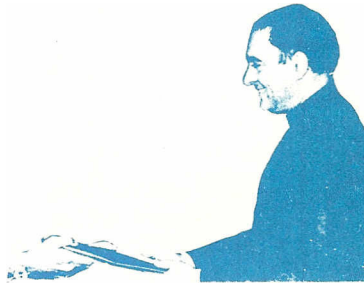


*Liberation Tigers' Critique
on Indo Sri Lankan Accord*



A
NATION BETRAYED

Liberation Tigers' critique on Indo - Sri Lankan Accord.



The paper presented by the Political Committee of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam at the International Tamil Conference held in London on 30th April and 1st May 1988

Why did the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) refuse to accept the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord unconditionally? What are the basic defects and limitations of the Accord? Does the Accord offer a permanent solution to the Tamil national question? Does it fulfill the political aspirations and national interests of our people? Will it create an appropriate political climate so that our people can live in peace, in freedom, with honour, dignity and security?

This paper attempts to answer these crucial questions and clarifies LTTE's position on the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord.

The euphoria and high hopes that were displayed when the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord was signed in July last year have almost disappeared. What prevails now is gloom and hopelessness since the Accord has brought war, violence and misery, instead of the promised peace, harmony and happiness. Yet the Government of India continues to praise the Accord as a remarkable historical triumph, as a magnificent diplomatic achievement on the part of Rajiv Gandhi and Jayawardane. What amuses the people of Tamil Eelam is the continuous assertion by India that the Accord was signed to promote the interests of the Tamils and to find a permanent solution to the Tamil question. In India's opinion, the Accord provides for all the political demands of the Tamils except the demand for an independent Tamil state. We wish to argue that this interpretation advanced by India is deliberately misleading and far from truth.

It is our considered opinion that the Accord fails to fulfill the political and national aspirations of the people of Tamil Eelam. It fails to grasp the complex dimensions of the Tamil national question. It fails to offer an adequate framework for the resolution of the problem. This failure can only be attributed to the superficial approach to a complex historical problem, an approach based on entirely false premises, on false perceptions. Let us discuss the issue in more detail.

A NATIONAL QUESTION

The problem of the Eelam Tamils is a national question. It is a problem concerned with the fundamental political rights of a nation of people. It is a problem of the right to national self-determination of a people. The political struggle of the Eelam Tamils is based on this very question of national self-determination.

Our people have all the attributes that constitute them into a unique nationality. We have a homeland, a historical habitation with well defined territory; a unique culture and tradition, a rich language, a distinct history that extends to pre-historic times.

As a nation of people, we have the right to determine our own political destiny. This right to self-determination of people is recognised by international law and by U.N. Charter. This right bestows upon us the freedom to form an independent state of our own.

Our struggle for self-determination arose as a consequence of state repression, terror and genocide, as a consequence of the rejection by the chauvinistic Sinhala regimes of our civilized demand for Federal autonomy, as a consequence of ever growing conflict between Tamil and Sinhala nations which made co-existence under a unitary state intolerable and impossible.

The forms and methods of our struggle for political independence changed on account of the concrete conditions of State oppression. The peaceful, non-violent agitations adopted by our people were ruthlessly crushed by the repressive arms of the racist State. Armed struggle as a mode of political agitation arose when our people were presented with no alternative other than to resort to armed resistance to defend themselves against a savage form of State terrorism.

As the liberation movement of our people, we have been fighting an armed struggle for the last twelve years to gain our right to self-determination. In this long and arduous struggle we fought with dedication and commitment and made supreme sacrifices. Over a thousand of our cadres have laid down their lives for this noble cause. Our people too, have faced immense suffering, the vicissitudes of which cannot be described by words. Over twenty thousands Tamils have lost their lives for the emancipation of their homeland.

Ours is a national liberation struggle, a struggle for freedom to shape our political destiny, a struggle waged with courage, heroism and sacrifice, a struggle soaked in blood and tears, a struggle built on the ashes of several thousands of martyrs.

The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord fails to identify the essence and mode of our struggle as a liberation struggle, as a struggle for self-determination. Instead, the Accord places our national struggle entirely on a fallacious premise reducing it to a simple problem of a **discriminated minority group in a pluralistic social formation**. The accord acknowledges that "Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, and a multi-lingual society" and that Tamils are one of the ethnic groups. Such characterisation conveniently buries the truth that there are two major linguistically oriented national formations, the Sinhalese speaking and Tamil speaking people and that the conflictual relations between the two generated by the chauvinism of the big nation, is the cardinal cause of the national strife in Sri Lanka.

