



MILITARISATION IN SRI LANKA

World Bank's South Asia

Director Paul Isenman had raised the issue of economic aid to Sri Lanka being spent on the purchase of military equipment, before the Paris Aid Consortium decided on 19 June to grant Rs.40.3 billion (US\$ 847 million) as aid for 1993. The question raised by Mr. Isenman apparently did not have any effect on the outcome of the meeting of the Consortium as the aid was increased by US\$15 million from the aid pledge for 1992.

The pace of militarisation has been increasing rapidly in the past fifteen years. In 1978 the defence expenditure was Rs.560 million (US\$ 12 million). By 1986 it had risen to Rs. 8,855 million (US\$ 189 million). Defence spending rose from 3.3% GDP in 1989 to 4.2 in 1992. For the year 1993, Rs.24 billion (US\$ 5 10-million) has been allocated for defence. This amount is equivalent to 60% of the aid approved by the Paris Aid Consortium. Sri Lanka maintains that foreign economic aid is not spent on the military. This is similar to saying, "I am not spending from this pocket but from the other pocket". It must also be noted that all government machinery is geared to the prosecution of the war and expenditure for service and social sectors has fallen. Expenditure for general public services has fallen from 13.5% in 1990 to 7.4% in 1991; for social services from 11.3% to 9.1%; for education from 3.9% to 3.6%; for health from 4.8% to 3.4%; for housing from 1.9% to 1.6%.

In 1980 there were only 15,000

persons in the armed forces. In 1985 the total regular forces numbered 2 1,560, reserves - 18,200, police - 14,500 and paramilitary home guards - 5,000. In that year Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, who was then Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Employment, introduced a plan to ensure that those entering the security services will not be raw recruits but persons with a high degree of training. Military schools were set up and laws such as "Mobilisation of Supplementary Forces Act" and regulations such as "Emergency (Military Training Centres) Regulations" were introduced to ensure that a large number of persons were trained.

As a result of the intense military recruitment drive a large number of persons have been recruited to the armed forces. The Army has 70,000 personnel, the Navy 10,000 and the Air Force 8,000. The Police Force number 30,000 including the 3,000- man Special Task Force (STF) anti-guerrilla unit. There are also 12,000 personnel in the National Auxiliary Force (NAF) and 15,000 in the Home Guard units in the border villages and colonisation schemes in the North East. Sinhalese civilians have also been provided weapons.

Recruitment is not without its difficulties. In the last four years, nearly 10,000 soldiers have deserted. Army sources say around 3,000 have returned to their Posts and have been pardoned. Many soldiers deserted with weapons and a number of them

have been caught while committing robberies. Reports say many are also involved in murder, rape and other crimes in the south. Some of the contract killings in Colombo are said to have been carried out by soldiers. As the war drags on recruitment is becoming more and more difficult. Last year the qualifications to join the Army were lowered and again this year the Army has announced that one needs only to be 5 feet in height and educated upto the 5th standard.

Acquisition of military equipment keeps pace with the recruitment drive. In November 1992, the British Government lifted its embargo on arms to Sri Lanka imposed a few years earlier, declaring that the Human Rights situation in the island has improved. The main suppliers of arms to Sri Lanka now are China, Argentina and the former countries of the Eastern Block. The collapse of the Soviet Union has helped Sri Lanka as arms from Russia and other former communist countries are more easily available.

Currently Puccara ground attack aircraft are being used to bomb the North East. A large number of civilians have been killed in these attacks. Four Puccara Aircraft were supplied by Argentina in January this year at a cost of US\$ 2.8 million each, and can carry upto 1,500 kg bombs and rockets or missiles. The Airforce also has eleven Italian made SIA Marchetti aircraft for counter insurgency, 17 ground attack Bell helicopters, six Cessna aircraft and two Dauphin helicopters for maritime

reconnaissance and rescue, 18 planes including Chinese Y8 and Y 12 aircraft and 7 helicopters for transport, and 30 planes for training. The transport aircraft are often used for dropping the "Sri Lankan special Barrel Bombs", a lethal mixture of explosives and iron nails. The main military airbase is at Ratmalana and the Vavuniya airport is being extended. The extension will result in the displacement of a large number of Tamil civilians. Within Jaffna peninsula, the Palaly airport is in the hands of the military. The Trincomalee and Batticaloa airports have also been extended and newly equipped.

