Sinhalese opinion is the effectiveness of peace.

If the bloodshed ends, the deeper emotional and psychological scars of this conflict can in fact be healed. If there can be political stability, it should bring about a kind of growth which has stalled this society for many years. Then this will be the most convincing aspect of the Accord.

**Mainstream:** There is another feeling apart from the ethnic question that by signing the Accord Sri Lanka has compromised its sovereignty. To what extent is such a concern genuine? To be very frank, can I ask you if there had been moments in the recent past when India displayed a certain attitude which could have been interpreted as being domineering?

**Neelan:** Well, I think that in a way India's concern for peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka has been real and genuine. We have carefully followed the process by which India's good offices were offered and extended to Sri Lanka to bring about reconciliation between the two communities. I think that this process has been very sincerely pursued and if the people of Sri Lanka were able to resolve these matters to their mutual satisfaction without any external element those good offices would have become redundant. Those good offices became necessary to prevent chaos, anarchy, fragmentation in Sri Lanka. In short, I would consider this intervention as being a stabilising factor in the politics of Sri Lanka.

The question that arises is related to the relationship between India and Sri Lanka. This relationship is always a bit complex one as India's relationship with any of its neighbours would be complex because of the extraordinary diversity that symbolises India, the extraordinary economic and military power that India, by its very size and level of industrialisation as well as its military strength, represents in the whole region.

These are realities which are dictated by geography and by the very history of the two countries. So the geo-political realities are those which would continue to impinge upon and shape the relationship between the two countries.

But small nations which are in close proximity of much more powerful and strong neighbours can nonetheless exercise a large measure of autonomy in determining not only their domestic policies but also their external linkages provided they are strong within. So I think if there are people in Sri Lanka who feel that Sri Lanka has a relationship with India which is being weakened by its inability to deal effectively with its larger neighbour, then the answer lies in reconciling the inner differences within the society, in unifying its internal elements so that it can then, in strength and in unity, deal with the external world.

**Mainstream:** Here another question comes up. Regionally India is a power and this has been almost accepted as a result of this Accord. However, on the international plane superpower influence over Sri Lanka has been quite strong. Would you consider this regional influence of India over Sri Lanka a positive development?

**Neelan:** The two superpowers have implicitly acknowledged India's role and responsibility as a regional power in bringing about an ethnic reconciliation in Sri Lanka. There are not too many conflicts in the world where there is such an award of acknowledgement of such situations.

**Mainstream:** Can we also say that this amounts to respect for India's and Sri Lanka's policy of non-alignment?

**Neelan:** Yes, I think the respect for the policy of non-alignment grows if two non-aligned countries are able to mutually work out their relationships without the interference of the superpowers. In a wider and deeper sense, Sri Lanka is just one instance; there are many other instances in which the superpowers are beginning to work out their accommodation in regard to both regional and international conflicts with wider ramifications.

This is a factor which has clearly influenced the thinking

of the Government of Sri Lanka. There were many people within the Government who were arguing that the Government of Sri Lanka should align itself with larger nations who could be a counter-weight against India within the region. But they didn't succeed.

**Mainstream:** Does this mean that these forces inside Sri Lanka which wanted the country to align with a larger nation were defeated in the long run because the Government felt that any such step would have led to the ultimate dismemberment of the country?

**Neelan:** No, I think that these forces were not able — except for the linkages they were able to forge with countries like Israel, South Africa and to some extent with tacit support from Pakistan — to forge an alliance with any one of the superpowers against India. The possibility of forging such an alliance was not available to Sri Lanka because of the geopolitical situation and also acknowledgement by both superpowers of the role that India could play.

Similarly on the Tamil side, in Prabhakaran's speech in Sudamalai he claimed that the geopolitical realities were such that the Tamils had no alternative but to submit to the Accord. Here again in a different sense there was an acknowledgement of the situation.

**Mainstream:** Do you feel that as a result of the Accord the understanding that was reached between the Government of Sri Lanka and the intelligence agencies and security advisers of Israel, Pakistan and Britain would be weakened?