This pluralistic theory of multi-ethnic, multi-lingual Sri Lankan social formation was advanced by Hector Jayawardane at Thimpu talks to reject outright the demands forwarded by LTTE and other political organisations seeking recognition for Tamil homeland, for Tamil nationality, for the Tamils' right to national self-determination. We are dismayed to find that the Government of India has adopted similar theoretical constructs and definitions utilized by Sri Lankan chauvinists to distort the real issues underlying the Tamil problem. Therefore, the Indian position entrenched in the Sri Lankan ideological terrain rejects the very conceptions of nationality and self-determination which are fundamental to our political struggle.

TAMIL HOMELAND

The people of Tamil Eelam have a homeland, a soil of their own upon which they lived and toiled for centuries, a historically constituted territory embracing the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Our people have an inalienable right to this homeland. This homeland is the basis of our national identity and the very foundation of our socio-economic existence. Therefore, the recognition of the Tamil homeland is a crucial element for any rational and permanent resolution of the Tamil question.

The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord does not recognise the concept of a Tamil homeland. Instead, the Accord contains within itself dangerous clauses that might eventually lead to the bifurcation of our homeland.

The Accord, while recognising that "the Northern and Eastern Provinces have been areas of historical habitation of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking people", it further qualifies the statement by adding, **"who have at all times hitherto lived together in this territory with other ethnic groups."** This qualified statement conveniently ignores the critical problem of the forceful annexation of vast territories of Tamil land by State aided Sinhala colonisation in the last 40 years and to some extent legitimises such illegal encroachment.

The geographical merger of the North and East to form a single Tamil regional State with adequate powers over the land has been the central demand of the Tamils. This demand for the

re-unification and reconstitution of our homeland was the major issue figured in the past agreements and pacts. The question of merger was cardinal, since the Tamil people aspired to enhance their national character and identity and determined to protect their historical homeland from being swamped and swallowed by planned Sinhala colonisation.

Does the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord meet this longstanding, legitimate demand of the Tamils? We are of the opinion that the Accord fails to meet this demand. Contrary to the Indian claims that the question of merger is resolved, the Accord only provides for a temporary linkage; it proposes a single administrative unit consisting of Northern and Eastern Provinces only for an interim period followed by a referendum in the Eastern Province to enable the people of the Eastern Province to decide whether the province remain linked with the Northern Province.

The LTTE is firmly opposed to the idea of a referendum.

We hold the view that the Tamil homeland is one and indivisible and that the geographical contiguity and territorial unity of our homeland should be given unconditional recognition for any meaningful solution to the Tamil question.

The proposal for a referendum for linkage or de-linkage is unacceptable to the Tamils since it has dangerous implications. The Eastern Province is already a seething cauldron of communal tension primarily due to the manipulations of the Sri Lankan government to disrupt the demographic composition of the population. Jayawardane's government is hell bent on devouring the Tamil lands with the objective of reducing the Tamils to a minority in the area. Though a party to the accord, the Sri Lankan government has publicly declared that it was opposed to the merger and would campaign against it. With thousands of Tamils uprooted and driven away from their homes, with thousands of Sinhalese settlers re-allocated in the deserted Tamil villages, one can easily predict the outcome of a referendum, possibly a rigged one.

The people of Tamil Eelam are deeply dismayed that the Government of India, which is fully aware of this sensitive issue, has failed to work out a satisfactory solution. A referendum on this issue questions the legality and validity of our right to homeland which is a historically given reality.

The Indo-Sri Lankan Accord rejects the fundamental political demands of the Eelam Tamils: the demand for the **recognition of our homeland**, for the **recognition of our people as a nationality**, for the **recognition of our people's right to national self-determination**. These demands were proclaimed at the Thimpu talks as a unanimous decision of the Tamils setting out the basis for a permanent resolution of the Tamil national question.

In total disregard to Tamil aspirations, the Accord attempts to impose a settlement within the framework of the unitary constitution of Sri Lanka which is nothing but a legalised embodiment of Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism, thereby subjugating our people to the tyranny of the dictatorship of the majority. The Accord, therefore, fails to take into account the long history of our political struggle, fails to recognise our people's quest for national identity and freedom, fails to realise the significance of the torrents of blood and tears shed in Tamil Eelam or the cause of our liberation struggle. Having completely ignored the aspirations and sentiments of our people the Government of India has entered into this agreement which does not deal with the fundamental issues of our national struggle nor in any way promotes the interests of the Tamil people.

THE PROPOSALS FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT

Let us now critically examine the set of proposals offered by the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord for the settlement of the Tamil issue. The scope and theme of this document does not permit us a

detailed exposition of all the aspects of these proposals. We will confine ourselves to a brief analysis of the important themes.