The main Naval base is at Trincomalee. There are also other bases at Karainagar, Tangalle and Kalpitty. The Navy has two large Jayesagara patrol crafts and 42 other patrol crafts including Israeli, South Korean and Chinese vessels. The Navy also uses 30 other boats, six amphibious craft, and three ships for command and support.

The army has a variety of arms and military equipment. Currently it uses 25 T-54 and T-55 battle tanks, 76 armoured cars and 197 armoured personnel carriers including Chinese Type 85, Unicorn and Saracen Carriers. Also in use in the North East are 14 Yugoslavian 76 mm field guns, 12 Chinese 85 mm guns, 24-88mm pdr guns, 12 Chinese 130 mm Type 59 guns, 60 recoilless anti tank guns and 248 mortar guns. Military personnel use T 56 assault rifles. Some units also use German weapons. Home guards have been provided Lee Enfield rifles. It is interesting to note that many of the countries providing economic aid to Sri Lanka are also providing military aid.

The Joint Operations Council Regulations No.2 of October 1992 provides for the Joint Operations Council charged with the function of deciding and directing security operations. The Council

comprises the President (Chairman), Prime Minister, State Minister for Defence, the secretaries to the Ministry of Defence and State Ministry of Defence, Head of the Joint Operations Command (JOC), the Chiefs of Armed Services, the Inspector General Police (IGP) and the Director of the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB). The service chiefs and the IGP are required under the regulations to act under the command of the Chief of the JOC, who is currently Lt.Gen. Hamilton Wanasinghe.

Militarisation in Sri Lanka goes on in hand with the establishment of the intelligence services. Apart from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) which is more involved in harassing people than investigating crimes, NIB is the main intelligence organisation in Sri Lanka. During President Premadasa's period a "Secret Service" was set up in the National Housing Development Authority headed by retired police officers. This secret service was involved in the identification of persons politically opposed to President Premadasa and "getting rid" of them. Then there was the Bureau of Special Operations (BSO) led by the now infamous Premadasa Udugampola. Reports say during the period BSO operated, it was responsible for the disappearance of a large number of people.

As a result of intense militarisation the military is increasingly entering into and controlling civilian life. Politicians often take up the cause of the military and it is not infrequent for MPs to speak in Parliament about the importance of improving the wages and conditions of the soldiers fighting the war. Officers of the armed forces are frequently invited to religious and social ceremonies.

Recently members of the Sri Lankan diplomatic service were up

in arms over the appointment of military personnel as Sri Lankan envoys abroad. Former Army Commander and Secretary to the Ministry of Defence Gen. Sepala Atygala was until recently High Commissioner in Britain. Many will remember the furore over the appointment of "Jaffna Butcher" Tissa Weeratunge as High Commissioner to Canada. Another former Army Commander and Secretary to the Ministry of Defence Gen. Cyril Ranatunge was appointed High Commissioner to Australia in February. General Ranatunge led "Operation Liberation" in 1987 and was responsible for the massacre of over 600 Tamil civilians in Jaffna.

Recently Premadasa Udugampola, who has been accused of being involved in grave violations of human rights, returned to Sri Lanka after fleeing the Island a year ago. He was immediately tipped to be ambassador for the US. He has now been appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Ports Authority.

Many people in Sri Lanka are urging the government to increase the military spending and acquire more and modern equipment for the military. Such militarisation will mean an end to normal civilian life and the undermining of democratic institutions. The President and other politicians will always have to "listen" to the military in taking political decisions. Increased militarisation will also mean decreased expenditure in social welfare.