**Neelan:** Yes, I speak from the perspective of a group who would be utterly opposed to such linkage and deeply critical of them. Therefore, to the extent that these linkages have been weakened by the Accord is a positive development in Sri Lanka's history.

**Mainstream:** The Accord has, of course, restored peace especially in the North and the East despite the violence against it in the South. But how could the Accord be utilised to bring about harmony between the two communities? That is something which I have found people even in the North desiring.

**Neelan:** You see, harmony between the two communities is much more difficult because there are few parallels in history of a society which has been so deeply ravaged by war, which has gone through the kind of brutalisation process that Sri Lanka has gone through, which has experienced so much cruelty.

**Mainstream:** Would you say that this is mainly in the last four years, or is it a consequence of history?

**Neelan:** It has taken place in the last ten years but became very severely accentuated in the last four years, from 1983 onwards, when the Tamil people suffered so deeply in terms of the violence that was directed against them. There are few countries in the world that have experienced such a degree of suffering which has really been covert suffering.

So Sri Lanka is thus presented with an opportunity of making a new beginning. We have just laid down the Constitutional foundations of a multi-ethnic polity but ultimately those foundations must be sustained by the values of tolerance and accommodation; respect for the principles of racial equality and racial justice. This can only take place by a transformation of attitudes.

Hitherto we have not had an enlightened political leadership to control everything which was capable of providing the moral leadership, which was capable of altering consciousness. The political leadership in control of the state manipulated and exploited the darker passions of the people with the result that we have an educational system, for example, in which 93 per cent of the schools in Sri Lanka are linguistically segregated. There is very little opportunity for the children of the two communities to grow up together, to learn together, to understand and comprehend their different dreams and aspirations.

This can only be changed by a fundamental alteration in the educational and cultural policy of Sri Lanka by instilling a new consciousness, a new awareness of a wider identity which transcends the narrow ethnic identities of the two communities. I feel that this is a slow process. It is also not clear that the state has the capacity, the moral capacity, to provide leadership to such a process. Therefore, we need community groups, concerned people — particularly progressive forces in our society can play an important role — trade unions, some of the Left-wing intellectuals, who have expressed concern for leadership; too can play an important role in the beginning to rebuild the consciousness of the people.

But, I think, if there is peace and the killings that we have

seen in the last several years cease then that would be the beginning for bringing about the kind of climate in which ethnic reconciliation in a wider sense can become possible.

**Mainstream:** But that is where leading Sri Lankan Tamils like you can play prominent role alongside such personalities like Thondaman.

**Neelan:** Well, it is a responsibility which falls on everybody. Naturally we will primarily look to those who can change the status quo, that is, the majority community.

**Mainstream:** The essential point is that you consider yourselves as Sri Lankans first and Tamils later. That is very crucial.

**Neelan:** Well, I think that it is essential for the majority community, again I am reiterating, to make the Tamils feel that they are a part of the Sri Lankan nation, that they will share power not only in the periphery but also in the Centre, to give them the confidence which they have lost over the decade through progressive discrimination, injustice and indifference.

Now the recognition of Tamil as an official language, if it is properly implemented, will go a long way in providing this kind of an assurance. If non-discriminatory policies are pursued in regard to access to employment, to educational opportunities, to the distribution of economic opportunities then it will again create a climate within which an egalitarian society can emerge.

So I think Sri Lanka is presented with a very exciting challenge. This chapter of our history has been a period of darkness, of great national shame, in terms of the cruelty and injustices that we have tolerated and permitted in these so many years. But the future must be viewed optimistically, we must learn from the mistakes of the past and try to work towards a society which would be essentially a just society, a compassionate society, a caring society.

**Mainstream:** Would you agree with the view that it was political expediency that resulted in the signing of this kind of an Accord, but the Accord has presented the progressive elements in Sri Lankan society with an opportunity to bring about that type of a transformation to which you have referred?