A collection of incomplete set of proposals negotiated between the Government of India, Sri Lanka and the TULF from **4.5.1986 to 19.12.1986** were recommended in the Accord as the basis for the resolution of the issue. These set of proposals, called the December 19th framework, at that time, were presented to us for consideration by the Government of India in January 1987. Our leader Mr.Pirabakaran, submitted a written response to the Government of India through Hon.M.G.Ramachandran, then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Mr.Pirabakaran rejected the framework outright pointing out the inadequacies of the proposals. Mr.Pirabakaran argued that the proposed devolution of powers set-out in the proposals were extremely limited and failed to meet the legitimate political aspirations of the Tamil people.

This same set of proposals are now presented to us again in the Accord with a commitment that, "the residual matters not finalised during the negotiations shall be resolved between India and Sri Lanka". But to the disappointment and dismay of the Tamils, these residual matters were not taken up for discussions. In blatant violation of the commitment given in the Accord, Jayawardane's regime refused to consider the residual matters, but rather rushed through the Parliament two Bills - **THE 13th AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION AND THE PROVINCIAL COUNCILS BILL** - which contains most of the unresolved, incomplete collection of proposals.

A critical elucidation of the provisions of these Bills brings one important truth to light. That is, the Provincial Council framework envisaged in these Bills is not specifically addressed to the specific grievances of the Tamil people with the specific objective of resolving the Tamil question. Rather, these laws propose the creation of an island wide administrative structure rigidly controlled by the Centre with limited distribution of political authority to all the provinces of Sri Lanka. Provincial Councils are thus reduced to local administrative bodies serving to the dictates of the State. They do not enjoy any autonomous powers of their own. The institutions of the Centre - the Presidency, the office of the Governor and Parliament - are invested with sweeping powers to interfere and control the functions of the Provincial Councils. In essence, the provisions of these Bills, instead of delegating powers from the centre to periphery allows absolute concentration of power to the Centre.

DICTATORIAL POWERS

The 13th Amendment confers on the President totalitarian emergency powers to dissolve or to make redundant any Provincial Council at his whim and fancy. The President can make a proclamation of Emergency on the ground that the maintenance of essential supplies and services is threatened or that the security of Sri Lanka is threatened by war or external aggression or armed rebellion or **in the President's view there is imminent danger of such happenings**. Having declared Emergency, the President can give directions to the Governor on the course of action and that the presidential direction cannot be questioned by any court of law.

The Governor, who will function as the Agent of the President will not be a ceremonial puppet but rather endowed with far-reaching executive powers. Acting on the directions of the President, the Governor's role is to supervise the functions of the Provincial Councils and super-impose the authority of the Centre over them.

By bestowing extra-ordinary powers to the President and to his appointee, the Governor, the architects of these proposals have deliberately thwarted de-centralisation of power to the Provinces and extended the Presidential authority to grass-root level, subjugating the entire Provincial administration of the island to the dictates of the Centre.

It is well-known that President Jayawardane has been abusing emergency powers for the last 10 years to continue his regime of racist repression. With additional emergency powers conferred on him by these laws one can safely assume that Jayawardane will not hesitate to use his power to stifle and suffocate any attempts on the part of the Tamils to assume political power.

With Presidential authority exerting rigid control over the functions of the Provincial Councils, the powers accorded to Parliament to amend or repeal the chapter pertaining to the P.C's make this 'devolution package' a mockery. The legislative powers devolved to the Councils become meaningless and impotent since Parliament retains the power to legislate even on matters allotted to Provincial Councils. In brief, the provisions of these Bills, having effectively constrained devolutional power, allow the perpetuation of the tyranny of the Parliamentary majority which has been the medium of repressive racist policies against the Tamil people.

CENTRAL CONTROL OVER VITAL SUBJECTS

The severe limitations of the functional authority of the Provincial Councils can be best ascertained by the list of subjects that are allotted to the Provinces. While all the crucial subjects that are vital for the social and economic development of the regions are brought under the Central Government (under Reserved and Concurrent lists) only a limited number of unimportant subjects fall within the Provincial administration.

Important subjects like agriculture, industries, fisheries, land development, colonisation, higher education, reconstruction, rehabilitation, local government and several others are excluded from provincial authority.

The powers of the Provincial Councils are extremely limited over the issue of land and settlement which is an important and sensitive matter to the Tamils. The Provincial Councils are denied the right to utilise lands which fall within their regions. The right of alienation of what is described as 'state lands' is vested with the Centre and the President is given power over alienation and disposition of such lands. Furthermore, the State is empowered to allot or acquire lands, or initiate colonisation projects under the cover of inter-provincial irrigation and land development schemes. In brief, the proposals governing land settlement deprive the Tamils their right over their own lands, their right to develop their own soil for their own economic well-being, and their right to protect their own homeland against Sinhala encroachments.

