



THE AMBASSADOR
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Colombo, Sri Lanka

March 12, 2001

Dr. Nagalingam Ethirveerasingham
18102 Harvest Avenue
Cerritos, CA 90703

Dear Dr. Ethirveerasingham,

Thank you for your thoughtful, well-written letter of March 9. I can well understand why you ask what sort of political system the US would indeed favor for Sri Lanka. My speech indeed begs that question.

You will perhaps have noticed in my list of official US opinions that we think Sri Lankans should themselves determine the political system for the future through negotiations. We feel that it is not our place to prescribe political arrangements for another country. Some people would call that a cop-out, considering our strong views against Eelam and LTTE tactics as well as against Sinhala chauvinists; others would say it is prudent diplomacy. It is not our country, after all.

As an American, and one who believes in states' rights and local government, I personally would be comfortable either with a federal or a confederal structure for Sri Lanka. But if I'm asked publicly, I'll demur because it would be presumptuous and interventionist to do otherwise. But I hope the negotiators for the Sri Lankan Government and the Tamils turn to federalism or confederalism because I think these two set-ups would accommodate the country's diversity, give Tamils very substantial self-rule, promote prosperity and keep the country together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ashley".

E. Ashley Wills