**Neelan:** Well, the present Government of Sri Lanka has contributed so much to the present crisis in terms of its policy of militarisation, of its callousness to Tamil aspirations that it must assume considerable responsibility for the predicament in which we are now placed.

Nonetheless, I think there were many factors which influenced it to sign the Accord. It was largely left with no real military option; it was faced with economic ruin; growing discontent in the south of Sri Lanka. There were many forces which impinged on the Government and compelled this course of action.

But I think that it is important, as suggested by you, for the progressive forces of Sri Lankan society to look towards the future and try to build this kind of ethos that will bring about a fundamental change in the nature of politics. We need a new vision in our politics, a vision which relates to the upliftment of the poorer sections of all the communities, a new social vision which I think must be infused into the entire political process.

**Mainstream:** Would you like to say something on the economic dimension of the problem, the economic compulsions which led to the Accord? What was the magnitude of the economic disaster wrought by the ethnic war? What is the essence of the economic development the Accord seeks to accelerate?

**Neelan:** You see, the economic consequences of the conflict are very clear, particularly from the extraordinary damage and destruction that was caused to the social structure of Sri Lanka which has been very conservatively estimated to come to 15 billion Sri Lankan rupees in terms of the public buildings destroyed, roads which were neglected, railway lines which were damaged, the total collapse of certain important sectors of the economy.

The damage of the socio-economic infra-structure had a considerable impact on the agrarian economy.

The other impact of the conflict related to the whole militarisation process which has forced an extraordinarily crushing, crippling military budget which has generated its own inflationary pressures.

**Mainstream:** Which is totally alien to Sri Lanka?

**Neelan:** Yes. And which is twenty times the military budget that Sri Lanka had in 1957.

There emerged a group of people who had come to acquire an interest and a stake in the whole war machinery, in oiling the machinery of destruction by the defence procurement contracts and financing the war efforts. It became very clear that these forces were bringing about a great decline in the economy of Sri Lanka. The Finance Minister was very apprehensive that he would not be able to finance the level of defence expenditure without fundamentally undermining the various development efforts of the Government. The budgetary deficits, as you know, were getting larger and larger and becoming difficult to balance with consequences for many spheres of economic activity.

Now with the Accord there is a new economic opportunity presented. But in the North and East this calls for a mini-Marshall Plan to mobilise resources for three different functions. First, the socio-economic infrastructure would have to be put in place. The agrarian economy would have to be reconstructed and rehabilitated. Secondly, it is necessary to resettle almost 300,000 displaced people — Tamil refugees — who went away to India, Europe and other parts of the globe. Then the economy would also need to absorb many of the youth elements who have been alienated from the mainstream of life and be given some opportunity of reconstructing their lives.

And finally, in an area which had been historically neglected, had the experience of very little industrialisation, had not had significant developmental initiatives, we need to begin to implement projects — industrial projects, irrigation projects, agro-industrial projects — which are capable of generating employment and absorbing the new entrants of the work force in those regions.

We are presented with a very important challenge. The Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Economic Commission I believe is contemplating of implementing certain very large projects in the Northern region. The Finance Minister is to convene an Aid Consortium meeting which is expected to place as much as half a billion US dollars for the relief and rehabilitation of this area. We feel very strongly that these developmental efforts in this area should be largely the articulation of the rehabilitation programme, the implementation of the rehabilitation programme should be in the hands of the provincial administration, the new institutions that are being set up.

We also feel that this programme should be an equity-oriented programme, we must really bring about an improvement in the quality of life of the poorer sections of the society. We should not repeat the kind of mistakes that Sri Lanka has followed in its development model and strategy it had pursued in the south of Sri Lanka, the kind of "dependent development" which is intellectually dependent on models inappropriate for our social experience.

So while economic rehabilitation programme and redirection of substantial resources for that purpose provide new opportunities, nonetheless, there are many dangers that lie ahead. We hope the provincial administration would have sufficient vision and imagination to overcome those dangers.

**Mainstream:** You want Sri Lanka to follow some kind of a self-reliant development model that India has been trying to project?