In terms of the limitation of subjects and powers delegated to the Provinces one can safely conclude that Rajiv - JR peace Accord falls short of Bandaranayake-Chelvanayagam Pact of 1957. In the B.C. Pact, "It was agreed that Regional Councils should have powers over specified subjects including agriculture, co-operatives, lands and land development, colonisation, education, health, industries and fisheries, housing and social services, electricity, water schemes and roads". Did not the B.C. Pact offer more to the Tamils 31 years ago than the present agreement?

The proposals concerning law and order, a subject of grave concern to the Tamil people, is the most defective. The proposals fail to meet the demand for a Tamil police service independent of the Center's interference and domination. Rather, it proposes the creation of a dual police system - National and Provincial - with more powers to the national division to appoint senior positions to the Provincial police and even to interfere directly in the affairs of law and order of a province under the cover of emergency. This police system fails to provide adequate security to our people but rather it will allow the perpetuation of Sinhala police tyranny in Tamil areas.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE: A MYTH

The supporters of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord argue that one of the positive elements of the Agreement is the elevation of Tamil language to the status of an official language on a par with Sinhala. But a close scrutiny of this matter will dispel this myth.

The Sri Lanka constitution accords to Sinhala language the full status of the official language, **'to be the sole official language'** and provides for the manner of its use. The status of the Tamil language or its usage is not guaranteed by constitutional provisions. Instead, the 13th Amendment states the Parliament, shall by law, provide for the use of Tamil as an official language. By bestowing such power to the Sinhala majority Parliament the status of the Tamil language as an official language is negated and its use is severely undermined.

FORCEFUL REPATRIATION

A deliberate attempt by both India and Sri Lanka to de-link the burning issue of the plantation Tamils with 'the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka' is the most serious defect of the Accord. The LTTE and other Tamil organisations, at Thimpu talks, insisted on the inclusion of the problem of plantation Tamils in any meaningful attempt to find a permanent political solution to the Tamil issue and demanded that citizenship and other civil rights should be granted to plantation Tamils who consider the Island as their mother country.

The Accord offers nothing to resolve the plight of his section of the Tamil population. Instead, the Government of India's pledges "to expedite repatriation from Sri Lanka of Indian citizens to India concurrently with the repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees from Tamil Nadu". The Accord, allows for forceful repatriation of plantation Tamils, thereby, violating the right of human beings to choose their own country.

TAMIL INTERESTS BETRAYED

In total perspective, the provincial council framework fails to meet the legitimate and reasonable demands of the Tamils; it fails to recognise their political and national aspirations; it fails to promote their socio-economic interests; it fails to guarantee their security concerns. The proposed devolution is not designed to redress the on standing grievances of our people. On the contrary it allows the perpetuation of the domination, oppression and exploitation of the Tamil masses by the racist Sinhala state. Thus, the Indo-Sri Lankan accord offers an inadequate, insubstantial and impotent set of proposals for the resolution of the Tamil issue. This is the offer given as an alternative to a politically conscious nation of people who have been waging an armed struggle for more than a decade to establish an independent sovereign state. This total disregard shown to Tamil political sentiments and aspirations by both India and Sri Lanka brings to surface one important political truth. That is, the signatories of the Accord have little or no concern about the interests of the Tamil people. The Accord was hurriedly signed not with the acknowledgement '11 "the imperative of resolving the ethnic problem" as proclaimed in the preamble to the Agreement. The impelling and compelling imperative was something else. As far as India is concerned, the imperative is her geo-political interests and the Accord secures such national interests. What shocks the Tamil nation is that the Government of India, in persuasion of her geo-political interests has betrayed the Tamils by totally disregarding their political aspirations and interests.

Indisputably India has given primacy to her national and geo-political interests over and above Tamil concerns. But the manner in which the Government of India chose to secure her

interests at the cost of Tamil aspirations is what has deeply disillusioned the Tamil people. Utilizing the Tamil struggle to interfere in the conflict, encouraging the Tamil resistance movement to bring pressure on Jayawardane, taking the responsibility upon itself to mediate on behalf of the Tamils, the Government of India has finally achieved her strategic interests but the Tamils are left alienated, helpless, defenseless, with their fundamental political problems unresolved,

INDIA'S STRATEGIC INTERESTS

Let us now examine the aspects of the Accord that secures India's strategic interests. Sri Lanka, since the assumption to power of the right-wing regime under JR Jeyawardane has been drifting away from India's sphere of influence and was moving towards the power axis of western imperialism. Sri Lanka's open economic policy, her desperation to crush the Tamil freedom movement, her fear of India's hegemonic dominance in the region, propelled Jayawardane to drift closer to western imperialism. Such a drift of a neighbouring country, whose strategic importance is considerable, has irritated India. Furthermore, the subversive activities of Israeli intelligence personnel, the induction of foreign mercenary forces in the war against Tamil guerrillas, the military assistance and training facilities provided by Pakistan, the clandestine operations of the American and West German broadcasting stations, the U.S. bid to take over the oil farms in Trincomalee - all these factors posed a serious threat to peace and stability in the region. Therefore, an Accord of peace and friendship with Sri Lanka, to bring the Island back into India's sphere of influence and to put an end to the penetration of the international forces of subversion became an imperative need for India. The precise objective of the Accord is to secure these strategic interests of India.

