

Press Communiqué of the NDP

NDP Opposes the State of Emergency

22nd August 2005

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Party in his press communiqué of 22nd August 2005 made the following statement.

The action of the President in imposing a State of Emergency and extending it with parliamentary approval points to the prospect of the Government putting into effect several of its ulterior motives. This poses a threat to the three and a half years' old Memorandum of Understanding and the Ceasefire Agreement. A fearful situation has arisen in which the State of Emergency could be used to deny and to violate the basic democratic and human rights of the people, especially in the North East and the Hill Country, workers and peasants. Hence the New Democratic Party strongly condemns the imposition of the State of Emergency, which gives additional powers to the police and the armed forces, and demands its withdrawal.

The killing of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the 12th of August has been used as the pretext for the declaration of the State of Emergency. It has been extended to a month with the support of a parliamentary majority. The parties constituting the government, the opposition UNP, the JVP and the JHU have voted together to express their chauvinistic ruling class stand. The police and the armed forces are certain to use the powers granted to them under the Emergency Regulations to carry out abuses that transcend normal laws. Searches, roundups, inspections, arrests, detention torture and false charges will occur as in the past. As a result there is the danger of the disruption of the three and a half year's long environment of peace and the emergence a dark period of people living in fear and a state of terror. The Government has created a situation in which democratic and trade union struggles by the peasants and workers, and employees of the state and private sectors and other protests will be stopped and defeated using the same emergency regulations.

Therefore, the New Democratic Party demands that the State of Emergency, which will be used in a way detrimental to the people of the North East and the Hill Country, workers and peasants, state and private sector employees and the people as a whole, should be retracted. At the same time it emphasises that the government and the LTTE should without delay take part in discussions and arrive at the necessary agreement for all concerned to stop forthwith the killings that take place on a daily basis and to refrain from acts in breach of the Ceasefire Agreement.

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NDP Condemns Attack on Newspaper Office

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Party in his press communiqué of 25th August 2005 made the following statement.

The hand-bomb attack on the office of the 'Sudar Oli' and 'Udhayan' newspapers last week and the attack on the 'Sudar Oli' journalist at the JVP demonstration two days ago are acts chauvinistic fervour that are hostile to democracy and media freedom. These are not merely unruly attempts to intimidate Tamil media and media persons into submission but also to threaten the entire Tamil population. The New Democratic Party strongly condemns both incidents. It insists that the government should conduct the necessary inquiries and take appropriate action concerning these two fierce acts.

Hand-bombing the branch office of the 'Sudar Oli' and 'Udhayan' newspapers and attacking the 'Sudar Oli' journalist at the JVP demonstration are unruly acts of intimidation that deny democracy, freedom of opinion and the right to gather news, and demonstrate the bitter hostility of the JVP towards Tamil journalists. One could see that the JVP seeks to stir feelings of ethnic tension, hatred and fanaticism between the Tamil and Sinhalese people to strengthen its vote bank. The New

Democratic Party points out that the Sinhalese people should not fall prey to the chauvinistic fanatical acts of the JVP.

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The Central Committee of the NDP Calls for the Boycott of the Presidential Polls

6th September 2005

The Central Committee of the New Democratic Party has passed the following unanimous resolution regarding the forthcoming Presidential Election.

The system of presidential rule has not has failed to produce any results or benefits concerning the development of the country, the elevation of the living standard of the people or the basic right to existence of the nationalities. At the \same time the executive presidential system has been one that has denied the demands and rights of the entire working people and the nationalities to exercise oppression in its various forms. It was the wish of the Party that a common candidate was put forward on behalf of the Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil nationalities and the left and democratic forces of in the South, in opposition to that system and the constitution that enabled it, and calling for a change. The Party appeals to the entire population to spoil their ballot papers as an expression of their protest.

The late JR Jayawardane and the UNP introduced the system of executive presidential rule introduced into this country in 1978. They exercised a 17-year long rule of darkness using that constitution. From 1994, the SLFP and its allied have under the leadership of the President Chandrika Kumaratunga have ruled the country under that system. After a total of 27 years of presidential rule, the country has not moved in the direction of progress or welfare for its people. Instead, the people of the country have experienced problems, crises and degeneration of the economy, of the political and social systems, and of education, health and culture, as burdens, sorrow and cruelty. Meanwhile, the presidential system has paved the way and welcomed the infiltration of imperialist and regional hegemonic capital and their political and military intervention.

