



We are aware that some countries being battered by terrorism have taken strength from the victories won by Sri Lanka over terrorism. It is time for the countries facing attacks from terrorism to look back and see where they had gone wrong, whereas Sri Lanka has succeeded, said President Mahinda Rajapaksa, in his address to the Nation on the Victory Day celebrations at Galle Face, Colombo today.

It is a grave error of judgment to think that while being opposed to terrorism targeting you, to believe that terrorism that is no threat to you is good...The world has so far trod on this wrong path. Terrorism remains unvanquished because of this incorrect thinking. The countries that show sympathy towards terrorism and separatism will be the victims of terrorism. This is the lesson of history, President Rajapaksa further said.

Among the highlights of the President's address are:

- We have already appointed an Independent Commission to inquire into the causes that led to terrorism, the lessons we can learn from this, and the path to reconciliation.
- As long as we remember that those who sacrificed their lives now rest in the soil of our land, I declare with pride that our people shall not leave room for anyone to divide this motherland of ours.
- The people should have complete faith and confidence that the land that was liberated from terrorism through great sacrifice of life will not be handed over to the forces of separatism again.
- Our armed forces comprise those who went to battle carrying a gun in one hand, the Declaration of Human Rights the other, as well as taking food for the liberated people of the North and full of human kindness in their hearts
- What those from abroad who seek to strengthen separatism are really doing is to once again corral the people of the north into camps...The world should look into what happened to all the aid that was given as relief for the Tamil people of the North. For thirty long years they did not see the development of roads, electricity and schools.
- It did not take us long to restore normalcy to the East that was affected by terrorism. We shall

next resolve the problems faced from terrorism by the people in the North, by the end of this year.

- What is most needed to prevent the shedding of blood and tears for the country is to restore the hearts shattered by violence and ease such pain. I am confident that the Sri Lankan nation has the will to achieve this.
- We must line up under the slogan, 'We for the Country'. Many countries in the world have developed through the extra-ordinary endeavors of their people. We, who have astonished the world through success in our humanitarian operation, must do so in development, too. We must surprise the world through the unthinkable.

Here is the text of President Rajapaksa's Address to the Nation:

As I hoist the national flag today, I recall the cry of victory raised by the entire nation waving the national flag throughout the country one year ago. For the first time in the history of our nation the proud roar of being brought under a single national banner was taken to the entire world by our people. Our national flag fluttered on that occasion in the last breath of those heroes who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the land. Each day, as the sun rises I remember these heroes of war who laid down their lives for the country.

We must also remember that presidents, presidential candidates, ministers, members of parliament and political leaders and intellectuals such as Duraiappah, Amirthalingam, Lakshman Kadirgamar and Neelan Thiruchelvam who faced death at the hands of terrorists are interred in our soil. We also must remember that large numbers of people, including thousands of little children, who were killed by terrorist attacks on villages, streets and highways, also lie buried amongst us. Our land today does not comprise only rock, sand and gravel but the flesh and blood of our ancestors, too.

As long as we remember that those who sacrificed their lives now rest in the soil of our land, I declare with pride that our people shall not leave room for anyone to divide this motherland of ours.

Friends,

The strategies to divide our motherland were not limited to the battlefield. This had entered not only our parliament but also factories, schools and even our homes. For thirty long years our people faced this threat in the midst of many obstacles. On some occasions our people even had to face international sanctions.

Our people have faced the worst tragedies in the history of the world. Even at a time when the Sri Maha Bodhi, the Sacred Tooth Relic and Bhikkhus were being assassinated, the community of Bhikkhus living in distant villages did not abandon their sacred responsibility of being the guardians of the nation. They gave guidance and strength to people, who clutching their children had to hide in the forest at night, returned to work their fields at day and protected the villages that would have been the borders of our land. Both in the North and East children who

were returning from school were forcibly taken by the terrorists for the war. The mothers in the North and East suffered this loss.

In spite of the bombs being exploded in trains and buses, and air raids, not a single person abandoned their places of work. Terrorists who snatched away the lives and property of our people could not deprive them of determination.

The effort of the terrorists to change our hearts through the pursuit of terror for thirty years did not meet with success. Our children were deprived of their right to learn the history of our nation. The name of King Dutugemunu was demeaned even worse than during the reign of King Elara. Many were the efforts made to make us forget that we are a people who in the past had defeated the most powerful invaders.

Terrorists decapitated the villagers in the North and East. Others who earned dividends from separatists struck at the minds of the people. The determination of the heroic youth of Sri Lanka was blunted by those who spread the belief that going to war against terrorism was a dangerous and unwise task. Films were screened all over the world seeking to humiliate heroes who were disabled in the war. As much as our language, our intellectuals too, were totally ignored. Sons of Sri Lanka were been made to be temporary lodgers in their homeland.

We must be proud that our people did not allow the nation to be divided despite all these challenges that lasted thirty years. The mere recruitment of youth in large numbers to the armed forces and strengthening the forces with more arms was not sufficient. It was necessary to consider this land as part of ourselves. It was necessary to instill the confidence that the nation belongs to the people themselves.

Friends,

We inscribed in the Mahinda Chintana the path of bringing back to the nation what was forcibly taken away from us and our nation.