First of all, the Accord binds Sri Lanka to India's strategic sphere of influence in the region.

Secondly, it puts an end to the employment of foreign mercenary forces in Sri Lanka.

Thirdly, it stops the activities of Israeli Intelligence agencies in Sri Lanka.

Fourthly, it prevents foreign broadcasting organisations in Sri Lanka to use their facilities for military and intelligence purposes

Fifthly, it allows India to undertake the task of restoring and operating the Trincomalee oil tank farm, and

Sixthly, it prevents the use of Trincomalee or any other ports in Sri Lanka for military purposes by any country in a manner prejudicial to India's interest'.

Thus, the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord secures India's geo-political interests and strategic objectives. The LTTE is sincerely pleased that the Government of India was able to put an end, through the Agreement, the dangerous activities of the international subversive elements who operated in Sri Lanka as agents of imperialism. As a revolutionary liberation movement committed **to anti-imperialist policy we recognise India's security concerns in the region and support her cardinal foreign policy of making the Indian ocean as a zone of peace free from interference of extra-territorial powers.** In this context, we wish to point out that it was the LTTE fighters who put up a heroic and relentless fight against foreign mercenaries. It was the LTTE fighters who shed their blood to contain these evil forces. Our liberation movement is not opposed to India's interests. **We have no objection whatsoever to India's strategic aspirations to establish her status as the regional super-power in South Asia.** We always functioned and will continue to function as a friendly force to India. We would have extended our unconditional support to the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord if the Agreement is only confined to Indo-Sri Lanka relations aimed to secure India's geo-political interests. But the Accord interferes in the Tamil issue, betrays the Tamil interests. It is here the contradiction of interests between the LTTE and India emerges.

The Accord posed a serious threat to the role and function of our liberation organisation, to our armed revolutionary struggle, to our political objectives. The military structure of our organisation, which was built by blood and tears, by the supreme sacrifices of our heroic fighters, by relentless toil of our cadres for the last 15 years was ordered to be dismantled within 72 hours. The Accord stipulated such stringent conditions on our organisation without providing an acceptable solution to the Tamil issue, without providing adequate guarantees for the protection of our people.

The Accord proscribes the armed resistance movement and the political struggle for self-determination. The armed struggle is depicted as terrorist activity, while the demand for the right to self-determination is characterised as 'separatism or secessionism'. These activities are considered "prejudicial to the unity, integrity and security of Sri Lanka" and would not be permitted to be practised on the Indian soil. Those who practice such activity in India would face deportation. The Indian territorial waters will also be closed for 'militant activities. The Accord also threatens Indian military action against any Tamil organisation that rejects the Agreement and refuses to lay down arms.

Thus, the Government of India, suddenly and mercilessly, closed her doors for the Tamil freedom movement and imposed upon the Tamils, at the point of a gun, a framework of proposals that fell very short of their legitimate demands. Tamil interests are the price paid by India to Jayawardane's regime to secure its consent for the Accord. By subordinating the Island to India's regional supremacy, Jayawardane has secured from India what his imperialist masters couldn't provide, that is the total suppression of the Tamil liberation movement and the permanent subjugation of the Tamils under Sinhala hegemony.

WHY WE DECIDE TO CO-OPERATE

The Accord posed an unprecedented challenge to our liberation movement; it signaled a monumental turn of events. As, our leader Mr.Pirabakaran has put it aptly at the Suthumalai convention, "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".

We had no alternative other than to co-operative with India on the implementation of the Accord or to face the full might of the Indian armed forces.

We were taken unawares by the haste and hurry in which the diplomatic carpet was pulled under our feet. The Accord was framed secretly between the Government of India and Sri Lanka without our knowledge. Our leader Mr.Pirabakaran was rushed to Delhi in a hurry on the pretext of a meeting with the Indian Prime Minister. There, in Delhi, the Agreement was read out to him. He was told that the Accord has been finalised and there cannot be any alterations.

Pirabakaran refused to accept the Accord expressing serious reservations on the Provincial Council proposals. He was firm in his conviction that the proposals envisaged in the Accord would pave the way for the permanent settlement to the Tamil question. At this stage, the Indian Prime Minister Mr.Rajiv Gandhi met the LTTE leader and had a lengthy dialogue. The Indian leader gave a patient hearing to Mr.Pirabakaran-s concerns and misgivings, particularly to his anxiety about the security of his cadres and his people. The Indian Prime Minister assured the following:

- The problems and limitations of the proposed framework would be resolved to the

satisfaction of the Tamil people.

