

## **Party Activities & Statements 2002 January to March**

- ◎ The National Day of Cuba was commemorated by the NDP on 01 01 2002 in Colombo.

It was remembered with pride that it was a remarkable feat that the Cuban people and the socialist state remain firm in the face of the military threat, economic embargo, conspiratorial moves and false propaganda by the US against Cuba and its people. Cuba is a shining example of a country that has demonstrated to the world that imperialism is powerless against a small country that advances on the political, economic and socio-cultural fronts, based on socialism.

The Cuban National Day was organised by the Central Committee of the Party to communicate to the people, and in particular to introduce to the younger generation, the anti-imperialist sentiment and the faith in socialism of this country, and to express to the people of Cuba the solidarity and revolutionary greetings of our people and of the Party.

The Cuban National Day Meeting held at the Narayana Guru Hall on 1st January 2002 was chaired by Comrade E. Thambiah, National Organiser of the Party. Comrades S. K. Senthivel, Vasudeva Nanayakkara, S. Thevarajah and Vasantha Dissanayake addressed the meeting. The meeting was preceded by an anti-US-imperialist street play by the theatre group 'Cem Malarkal' (Red Flowers) and a large number of people gathered to watch this anti-US-imperialist play. The meeting was concluded with the recital of revolutionary songs.

- ◎ The NDP submitted a detailed petition to the Government Agent for Jaffna on 18th December 2001, expressing its strong condemnation of the hoarding of essential goods, black marketeering and profiteering. A delegation led by Comrade S. Kathirgamanathan, Jaffna District Organiser of the NDP submitted the petition to the GA and explained to him the importance of taking firm action. The petition contained a comprehensive list of the prices charged for essential goods. It also warned the GA of the prospect of mass protest in the event of government failure to take effective action.

Following the above action by the NDP, other political parties and groups too expressed their condemnation against the increase in prices. On 18th January 2002, a hartal was called to protest against the shortage and the increase in price of essential goods and the hoarding of goods in the Jaffna Peninsula. The NDP expressed its fullest support for the hartal, appealed to the people of Jaffna to give it their fullest support, and participated in it, alongside other political parties and mass organisations. People demonstrated in their hundreds opposite the Jaffna Secretariat and, in most parts of the Jaffna peninsula, shops and markets remained closed and very few schools were open, and with a small number of students attending. The arrest of some of the organisers of the protest failed to achieve the purpose of the police, namely to disrupt the peaceful demonstration by the people at the entrance to the Secretariat. It was significant that representatives of all political parties, excluding the ruling UNP and more significantly the Tamil National Alliance, joined in expressing their protest.

At the end of the demonstration, Comrade S. Kathirgamanathan, Jaffna District Organiser of the NDP addressed the gathering on behalf of the Party.

- © The NDP in its press release of 21st January 2002 issued by Comrade S.K. Senthivel, the General Secretary of the Party made the following observations.

The New Democratic Party strongly condemns the unprincipled political moves of the JVP through its chauvinistic propaganda to undermine the efforts of the present United National Front government to initiate peaceful negotiations. The JVP, because of its greed for parliamentary political power, has descended to lower depths than the traditional chauvinistic political parties and is spitting chauvinistic political venom. This is designed to drag the new generation of Sinhala youth among the Sinhala people into the swamp of chauvinism. The left and democratic forces should come forward to defeat this counterproductive campaign by the JVP.

The statement also pointed out that the people were forced out of desperation to restore the UNP, leading the United National Alliance, to power, because of the failure of the PA rule during its past seven years in power to deliver the peace and economic prosperity that they expected. This had the fullest blessings and active support of the forces of big capitalist and conservative dominance. In the current situation of dual power and the absence of alternative plans for peace or alternative economic or political programmes, the extent to which the expectations of the people will be fulfilled remains in doubt. However, it would only be appropriate to allow people time to find out through experience.

The UNF government's initiative to start negotiations with the LTTE is materialising on several fronts. This has caused shoots of expectation to sprout among the people, especially in the North-East. These trends remind us of the initial activities of the PA regime that came to power in 1994.

Whoever be that takes the initiative for peace, no leftist party that stands for the Tamil people who have been subjected to chauvinistic oppression and war can stand in the way of such peace efforts. It should not participate under any pretext in any activity that would disrupt the peace efforts. Any left political party that fails to conduct itself with a sense of responsibility does not deserve to call itself a leftist party.

