

**NO COUNTRY OR GOVERNMENT
IN THIS WORLD HAS THE
POWER TO DICTATE TO US**



PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT
LIBRARY

**THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY
R. PREMADASA PRESIDENT AT THE PRIZE
GIVING OF THE 1989 GAM UDAWA
ANNIVERSARY ON 3RD JULY 1989 AT
MAHIYANGANAYA**

I must first of all extend to you our grateful thanks for inviting us to be present at this prize giving connected with the Gam Udawa Anniversary.

We hold the Gam Udawa commemoration annually. This is the eleventh occasion. It is because of the unstinted support we received from all of you that we were able to hold this anniversary in the Uva Province.

In this effort we received the fullest support from all Ministers and Ministries, Ministers of State, Members of Parliament, Chief Ministers and Ministers of Provincial Councils. Similarly our efforts were supported by organisations such as Gramodaya Mandalayas, Local Authorities including Urban Councils and Municipalities. I must also gratefully acknowledge the assistance received from State Officers, Government Departments, Private Sector Organisations, the Armed Services, the Police and Voluntary Organisations. We recall the assistance received from them with a deep sense of gratitude.

The ordinary folk, in particular, worked with singular dedication to make this event a success. This was done in the face of great difficulties, especially in the midst of severe transport problems.

Lakhs and lakhs of people converged on Miyugunagama in Mahiyanganaya to participate in this

Eleventh Anniversary of the Gam Udawa Movement. Today, you can see an unprecedented crowd present here. On our way here, we saw people lined up for miles on end to enter the exhibition grounds. Other than our Ven. Members of the Maha Sangha and other religious dignitaries and school children in groups, all others had to Pay Rs. 5/- to enter the exhibition grounds. Even the very poor people paid this fee to gain entry. They come walking many miles. They travel from distant places in tractors, bicycles, trailers, lorries and vans, incurring much expenditure. During the last ten days we had the opportunity of meeting these people. We also had the opportunity of talking to people who had met these ordinary people. This gave us an opportunity of getting to know the views of the people at first hand. The Gam Udawa Anniversary affords me the opportunity of ascertaining the views of the ordinary people.

Last year what I learnt at Anamaduwa I expressed in public at the Gam Udawa Anniversary on July 3rd that year, in the presence of the former President. On that occasion, I told you that Science and Technology must be harnessed for the good of the common people. At this exhibition you may have seen how our Scientists and Technologists have transformed those ideas into programmes and projects for the welfare of the poor people. Last year, I said that at least the people who are living on food stamps should be given Rs. 2,500 for a period of two years to strengthen them physically so that they will be equipped for production. These deprived people should be strengthened to enable them to live with dignity without having to beg from others.

Now we have got the opportunity to implement these ideas. The inspiration for these ideas comes from the

people. If we want to know what public opinion is, we must participate in occasions like this. It is on occasions like this that we can really feel the pulse of the people; know their feelings. People who could afford to go abroad two or three times a year and go to see international exhibitions thought that it was an exclusive privilege of theirs. They could go to countries like America and Japan and witness shows like Disneyland. They derive that enjoyment expending a lot of our valuable foreign exchange. When we make available similar entertainment to our village folk in different areas in rural Sri Lanka, it is only natural that they should feel a little jealous about it. There is nothing surprising in that. If you only talk to the poor villagers who gather together in the Gam Udawa Exhibitions, you will understand how greatly this effort contributes for their material upliftment; how it suggests ways and means to improve their living conditions and to increase their incomes; and also to improve their knowledge and give them healthy entertainment.

If you only talk to our poor rural people who come many miles amidst great difficulty and enter the exhibition grounds paying a fee of Rs. 5/-, you will know the great benefit they derive from this exercise. Countless numbers have visited this exhibition from 2 p.m. to 12 midnight, these days. Many of them told me that some people had received letters, and posters had been put up holding out death-threats to anyone who comes to visit the exhibition. They had been threatened that if they visited the Gam Udawa they would not be allowed to come back alive. In the villages those who owned vehicles have been threatened with death if they transported people to Gam Udawa. These people numbering lakhs have come to see the exhibition braving all this. I asked one person why he

came here all the way in the midst of all these threats, from his distant home, spending a considerable amount of money to see the exhibition. He gave a very important reply, "We have only one thing to lose, that is our life. It could be lost anywhere, anytime. It did not matter to me if I lost it after seeing Gam Udawa." Almost all these people are very poor people. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we offer them our highest regard and esteem.