The international community must urge the new government under President Wijetunge to give less importance to militarisation and more importance to bringing about peace in the country. The legitimate struggle of the Tamils cannot be suppressed by military force. This reality must be accepted and appreciated by Sri politicians.

FINANCIAL CRUNCH

A communique from the Presidential Secretariat reported the decision of the government to postpone the salary increases for its employees announced in the 1993 budget and scheduled for implementation from 1 July. Priority given for Defence and Rehabilitation / Reconstruction expenditures had necessitated this postponement according to this communique.

JANAKAPURA ARMY CAMP OVERRUN

Forty two soldiers were killed and twenty nine were injured when the LTTE destroyed the Janakapura army camp on 25 July in the east. This camp was set up to protect the state sponsored Sinhalese settlers at Manal Aru. Large quantities of arms including an 81 mm mortar, ammunitions and communication equipment were taken away by the attackers. Seventeen Sinhalese settlers were also killed in this attack according to reports. Attack aircraft brought in to pursue the withdrawing LTTE men are said to have destroyed some of their vehicles.

REFUGEES DISAPPEAR

UNHCR's Pesalai refugee camp inmates Ilayathamby Muttulingam, Arumugam Arasaratnam and Arulanantham Amirthanayagam arrested while returning in a bus to the camp after presenting themselves at the Police Station in Mannar have disappeared on 4 July. Relatives in the refugee camp have appealed to UNHCR representatives and Government officials to trace their whereabouts. Their arrest and disappearance soon after the killing of five policemen has caused much anxiety in the refugee camp.

TIC ACCESSION LIST

A selection of documents received by TIC in July 1993

SHR 3203

Sivarajah, N
Nutritional Survey of Children in the Jaffna District; A Preliminary Report.

Jaffna: Faculty of Medicine; 1993

17P

**DESCRIPTORS: Children/
Nutrition/ Jaffna District**

SHR 3202

Workshop on Identification of Rehabilitation Programmes for Unsupported Women; NGOs Project

Jaffna: Council of NGOs, Jaffna; 20 May 1993

42P

**DESCRIPTORS: Women/
Rehabilitation/ Sri Lankan
Tamils**

SHR 3204

An Appeal to Humane Canada for Peaceful Intervention in Sri Lanka
Canada: T.S.Rajah; 19 April 1993

4P

**DESCRIPTORS: Appeal/
Ethnic Problem/ Sri Lankan
Tamils/ Recommendation/
Canada/ Member of Parliament**

OHR 243

Rebecca J Cook

Human Rights in Relation to Women's Health: The Promotion and Protection of Women's Health Through International Human Rights Law

Geneva: World Health Organisation; June 1993

7P

**DESCRIPTORS: Women/
Health/ Human Rights/ World
Health Organisation**

OHR 245

Graham-Brown, Sarah
Education in the Developing World: Conflict and Crisis
New York: Longman Publishing; 1991

332p

**DESCRIPTORS: Education/
Developing Countries**

SHR 3212

Information Note on UNHCR Position Concerning Sri Lankan

Asylum Seekers in Europe and North America

Geneva: UNHCR; 16 June 1993

2P
**DESCRIPTORS: UNHCR/
Repatriation/ Sri Lankan
Tamils/ Refugees/ Europe**

SHR 3211

Norwegian Assistance to Rehabilitation and Development of the Tamil Homelands in Sri Lanka
Norway: Tamil Development Network of Norway; March 1993

12P

**DESCRIPTORS: Development/
Tamil Homeland/ Norway/ Sri
Lankan Tamils**

SHR 3214

Hasbullah, shahul Hameed
Devolution and Muslim Aspirations of Sri Lanka. Paper presented at the Conference on the Promotion of Peace in Sri Lanka