- The LTTE would be given its due recognition. An interim Government would be formed with LTTE playing a dominant role.
- A Tamil regional police service would be set up under the Interim Government.
- The Government of India would pay compensation for the LTTE for the maintenance of the organisation following the decision of the LTTE to withdraw the system of taxation in Jaffna. This relief fund would be paid on a monthly basis until the formation of the Interim Government.
- The Government of India also promised funds to the Interim Government for the rehabilitation and resettlement of Tamil refugees.
- The Indian Peace Keeping Force would take over the responsibility of protecting the Tamils in the North and East until an adequate Tamil security system is created.

Following the assurances given by the Indian Prime Minister, we decided to lay down our arms. We also pledged to co-operate with the Government of India on the implementation of the Accord if the Tamil interests are promoted and the Tamil people are protected.

As pledged, we handed over a substantial portion of our arms to the Indian Peace Keeping Force. We parted with our arms as a gesture of goodwill towards India and as a symbolic act signaling our willingness to co-operate with India in her efforts to implement the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord. We also pledged that the rest of the arms would be handed over once the Interim Government is established. While we handed over our arms, we also handed over to the Government of India the responsibility of the protection of our cadres and people. Our leader Mr. Pirabakaran declared at the Suthumalai Convention: "What ardent immeasurable sacrifices we have made for the safety and protection of our people. There is no need 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.

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

The soldiers of the Indian army are taking up the responsibility of safeguarding and protecting us against our enemy. I wish to emphasise very firmly here that by the 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"

On his part, Pirabakaran fulfilled his pledges. He showed his goodwill towards India. In the hope that the lives of his people would be protected he laid down his arms, co-operating with the implementation of the Accord.

We need not elaborate or discuss in detail how the Government of India carried out its responsibility of protecting our people. It has now become the knowledge of the entire world how the Indian army unleashed terror in Tamil Eelam, turning our homeland into a killing field, how the promises and pledges given to us were betrayed, how the terms of the Accord were violated.

The LTTE did not violate any provisions of the Accord. But it was the signatories of the Accord who chose to violate the Agreement. Let us document here, very briefly, the breaches of the Accord made by both Sri Lanka and India.

VIOLATIONS OF THE ACCORD

Sri Lanka Government violated the Accord by:

- Failing to release the Tamil political prisoners.
- Failing to withdraw the Emergency rule in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.
- Failing to disband the Sinhalese home-guards in the Eastern Province.
- Failing to confine the armed forces in the barracks.
- Intensifying Sinhala colonisation in Tamil areas.
- Opening up Sinhala police stations in the North and East.
- Arresting LTTE regional commanders and cadres and attempted to take them to Colombo for interrogation and execution.
- Refusing to merge the North and East.
- Rejecting talks on residual matters concerning Provincial Councils.

The Indian Government withdrew its commitments and pledges by:

- Failing to set up an Interim Government for the North and East.
- Failing to set up a Tamil police system.
- Arming the other Tamil groups while disarming the LTTE.
- Allowing these armed groups to hunt down LTTE cadres. • Allowing our political wing leader Thileepan to die from fasting.
- Allowing the LTTE regional commanders and cadres who were in the custody of the IPKF to die.
- Declaring an unjust war against the LTTE.
- Being responsible for the senseless slaughter of thousands of innocent Tamil civilians.

These are the remarkable achievements made by both Sri Lanka and India since the signing of the Accord to promote the well-being of the Tamil people and to establish peace and normalcy in Tamil areas. From this impressive list of achievements it is easy to assume who is responsible for the present chaotic state of affairs in Tamil Eelam, whether it is the LTTE or the signatories of the Accord.

In theory and practice, the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord is a monumental failure. It is a disastrous failure in so far as it acclaimed objective of resolving the Tamil problem is concerned. The Accord has miserably failed to bring about peace and normalcy in Tamil areas, nor has it promoted "the safety, well-being and prosperity" of our people. Instead, it brought war, violence, death and destruction; it brought a holocaust to the Tamil nation; it brought a colossal human tragedy.

The Accord is a failure because the parties who entered into this diplomatic contract paid no attention to the pathetic plight of the Eelam Tamils, to their profound suffering and anguish, to their complex problems and grievances.

The Government of India is only concerned with securing and consolidating her national interests and gee-political gains. Whereas, Sri Lanka is only concerned with the liquidation of the Tiger movement and the destruction of the Tamil freedom struggle. The people of Tamil Eelam have become the unfortunate victims of these different designs of a regional super-power and a racist state.