This year the Minister of Housing and Construction could find the time to organise the Gam Udawa Anniversary activities only after March. I am sure your Chief Minister, Mr. Percy Samaraweera will tell you what doubts and fears assailed the minds of some people when we cut the first sod in August last year. At that time many people entertained doubts of our ability to hold the Anniversary celebrations in this manner. Your Member of Parliament and State Minister, Mr. Lakshman Seneviratne told me that at that time some people had said with much confidence that even though we were building these houses, it was they who would be distributing them. Whatever misgivings people had, we were not daunted. Our duty is to engage in work that would be beneficial to everyone.

These days, the TV telecasts daily, a feature which attracts every one's attention. When we were attending school as little children we were told the story quite often by our teachers. An old grandfather goes and plants a mango seed in the garden. A child comes up to him and questions—"Grandpa, why are you planting this mango seed?". The Grandfather replies "My son, this mango seed will sprout and in due time grow into a big tree which will bear fruits." This is what he says. Then the child asks "Grandpa, will you live to eat these mangoes?" The

grandfather says "My dear child! I plant this seed now for you to eat mangoes when you grow up". We are implementing this Gam Udawa Programme also with a similar concept and object in mind. It doesn't matter who comes into power. We do all this for the general good of the people. You will understand that when things are done in that manner there is no possibility of failure. Mr. Percy Samaraweera the Chief Minister made a prediction of this when he cut the first sod on that day. Therefore, you all can see that this Gam Udawa movement is a programme which gives encouragement and strength to those people who strive to uplift society.

Brothers and sisters, we want to achieve several objectives within the coming six years. One is to have peace in this country. The other is to achieve discipline. The third objective is prosperity for the country. We hope to achieve peace not by arms, threats or violence but by discussion, compromise and consensus.

There may be certain sections which do not accept this way of thinking. But we should not be discouraged. We must try our best. Peace can never be achieved through violence. You know that while we constantly talk of peace a small group talks through weapons. They kill people in cold blood; they kill servicemen; they kill policemen; they kill politicians, they kill the common people, they kill children and infants. They spread fear and terror throughout the country. Today, services have been stopped. It is not for a just cause, nor is it for the purpose of setting right an injustice. They have done this by force of arms and by death threats. You know that today, the whole transport system is at a standstill. The employees in these services have informed us that they are keeping away from work not because they have suffered any

injustice but because of death threats. Already hundreds in the transport sector have been killed mercilessly.

Perhaps, these threats may be made in the other sectors too. What happens if all the services in the country are stopped in this manner? Those who stall these services may be thinking that only others suffer thereby. But this is not so. They themselves will have to suffer.

Today ships bringing our essential food-stuffs, textiles and medicines, arrive daily at the harbour. If these items are not unloaded they cannot be distributed. If those goods are not transported the people in the various provinces will not receive these goods. When food, clothing and medicine are in short supply who suffers? Not one or two but all will have to face difficulties. The very people who disrupt these things by death threats will have to face difficulties.

If the employees cannot get to their places of work what will happen? Those who get salaries won't be able to obtain their salaries. The pensioners will not be able to get their pensions. Then, who will suffer? All will suffer. When you think on these lines you will see that these things will affect all. Even those people who cause these things will have to face the consequences. What is the purpose of this? There is no use for anyone. You elected our government through a Presidential Election and the General Election. At those two elections, also just like today, the common man was subjected to various harassments and terrors. But the people, just like to-day; without being discouraged went and performed their duty.

See what has happened today. Even before the commencement of the Gam Udawa Anniversary there

were threats, suppression, disruption of transport and such other things. But the common man did not get discouraged by those things and responded in a big way. It is such great response that they showed at both the elections. They used their universal franchise to have a government. That government was for the purpose of achieving three objectives. To achieve peace through peaceful means; to achieve discipline by example; and to achieve prosperity through production. These things were to be effected not by the force of weapons and guns. Peace was to be achieved by discussion and the co-operation of all. Discipline is to be achieved through example. Prosperity is to be achieved and poverty is to be alleviated through production. That is the mandate we got. That is why I am trying and my Government is trying, to get the sections who have not yet joined the democratic process to do so.