Canada: April 1993

**DESCRIPTORS: Muslims/
Peace Initiative./ Ethnic
Problem/ North Eastem
Provinces/ Statistics/
Population/ Maps**

SGN 348

Economic & Social Statistics of Sri Lanka 1991

Colombo: Central Bank of Sri Lanka; No.1992

108p

**DESCRIPTORS: Statistics/ Sri
Lanka**

OHR 248

Nadarajah, Sushila

Garland

Sri Lanka: Darling & Company; July 1993

104p

**DESCRIPTORS: Poems/
Women Rights/ Asian Women**

SGN 349

Central Bank of Sri Lanka:

Annual Report 1992

Colombo: Central Bank of Sri Lanka; 1993

182p + LXXXVp + 95p

**DESCRIPTORS: Statistics/ Sri
Lanka/ Economy**

JULY DIARY

JULY01

VEHICLE HITS LANDMINE: A military vehicle was damaged by a landmine and a soldier was killed and two others were injured. The incident took place at Manal Aru in Mullaitivu District.

JULY 02

LTTE LOSSES: Military sources reported that six LTTE members were killed when troops fired at a group of armed men at Siththandi in Batticaloa District. Escaping LTTE men threw hand grenades at the soldiers, three of whom were injured.

JULY 03

SLMC DISILLUSIONED: Sri Lanka Muslim Congress Leader M. H. M. Ashraff MP made it clear that his party would not be attending the Parliamentary Select Committee as confusing signals were emanating from it.

JULY04

POLICEMEN KILLED: Five policemen including a sub-inspector were killed when their vehicle came under fire between the 2nd mile post and Tharapuram in Mannar District around 11.30 a.m.

JULY 05

MASKED INFORMANTS: All the entry check points into Batticaloa town have been strengthened with troops deployed to assist Police. Masked informants were also stationed at every checkpoint to identify LTTE suspects. Metal detectors are in use to trace explosives.

JULY 06

MILITARY OPTION: SLFP 's S.L.Gunasekera MP speaking in Parliament said that a military victory was the only solution to the North East problem. LTTE's Homeland call and North East merger brought up by EPRLF, TELO, PLOTE and EPDP are not matters for any consideration according to him.

JULY07

TAMIL YOUTHS ARRESTED: Seven Tamil youths returning from a cinema hall were arrested at Dehiwela in Colombo District. Relatives have sought the assistance of the IGP to trace these seven persons.

SPEAKER'S ATTEMPT:

Speaker of Parliament M.H.Mohamed invited Tamil and Muslim MPs in an attempt to persuade them to participate once again in the meetings of the Parliamentary Select Committee. Those invited conveyed to the Speaker that their boycott would continue until the major parties UNP and SLFP placed their proposals before this committee.

JULY08

KILALI CROSSING: A large number of passengers crossed the only access to and from the besieged Jaffna peninsula amid naval shell fire. Passengers had been collecting on both sides for several days and made the hazardous crossing without mishap.

NORTH - EAST WAR TO END IN TWO MONTHS: Minister for Human Resources Dayananda Wickremasinghe disclosed at a function at Mawarella in Matara District that the ruling UNP had taken a decision that the North East war should be brought to an end within two months.

JULY09

VOTERS NEED IDENTITY CARDS: Parliament unanimously adopted a private member's motion moved by a Government MP making the production of National Identity Cards compulsory for casting votes at elections. Minister Wimal Wickremasinghe speaking on the debate conceded that this could cause problems among the large sections of plantation Tamils, majority of whom presently do not possess identity cards.

JULY 10

BRIEF CONFRONTATION :

Troops moved out of the Nochchimodai area in the Vavuniya District and returned after exchanging fire with LTTE men in the area. A reserve policeman Dassanayake on duty at a security post was killed by sniper fire.

JULY 11

FISHING CURBED : Security forces have debarred fishing in the Thattumunai area in Vakarai in Batticaloa District.

JULY 12

ABDUCTED AND KILLED : Khalideen Hashim (22years) and his brother Khalideen Azik (20years) from Kalmunaikkudi in Batticaloa District were abducted by a group of uniformed men with modern weapons from their home in the early hours of the morning. Their bodies were discovered later buried beside the navy camp at Kalmunaikkudi.

