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SRI LANKAN OFFERS PLAN FOR ELECTION

Retiring Leader Will Dissolve Parliament Dec. 20 and Set Vote for February

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Dec. 3 (AP) — President J. R. Jayewardene announced today that he would dissolve Parliament on Dec. 20 and that parliamentary elections would be held in February, six months ahead of schedule.

In his address to the nation, broadcast on state-run radio and television, the 62-year-old leader said he had decided to dissolve Parliament a day after a presidential election on Dec. 19 to give his successor "the benefit of the views of the present electorate."

Opposition leaders and the powerful Buddhist clergy have called for the dissolution of Parliament before the presidential election in an effort to end ethnic unrest that has plagued this Indian Ocean island for five years and claimed nearly 10,000 lives.

Parliamentary elections were due in August 1989, but Mr. Jayewardene said that the balloting had been advanced to Feb. 15 and that the new legislators would begin their six-year term on March 9.

"I feel that an opportunity should be given to the people to elect a new Parliament so that the new president should have the benefit of the views of the present electorate," he said.

Jayewardene to Step Down

Mr. Jayewardene, who is limited by law to two six-year terms, has said he will step down as soon as his successor is chosen.

His United National Party has been in power since 1977, extending the term of Parliament through a 1982 referendum instead of a general election.

An ethnic Sinhalese extremist group, the People's Liberation Front, has called on the 9.3 million eligible voters to boycott the presidential election, charging that Mr. Jayewardene's Government is incapable of conducting a fair vote.

The front opposes a peace accord aimed at ending an insurgency by ethnic Tamil militants who are fighting for a separate homeland in the northern and eastern regions. They also want Indian peacekeeping troops trying to enforce the accord to leave the island.

The front contends that the pact grants too many concessions to the Tamils, who are mostly Hindu and make up 18 percent of the island's 16 million people.

Front Blamed for 900 Killings

The authorities have blamed the front for more than 900 killings, most of them Government supporters, since the accord was signed in July 1987.

The predominantly Buddhist Sinhalese make up 75 percent of the population and control the Government and the military.

Mr. Jayewardene will end a political career of 45 years when he leaves office. In his speech tonight, he said civil war had prevented many Government programs from being carried out.

But he added, "I value especially whatever I have been able to do to preserve the rights of my people to elect their representatives, to point out their mistakes and to replace them through elections, thus preserving the fundamental freedoms of democracy."

The main challengers in the presidential contest to replace Mr. Jayewardene are the candidate of his United National Party, Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa, and Sirima Bandaranaike, leader of the opposition Freedom Party.

The People's Liberation Front is suspected of a bomb and gun attack on Thursday on an election rally of the presidential candidate of the opposition People's Party, Oswin Abeygunasekera. Mr. Abeygunasekera was unhurt, but four people, including his bodyguard and the party vice president, were killed.