**Neelan:** Exactly.

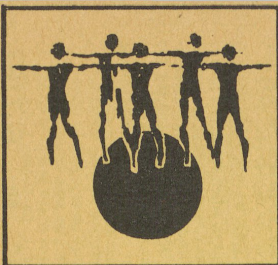
**Mainstream:** My last question would be to request you to sum up the role India could play in helping Sri Lanka to meet the challenge that you have mentioned here?

**Neelan:** As I said, India has helped us to provide the framework. It must essentially be left largely to the energy, initiatives and enterprise of the people of Sri Lanka to not only make the political institutions successful but also to ensure that in the social and economic spheres disparities and inequalities are redressed.

India can make resources available to Sri Lanka. It can arbitrate between the two communities when there is a breakdown. But fundamentally if Sri Lanka as a nation is to succeed then the two communities must make their own accommodation. They must be given a measure of stake to achieve the end result.

I think we have set in motion a process which will have momentum and we can only hope that this experiment will succeed. □ (Colombo, September 1987).





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இனங்களுக்கிடையில் நீதிக்கும்  
சமத்துவத்துக்குமான இயக்கம்  
Movement for Inter Racial  
Justice and Equality

4. எலிசாவெட், கொழும்பு 3, 80 573948  
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The Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE) welcomes the Accord entered into by the governments of Sri Lanka and India in order to bring to an end the ethnic conflict that has ravaged this country during the past decade.

The total lack of trust and confidence between the government on the one hand and the Tamil people and the militant organisations on the other has prevented any serious negotiation between them since 1985 and it was probably only an accord of this nature that could have brought the country out of this impasse.

The accord is in the nature of compromise and may not entirely satisfy the parties to the conflict. However it does promise the end of violence and the restoration of democratic rights to the Tamil people through a pattern of devolution that recognises their right to self governance in the area they inhabit, a right that MIRJE has consistently campaigned for. In this sense the accord does go far towards resolving one of the issues basic to the conflict.

MIRJE has also consistently upheld the view that Sri Lanka is a multi-linguistic society and that each ethnic group possesses its own distinct cultural and linguistic identity, even in the face of chauvinist hysteria that sought to identify Sri Lanka as a Sinhala Buddhist society. MIRJE is therefore glad that a recognition of this reality is one of the features of the accord.

The chauvinist hysteria that attempted to deny to the Tamil people their collective rights has manifested itself again during the past week. To these misguided persons MIRJE can only say that attempts to wreck the accord will inevitably lead to separation. Only the recognition of the multi-ethnic nature of our society and the creation of political structures in which the different ethnic groups can nurture their own collective identity can preserve the unity of Sri Lanka and lead hopefully to the eventual creation of an over-arching Sri Lanka identity.

They must also note that the failure of a society to resolve its own internal contradictions can be fatal to its continued independence. Agreements to resolve the issue have had an unfortunate history in the past. MIRJE hopes and expects that this accord will not meet with the same fate. To that end all parties

to the conflict must implement this accord in good faith. MIRJE therefore calls upon the state and the Tamil militant groups to implement the accord in this spirit, resolving many of the problems that are bound to arise in the course of implementation through negotiations and also calls upon all citizens of Sri Lanka to assist in this process.

Charles Abeysekera (President MIRJE), 4.8.87

## சுதா அகிர்வாசினி ஈரணன் பேரவையுடன் 1/8/87 ஐனநாயக உரிமைகளைப் பாதுகாப்பதற்கான இயக்கம் CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT OF SRI LANKA

### THE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ETHNIC CONFLICT AND THE INDO-SRI LANKA ACCORD

The Civil Rights Movement welcomes the political settlement of the ethnic conflict and the prospects of peace. The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord marks the end of an era of civil strife entailing the killing of thousands, mass "disappearances", and great human suffering; we hope it will also mark the beginning of a new era of peace and unity.

