

LTTE won't follow democratic process if defeated in a poll. (1993, July 04). *The Island*.

LTTE won't follow democratic process if defeated in a poll — Ranil

by Elmo Leonard

The LTTE operating in the North and East of Sri Lanka is not willing to abide by a democratic process if they are defeated in a poll conducted in the regions they are active in. Premier Ranil Wickremasinghe told foreign participants at the inauguration of The Economist Conference concluded in Colombo last week.

The Economist Conference, a roundtable between government and foreign investors was organized by 'The Economist' magazine based in UK aimed at providing overseas investors an insight into the investment climate

in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Wickremasinghe said that in a situation where terrorists are not prepared to abide by the vote of the people, no government in the world could restore order within a nation overnight.

Government had control of its administration south of the Wannu jungles of the island nation, Mr. Wickremasinghe said. While the whole of Sri Lanka is technically under the administration of government agents, government lacked the ability to enforce law and order north of the Wannu jungles. Police enforcement was first being

clamped down in the eastern province of the country. Government is currently engaged in disarming the militants. While talks were being held between government and all other parties on the issue in question the LTTE was continuing to be absent.

Mr. Wickremasinghe said that during the past 15 years the nation had seen some sort of economic stability. Following 1989 when southern subversion was defeated government was attempting to accelerate the growth of the economy, with the aim of reaching Newly Industrialised

Nation (NIC) status by year 2,000.

The Prime Minister emphasised that the smooth transference of power following the double assassinations of April 23 and May 1, was a pointer to the nation's maturity as a democracy.

The aim of Sri Lanka is to integrate completely with the economic community of the world, Mr. Wickremasinghe stressed. Towards achieving this end the nation's exchange controls had been relaxed during the past few years; controls in many other sectors had been removed; Customs procedures

were being made simpler; infrastructure was being improved — the policy was clear, that of a commitment to a market-oriented economy. Yet, 40 per cent of the populace lie below the poverty line.

A political package would be needed to solve the problems of the North-East, Wickremasinghe said. It would include socio-economic measures, the growth of industry in the troubled region; the adoption of a market-oriented economy, also within the region. Without such measures long term peace could not be achieved, the Premier said.