

Talking with the tigers: a recipe for disaster. (1999, September 19).
The Sunday times.

Talking with the Tigers: a recipe for disaster

By Kumbakarana

The SLFP and the UNP are shouting slogans against each other. Ministers are demanding an end to the war along with foreign fund seekers conducting meditation circuses. Anton Balasingham, with the blessings of the British is able to go round the world praying for peace talks. The PA, the UNP and the business community are engaged in the same activity.

The aim of the PA and the UNP are to talk with the Ti-

gers. Their sacrificial offering is a political solution to satisfy the so-called aspirations of the Tamils. On all previous occasions the Tigers wanted first a discussion on the tribulations of the Tamil people in areas controlled by the LTTE. Among the Tiger demands were: confining the army to barracks, a halt to monitoring, despatching food and medicines to Tiger-controlled areas and the permitting Tiger cadres to carry weapons in public.

What did the Tigers do meanwhile? They imported arms and ammunition and

weaponry, recruited at least 2000-3000 cadres and killed off at least 200-300 dissidents. They also set up new bases and bunkers. The Tigers then abandoned the talks for some trivial reason and complained that the government talks only about the daily needs of the Tamils in Tiger-controlled areas and not about the political aspirations of the Tamils.

The disasters multiply and none of the peace mongers hold themselves responsible for the debacle. This was the cycle in 1985, 1987, 1989-1990 and this will not change.

Would it really change with the intervention of Lalith Kotelawala?

On July 24 Mr. Kotelawala even declared that he sees the establishment of Eelam as an alternative political solution, which means he accepts the concept of Eelam. How can such a person be considered an impartial negotiator. Are the people of this country ready to hand over the future of Sri Lanka to a couple of businessmen? Besides, Anton Balasingham has declared to Liam Fox that the devolution proposals are inadequate. The

Tiger leader in the US Rudrakumaran says he sees a confederation and power sharing at the centre as an alternative solution.

So are we going to follow the Yugoslav example where for a short while power was shared between Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, and this included the sharing of Presidential power?

Under the Constitution the government has no power even to change the unitary status into a federal structure, leave alone a change into a confederation and power sharing at the cen-

tre. That is possible only if the constitution is done away with. This means abandoning power to armed gangs who would be able to conduct themselves as they please. The result would be chaos and a country without a government.

If the Tigers oppose any such solution what would be the consequence? At the cost of so much blood the Provincial Council system was established. But the PCs exist everywhere except the North/East for which it was meant. The result is a waste of about Rs. 33,000 million of tax payers

money, and the creation of chaos in the administration.

Our experience with devolution has been disastrous and the talks with the Tigers have had catastrophic consequences. The Tigers aside, the aim of all these proposed talks is to please the Tamil people. The result of Tiger activity is terrorism. The TULF, the EPDP, PLOTE, EPRLF and other parties believe that Tamil terrorism is a result of unsolved Tamil grievances. Satisfy the Tamil demands and they will support the government. In the event, it might even be possi-

ble to defeat the Tigers militarily.

The only thing that politicians achieved by following this recipe was waste of time.

Both the cause and the effect of the war are the Tigers. There are no civil Tamil organisations to fight for their rights. The TULF and other Tamil parties will not be allowed to hold power even in a provincial council in opposition to the Tigers. So how could there be an agreement to a political solution, in this gangland of opportunists and contract killers?