JULY 13

SARVODAYA UNSHACKLED: Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President of leading development NGO - Sarvodaya - thanked President Wijetunge for removing all obstacles earlier placed in its path.

JULY 14

INTENSE AIR ATTACK: Attack aircraft dropped several bombs in the Omanthai area in District. Helicopters also joined in this aerial attack. Seven people were injured and ten houses were damaged as a result of the bombing.

JULY 15

LARGE SCALE ABDUCTIONS: JOC spokesman Brigadier Angamana told reporters that he was unaware of press reports alleging the mysterious disappearances of nearly two hundred people including doctors, teachers and government officials in the villages on the border separating the Polonnaruwa and Batticaloa Districts.

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Chandrasekaran Denied Fundamental Rights

Up-country People's Front (UPF) leader Periyasamy Chandrasekaran remains in prison despite his election to the Central Provincial Council in the election on 17 May. He has thus far not been allowed to take oaths as local councillor. Chandrasekaran is accused along with Abdul Cader and T.Dharmalingam, both officers of the UPF, of abetting Varathan who is said to have been the mastermind behind the bombing of the Joint Operations Command (JOC) headquarters on 21 June 1991.

High Court judge D.B.Weerasuriya who heard Chandrasekaran's case in the Colombo High Court has now been transferred to Panadura, south of Colombo. Evidence of three persons, including that of Inspector Deva Snrendra who arrested him, has been recorded. The dispute over who would now hear the case, Justice Weerasuriya or Colombo's new High Court judge Dharmadasa Jayaw-ickrema, has now been settled. Justice Weerasuriya will continue to hear the case which has been transferred to Panadna and scheduled for 12 and 13 October.

Lawyers for Chandrasekaran applied to court for his release on bail to enable him to participate in Provincial Council proceedings. The State Counsel said at the hearing of the bail application that Chandrasekaran had been detained on an order signed by the Secretary

to the Ministry of Defence and therefore the Attorney General had no authority to agree to his release.

The Defence Secretary has rejected the application despite a statement by Justice Jayawickrema that Chandrasekaran should be released. The Defence Secretary has, however, stated that he could participate in council proceedings with police security.

UPF's Deputy General Secretary Jayabharathy has declared that mere participation in meetings would not suffice and that he should be released and allowed to serve the people who elected him. Meanwhile SLFP, DUNF, Communist Party and NSSP representatives have said that they would conduct an islandwide campaign for the release of Chandrasekaran.

Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) president and Minister S.Thondaman in an interview to *The Island* and *Lankadeepa* newspapers states : " Elections should not be considered as a shortcut to be released from prison. Currently hundreds of innocent hill country youth are detained without trial. When compared to them the position of Chandrasekaran , who is accused of a grave crime, is better . Observers say that this statement appears to give credence to the accusation that the CWC is behind the refusal for granting bail to the UPF leader.

Secretary General of the UPF Abdul Cader's case was heard in Colombo on 27 May before High Court judge C. V. Vigneswaran . Inspector Deva Surendra said in his evidence that the UPF leaders were arrested following the statement given by Sangarapillai Balachandran who had also been arrested in connection with the bombing of the JOC headquarters. But Balachandran in his evidence in Chandrasekaran's case had said that he had never met Abdul Cader. Prosecution has informed court that Balachandran will not be called as a witness although his name appears in the list of witnesses.

The prosecution has requested several postponements in this case. When the case was heard again on 19 July Justice Vigneswaran said hat in cases of political significance the state does not show the enthusiasm it shows in ordinary cases and he believed that the state was dragging its feet. The case will again be heard on 16 August. UPF Vice President V.T. Dharmalingam's case will be heard on 25 August before High Court judge Leslie Abeysekara.