A compromise has been arrived at to end a bitter dispute. There will inevitably be criticisms of some of its aspects whether from one standpoint or another. It does, however, provide a framework for a solution to the conflict. It is therefore essential that a determined effort is made to see that the particular solution now arrived at is made to work fairly. The alternative of continued suffering and misery is too appalling to contemplate.

We welcome the devolution of power to Provincial Councils which will strengthen democratic processes, as well as the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka. We also welcome the general amnesty granted to political prisoners.

There are many challenges and pitfalls in the tasks ahead and there should be no complacency in this regard. Beyond the specific provisions of the Accord, the Government must also tackle the task of the reconstruction of the Northern and Eastern Provinces with a sense of urgency. Many pressing human problems such as ascertaining the fate of "disappeared" persons need to be resolved. Specialised help for rehabilitation and reconstruction is also necessary. CRN repeats its request that the government accept the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which has long experience and special skills relating to rehabilitation, displaced persons and refugees, tracing missing persons and helping the wounded and disabled. Another agency with expertise in this field is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). CRN also urges the government to invite the United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances to visit Sri Lanka.

CRN calls upon all political parties to learn from the mistakes of the past. They must act with statesmanship and not exploit a constructive and long-awaited solution to the ethnic problem as an opportunity to seek short term political ends for themselves. It is a matter of great regret that protest against this Accord should have resulted in the mass destruction of public property causing serious hardship to the people and in particular to the poor and underprivileged.

At the same time, the government should realise that the violence which accompanied this protest may not be attributable to one simple cause. It is more likely to reflect a number of factors, not least of which is a simmering resentment against many undemocratic features of the government such as its conduct during the 1982 referendum, the failure to hold a general election, and the intolerance of peaceful protest and dissent. Attention must now be turned to many such issues which have hitherto been overshadowed by the ethnic conflict and it is essential that the government be more sensitive and responsive to such questions.

The government should also realise the need for broad support for any lasting settlement. The government and the media it controls have not prepared public opinion for this solution. Riding roughshod over opposing views now is no remedy. Heavy-handed tactics at this stage are not merely undemocratic but counter-productive.



The government, just as much as the opposition, must not now repeat the costly mistakes of the past. CRM is certainly mindful of the very serious security problems the government now faces, especially in view of this week's shooting and explosions within Parliament itself resulting in the death of a District Minister and injury to many others. At the same time, injustices such as arbitrary and indiscriminate arrests, police excesses, and unnecessarily prolonged detentions, apart from constituting serious violations of human rights, inexorably arouse mounting resentment and hardened opposition. The government must keep this in mind while effectively fulfilling its responsibility to maintain law and order. Censorship if resorted to at all must be strictly confined to exceptional instances such as incitement to violence or racial hatred. Opposing views must be given free expression, not driven underground; only then can they be examined and countered.

In conclusion CRM states that it welcomes in particular the acknowledgement in the Accord that Sri Lanka is a "multi-ethnic and a multi-lingual plural society". This is basic to the future of democracy, peace and justice in our country. A spirit of genuine goodwill, sincere co-operation, hard work and determined effort is now needed to make this a living reality.

*Diamond Fernando*  
Secretary

statement adopted at a meeting of the Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka held on 19 August 1987.

## Reaktion der

"Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front" (ENDLF),  
"Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front" (EPRLF),  
"Peoples Liberton Organisation of Tamil Eelam" (PLOT),  
"Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO)  
auf den Friedensvertrag:

"After careful consideration of the assurances given by the Government of India in response to our reservations and apprehensions as regards certain provisions in the proposed accord, we, the representatives of the (above) mentioned Tamil political organisations, extend our whole-hearted support for the proposed Indo-Sri Lanka accord.

