

Door is open for LTTE to discuss with govt. (1994, May 20). Daily news.

'Emergency' debate

Door is open for LTTE to discuss with govt

Deputy Speaker Gamini Fonseka presided when parliament met at 9 am yesterday.

Mr. Gamini Dissanayake took his oaths as a member of parliament.

Dr. Wimal Wickremesinghe (Minister for Environment and Parliamentary Affairs): Moving the motion for the extension of emergency said:

"The proclamation dated May 14, 1994 made by the President under section 2 of the Public Security Ordinance (Chapter 40) as amended by Act No. 8 of 1959, Law No. 6 of 1978 and Act No. 28 of 1988 bringing into operation the provisions of part II of the aforesaid ordinance throughout Sri Lanka with effect from May 14, 1994 be approved".

Mr. Speaker, when this house met on April 21, 1994, the motion in favour of the continuation of the operation of the emergency regulations was adopted and the motion was passed on the same day.

The incidence of terrorist related violence and crime committed during the period under the review by LTTE terrorists continued unabated, in pursuit of their goal to achieve separatism. It is to be observed that apart from continuing violence in the North and East LTTE terrorists are now concentrating attacks on the western sea-board also in the city of Colombo and its suburban areas.

On account of the continuing acts of terrorism of the LTTE the security forces have been compelled to take effective action recently - especially in Vanni and Mannar. On the other hand it is encouraging to note that the US State Department and the European parliament has officially recognized the terrorist and illegal activities of the LTTE - which is not only confined to Sri Lanka - but also neighbouring countries such as India and Western capitals. In fact the annual terrorism report recently released by the US Department of State titled "Patterns of Global Terrorism 1993" have accepted the position that the LTTE has "integrated a battlefield insurgent strategy with a terrorist programme that targets not only key personnel in the country-side but also senior Sri Lankan political and military leaders in Colombo". It also goes on to state very clearly as follows "the LTTE exploits large Tamil communities in North America, Europe and Asia to obtain funds and supplies for its fighters in Sri Lanka".

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the government is also happy to note that as a sequel to a recent visit to Sri Lanka of a group of European parliamentarians led by Hon. Henri Saby - at the invitation of Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister, European parliament in Strasbourg has indicated its displeasure for allowing LTTE to establish offices in European capitals and also called upon member states of the European Union to close down these offices. It is encouraging to note that the western capitals are becoming aware of the true nature of the LTTE and their sinister motives.

During the period under review, a search and clear operation code named "Operation Jayawarna" was conducted in area West and South West of Vavuniya in order to expand the area of security forces control. The significant gain of this operation was the support of civilians in the area. The civilians in the area cheered and welcomed the troops. A total of 1232 members of 435 families had remained in the area during the operation. Out of 1232 civilians, 15 suspected LTTE cadres have been detained. A total of 10 LTTE cadres of this group had undergone combat training in LTTE camps. Two former cadres of LTTE too, surrendered to the troops, during the operation. In addition to the civilians who remained in the area another 80 civilians of 23 families entered through the forward defended localities in to the newly liberated areas. The operation continues and more areas and civilians will be under the security forces control by the end of this week.

During this operation in Vavuniya a total of 09 terrorists in uniform have been killed and their dead bodies and weapons were recovered.

In the North during the period under review, the terrorists attacked soft targets mainly police posts and troops on routine operations causing casualties.

In the North during the period under review, security forces conducted 09 x cordon and search operations, 05 x raids and 05 x search and clear operations. In these operations security forces were able to kill 35 x terrorists and captured 08 x of their weapons. 25 x suspects too were arrested. 03 x terrorists surrendered to the security forces. 111 x civilians crossed over from uncleared areas to the areas of security forces control.

Mr. Nimal Siripala de Silva (SLFP): We would like to tell the people that under a PA government we will end emergency rule in five months time. After the next general election it is the Peoples Alliance that will form the government ending 17 years of your corrupt rule.

On May 1 when I put up a banner across the road at Eviyigala paying our respects to the Southern people for defeating the UNP. The police came and removed it. But today there were several banners across the Parliament Road greeting Gamini Dissanayake. Why this discrimination?

The day Dr. Wickreme Weerasooria took over as

Secretary of the Policy Planning Ministry a message went out on all fax machines abusing Mrs. Chandrika Kumaranatunge.

Dr. Wimal Wickremesinghe: That's a lie.

It was Mr. Gamini Dissanayake who asked for an independent commission of inquiry into the Kobbekaduwa killing. We gave him only a side support then. He arranged the press conference at the hotel and paid all the bills. We would like to ask him now whether he will press for that commission.

Who is Sottie Upali? He is a UNP ex-co member. He worked for the UNP. We understand that he was in a house belonging to a government politician in Pilimalalawa at the time of his arrest. When we come to power we will appoint a commission to probe his activities. Now you are getting the police to conduct investigations on him just to put the blame on one section of your party and to white wash the leadership. Ultimately Sottie Upali might even get a Presidential pardon.