TAMIL ARRESTS IN COLOMBO

Despite representation of Tamil MPS and the strong stand taken by Minister S.Thondaman arrests of Tamils in Colombo continue. On 19 July seven Tamils from Valvettiturai in Jaffna were arrested at mid-night from a lodge. They are being held at the Yagoda police station. Although the police say only arrests have been made in Colombo, independent observers estimate over 1,000 Tamils have been detained in the latest round-ups.

INFLATION SOARS

A sharp rise in prices of essential commodities led to an increase in the inflation rate for June which stood at 12.3% . The figure for May was 10.0%. Price increases were part of a government-IMF economic reforms package.

PRIME MINISTER MEETS OPPOSITION

At the request of opposition parties the Prime Minister met their representatives in the company of Security Services and Police Chiefs. Military campaigns and political agenda figured in the discussions.

Situation Report

BUDDHA STATUE IN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Vavuniya citizens committee chairman took up the matter of Buddha statues being erected in the Cheddikulam area "cleared" by the army. He pointed out that this action of the army is unacceptable as only Tamils and Muslims were in occupation of this area. A statue erected at the Roman Catholic Church had subsequently been removed, according to him. Rehabilitation Minister Dayaratne undertook to bring this complaint to the attention of the military coordinator of the Vavuniya District.

DISPLACED PERSONS IN JAFFNA

Jaffna District NGOs Forum in a recent survey has compiled detailed statistics on the displaced people in the district. These 265,091 persons belong to 80,271 families. Of this 147,758 persons from 50,166 families are in open centres and 118,143 persons from 30,105 families are in 236 refugee camps. Of the camps 192 are run by the NGO's Forum and the balance 44 are run by the Government Agent.

FORCED REMOVAL

Social Services Department's Leela Gunasena has issued instructions to the effect that 292 refugee families totalling 632 members now housed at the Manicka Pillayar Temple, Bambalapitiya in Colombo should be sent to the North East on 20 July. Most of the refugees have voiced their concern at this involuntary removal and made representations to MPs and organisations caring for refugees.

TAMIL WOMAN TORTURED

The Court of Appeal made order in a fundamental rights application for the release of Miss Perinpan Pushparani (18 yrs) held in custody without trial since 08.09.92. Allegations of torture had been made against the soldiers who held her in custody for three days at the commathurai army camp in Batticaloa District. The father of Pushparani had died of shock following her arrest, according to the application.

PILFERING PRIVATE MAIL

JOC's Brigadier Amgamana in a letter to the Post Master General has indicated that the Navy will stop censoring all mail sent to the north. If implemented, this will enable 800 mail bags held up for examination reaching the addressees without further delay. Pilfering of documents and cheques found in mail sent from overseas had been regular complaints received by the authorities.

PRIME MINISTER APPEALS TO LTTE

Addressing the soldiers at the Palaly base camp in Jaffna District Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe called upon the LTTE to seek a negotiated settlement to the North East war which was an essential prerequisite for economic development. He also said that the people of the North-East are suffering because of the war.

Although the Prime Minister made this appeal among soldiers the Leader of the Opposition and

AMERICAN ENVOY URGES EARLY SOLUTION

U.S. ambassador Mrs. Terisita Schaffer addressing the annual general meeting of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce as the chief guest on 28 July drew attention to the war in the North East. She emphasized that the long-standing political problem should be solved before charting the future economic development of the country. Only a political solution was viable if the country is to develop rapidly she further asserted. Chairman of the Chamber Harendra de Silva also urged an early resolution of the conflict.

CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENT

TRIPOSHA- the nutritional supplement for children has not been issued to the Jaffna District since May according to the district health department reports. The monthly requirement is 60,000 packets and its non-availability has further deteriorated the precarious nutritional levels among expecting mothers and babies. The Jaffna Teaching Hospital meanwhile, lacks drugs for cancer and epilepsy. There is also a shortage of drugs for the treatment of diabetes, hypertension and heart ailments.