We give below, a further elaboration of the reasons for our support for the present accord:

1. The assurances given by the representatives of the Government of India at our meeting of 27th July, that the Government of India would not be a mere arbiter, but an active participant in ensuring that our people live in peace, honour and dignity. This role by India is explicitly manifested in the accord.
2. Although the accord cannot be seen as a final solution to the Tamil National Question in Sri Lanka, it paves the way for the containment of state terrorism that has been unleashed against our People by the Sri Lankan State. As such, the accord is seen by our besieged and suffering people as a respite from their sufferings. We, as the collective representatives of the Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka, have to respond to the will of our people.
3. Unlike earlier agreements between successive Sri Lankan governments and elected representatives of

the Tamil speaking peoples of Sri Lanka since Independence, the proposed accord for the first time co-opts a guarantor - namely, the Government of India. In view of India's strategic importance in the region, the anti-Imperialist content of its foreign policy and its role as a mediator in the peace process, commencing from August 1983, the role of India as a guarantor is significant and necessary. In addition, we see the need for a guarantor for any political solution, in view of the fact that we have absolutely no confidence, given our past experiences with broken pacts and unkept promises, on the Sri Lankan Government.

In view of our above-stated position, we wish to express our utter dismay at the stand taken by the LTTE in rejecting the proposed accord. It is our collective opinion that the intransigent and provocative stand of the LTTE is determined more by the narrow, parochial and megalomaniacal interests of its leadership, and not by the long-term interest of our people. Further, we feel that their intransigence would only serve to strengthen the forces of destabilization in the region led by US-Imperialist in addition to strengthening the hands of the forces of reaction and chauvinism in Sri Lanka.

We also wish to issue a warning to the Sri Lankan State that if it abrogates the accord or fail to implement it, then we shall be compelled to resort to the force of arms to obtain that which cannot be obtained by the force of reason. 28th July, 1987

(Unterschriften der Führer der oben erwähnten Organisationen).

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Seine Exzellenz  
Mr. J.R. Jayewardene,  
Präsident der Demokratischen sozialistischen Republik von Sri Lanka, Colombo

Hiermit wird bestätigt, daß oben Erwähntes die zwischen uns erzielte Vereinbarung korrekt wiedergibt.

Bitte nehmen Sie meine Hochachtung zur Kenntnis.  
(J.R. Jayewardene)  
Präsident

Seine Exzellenz  
Mr. Rajiv Gandhi  
Premierminister der Republik Indien  
New Delhi.

(Übersetzung: Ruth Kleivinghaus/Walter Keller)



Rede von Velupillai Prabhakaran, Führer der "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam", am 4. August 1987 nach Unterzeichnung des Friedensvertrages:

# "Let us give India the opportunity"

The "we love India and the people of India" speech of August 4 by Mr. V. Prabhakaran, the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), on the grounds of the Sudumalai Amman temple in the vicinity of Jaffna town signalled the important decision to surrender arms, as envisaged under the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement to Establish Peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka. It is a politically interesting exposition that deserves to be followed closely for its content and its nuances. This is a translation of the text of Mr. Prabhakaran's speech made available to THE HINDU at the venue of the meeting itself.

**M**Y beloved and esteemed people of Tamil Eelam,

Today there has taken place a tremendous turn in our liberation struggle. This turn has come suddenly, in a way that has stunned us, and as if it were beyond our power to influence events.

Whether the consequences of this turn will be favourable to us, we shall have to wait and see.

You are aware that this Agreement, concluded suddenly and with great speed between India and Sri Lanka, without consulting our people and without consulting us, our people's representatives, is being implemented with expedition and urgency. Until I went to Delhi, I did not know anything about this Agreement. Saying that the Indian Prime Minister desired to see me, they invited me and took me quickly to Delhi. This Agreement was shown to us after I went there. There were several complications and several question marks in it. The doubt arose for us whether, as a result of this Agreement, a permanent solution would be available to the problems of our people. Accordingly, we made it emphatically clear to the Indian Government that we were unable to accept this Agreement.

