

Army stays on alert despite talks. (1994, September 04). *Sunday times.*

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The armed forces want to be fully equipped to meet any threat from the LTTE irrespective of any negotiations with the rebels, Defence sources said yesterday.

"The armed forces have also expressed views against the feasibility of declaring a ceasefire in the north," they said.

Armed forces Chiefs and Defence Secretary Hamilton Wanasinghe this week briefed Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga, Deputy Defence Minister, Anuruddha Ratwatte and other senior ministers on the security situation in the north east.

Mr. Ratwatte yesterday flew to the north to visit soldiers in the battle field and assured them the

government would look into welfare measures of the soldiers.

In a related development the People's Alliance government has decided to back a proclamation already made by President Dingiri Banda Wijetunga to confine the state of emergency to the northern and eastern provinces and part of the Puttalam district.

The proclamation has been made by the President with effect from last Thursday midnight and parliament will take it up for approval when it meets on Thursday, Justice Minister G.L. Peiris told 'The Sunday Times'.

The state of emergency was redeclared islandwide on August 16 after

the General Elections and should have been passed in parliament within 10 days, if it was to continue. However as it was not approved when parliament met on August 25 the state of emergency was due to lapse tonight.

The President has issued the new proclamation before that date. Thus the state of emergency does not exist in areas other than those specified in the presidential proclamation. Meanwhile more details have emerged on the controversial arms deal which the new government has suspended.

Defence sources said the former UNP government had entered into the arms deal with a Russian com-

pany to equip the military for a major operation in the north. However with the government deciding to hold snap polls it had not been able to go ahead with its plans.

The military already had sent 15 personnel including mechanical engineers and gunners for training in Ukraine to use the armoured personnel carriers which the government intended to buy.

Meanwhile a Singapore bank from which the former government had made the loan arrangements has demanded the payment of the balance of the 10 per cent of the massive 3.6 billion rupee deal. The government had already paid Rs. 290 million.

LTTE Chief ready to meet Chandrika

LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran is prepared to meet Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga if she comes to Jaffna, Government Agent K. Manickavasagar said yesterday quoting an announcement by LTTE spokesman Anton Balasingham.

Mr. K. Manickavasagar arrived in Colombo yesterday to brief Ms. Kumaratunga on the situation in Jaffna in the wake of the easing of the trade embargo.

Mr. Manickavasagar said he would give the Prime Minister a memorandum he himself had prepared.

There was speculation Jaffna GA might be carrying a message from the LTTE to the PA government.