

Tribute to Lee Kuan Yew, the Great Statesman of the East : TGTE

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- “Sri Lanka is not a happy, united country. Yes, they have beaten the Tamil Tigers this time, but the Sinhalese who are less capable are putting down a minority of Jaffna Tamils who are more capable. They were squeezing them out. That’s why the Tamils rebelled. But I do not see them ethnic cleansing all two million-plus Jaffna Tamils. The Jaffna Tamils have been in Sri Lanka as long as the Sinhalese.” Lee Kuan Yew.

We at the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) offer our deepest condolences to the people of Singapore on the demise of Lee Kuan Yew, the Great Statesman of the East.

He was a true friend of the Tamils of Sri Lanka and spoke out with clarity and courage on their behalf and against the injustices meted out to them by successive, racist Sinhala governments.

Ironically, in 1965 when Lee Kuan Yew was asked which country in Asia was his model to emulate for the newly formed Singapore he said without hesitation ‘Ceylon’. At that time Sri Lanka had a robust economy, a highly literate population, and was showing an excellent set of development indicators.

Fifty years down the line, Singapore is among the leading nations of the world in terms of its economic and social achievements, while Sri Lanka sits along with many low performing States towards the bottom of the pile, with successive regimes in Colombo carrying out genocidal policies against its own Tamil people. Singapore, starting off as a small and underdeveloped island outpost, under Lee Kuan Yew’s able leadership, transformed itself to be a first-world metropolis.

As one of Asia’s richest countries in terms of per capita income, with public services on par with the best in the world, and a remarkable level of social stability for a multi-racial society, Singapore today is the cynosure of the world’s attention. If there is any term that can capture the reasons behind this transformation, it could only be the ‘sagacity’ of the leadership under Lee Kuan Yew. President Nixon once observed Lee Kuan Yew as a big man on a small stage, who “in other times, and other places, might have attained the status of Churchill, Disraeli, or Gladstone.” President Obama described him as a “true giant of history.”

Despite his initial admiration for Sri Lanka, it is clear that Lee Kuan Yew led Singapore along a completely different path of rule of law, reward for the meritorious and justice for all ethnic communities living on the island-state. Unlike Sri Lanka, which enacted its notorious and racist ‘Sinhala Only’ policies back in the fifties itself, the new Singapore started off with official recognition to the languages spoken by different groups in the country, including Tamil which was spoken by only 7

percent of the country's population.

Lee Kuan Yew, spoke in favour of the Tamils of Sri Lanka, not because of any special affinity towards them or antipathy towards the Sinhalese. He saw clearly that the Tamils had been gravely wronged, in fact persecuted severely for being honest and meritorious.

Always known for his blunt and brutally honest observations, when asked in 1998 about the Sri Lankan civil war, Lee Kuan Yew said, "One-man one-vote led to the Sinhalese majority domination over the minority Tamils who were the active and intelligent fellows who worked hard and got themselves penalised."

More recently, in 2011, he called Mahinda Rajapaksa a 'Sinhala extremist' and described the 2009 Mullaivaaikkaal events 'ethnic cleansing', being one among the few global statesmen to have the courage to call a spade a spade. Elaborating on the theme he said "Sri Lanka is not a happy, united country. Yes, they have beaten the Tamil Tigers this time, but the Sinhalese who are less capable are putting down a minority of Jaffna Tamils who are more capable. They were squeezing them out. That's why the Tamils rebelled. But I do not see them ethnic cleansing all two million-plus Jaffna Tamils. The Jaffna Tamils have been in Sri Lanka as long as the Sinhalese."

Lee Kuan Yew's observations on Sri Lanka were entirely in keeping with his perspective in general, of nailing down bright, shining lies wherever he saw them and upholding fairness wherever needed, irrespective of creed, ethnicity, language or community. His wisdom and integrity on the global stage will be sorely missed by all Tamils around the world.

ABOUT TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL EELAM (TGTE):

Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) is a democratically elected Government of a million strong Tamils (from the island of Sri Lanka) living in several countries around the world.

TGTE was formed after the mass killing of Tamils by the Sri Lankan Government in 2009. According to UN internal review report on Sri Lanka, over 70,000 Tamils were killed in five months in early 2009 and Tamil women were sexually assaulted and raped by Sri Lankan Security forces. There are over 90,000 Tamil war widows and hundreds of Tamil political prisoners.

TGTE held internationally supervised elections among Tamils around the world to elect 132 Members of Parliament and is leading a campaign to realize Tamils' political aspirations through peaceful, diplomatic and democratic means.

TGTE has a bicameral legislature and a Cabinet and held one of its Parliamentary sittings in the British Parliament.

The Constitution of the TGTE mandates that it should realize its political objective only through peaceful means.

The Prime Minister of TGTE is Mr. Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, a New York based lawyer.

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