Today the Parliament has come to represent various shades of opinion that it didn't earlier. That is a thing which makes me happy. It has happened so due to your system of proportional representation. If, by any chance, the old system had been there, I would have, and our party would have, got a majority of more than 5/6 again. It may be a thing which makes us happy, but in no way can we be satisfied. Then they will say it is an unbalanced Parliament. You know that the way the people in this country used their vote both at the Presidential Election and the General Election giving me a mandate, is very surprising. We got a resounding victory. But due to the system of proportional representation which had been introduced by our own Government, Parliament did not get weighted to one side. We have got a Parliament where diverse opinion can be expressed and where various communities are represented. The Parliament

consists of persons of various political views. I am very happy about this. Although I do not have a 2/3rd majority, I am happy about a Parliament of this type. What I am trying to do is to get those people who have not yet entered the democratic process to enter that path. That is why I appeal to every person in this manner.

I have no doubt that you all will be very glad to hear that we have been able to persuade the LTTE to enter into a dialogue with us for the solution of problems by peaceful means. Till recently hardly anybody thought that they would come for talks. How did we achieve that success? It is not with guns or bombs that we did it, nor with threats or boastful talk. It is through the strength of our genuine and sincere desire to resolve problems on the basis of justice and fair play that we could get them down for talks. What is LTTE? It is undoubtedly a very powerful militant group. It has power not only in our Northern and Eastern Provinces. It has organisations which give it strong support in many countries in the world. The LTTE has money, weapons and also very dedicated supporters. A great effort was made to suppress them through various means, but it could not be done. But today it has not only come forward for talks giving ear to our appeal and will stop their conflicts and inimical action with not only various groups of the Northern and Eastern Provinces, but with all communities and groups throughout the country.

You all know what great massacres of people took place over the past two years in the country. These groups have come to talk with us for the solution of problems through peaceful means. We earnestly hope to find solutions to our problems through discussion. Now this group is very eager to enter the democratic process. This is a victory for all. Just recall what a great loss of

human lives and wealth took place over the years because of the violence that prevailed. Now that situation is changing. And, that is why I am appealing to all other groups which have not yet entered the democratic process to do so.

That is why I am trying to get them into the administrative and political machinery, into Parliament and to other elected bodies of the people. We must afford an opportunity for all groups to express their views. May be that we have big differences. But we can discuss them. Instead of engaging in an armed clash we can arrive at solutions through discussion. We must afford the fullest opportunity for this. When I was chosen by the United National Party as its Presidential Candidate I formulated this policy.

I would like to state that the United National Party with all its experience is now transformed into a new party with a new policy and a new programme. That is why a militant group like the LTTE reposed confidence in us. Our Party has a new Manifesto. That is why I appeal to all groups and communities in this country to eschew violence and express their views freely. That is why we strengthened our Parliament with better representation of all shades of opinion. It is with the intention of facilitating the process of solving problems through discussion, consultation and consensus, that we brought this improvement in Parliament.

Even well before the elections, I said that Parliament would be given more responsibility. The Speaker has been requested by me to amend the Standing Orders necessary for this process. Parliament is a very important institution. Therefore, every section of our population should be

given representation in that body. We must do everything possible to get every shade of opinion represented in Parliament. I am always prepared to resolve problems through discussion and exchange of views, and I sincerely believe that it is possible to do so. Our newest experience in this regard is the process of dialogue that is now going on between our Government and the LTTE. Just see what a great achievement this is. All this time we fought with each other. Thousands died from each side. We brought foreign armies to suppress this group leaving aside our own Army. But we could not do it. But what triumphed ultimately? it is the process of establishing peace through discussion.

It is because of this that I appeal to all to tell us what their problems are and what they really want before resorting to a course of action which will result in great hardship to the people. We can discuss that. This is a country which belongs to all. These problems affect all. Any stoppage of work or a breakdown in services or any inconvenience caused to the public will affect not one or two but everyone. All have to suffer the consequences of such actions.

Wasn't it because of the confidence people had in our programme that they voted our Party into power at both elections. I have no doubt that it is because of the confidence that the ordinary people have in our programme and policies that 19 to 20 lakhs of people patronised our Gam Udawa Anniversary celebrations during the last 10 to 11 days. It is because they believe in our programme that every day from 2 p.m. to 12 midnight lakhs of people visited our exhibition paying a fee of Rs. 5/. Some people thought transport difficulties would dampen the Gam Udawa celebrations. Some others thought that

threats would succeed in preventing people from coming to see the exhibition. But now you can see the difference. Now, you can see what the public opinion is.