It is our liberation movement which is sincerely concerned with the interests of our people. It is because of our earnest and genuine commitment to the cause of our people we stand in conflictual relations with India and Sri Lanka. It is this conflict of interests that has exploded into a war.

This war undertaken by India with its full military might against our liberation movement has been

continuing for the last seven months causing unprecedented suffering to our people. The reason advanced by India to legitimise her military misadventure is that the Tamil Tiger are opposed to the Accord and that they have to be disarmed as a necessary condition for the implementation of the Accord. This argument is untenable and far from truth. **The real objective of this massive military exercise is to terrorize the Tamil population and to impose upon them against their will - a defective political arrangement.**

Why India, the ardent advocate of global peace, of non-violence and non-alignment, the master of the world's largest democratic system, a crusader against oppression who intervened in Bangladesh, a champion for the world liberation movements and struggles for self-determination, chose to adopt an unpopular method of military repression and domination against a nation of people who are its ally and friend, who are culturally and ethnically bound to its blood and history, is the most perplexing question that torments our people. We do not think that the interests and aspirations of the Eelam Tamils, which are articulated in the political goals of the LTTE, are necessarily incompatible with India's national and strategic interests. What we demand is freedom from fear, from oppression, from genocidal annihilation; what we demand is justice, peace and security; what we demand is the recognition of our inalienable rights, our birth rights, our fundamental human rights; what we demand is liberty to shape our own destiny, to shape our own social, economic and political life; what we demand is a rational political system that could ensure our rights and liberties so that we could live like civilized humans with freedom, honour and dignity.

These demands are fair, reasonable, and legitimate and are not incompatible with democratic political thought and practice. If there had been an earnest and sincere effort on the part of India to resolve the national conflict, a political model could have been evolved to accommodate the aspirations of the oppressed Tamil masses without prejudicial to India's geo-political interests. But the policy makers in Delhi chose to ignore completely the concerns of the Tamil people.

We hope that the Government of India will give up its militaristic approach and opt for a path of peace and negotiations. The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord can only succeed if Tamil aspirations are recognised and the deep, complex, historical problems of the Tamils are resolved to the satisfaction of the Tamil people.

INDIAN MILITARY STRATEGY

Morally and spiritually we are opposed to this war. We do not want a conflictual relationship with India. This war is imposed on us against our will. We are only fighting to defend ourselves, to protect ourselves, against a formidable military machine far superior in manpower and fire power which is determined to wipe us out. While fighting a defensive war against severe odds, against extreme conditions, we are trying to impress upon the Government of India that the will and determination of a people cannot be subjugated or crushed by military means however formidable it may be.

Since the beginning of this war, we have been pleading with the Government of India to call off the military offensive operations and to resume negotiations to settle the issues by peaceful dialogue. We have indicated our willingness to lay down our arms and co-operate with the implementation of the Accord. At the same time we continue to insist that the interests of our people should be secured and their lives protected. In several communications to the Indian Prime Minister our leader Mr. Pirabakaran has expressed his desire for peace and reconciliation. But to our great disappointment India's response was negative. There is no indication whatsoever on the part of India to bring about peace and normality in Tamil areas. It is easy to discern from the belligerent and the intransigent attitude shown to us and from the malicious propaganda

carried out to malign our movement that the Government of India aims none other than the total destruction of the LTTE. In other words, the strategic objective of this war is the 'total immobilisation' - to use the current Indian military jargon - of the armed resistance movement of the Eelam Tamils, and to put an end to the struggle for national emancipation. Therefore, there is no doubt that this war is conducted, in such a callous and ruthless manner, for such a prolonged period of time, against all pleadings from the Tamil people, to serve the chauvinistic designs of the Sinhala regime. There is no doubt that India is playing into the evil hands of Jayawardane. This is the most dangerous aspect of the present Indian policy. By destroying the Tamil resistance movement which has been the protective shield of the Tamils against Sinhala state terrorism and the only bargaining card for political negotiations, India is committing a grave political blunder and also doing a grave injustice to the Tamils. The Indian Government will realise the folly of the present policy when it finds that Jayawardane regime going back on its commitments of the Accord once the Indian army succeeds in its strategy of totally immobilizing the Tiger movement. It is unfortunate that the Government of India has embarked on this disastrous policy at this critical juncture when Jayawardane has already violated the terms of the Accord, when a political process in Tamil Eelam is not instituted, when Tamil concerns particularly their security is not guaranteed, when the immense problems of the uprooted Tamil refugees are not resolved.