In that sense, the JVP, through its anti-peace propaganda campaign, has wholly demonstrated that it is not a leftist party. The red masks and the red cloaks donned by the JVP in the past have come apart because of it. It has demonstrated at the same time that it is just a third parliamentary political force that has taken the chauvinistic road to fulfil its great desire for parliamentary power. Our Party would like to remind the public that it in fact had, many years ago, pointed out that the JVP had already taken this degenerate, reactionary stand.

- © The NDP in its press release of 25<sup>th</sup> February 2002 issued by Comrade S.K. Senthivel, the General Secretary of the Party made the following observations.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) for peace signed last week by V. Pirabakaran, the leader of the LTTE and Ranil Wickremasinghe, Prime Minister of the United National Front government is a most welcome initial step. The MoU has brought into effect an indefinite ceasefire, and foundation has been laid for peace negotiations. The New Democratic Party gladly welcomes it. This MoU is an expression of the need and the desire of the entire population of this country for peace. Therefore, this agreement should be defended and carried forward to achieve a lasting and peaceful

political solution without retreat or disruption, and using every favourable means. At the same time, the Party condemns the chauvinistic reactionary forces that are bent on disrupting the process, for narrow political gain.

The NDP has opposed the war from the time that the national question was transformed into a war by the government of the chauvinistic ruling classes of the country, with the backing of the forces of foreign imperialism. The Party has been emphatic that no solution could be found for the national question through war and that a political solution had to be found for it, based on the principle of self-determination. The Party has consistently held that the war should be ended and that the government should conduct negotiations with the LTTE, which has been the principal representative of the forces struggling for the liberation of the Tamil nationality, to secure peace and a solution to the national question. The Party has also vigorously campaigned for this purpose, on its own as well as jointly with other left and democratic forces.

Thus, the Party recognises and welcomes this MoU as a an initial step to address the matters of bringing the war to an end, negotiations, political solution and lasting peace, which have for long been the hope and aspiration of the Tamil and Muslim people of the North-East, who have been worst affected by the war. The Party emphasises that the two sides that have authored and adopted the MoU, which has been based on the needs, expectations and faith of the people, should carry forward the MoU sincerely and with attention to experience, and not as a means of fulfilling their ulterior motives. At the same time, the Party appeals to the PA, which had a mandate from the people and adequate opportunity during its seven years in power but, owing to its erroneous approach, let every chance it had to achieve an end to the war and initiate negotiations slip through, not to wreck the present MoU and its positive aspects. The Party also points out to all concerned that, in view of the current national and international situation, that they should desist from making room for foreign hegemonic interests merely to serve the narrow interest of anyone, and that they should act with far sight.

### *The NDP Diary*

(Important party statements and other documents in recent months)

**25 02 2002**

### *Press release*

Comrade S.K Senthivel, in his statement following the meeting of the Politburo of the New Democratic Party, said that the memorandum of understanding (MoU) for peace signed last week by V. Pirabakaran, the leader of the LTTE and Ranil Wickremasinghe, Prime Minister of the United National Front government is a most welcome initial step. The statement further added:

The MoU has brought into effect an indefinite ceasefire, and foundation has been laid for peace negotiations. The New Democratic Party gladly welcomes it. This MoU is an expression of the need and the desire of the entire population of this country for peace. Therefore, this agreement should be defended and carried forward to achieve a lasting and peaceful political solution without retreat or disruption, and using every favourable means. At the same time, the Party condemns the chauvinistic reactionary forces that are bent on disrupting the process, for narrow political gain.

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S.K. Senthivel  
General Secretary, New Democratic Party

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18-03-2002

### ***PRESS RELEASE***

The General Secretary of the New Democratic Party, S.K. Senthivel issued the following statement on behalf of the Central Committee of the Party:

The recent statements and actions of the US ambassador, Ashley Wills indicate that the US has decided to crush and eliminate the demand and the struggle of the Tamil nationality for autonomy, based on the principle of self-determination, and that it is seeking to transform Sri Lanka into a base for establishing US presence in the South Asian region. The recent visit of the US Deputy Minister of State, Christina Rocca and her visit to Jaffna, accompanied by the US Naval Commander did not happen by chance. They imply a grave threat not only to the Tamil people who have sacrificed thousands of lives and shed much blood in their struggle for self-determination but also to the sovereignty, independence and integrity of the whole country. It is the duty of all far-sighted and sincere political forces to recognize and oppose this plan of the US for hegemonic infiltration. The New Democratic Party strongly condemns the statements made and views expressed by the US ambassador in a domineering manner.