We also have a good Constitution. There are three factors underlying the legislative function. Under this Constitution, there are certain things that can be enacted by a simple majority. Then it specifies things which can be enacted by a 2/3rd majority. There are however, certain specified matters which we cannot do by a simple majority or even a 2/3rd majority in Parliament. What are these specified matters? They concern the sovereignty, the territorial integrity and the unitary character of the Constitution. We have to consult the people regarding these issues through a referendum.

The sovereignty, territorial integrity and the unitary character of our country cannot be altered by a simple majority or even by a two thirds majority. If such a thing is to be done a Referendum should be held. It is only the people of this country who can make any change in the sovereignty, territorial integrity and the unitary character of this country. The division of this country cannot be done by a simple majority. It cannot be done even by a two-thirds majority. If such a thing is to be done you will have to hold a referendum. In that sense we have a very pragmatic Constitution. Therefore, we have the freedom to discuss anything with anyone if the need arises. We have such an effective Constitution. Therefore I wish to state that whatever I discuss, and any decision I take, will necessarily be a decision conforming to the Constitution. Therefore, we can have discussions with any person and formulate whatever programme we want. We are a sovereign State. We are an independent country. Therefore I wish to state that no country or Government

in this world, has the power to dictate to us as to with whom we should have discussions and as to what conditions those discussions should be subject to. That sovereignty is vested only in the people of this country. In no way can any other country or Government seek to share it. All of us know that it is a sovereignty vested solely in the people of Sri Lanka.

All of you know that for the last 3 or 4 months we have been doing everything possible to establish peace in the country. We lifted the Emergency. We released those who were in custody. All this was done to restore peace. But if these attempts to have peace are answered with subversive activity we have to take steps to ensure the protection of the majority of the people. That is why we had to reimpose the Emergency. In the same way we have enacted appropriate laws in Parliament to achieve discipline. We are reorganising the administrative machinery. We are going to have a different programme. It will be a complete reorganisation. There are many changes to come. Changes in organisation and changes of persons have to be done, based on experience. It was even before the election that we announced these intentions. We have made drastic changes. You know that when changes of this nature are made there will be dissatisfaction. But I wish to tell you that the present United National Party is not prepared to sacrifice the welfare of the people, to appease individuals. We will not hesitate to effect these changes.

About an year ago the President of the Soviet Union, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev wrote a book on his programme of restructuring called "Perestroika." Any one reading that book would get inspired. He has stated that he would make a complete re-organisation. I was the first to review

that book. He has suggested a restructuring that suits the Soviet Union. Today he is carrying it out amidst various obstacles. A few days ago I heard over the radio that various sections are placing various obstacles in his way and are trying to sabotage his programme. We should not be surprised about these things. At a time like this, when a major restructuring programme is going to be effected in our country it is not a surprise to see various obstacles and impediments being placed in the way. At this time when the UNP is effecting a complete reorganisation, both in policy and in execution, various obstacles may arise. Not only that, when we are working to protect this country's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and the unitary Constitution according to the mandate given to us by you, certain forces who wish to keep us in permanent subjugation will resort to various tactics.

In the past when a country wanted to conquer another they waged a war. But now that method has changed. Today when a country wants to tame, suppress or enslave another country it resorts to different methods. There are intelligence services. The agents of these intelligence services are sent to these countries. They get round people in those countries. By offering various inducements, these agents get these people to work for them. They give bribes to create internal disputes. Those intelligence services get murders committed and cause disruption. They hire people from inside the administration itself to disrupt the administration. They recruit such people and work insidiously through them to wreck the administration. There is such a system in the world today. In the past when burglars wanted to break into a house, what they did was to wait until the occupants of the house were asleep. But later, even the burglars discovered new methods. They get hold of the maid or the

man-servant of the house and bribe them to leave one door unbolted in the night. The burglars simply walk in, tie up the maid or man-servant and walk away with the valuables. Later the servant shares the spoils with the burglars. In the the past those who wanted to break into houses did it by making a hole in the wall and creeping in through the hole. Later, even those methods were replaced by new techniques. They get hold of some person inside the house and get his help to break in. Therefore we must not forget that in subjugating countries also new methods have been devised.