The daughter of the late President Premadasa Mrs. Dalanjali Jayakody is now asking for a commission to probe her father's death. She says there is no evidence to prove that he was assassinated by the LTTE.

At the time of the incident when we asked you, why did the police wash the scene of the crime? You laughed at us. Now Mrs. Dalanjali Jayakody is asking the same question.

You have a divided leadership in your party today. With that kind of leadership you can never solve the country's problem.

Observer Editor Mahindapala and ANCL Chairman Sunil Rodrigo worked devotedly for you. But you kicked them out. The same thing will happen to the new Chairman Dr. Amunugama.

Mr. Gamini Dissanayake was not at the UNP group meeting on Monday when you voluntarily decided to waive off your parliamentary immunities against any investigations being conducted on allegations of bribery and corrup-

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tion on you. Now we would like to know from Mr. Dissanayake whether he too approves that and also whether he would allow the four complaints against him that had been sent to the Bribery Commissioner to be probed and also whether he will make a declaration on his assets.

Mr. K. B. Ratnayake took the chair at this stage.

Mr. M. H. M. Ashraff (SLMCC): I must thank the Chief Opposition Whip, the Leader of the House and the Government Whip for giving me time to speak on the emergency as this will be my farewell speech prior to handing in my resignation today.

Actually I should have handed over my resignation on March 01, 1994. But I couldn't do it for reasons beyond my control.

In the Karativu incident on March 10, Muslim fishermen lost their fishing boats and nets in a fire. They were burnt by some people. The loss is over Rs. 10 million. I was surprised to find the Minister of Fisheries telling the house on Wednesday that the government has no money to pay that compensation. There was an incident between some Muslim and Sinhala youths. The Muslim people had complained to the police that they feared that their boats will be set on fire that night. In fact a police party had been sent there for protection. But there is evidence that boats were burnt in front of the police. We suspect that the police also had a hand in it.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe winding up the emergency debate in Parliament yesterday said the door was open for the LTTE to enter into discussions with the government for a negotiated settlement to the North/East problem. They (political parties) were currently having discussions on the issue and a consensus has been reached on several matters. It is left to the LTTE to respond.

The Prime Minister said: President D. B. Wijetunga is one of the most experienced politicians in our midst. He was mainly responsible for launching the development of local infrastructure like roads, bridges, telecommunications etc.

In 1977 when the PC set up was evolved, President J. R. Jayewardene wished to entrust the new scheme to persons with eminence and he requested some members to volunteer for this. This is how the present President became Governor of the North Western Province. If not for their voluntary service the system would have failed to get off the ground so quickly.

Though the debate was on the emergency very few spoke about the North - East. Our government is committed towards a peaceful negotiation. I have even asked the LTTE to send in their proposals. We have discussed this with all the parties and have reached consensus on several issues. It is the unit of devolution. That is yet to be decided. I am sure we have the capacity to come to an understanding in the near future. Certain discussions are still going on among political parties and I have not lost hope. Politics takes a long time. The government has not closed the doors to the LTTE. It is upto them to respond.

Replying to an issue raised by Mr. Dinesh Gunawardene the PM said there is no UN force ready to land in Sri Lanka.

With regard to Embilipitiya, the Habeas Corpus applications are presently before the Colombo Magistrate Courts.

The PM also said that the figures trotted out by the opposition with regard to Boossa are incorrect. He said the opposition uses the term "thousands" when talking about Boossa. There are only 134 detainees in Boossa. Of them only 6 were brought in after 1989. Indictments have been filed against 98 and 24 have been recommended for prosecution by the Jayalath Committee. So the myth about Boossa has been exploded.

The weapons and empty cartridges in the Dickwella shooting have been submitted to the Government Analyst. His report is being awaited. The case will be called up on October 03.

The Hon. Hemakumara Nanayakkara referred to some leaflets being distributed in southern tourist hotels. Inquiries have revealed that the LTTE was responsible for the first batch of leaflets. May be the subsequent attempts were those of some other groups.

With regard to the killing of Rasmar Hussain the CID have traced 4 witnesses who are in a position to identify the assailants.

Soththi Upali had never been in a house at Pilimalalawa. Nor is there any building there occupied by the STF. Also there is no presidential security unit at Pilimalalawa. These are the type of stories you circulate. You earlier said that Soththi Upali was a Reserve Sub Inspector attached to the Housing Ministry.

Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe: At the no-confidence debate against the government, I said that the DIG (CID), was making investigations against the "Ravaya" newspaper. Interruptions.

As Prime Minister, I shall answer any false allegations made against any minister. Mr. Sirisena Cooray has already filed a case against this newspaper. As this is before the courts, I shall not say anything further about it.