

Guerrillas attack political meeting. (1988, October 25). *The Ottawa citizen.*

President Premadasa to all citizens

Let's help rebuild a peaceful society

Address to the nation by His Excellency Ranasinghe Premadasa on the occasion of his inauguration as the President of Sri Lanka on 2nd January 1989 delivered from the historic Octagon of the Sri Dalada Maligawa in Kandy.

The Most Ven. Maha Nayake Theros and Members of the Maha Sangha.
Ven. Clergy of the Hindu, Islam and Christian Faiths.

My fellow countrymen.

We are gathered here in these venerated precincts of the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic for a noble and enlightened purpose. We are here today to perform a historic task - to lay the foundation for the economic and spiritual advancement of all our people. This is the mandate given to me at the Presidential election. We have just received the blessings of the Triple-Gem: Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha. In order to ensure the wellbeing of our people let us dedicate ourselves to wisdom, truth and discipline.

At the Presidential election the people of Sri Lanka expressed a deep commitment to the democratic process. This signals an endorsement of both freedom and discipline. Freedom to exercise the liberties that our Constitution defines; discipline to nurture our society in a new era of nation-building.

My government will provide conditions in which liberty will flourish and discipline will prevail. Benefits must be earned. Rewards must be merited. I ask each and every citizen to participate and contribute fully in the restructuring of a free society, in the restructuring of a peaceful society, in the restructuring of a prosperous society.

Participation is encouraged

Participation is encouraged when people feel that government is humane, close and caring. Full democracy requires decentralised administration. Responsive government must reach the people where they are. It must answer their needs on the spot. This is one way in which we can involve young men and women in public life. We must engage their energies and enthusiasm in positive patriotic activities.

Democracy needs both dynamic government and healthy opposition. I welcome constructive criticism. Many years of my own political life have been spent in opposition. I know the pain of defeat at the polls. However, this frustration is not a licence to make mischief. It is not a licence to issue menacing threats. It is not a licence to disseminate misinformation and disinformation. The safety of our country must not be held hostage to the ambitions of those who fail to win the confidence of the people.

Once again, I call upon all those who have still to join the democratic process to do so. I am available for any discussion in order to arrive at constructive solutions. I will provide all the protection and security

necessary for this purpose. Further delay will enable certain elements to destroy many more innocent lives and damage much more public property and attribute them to others. This destruction must end. Democracy can no longer tolerate it.

For the first time in recent elections the victors have not rejoiced by inflicting injury of mind or body on the vanquished. They have conquered the anger and hatred that is usual in post election periods. To me this is a greater victory than my own victory at the Presidential election. However, this restraint must not be abused by the vanquished to harm the victors.

Transfer our efforts

We must transfer our efforts and expenditure from weapons to work. We must reallocate resources from defence to development. Development is not a choice for us. It is a necessity. If development is to have any value, it must be based on human values. As we implement our anti-poverty policies, the family and the home will be at the core of our efforts. It is only by strengthening the family that we can bring a true spirit of community to our society. If we cannot help those who are deprived, we certainly cannot protect those who are privileged. Sri Lanka will not be a country where a few will always benefit and many will always suffer.

In recent years, the unity of our country has fractured. Yet, not so long ago, Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers lived together peacefully. They joined together purposefully in national endeavours. When I went to school, I shared a class bench with students of all four communities. What an enriching co-existence that was. Since those days, irresponsible elements have created deep divisions. Let us restructure the education system purposefully. Let us inculcate in our children moral values and an appreciation of unity amidst diversity.

Self help the best

Self-help is the best help. We must create our own resources. We must build with our own resources. Depending needlessly on foreign assistance is to mortgage both our independence and our future. The independence of our foreign policy must be maintained. Relationships with friendly countries must be strengthened on the principles of equality, mutual respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the affairs of each other.

To sustain these principles let us settle our differences and disputes among ourselves through a process of consultation, compromise and consensus.

We should not and will not create situations that provoke or invite intervention. Our own affairs must be conducted in a manner that makes foreign intrusions unnecessary. Whatever the cost, I will not surrender an inch of Sri Lankan territory. Whatever the cost I will not surrender a shred of our sovereignty.

My objective is not the defeat of anyone. My objective is to ensure victory for everyone. Inflicting defeat is easy, ensuring victory is not so easy. We have been weakened by dissension and disunity. We have been weakened by tension and turmoil. We have been weakened by intrigue and disharmony. We have been weakened by disorder and indiscipline. If we are to be true to our great history and noble traditions all this must change.

My mission is to lift our people out of this abyss of weakness and defeatism. I dedicate myself to lead my people to unity and amity. I dedicate myself to lead



Proclamation by the Secretary to the President

It is hereby proclaimed that His Excellency Ranasinghe Premadasa, having taken refuge in the Triple-Gem and observed the Five Precepts in the presence of the Sacred Tooth Relic that had felt the touch of the eighty-four thousand Dharmas Skhandas and is held by the Buddhist public the world over as the embodiment of the living Lord Buddha himself, at the Sri Dalada Mandiraya resplendent with the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Sri Sakyamunindra Sugatha Thatagatha Samma Sambuddha, in this noble city of Sri Senkadagala Srivardhana Kandy, and having paid homage and made offerings to the Sacred Tooth Relic and blessed the people of Sri Lanka with loving compassion for them, and having obtained the blessings of the Triple-Gem and of the Sacred Tooth Relic and the protection of the Guardian Gods of the Sasana for the purpose of

eliminating the poverty of the people and ensuring them health and comfort, and having in the morning of this Monday the tenth day of the waning moon in the Lunar month of Unduvap in the two thousand five hundred and thirty second year of the Buddhist era, equivalent to Monday the second of the month of January in the year of Christ one thousand nine hundred and eighty nine, at the auspicious time of ten past forty, appeared before Hon. Parinda Ranasinghe, the Chief Justice of Sri Lanka, at the historic Octagon of the Sri Dalada Mandiraya and from which kings of old addressed and gave audience to their people, and having made his solemn Affirmation as the second Executive President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka with the firm resolve to dedicate himself to the service of the people who have given him their mandate and who in their hundreds of thousands will be witness to these proceedings, and having accepted the said exalted office, will thereafter address the Nation.

Text of the Solemn Declaration and Affirmation

I Ranasinghe Premadasa do solemnly declare and affirm that I will faithfully perform the duties and discharge the functions of the office of President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in accordance with the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Law, and that I will to the best of my ability uphold and defend the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Signed and affirmed before me at Kandy in Sri Lanka this Second day of January, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Eighty Nine

Chief Justice

"New Year will bring peace and harmony"

The Maha Sangha chanted stanzas of paens of joy and victory over evil forces expressed by Buddha Gotama and invoked blessings on the country and the people on the eve of the New Year Buddhist religious ceremony held at the Sri Sambuddhaloka vihara-ya, Lotus Road, Colombo on Saturday evening.

Men, women and children and a few foreign tourists from the adjoining hotels lit coconut oil lamps round the vihara premises and the Bodhi Tree before mal-pahan pooja was offered at the Samadhi Buddha statue.

Ven. Vitarandeniy Chandajoti Sangha Nayaka Thera in his anussana assured with the blessing of the Buddha the New Year will bring peace and harmony to the people. "All