The statement further added that the memorandum of understanding has come into effect as a result of third party facilitation by Norway. As a result, the war has ceased and several constructive measures have been undertaken. A climate has been created in which the LTTE and the government could initiate talks. But the US has chosen to intervene with its uncalled for statements and views and to conduct itself in a way that makes the US appear to be the agent of peace.

It is common knowledge that it was the US that, during the past twenty years, lent all manner of assistance and cooperation, first to the UNP government and then to the PA government, to intensify the war. Besides that, the US acted most indifferently at a stage when, under the previous government, the parties in conflict were agreeable to peace efforts by Norway.

Today, the US is seeking to overwhelm Norway and to subdue the Tamil people, their struggle and the LTTE with the threat to wield its big stick.

The new attitude of the US towards our national question is a serious threat not only to the Tamil people, the LTTE and Sri Lanka but also to India. The US, by posing as the angel of peace, is trying to fulfill its hegemonic intentions, which it could not earlier through war. Thus, our party emphasizes that it is essential that the LTTE, the government and the people of all nationalities act with calm and far-sight to avoid falling into the conspiratorial trap set up by the US and carry forward the negotiations to achieve peace through a lasting political solution.

S.K. Senthivel

General Secretary, New Democratic Party

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## **Party leaflet on the MoU**

**Let us Demand a Political Solution and Peace!**

**Let us Oppose American Meddling!**

**The People Should Reject the Enemies of Peace!**

- \* The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Government Sri Lanka and the LTTE should be welcomed. The removal of restrictions and controls and the opening of land routes are fair actions that give relief and hope to the entire people of the country, especially the people of the North-East.
- \* Both parties should respect this agreement and the relevant procedures to make the ceasefire permanent. Both parties should not for any reason retreat from the agreement, break it or give in to pressure, and progress with firmness.
- \* The People's Alliance and the President should not become partners in the moves to disrupt last opportunity for peace and the new climate of peace. They should abandon the revengeful approach that they had adopted towards efforts to resolve the national question and carry forward their political work with far sight. The PA should realise that the country as well as the people of the different nationalities expect this of them and co-operate in the peace process.
- \* The Sinhala people should criticise and reject the JVP, the Sihala Urumaya and other forces of chauvinism with ulterior motives that act to disrupt and wreck the MoU and the ceasefire and the peace negotiations that follow from it and the various protests organised by these forces.
- \* The government and the LTTE should not procrastinate and start forthwith the negotiations for a political solution. Both sides should appreciate the political and economic realities that have come about as a consequence of the of the prevailing national and international conditions and should progress towards a just solution in the spirit of give and take and mutual understanding.
- \* The government should stop insisting on a unitary form of government as it had done in the past and come forward to accept a united autonomous North-East region based on the principle of self-determination. At the same time, the LTTE should act in the spirit of give and take, respect democratic freedom, human rights and dissenting views, and act to unite with all democratic and progressive forces. They should also acknowledge and affirm the

fundamental democratic rights of the Sinhalese who live in the North-East. It is only through such an approach that the fruits of past struggles characterised by dedication and sacrifice will materialise in the form of a just solution.

- \* A solution thus achieved should embody essential features that ensure the preservation and protection of the identity and the distinctness of the Muslims of the North-East. Solutions should also be sought on this occasion for the issues of national rights and the right to existence of the Hill Country Tamils.
- \* The government and the LTTE should not fall victim to the ulterior motives of the forces of global and regional hegemony. They should learn from experience and carry forward the peace negotiations in a beneficial way with calm and far sight.
- \* Over and above the third party facilitation by Norway, America is putting forward views and taking steps in ways that would facilitate intervention to serve its hegemonic interests. The country and the people know well that, during the twenty years of national conflict, it was America that gave advise, support, guidance and co-operation to the oppressor. But today, the very same America is donning the robe of peace merely to ensure its domination. Therefore, it is essential that the Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim people and their political and social organisations unite against the efforts of American meddling and infiltration. The progressive left and democratic forces, with their long tradition of anti-imperialism, need to take a leading part in this struggle.

Let the ceasefire continue!

Let the negotiations commence!

Let political negotiations succeed!

Let there be peace!

New Democratic Party  
25.03.2002

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