A government that sells the national assets of the country to foreign racketeers, that degrades our national history, that pays no heed or respect to our national language, traditions and values, is not capable of winning such a struggle. Heroism cannot be imported from abroad- it lives in our history and tradition.

In a struggle to liberate one's country, knowing the enemies' terrain alone is not important. It is necessary to understand the heartbeats of the people, their views and aspirations and respect them, too.

The people should have complete faith and confidence that the land that was liberated from terrorism through great sacrifice of life will not be handed over to the forces of separatism again.

One cannot succeed in liberating the motherland by keeping your son at home and getting another's son to fight. When we came forward to liberate the motherland, it was not done

thinking that the leader, the people and the country were separate from each other, but was a single entity.

Friends,

A year has passed since that glorious victory. But there were attempts to tarnish that victory in the recent past. You are aware of the attempts at the biggest betrayal of bringing the armed forces to disrepute took place. It is an insult to the heroic troops who shed their blood and gave their lives for the country in this great humanitarian operation to say that they shot at terrorist leaders who came carrying white flags. Our armed forces comprise those who went to battle carrying a gun in one hand, the Declaration of Human Rights the other, as well as taking food for the liberated people of the North and full of human kindness in their hearts.

It is only those who have hatred towards the country and nation can betray such heroes. The beneficiaries of such a great betrayal will only be the separatists.

But my dear friends, it is with the same satisfaction that I felt when we won the humanitarian operation that I am pleased to say today that the people of this country have accepted the great challenge of protecting this glorious victory.

I believe the people of this country will stand firm as a solid fortification around the government and the security forces who won the country for them.

Friends,

We are aware that some countries being battered by terrorism have taken strength and courage from these victories won by Sri Lanka. It is time for the countries facing the attacks of terrorism to look back and see where they have gone wrong.

It is a grave error of judgment to think that while been opposed to terrorism targeting you, to believe that terrorism that is no threat to you is good.

The world has so far trod on this wrong path. Terrorism remains unvanquished because of this incorrect thinking. I must state that the countries that show sympathy towards terrorism and separatism will be the victims of terrorism. This is the lesson of the history.

Friends,

What those from abroad who seek to strengthen separatism are really doing is, to once again corral the people of the north into camps.

The world should look into what happened to all the aid that was given as relief for the Tamil people of the North. For thirty long years they did not see the development of roads, electricity and schools. It is now seen how all those funds went for the luxury, pleasure and overindulgence of separatists and for them to deprive the people of the North of their freedom.

Friends,

The problems of the Tamil people, Muslims and all others who are born and live in this country cannot be a burden to those outside. It is our own responsibility to solve the problems of our people. It did not take us long to restore normalcy to the East that was affected by terrorism. We shall next resolve the problems faced from terrorism by the people in the North, by the end of this year.

Many who went to the North are satisfied with the work done by the government towards the welfare of the displaced people. We have already appointed an Independent Commission to inquire into the causes that led to terrorism, the lessons we can learn from this, and reconciliation. It is our intent to make the people in the North be the most pleased by this victory over terrorism. It is understood by all that we carried out this great humanitarian operation only to eliminate terrorism. We left no room for even one bullet to be fired against ordinary citizens. Therefore, we consider day as one which unites all our people.

The conditions laid before us holding this country to ransom with the threat of terrorism are not valid anymore. There is a government and people today ready to make any sacrifice to safeguard the freedom of this country.

We are not ready to accept aid under conditions that will betray the freedom of our land and people. We must be ready to end the era of dependence on aid.

Friends,

It is not to idly waste our time that we liberated this land. It was not to hand over the country to thieves, crooks, the corrupt and those of the underworld and also not to waste our time in lethargy.

More than 200,000 in our armed forces have given Sri Lanka a victory through their commitment through day and night in good weather and bad. These heroes are our children born in our own villages.

Our public service has six times the manpower of the armed forces. They are also our own children born in our own villages. If our public servants make a commitment for four years similar to that by our heroic forces we will be able make this country the Wonder of Asia.

Friends,

You should be well aware of the challenges that lie ahead. We went to battle under the slogan, 'Api Wenuwen Api'. Similarly, in building the nation and country we must line up under the slogan, 'We for the Country'. Many countries in the world have developed through the extra-ordinary endeavors of their people. We, who have astonished the world through success in our humanitarian operation, must do so in development, too. We must surprise the world through the unthinkable.

It is only those of us who are born in this country that have the will to build this country. People of our country have the strength and courage to build this country. What is only needed is the will.

Yes! What is most needed to prevent the shedding of blood and tears for the country is to restore the hearts shattered by violence and ease such pain. I am confident that the Sri Lankan nation has the will to achieve this.

Heroic Troops,

We had a past full of valor, heroism and courage. But we have such qualities in which we can take pride, today. In the future when there is a need for the Sri Lankan nation to launch an incomparable battle to protect this land, they will recall with pride and take courage from the heroism displayed by you today. Even if you die you will not lie in a grave but in our hearts that love our land.

We shall pay you the tribute of our nation for every drop of blood you have shed to free our land by uniting all our peoples, ensuring that terrorism does not raise its head again, and building this nation to its true greatness.

May you have a prosperous future!

May you be Blessed by the Noble Triple Gem!