Sri Lanka Freedom Party Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike rejected any moves other than a complete military victory over the LTTE. She also urged a more vigorous pursuit of the war through the appointment of a full time Minister of State for Defence.

Situation Report

DISAPPEARANCES IN THE EAST

Reports indicate the disappearance of some 200 persons within the last three months in areas on the Batticaloa - Polannaruwa border. All those who disappeared had been allegedly removed for questioning by groups arriving in uniform as well as civilian dress. In June and July alone the following persons taken in for questioning have disappeared:- Pathmanathan- a teacher, Sothinathan- a trader, Sivarasa- a doctor, Kanapathy- a school principal, Anandarajah- a school principal, Thiruchelvam- a teacher, and Thangarajah- a teacher.

PUBLICATION IN NORWAY

The Tamil Development Network of Norway has published a booklet in Norwegian titled "Norwegian Assistance To Rehabilitate and Develop the Tamil Homelands in Sri Lanka". This is being distributed among government officials, political parties, MPs, NGOs, and others in an effort to channel resources to the Tamil Homeland. The English version of this could also be obtained by contacting Tamil Development Network of Norway, Sondre Tollbugt. 2, 9008 Tromsø, Norway. Tel: int +47+83 10344.

JULY 83 POGROM REMEMBERED

Human Rights activists in the UK marched from Portland Place to the historic Trafalgar Square in London to mark the 10th anniversary of July 83 Tamil pogrom in which over 3,000 Tamils were killed. The rally was addressed by prominent activists including three MPs.

ICRC MALIGNED

The political wing of the All Ceylon Muslim League in a statement has charged that ICRC is conniving with the LTTE to discredit the Sri Lankan government and General Hamilton Wanasinghe of the JGC. This charge arises from the failure of the ICRC to obtain the release of all the policemen in the custody of the LTTE. The League has concluded the statement by calling on the government to declare the ICRC persona non grata.

THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTION

Cabinet spokesman Minister Harold Herat answering questions from journalists on 22 July regarding specific government proposals for a solution to the ethnic problem said the government had made several attempts at a solution over the last ten years. He further said that the government was engaged in ascertaining the views of all to gauge the public opinion and feelings which would enable it to arrive at a basis upon which to build a solution.

SPIRALLING DEFENCE EXPENDITURE

President of Tea Traders Association Mr. Micheal de Zoysa speaking at a function at Hotel Hilton in Colombo said that 20 cents in every Rupee was being spent on defence. He welcomed moves to invite the LTTE for negotiations in a bid to solve the ethnic problem. These comments were made in the presence of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe.

TAMIL INFORMATION is published by Tamil Information Centre, Tamil House, 720 Romford Road, London E12 6BT. Tel: 081 5 14 6390
SUBSCRIPTION: UK-£6.00 All Other Countries - £10.00

NAVAL FIRE KILLS NINE CIVILIANS

Nine passengers including three women were killed on 28 July when naval craft fired at a boat carrying passengers across the Jaffna lagoon which though prohibited by the government is the only entry point to the besieged Jaffna peninsula. Ten passengers wounded in this incident were admitted to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital.

MILITARY SOLUTION

At a seminar held at the Colombo Public Library on "North East problem; its history and solution" on 15 July, SLFP MP and president of Sinhala Lawyers Association S.L.Gunasekera praised President Wijetunge's perception that there was no ethnic problem but only a terrorist problem in the country and argued for a military solution. Buddhist monk Sobita Thero who presided at the seminar also emphasized a military victory over the LTTE.

SRI LANKA RED CROSS CHIEF VISITS JAFFNA

Mr.D.D. Abeyasinghe President of Sri Lanka Red Cross Society visited Jaffna last month and met officials of the Jaffna Branch. Speaking at a function there Mr. Abeyasinghe drew attention to the transport difficulties of the Tamils in the peninsula and regretted that even patients had to be brought to hospital on bicycles. He assured all support to the efforts of the Jaffna Red Cross to ease the difficulties of the patients.