It was especially under this presidential system that the quarter century long war of chauvinistic oppression was imposed on the North East and the Tamil nationality. Its impact had severe consequences for the Muslim and Hill Country Tamil nationalities. It did not spare the Sinhalese people in regions bordering the North East. That is why the Party totally rejects the process of electing someone as President under a system of executive presidency, which has neither brought any benefit to nor solved the problems of the workers, peasants, intellectuals and other working people and the nationalities of the country. It calls upon the people to invalidate their votes and thereby express their protest.

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NDP Condemns Arrest of Youth in Hill Country

25th September 2005

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Party in his press communiqué of 25th September 2005 made the following observations.

The government has started to make use of the Emergency Rules to defeat the people's movement that is being carried forward democratically to oppose the Upper Kotmale Scheme with disastrous consequences. It is as a consequence that the police arrested five youth who were putting up lawfully printed posters issued by the People's Movement Against the Upper Kotmale Hydropower Scheme announcing its forthcoming conference, confiscated the van used by them and surrendered it to the

law court. The New Democratic Party strongly condemns this action of the police and the inducement by the government. The Party views this undemocratic action by the police as an attempt to use threat to force the abandonment of the people's movement against the Upper Kotmale Scheme. There is also suspicion whether the leadership of certain political and trade unions are behind the police action, for the purpose of disrupting the conference of 25th September organised to express democratic protest and other related protest movements. Therefore all the people should cooperate to enable the people's movement against the Upper Kotmale Scheme to overcome all obstacles and achieve success.

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NDP's Call to Mobilise in the Demonstration

30th September 2005

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Party in his press communiqué of 30th September 2005 made the following public appeal.

If the people of the Hill Country do not stop the Upper Kotmale Hydropower Project, several more disastrous projects of a similar nature will be introduced in the Hill Country in the name of development, and the land and the people of the Hill Country will face destruction. The people, workers, youth and students should mobilise to defeat the conspiracy of the ruling classes to achieve their ulterior motives by destroying natural splendour and pollute the environment in order to generate 150 MW of electricity. It is necessary for the entire people to stand up against the Upper Kotmale project being given away to a Japanese company. Hence, the New Democratic Party calls upon the people to join in the demonstration and rally on 4th October in Talawakelle Town in protest of the Upper Kotmale Hydropower Project.

He also requested the Party and mass organisations led by it to join with the people to express their protest and condemnation.

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NDP Strongly Condemns Attack on Demonstrators by Thugs

3rd October 2005

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Party issued the following press communiqué of 3rd October 2005 condemning the attack by thugs on demonstrators against the Upper Kotmale Scheme.

The two chauvinistic parties have from time to time used thugs and hooligans to crush the just demands and struggles of the Hill Country Tamils. The melee caused by setting thugs on the protest demonstration organised on last Sunday by the People's Movement Against the Upper Kotmale Hydropower Scheme is one such act. The New Democratic Party strongly condemns it. The party with foresight draws attention to the risk of such unruly acts being directed against future demands of the Hill Country Tamils. Our appeal to the Hill Country Tamils is that they should not in any way allow room for such acts.

The two main political cum trade union organisations of the Hill Country are competing to support one or the other of the presidential candidates of two chauvinistic political parties. But on the question of the Upper Kotmale scheme that would spell doom to Talawakelle an important region of the Hill Country, they are on retreat rather than oppose the scheme. Neither the members of the Hill Country People's Front nor its leader, who issued a statement in support of the protest struggle of Sunday participated in the struggle. Meantime, the Party, under the leadership of its General secretary SK Senthivel and Hill Country Regional Secretary S Panneerselvam participated in large numbers and gave strong support to the struggle. Similarly, Mr Joseph, leader of the Sri Lanka Teachers Union, Sarath Fernando, leader of the Railway Employees Union, S Vijayaratham, leader of the Association

of Fishermen's Unions, Mekala Shanmugam, social activist and Rev Fr Geetha Vongalen participated alongside workers and youth to express their protest.

Remembering Comrade Navam

Meetings to commemorate the first death anniversary (8th October 2005) of Comrade S Navaratnam (Navam) were held in Colombo and in Jaffna. The meeting in Colombo was held at the Auditorium of the Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo 6 on 16th October and chaired by Comrade E Thambiah, National Organiser of the NDP. Comrade S Thevarajah, Attorney-at-Law delivered the address on the life and contributions of Comrade Navam, and Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the NDP delivered the memorial address titled "Peace and Democracy in the Current Circumstances". [An English translation of the memorial address is included in this issue].