If there are internal disputes it is easy for them to get hold of persons who are involved in the dispute, bribe them, help them and get them to create internal troubles and uprisings. You know what happened in the North and the East. From where did our people get that help and assistance to attack our own people? Now they themselves say that certain quarters gave them weapons, provided them protection, gave them money and so on. Therefore we must take note of the fact that there are subtle ways that people resort to in matters like this. Some people exploit the minor differences that exist between us to create dissension among us. There are various secret services which are engaged in this disruptive activity. It may be that some people do this because of an unwillingness to see our countries, especially countries that belong to the Third World prosper. We must be very careful not to fall victim, to these efforts. That is why we should safeguard our discipline. We must resolve any differences we have through our own efforts.

I was listening to what our Speaker said a few minutes back. I endorse what he said. If we had any differences, he said, we should discuss them among ourselves

peacefully and come to conclusions regarding remedial measures. If not, our in-fighting can result in making us subservient to foreign powers. We know that for over 400 years we went under the rule of various colonial powers. We therefore, must be careful and solve our problems by discussion amongst us. That is why I am always appealing to all communities in this country to be prepared to resolve our differences through consultation, compromise and consensus. There is no problem which will not yield to a solution on the basis of this policy. I am always prepared to arrive at a solution on the basis of truth and justice. I will not adopt a stubborn attitude and say that I will never give this or that. My Government will never adopt such an uppish attitude and will always be humble minded and kind. What we want is to get at the truth and justice. Our Government is ready to go to any length to solve our problems on the basis of establishing peace, discipline and prosperity for all in the country.

You will realise that during the last four or five months we launched many programmes to bring about prosperity in this country. Now our poor school children are being given a free mid-day meal. For this programme, we have already allocated a sum of Rs. 2000 million per year generously. Isn't that an indirect salary increase to the parents of those children. Anybody will see that it is also a measure that will contribute to bring down the cost of living. Now we are also commencing the implementation of the Janasaviya Programme. We are going to strengthen Seven Million people during a period of 2 years. This is a programme to alleviate poverty as well as to increase production. Today salaried people find their income inadequate because of the low level of production. They will find their present salaries adequate to meet their cost of living if there is greater production in the country. Isn't it

for this purpose that we are implementing the Janasaviya Programme? During the recent past the ethnic disturbances and conflicts among militant groups resulted in much damage to our buildings and other forms of property. Much reconstruction work has to be done in many parts of the country. A large sum of money will have to be expended for this purpose. This activity also will create much opportunity for new employment. Our friendly countries have given us much money for this reconstruction activity. These monies will have to be spent for the purposes they have been given. But peace must prevail for this to happen. If murder, arson and all types of other violent activities are the order of the day, how can we get down to reconstruction work. We have already prepared plans for rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes. Now we are unable to implement these plans because of lack of peace in the country. If people are being killed; if people have to live in fear; if public services are disrupted, if transport services are crippled how can we start any development activity? I therefore would like to draw the attention of everybody to this situation. I urge all sections to refrain from violence and disruptive activity. I want to tell you all bring back peace if you have any love for the people of this country, and if you are really concerned about bringing about their liberation.

In July 1980, there was a sudden stoppage by some sections of workers. Our Government has afforded relief in many ways to those who remained jobless as a result of that stoppage. Ultimately, it was I who afforded them the opportunity to retire from service on the basis that they had been in employment throughout this period. Now some people have again gone on a stoppage. Now many

people say they can't report at their places of work because there are death threats held out to them. I therefore thought it especially opportune and important to place these matters before you. I think it is a great fortune that we have in our country fair-minded, fearless, selfless people like you. I greatly appreciate the generous assistance and co-operation extended by you for the observance of the Gam Udawa Anniversary inspite of the great odds faced by you.

I again express my willingness to discuss and resolve any problem with any community or section of the people. But I do not think that any outside force has any legitimate right to lay down pre-conditions for such discussion. It is certainly the Government of the country only which has that right. The responsibility of our Government is to find solutions to problems on a basis that will not harm our freedom, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unitary status of our country. That requires the formulation of solutions on the basis of consultation with all parties, communities and sections of the people. Also it is necessary that any such solution should fit into the framework of our Constitution. Broadly, our approach to the solution of any problem has to be through the process of consultation, compromise and consensus. I would like to conclude my speech thanking all those who participated in this Gam Udawa Anniversary and for the encouragement given to me.

