

Peace Accord: Another Intervention

While the "No ethnic problem" school stands apart, the main debate on the Sri Lanka tragedy is dominated by what one may identify, at the risk of oversimplification, as the "War and Peace" groups. That discussion usually moves on "militarised settlement" tracks. The argument of the militarists sometimes refined to a "negotiation from a position of (military) strength, or advantage."

An important connected issue concerns an Indian role. Is it necessary, inevitable, avoidable, undesirable etc? The Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord of 1987 is almost always examined in that larger context with the post-Accord experience certainly the spectacular re-emergence of the JVP attracting the greatest attention.

Before the Pact was signed its strongest critic was National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali the politician who supervised the Vadamarachchi Operation, and was bitterly

disappointed when it was abandoned. Party Secretary, Gamani Jayasuriya was another conscientious objector in the Cabinet. Prime Minister Premadasa knew nothing about it till he read the morning papers in his Tokyo hotel room, the most vocal advocates of the 'Accord' were Ministers Gamini Dissanayake and Ronnie de Mel. (The latter was minister-in-attendance during Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit.

Consistency is an uncommon virtue of that tribe to which the average politician belongs. So it was heartening to hear Mr. Gamini Dissanayake the DUNF chief come out so strongly and unreservedly in favour of the Indo-Sri Lanka 'Peace Accord' which its co-signatory President JR argues has lapsed because the IPKF didn't fulfil its, expressly declared mission.

Participating in a panel discussion at the YMCA Mr. Dissanayake said "Over and over again we must tell the LTTE 'come for talks'. He said, the report

adds, "I support the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, every word, comma and full stop".

Mr. Dissanayake went on to identify its virtues. For the first time accepted Sri Lanka as multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society, consisting of Sinhalese, Tamils Muslims and Burghers. The ethnic dispute was the result of the fact that Sinhala leaders considered Sri Lanka a Sinhala-Buddhist country, ignoring the reality that a fourth of its population was non-Sinhala and non-Buddhist. The DUNF leader said the Sinhala-Buddhist view was the misrepresentation of well known historical facts. The Elara Dutugemunu battle was interpreted as a Sinhala-Tamil conflict but a Sinhala general fought on the side of Elara and Tamil soldiers fought under King Dutugemunu's banner".

New Convert

Either this is (innocent) misrepresentation or a genuinely new conversion. Many a political observer has identified Gamini D. with the other

Gaminis — cabinet colleague Gamani Jayasuriya, now leader of the S. A. S. and Gamini Iriyagolle, an able ideologue of the self-same school, as defenders of the faith. Indeed, as Mahaweli Minister presiding over the Welioya



— Kautilya

Men and Matters

project, a battleground of EELAM WAR I, he was widely recognised as an avant-garde ideologue of "The Sovereign State", authored by Herman (no associate of Goering) Gunaratne.

With poor Lalith gone, this unqualified endorsement of the "Peace Accord" is an ideological sea-change for the DUNF.

India-Israel

It also means of course that the chances

of a DUNF-UNP rapprochement are now remote. In the same newspaper the previous day we had Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, just back from Delhi, express the official view. Denying frequent reports of Sri Lanka's re-

DUNF that has now re-emerged, sans Lalith, as the island's leading pro-Delhi, pro-Peace Accord party.

Not that the hopes of reconciliation in the faction torn SLFP are any rosier. Not at all. Not after what we read in all

the CBI did not have the statutory authority to investigate the case.

The charge-sheet, he told the designated Court, had no material to show that the accused were seeking to "overawe" the government, an essential requirement in invoking TADA. The main ingredient in the definition of a "terrorist act" under this law was "an intent to overawe the government". However, there are other provisions which the prosecution can rely on such as "strike terror among the people" and "alienate sections of the people" and "adversely affect harmony between different groups."

The defence counsel has also argued that was "an ordinary citizen" at the time of the killing "and enjoyed" no special status "to justify the use of TADA. The fact that he was a former prime minister was no justification, for the use of the extraordinary law. What Mr. Doraiswamy is seeking to establish is that this murder was a settling of a personal score the personal "en-

mity" between Rajiv Gandhi and Velupillai Prabhakaran.

The proceedings have also established why Prabhakaran decided to re-open hostilities. It was when the Indians did nothing to stop the Sri Lankan authorities from transferring 13 LTTE prisoners in their custody. They went for: their cyanide pills. Among the dead were three of Prabhakaran's closest comrades. By the way, K. F. Rustomjee, arguably India's top counter-terrorism expert describes the LTTE as "one of the most formidable groups in the world".

Wise Guys

When you come to think of it, seriously, it is right that our little island is known as the dhammadeepa, blessed by the teaching of the Enlightened One. We have a touch of the Master, his superlative dialectical skill.

So what are they saying in the trains, buses and trishaws, as J. L. Fernando, the Political Corr. of the Daily Noise, that other all-knowing one would

have asked 40 or 50 from years ago. Not to worry, Kautilya is here to pose the question and provide the answers.

So what are they saying in the privatised buses and to-be privatised trains? (Forget the trishaws. I use that mode of transportation daily and agree that it is thoughtful of the driver to carry his coffin with him, while you meditate on your next destination in the karmic journey).

In the buses, the trains and the clubs they are saying....

"You saw, no?"
"Saw what..?"

"Why men, the Commission Report..?"

"What Commission..?"

"So many commissions, so many reports.."

"What men, the Kob-

bekaduwa Commission report.."

"So what does it say.."

"Tiger landmine, Tiger infiltration.."

"I say....how can those bu-rs talk about 'Tigers'... what do they know? One b-r from Ghana, the other fellow from Nigeria.."

"Then what about Sir Kenneth James Keith