Another aspect of the Indian policy that causes serious concern among the Tamil people is the plan to hold Provincial Council elections in Tamil areas under the umbrella of Indian military occupation and domination. This plan to induct an electoral process under the conditions of war and violence without creating conditions of peace and normalcy constitutes a serious breach of democratic practice. The people of Tamil Eelam want peace; they want the restoration of normal life; they want the creation of an appropriate atmosphere where free, unhindered expression of political will is possible. The prevailing conditions in Tamil Eelam is not conducive for the induction of a political process. The IPKF which has been behaving as an army of occupation has destroyed the free press, banned public meetings and assembly, and imposed rigid control over political expression. Our people are denied all democratic rights and freedoms which are fundamental to free political expression, therefore, this Indian plan to hold elections under these circumstances is nothing but a travesty of democracy, a mockery of democracy.

In view of these dangerous policies and plans envisioned by India in collision with Sri Lanka, it is of utmost importance that the international Tamil community should campaign effectively to bring maximum pressure on the Government of India to abandon its militaristic, authoritarian approach and to seek peace and reconciliation with the LTTE.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

We do not want a protracted war with India. We want to put an end to this unfortunate conflict as early as possible. As our leader Mr. Pirabakaran has declared at Suthumalai, our organization is prepared to co-operate with India in her effort to implement the Accord. As he said, we have no alternative but to offer India an opportunity to find a political settlement to the Tamil question. We are also prepared to face a democratically constituted electoral process to convince the world that the wider sections of the popular masses are behind our liberation movement.

It is the consensus opinion of all Tamil political organisations that the Provincial Council framework in the present form is defective, has serious limitations and falls very short of Tamil aspirations. Therefore this framework cannot be the basis for a permanent political settlement of the Tamil issue.

We are of the opinion that the Government of India should. re-negotiate with Sri Lanka with the

active participation of the Tamil representatives to work out an adequate framework with satisfactory devolution of power for a regional Tamil State. The LTTE holds the view that the principles enunciated at Thimpu demanding the recognition of Tamil people as a nation, the recognition of Tamil homeland, the recognition of the right to self-determination of the Tamils. The recognition of the right to citizenship of the plantation Tamils - should be the basis for a permanent solution to the Tamil national question.

The urgent and immediate task facing India today is to restore peace and normalcy in Tamil Eelam. The establishment of a congenial atmosphere of peace in the war torn territory is a necessary condition to initiate a political process. To create the conditions for peace, the Government of India should call for a ceasefire and withdraw its offensive military operations against the LTTE. Laying down of arms by the LTTE is not the stumbling block for a reconciliation. What the LTTE demands from India for the handing over of arms is appropriate guarantees and safeguards for the protection of life of the Tamil people.

It is the considered opinion of the LTTE and of the Eelam Tamils that an Interim Government should be established until appropriate conditions are created for the induction of an electoral process. This would facilitate, apart from other matters, the rehabilitation and resettlement of the Tamil refugees which is of utmost importance to alleviate the suffering of our people and to create conditions of normalcy in Tamil areas.

The future direction of our struggle is contingent upon actions and responses of the Government of India to our fair and reasonable suggestions which are predicated upon the interests of our people. But we can assure you that the LTTE will continue the struggle in the forms and modes that are suited to concrete conditions and historical necessities to advance the cause of our people.

At this critical historical juncture, when the Eelam freedom struggle is facing a grave crisis, it is the duty and responsibility of all patriotic Tamils living abroad to unite into a single force, into a single voice to articulate and campaign for their beleaguered brethren in their homeland. We suggest that an international forum of expatriate Tamils should be formed to organise an international lobby to:

1. Bring to book the human rights violations and other atrocities committed by the Indian troops in Tamil Eelam.
2. Expose the undemocratic, totalitarian methods adopted by the Indian government to terrorise the Tamil civilian masses and to impose upon them, against their will a political formula that is totally unacceptable to them.
3. Campaign for immediate cessation of hostilities and negotiations with the LTTE without pre-conditions.
4. Campaign for the establishment of an Interim Government as pledged by India.
5. Campaign for a political settlement based on the cardinal principles enunciated at Thimpu giving primacy to our struggle for national self-determination.

We hope that the international Tamil community will provide unrelenting support to the LTTE in its determined struggle to advance the cause of the Eelam Tamils. The LTTE is fighting for a right cause, a legitimate cause, a noble cause and righteousness and truth will eventually be victorious.

Indisputably India has given primacy to their national and geo-political interests over and above Tamil concerns. But the manner in which the Government of India chose to secure her interests at the cost of Tamil aspirations is what has deeply disillusioned the Tamil people. Utilizing the Tamil struggle to interfere in the conflict encouraging the Tamil resistance movement to bring pressure on Jayawardane, taking the responsibility upon

itself to mediate on behalf of the Tamils, the Government of India has finally achieved her strategic interests but the Tamils are left alienated, helpless, defenseless, with their fundamental political problems unresolved.