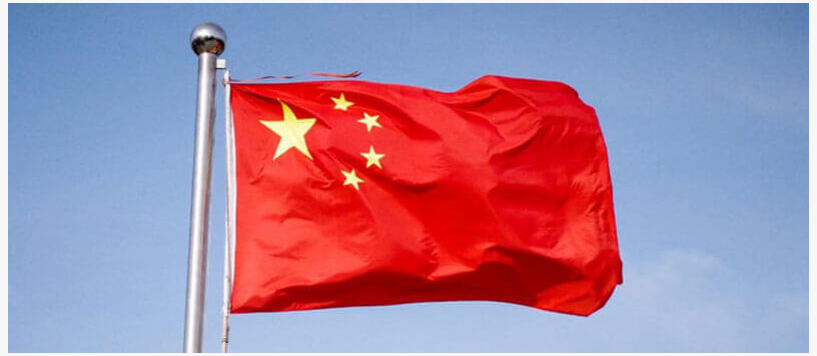


China Should Withdraw Plans for Renewable Energy Projects in Tamil Areas in Sri Lanka: TGTE

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China suspended its renewable hybrid energy project on the islets off Tamil-majority northern Jaffna Peninsula in the island of Sri Lanka in early December, citing "security concerns from a third party."



While this is a welcome move, China should withdraw entirely from development projects in the Tamil areas, said Mr. Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, Prime Minister of Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE).

"Any future development project initiated in the Tamil areas should only be done after explicit consent is obtained from the people of the North East for the undertaking. Consent should not only be for political and economic aspects of development projects, but on environmental features as well, through an environmental impact assessment by a credible international body."

"Sri Lanka's moves assisting China to encircle and contain India by awarding Chinese companies development projects will have a lasting impact on Tamil sovereignty. The renewable energy project awarded to the Chinese company Sino Sar Hybrid Technology were in Delft, Analativu, and Nainativu, which are islets in the narrow Palk Strait that divides the Tamil-majority Jaffna Peninsula and India's Tamil Nadu."

Although the "third party" was not named by the Chinese embassy in Sri Lanka, it is believed to be India. India voiced security concerns in February when the Colombo revoked the agreement to develop US \$12 million worth project on the islets with the Indian firm Adani Group and awarded it to the Chinese company. Under terms of the agreement, the project was to be developed jointly by the Chinese company and the Ceylon Electricity Board. China undercutting the Indian company's bid was seen at that time as the East Asian nation's power not only to secure its interests in Sri Lanka but also undermine New Delhi's relationship with its neighbours,

said Mr. Rudrakumaran.

"The proposal to install a renewable energy project on the islets came as Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's government rescinded a contract with India and Japan, reportedly on Beijing's instigation, for second phase development of the Eastern Container Terminal (ECT) at the Colombo Port. Under the agreement with India and Japan, the Sri Lanka Ports Authority was to own 51% shares in the ECT, while India and Japan would hold 49%."

Sri Lanka's refusal to go ahead with the project to develop the ECT is widely seen as pressure from Beijing to prevent its geopolitical rivals in the region, India, and Japan – both close U.S. allies and partners in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) – having any part to play in running of the terminal, which is adjacent to facilities being developed nearby by Chinese companies. Sri Lanka however cited objections by trade unions to sell the country's assets to foreign countries as the reason to withdraw from the deal. The ostensible reason shatters the often-trumpeted assertion by Colombo that the Sinhala people are culturally related to the Indian people and Sri Lanka is a friendly country of India's. India protested the move and asked Colombo to honour the original agreement of May 2019.

The move by the Rajapaksa to withdraw from commitments to India on development projects reinforces the concerns of former Defence Minister of India, George Fernandes who stated in 1998 that "China is potential threat number one . . . China is and is likely to remain the primary security challenge to India in the medium and long-term . . . The potential threat from China is greater than that of Pakistan and any person who is concerned about India's security must agree with that."

The maritime encirclement of India from Gwader in Pakistan in the West to Koko Islands in the East, is complete with Beijing's growing influence in Sri Lanka, which is South. As Professor Mohan Malik of Indian Defence said, "China's strategy towards India have three elements namely encirclement, envelopment, and entanglement." In 2017 Colombo handed over a Chinese-built port in Hambantota, which is in southern Sri Lanka and adjacent to the Indian Ocean shipping lanes, to Beijing on a 99-year lease. In 2014, a Chinese submarine berthed in the Colombo port provoking strong protests from New Delhi.

The Jaffna Peninsula on Sri Lanka's northern coast and the islets off its shoreline, are part of the territory that has been under the control of the Tamils from ancient times. As such, they are an integral part of the Tamil homeland. Furthermore, the Northeastern part of the Island and the adjacent seas fall within the purview of Tamil sovereignty. Tamils and their political leadership should exercise their sovereignty and their right to self-determination more forcefully to ensure that Colombo does not sacrifice parts of the Tamil homeland in its game to broaden Chinese orbit in the Indian Ocean.

ABOUT THE TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL EELAM (TGTE):

The Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) is a democratically elected Government of over 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.

TGTE thrice held internationally supervised elections among Tamils around the world to elect 135 Members of Parliament. It has two chambers of Parliament: The House of Representatives and the Senate and also a Cabinet.

TGTE is leading a campaign to realize the political aspirations of Tamils through peaceful, democratic, and diplomatic means and its Constitution mandates that it should realize its political objectives only through peaceful means. It's based on the principles of nationhood, homeland and self-determination.

TGTE seeks that the international community hold the perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide against the Tamil people to account. TGTE calls for a referendum to decide the political future of Tamils.

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

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BACKGROUND

Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka faced repeated mass killings in 1958, 1977, and 1983 and the mass killings in 2009 prompted UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to appoint a Panel of Experts to report on the scale of the killings.

According to UN internal review report on Sri Lanka, over 70 thousand Tamils were killed in six months in early 2009 and Tamil women were sexually assaulted and raped by the Sri Lankan Security forces.

International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) in February 2017 handed over details to UN of Sri Lankan Military run "Rape Camps", where Tamil women are being held as "sex slaves". Also, According to UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office report on April 2013, there are over 90 thousand Tamil war widows in Sri Lanka.

Thousands of Tamils disappeared, including babies and children. UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances stated in 2020 that the second highest number of enforced disappearance cases in the world is from Sri Lanka.

According to this UN report, the killings and other abuses that took place amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Independent experts believe that there are elements of these abuses that constitute an act of genocide.

Members of the Sri Lankan security forces are almost exclusively from the Sinhalese community and the victims are all from the Tamil community.

Tamils overwhelmingly voted in a Parliamentary election in 1977 to establish an independent and sovereign country called Tamil Eelam. This Parliamentary election was conducted by the Sri Lankan Government.

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