

No alternative but to meet the Tigers with force. (1993, December 05). *The Observer*.

● Repeated attempts to bring about peace have failed

No alternative but to meet the Tigers with force – Prime Minister

By Anton Nonis

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said yesterday that the Government had no alternative but to meet the tiger terrorists with force as all attempts made to resolve democratically the issue of the division of the country raised by the LTTE had failed.

He added that the LTTE had been called for talks over and over again, but they resorted to armed action.

This was the case during the J. R. Jayewardene and Ranasinghe Premadasa regimes as well as during the present regime of

of service. The SPC donated packages of books to school libraries selected on a district basis. The SPC set out Rs. 500,000 for the purpose.

He said that different sections in society came out with different opinions on the North-East issue. Some wanted the country divided, some others, not. But, whatever it is, the government is conscious of this matter and will tackle it very carefully.

It is true that the Security Forces suffered losses at the Kilali and the Pooneryn battles. But, losses for the enemy too were substantially high in these instances.

He said that the Government had solved many problems. This problem remained to be solved.

The Prime Minister also

said that unlike in the past, the United National Party (UNP) Government had done a lot for the Tamil community. Tamil language was made a state language. Tamil students have equal opportunities like the Sinhalese students to enter Universities and also that Tamil population has equal job opportunities.

During the past regime, things were much different in the country. There was absolutely no press freedom. UNP meetings were banned. If by chance five UNPers got together, they were taken to the police station and punished. A person could carry only two measures of rice. Carrying more was an offence. Rice was not allowed on Tuesdays and Fridays. A person was given only two

yards of cloth. And a whole lot of dirty measures were adopted by the earlier regime.

It was during such difficult times that Mr. Tyrone Fernando decided to leave aside his law profession and take up politics.

"Any citizen knows Tyrone's contribution to the country's uplift. President Wijetunga has also appointed him the chairman of a press committee that will be responsible to inform the people here and abroad of all the happenings in the North-East. Unlike in the past, today there is complete press freedom," the Prime Minister said.

There are some 60 to 70 journals published in the country. Some of these attack the Government directly, in a harsh way.

But, we do not want to stop them. They can go on till they realise what they had been doing is wrong.

The Prime Minister also stressed the importance of reading for anyone including all school children. It will keep them informed as to what's happening in various quarters in the country. Reading also would enable them to compare and contrast the achievements of the present government with those of the past regimes, Mr. Wickremesinghe said.

Mr. Tyrone Fernando said that he was a proud man for having completed twenty years in active politics. The UNP had been in power for the past 18 years. There still remains many more things to be done for the betterment of all peoples in the country. The UNP will never call it a day until all this work is done to the best, Mr. Fernando added.

5.12.93
OBSEWER