## Primary concern

But the Indian Government stood unbudging on the point that whether we accepted or did not accept the Agreement, it was determined to put it into effect. We were not taken by surprise by this stand of the Indian Government. This Agreement did not concern only the problem of the Tamils. This is primarily concerned with Indo-Sri Lanka relations. It also contains within itself the principles, the requirements for making Sri Lanka accede to India's strategic sphere of influence. (An alternative translation of this sentence, closer perhaps to its literal meaning, would be: "It also contains within itself the stipulations for binding Sri Lanka within India's big power orbit"). It works out a way for preventing disruptionist and hostile foreign forces from gaining footholds in Sri Lanka. That is why the Indian Government showed such an extraordinary keenness in concluding this Agreement. However, at the same time, it happens to be an Agreement that determines the political future and fate of the people of Tamil Eelam. That is why we firmly objected to the con-

clusion of this Agreement without consultations with our people and without the seeking of our views. However, there is no point in our objecting to this. When a great power has decided to determine our political fate in a manner that is essentially beyond our control, what are we to do?

## Difficult to digest

This Agreement directly affects our movement and our political goals and objectives. It affects the form and shape of our struggle. It also puts a stop to our armed struggle. If the mode of our struggle, brought to this stage over a fifteen year period through shedding blood, through making sacrifices, through staking achievements and through offering a great many lives, is to be dissolved or disbanded within a few days, it is naturally something we are unable to digest. This Agreement disarms us suddenly, without giving us time, without getting the consent of our fighters, without working out a guarantee for our people's safety and protection. Therefore we refused to surrender arms.

## India's assurances

Under such circumstances, India's Honourable Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, invited me for a discussion. I opened my mind and spoke to him of our concerns and our problems. I pointed out to the Indian Prime Minister the fact that I did not repose the slightest faith in the Sinhala racist government and did not believe that they were going to fulfill the implementation of this Agreement. I spoke to him about the question of our people's safety and protection and about guarantees for this. The Indian Prime Minister offered me certain assurances. He offered a guarantee for the safety and protection of our people. I do have faith in the straightforwardness of the Indian Prime Minister and I do have faith in his assurances.

We do believe that India will not allow the racist Sri Lankan state to take once again to the road of genocide against the Tamils. It is only out of this faith that we decided to hand over our weapons to the Indian peace keeping force.

What ardent, immeasurable sacrifices we have made for the safety and protection of our people! There is no need here to elaborate on this theme. You, our beloved people, are fully aware of the character of our passion for our cause and our feelings of sacrifice. The weapons that we took up and deployed for your safety and protection, for your liberation, for your emancipation, we now entrust to the Indian Government.

## Transfer of responsibility

In taking from us our weapons—the one means of protection for Eelam Tamils—the Indian Government takes over from us the big responsibility of protecting our people. The handing over of arms only signifies the handing over, the transfer of this responsibility.

Were we not to hand over our weapons, we would be put in the calamitous circumstance of clashing with the Indian Army. We do not want this. We love India. We love the

people of India. There is no question of our deploying our arms against Indian soldiers. The soldiers of the Indian Army are taking up the responsibility of safeguarding and protecting us against our enemy. I wish very firmly to emphasise here that by virtue of our handing over our weapons to it, the Indian Government should assume full responsibility for the life and security of every one of the Eelam Tamils.

My beloved people,

We have no way other than cooperation with this Indian endeavour. Let us offer them this opportunity. However, I do not think that as a result of this Agreement, there will be a permanent solution to the problem of the Tamils. The time is not very far off when the monster of Sinhala racism will devour this Agreement. I have unrelenting faith in the proposition that only a separate state of Tamil Eelam can offer a permanent solution of the problem of the people of Tamil Eelam. Let me make it clear to you here, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that I will continue to fight for the objective of attaining Tamil Eelam. The forms of struggle may change, but the objective or goal of our struggle is not going to change. If our cause is to triumph, it is vitally necessary that the wholehearted, the totally unified support of you, our people, should always be with us.

The circumstance may arise for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to take part in the interim administration or to contest elections, keeping in view the interests of the people of Tamil Eelam. But I wish firmly to declare here that under no circumstances and at no point of time will I contest elections or accept the office of Chief Minister.

The Liberation Tigers yearn for the motherland of Tamil Eelam!

aus: The Hindu, Madras, 5.8.87