

NEWS

'A sustained engagement, to the extent practicable'

Robert O. Blake
Letter to GTF

DURING my tenure as U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka, and since becoming Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, it has been a distinct honor to have had the opportunity to meet on a regular basis with Tamil-American community leaders – a number of whom are represented in London this week. I am pleased that the United States Government shares with its Tamil-American citizens the same hopes for peace and prosperity for all of Sri Lanka's peoples.

As Tamil Diaspora leaders from around the world come together in London, my sincere hope remains that Sri Lanka Tamils and the global Diaspora can unify around a common position that explicitly rejects violence and recommends a sustained engagement, to the extent practicable, with the Government of Sri Lanka, and a commitment to re-join and strengthen Sri Lanka's democratic process and institutions. The global Tamil Diaspora can and should play a critical role in national reconciliation in Sri Lanka, including, but not limited to, support for reconstruction in the North and East. The United States stands ready to partner with you and the



Government of Sri Lanka to help ensure that Tamil-Americans have every opportunity to play such a role.

With best wishes for a successful Global Tamil Forum.

'Tamil diaspora ready to play part'

David Cameron
Letter to GTF

I AM delighted to send my best wishes for today's inaugural Global Tamil Forum Conference.

Members of the Tamil diaspora have contributed a great deal to our society, and this event brings them together with their friends from around the world.

Today we are united in a common cause and wish to see the

same outcome – a peaceful, stable and prosperous Sri Lanka, where the democratic and political aspirations of all ethnic groups are fulfilled and all Sri Lankans are able to live together in harmony.

Sri Lanka has recently emerged from a very difficult period in its history and it is vital that a negotiated settlement occurs and a period of reconciliation and healing begins in earnest. I know that the Tamil diaspora is ready to play a full part in this process, and I am sure this



Conference will be a positive step forward in this work.

On behalf of the Conservative Party, I would like to congratulate the Tamil diaspora for their energetic efforts to ensure enduring peace in their country, and to wish the Global Tamil Forum inaugural Conference every success.

Political reconciliation ...

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ence. That is why we continue to call as a Government for a process to investigate serious allegations of violation of international humanitarian law by both sides in the conflict. If credible and independent, such efforts could make an important contribution to reconciliation between Sri Lanka's communities.

I've also said repeatedly that the concern with civil and political rights today, concern with the history, concern with the IDPs, feeds in to a constitutional point that there needs to be a genuinely inclusive political process in Sri Lanka which involves all communities of Sri Lanka.

It's important to say that whenever a British Minister says this, there are accusations that we are trying to tell Sri Lanka how to govern or run its own affairs. I want to refute that very, very clearly, because the shape of any future political settlement is for the Sri Lankan people, all the Sri

Lankan people recognising all their rights, including minority rights, it's for them to determine. But we will continue to be an advocate for the universal human rights that we believe underpin the basis not just of democracy, but of decent societies everywhere.

I just want to conclude on the following point. Politics is about Governments, it's also about people, it's about people in countries that are trying to chart a peaceful future, but it's also about those with links around the world and that relates to the significance of today's event. This democratic group, this heartily engaged forum is well placed to influence debate, well placed because of its commitments and well placed because of its contacts.

And it is my view that political reconciliation will require the active engagement of Tamil communities around the world. It will require you to speak up for your values of non violence. It will

require you to speak up for a vision of a decent Sri Lanka that respects all its people and it will require you to speak up for a spirit that recognises that if people can not find a way to live together they will drift apart.

These commitments are easy to say, especially easy to say from the relative comfort of a democratic country like the United Kingdom. But it's important that we say that we are in solidarity with all those Sri Lankans, whatever their background, who want to live up to the commitments in the Sri Lankan constitution and who want to live up to the founding ideals of a country that respects every single one of its citizens without fear or favour. The struggle for equality and democracy is one that should unite all Sri Lankans and all Governments around the world. On behalf of the UK Government I can assure you it does.

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'Urge them to move forward'

Gordon Brown
Letter to GTF

I AM delighted that the inauguration of the Global Tamil Forum will take place in London on the 24th of February 2010.

I am proud to be the Prime Minister of a country that represents so many people of different races, religions, cultures and faiths.

As I said recently in the House of Commons, we urge the Government to recognize the human rights of all those who are Tamil citizens in Sri Lanka, and we also urge them to move forward with the reconstruction of the country so that those who have been excluded both from power and from the chances of a livelihood can benefit now.

May I wish you well in your deliberations.



'Willingness to engage will go a long way'



African National Congress

Letter to GTF

WE are delighted to send this congratulatory message to the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) on its inaugural gathering.

Having resolved our past political, social and economic challenges in South Africa through dialogue, we firmly believe that willingness to engage, listen to views and ideas of fellow compatriots and the international com-

munity, will go a long way in finding a solution to Tamil concerns in Sri Lanka.

We are encouraged by the GTF's commitment to a democratic and non-violent approach. As an umbrella organisation representing mass-based formations in many countries around the globe and in the Tamil Diaspora, may you grow from strength-to-strength in achieving your objectives by peaceful means.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the organisers and dignitaries for honouring this historic occasion.

AMANDLA!