

Chandrika's acceptance speech. (1994, November 11). *Daily News*.

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Excerpt from the Daily News - 11 th November 1994

In power 'not as a dictator, but to serve the nation'
by Norton Weerasinghe

President-elect Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga yesterday said soon after the final results were announced that she would make use of the massive confidence placed in her by all sections of the people not to rule them as a dictator but humbly serve them with dedication.

Mrs. Kumaratunga said this victory was not a personal victory for her, but a victory of the people who had now given her the mandate to go ahead with the policies of the People's Alliance.

It was also a mandate to put an end to the 17 years of barbaric and dictatorial rule and begin an era of a new style of government which would ensure, peace and human freedoms.

Mrs. Kumaratunga was all smiles as she entered the conference hall to hear the final results which were read out by Commissioner of Elections R.K.Chandrananda de Silva.

Apparently choking with emotion as she began her speech, she thanked the leaders of the constituent parties of the PA and party activists and supporters who, she said, made that victory possible.

Mrs. Kumaratunga said that on the mandate given by the people she would take necessary action to abolish the executive presidency before July 1995.

She would go ahead with the peace talks, and take steps to safeguard the rights of the Sinhala majority, while ensuring the rights of the minorities.

This mandate to go ahead with the peace process was significant, because if was given in the face of a disgustingly low and inflammatory campaign, especially in the past two weeks, she said.

The government and the world should pay homage to the people of Sri Lanka for their restraint, political acumen and humaneness in not succumbing to this virulent campaign aimed at winning a few votes.

The people had given this mandate in the face of many obstacles of all sorts, like political victimisation and denial of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

"It is the ordinary people of Sri Lanka to whom I pay homage at this moment for upholding these human values in the face of intimidation and violence", she said.

"This victory is a mandate for the establishment of democracy and human freedoms, a mandate for honesty and transparency and public duty and public administration and a mandate against the corruption which existed right through the past regime from top to bottom", she said.

"It is also a mandate for the economic programme of the government which will take a new path of equality for all, instead of benefitting a handful of cronies".

Mrs. Kumaratunga said the people should celebrate their victory by trying to live in peace and harmony, instead of harassing political opponents.

Anyone who resorted to violence would be strictly dealt with irrespective of political affiliations, she said.

She thanked the candidates and all parties, the police, the armed services and the Defence Ministry, the Election Commissioner and his officials, public servants and the media, for helping to ensure a peaceful poll.

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