
'If there is any genocide in Sri Lanka it is by the LTTE' says Lord Naseby

Friday, 13 March 2009

Last Updated Friday, 13 March 2009

(By: Walter Jayawardhana) Lord Naseby, Conservative Peer and Chair of All Party Parliamentary Group on Sri Lanka said on Wednesday (March 11) that if there is any genocide in Sri Lanka it is by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who hold civilian Tamils by force as a human shield in the war.

"This talk about genocide is rubbish. The only people who are causing genocide are the LTTE who are holding the civilians as a human shield," he said when a LTTE propagandist in the audience charged the Sri Lanka government of genocide. Lord Naseby was referring to the Tamil civilians who are being held against their will as a human shield in the current war by the LTTE and who are being shot at by the LTTE when they attempt to escape on foot and by boat. The British House of Lords member made this public statement, at a Forum discussion recorded in front of an audience, mostly consisting of British Tamil Forum members, at a studio in the Media House in Central London and broadcast by Press TV of Iran. A sympathetic labour member of Parliament to the Tamil movement in London, Jeremy Corbyn was the moderator of the show. Labour Party Member of European Parliament Robert Evans, Suren Surenthiran a spokesman of the LTTE front organization the British Tamil Forum and Douglas Wickramaratne, President of the Sinhala Association of London were the other members of the discussion panel. Lord Naseby further said, during the course of the discussion, international pressure should be brought on the LTTE to release all those civilians. He said no international pressure is necessary, as Robert Evans suggested, to declare a ceasefire, by the government. He said the Sri Lanka government is an elected government and it is the LTTE who must down its arms and surrender to bring the military conflict to an end. The show had an ominous start when British Tamil Forum's Suren Suthanthiran, said that a main grievance of the Tamils is that Sinhalese being the only official language. One of the Sri Lankan members of the audience pointed out Suren Surenthiran was making factually incorrect statements. He said in Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese Language and Tamil language with English are being used as official languages. Immediately responding, Lord Naseby said the cry about Sinhalese language is very much dated as both Sinhalese and Tamil are used as official languages. Then Suren Suthanthiran said he was speaking about 1956. From the audience: Why are you going back to 50 years. Is it to hoodwink? The part of the discussion on the language has been edited out when this was broadcast on Wednesday March 11, by the Press TV. The British Tamil Forum member Suren Suthanthiran faced an embarrassing situation when an English woman in the audience questioned about Child soldiers by the LTTE. The British Tamil Forum spokesman, in reply, kept on repeating "to whichever religion one belongs to it is wrong for one to kill another person" unskillfully evading the question. When the embarrassed moderator of the show, Jeremy Corbyn, whose sympathies have been with the LTTE in the past, asked him for a specific reply for a straight question he was coming out with the same repetition turning the show into a comic show, participants commented. When a pro-LTTE woman from the audience said why question about child soldiers when so many thousands of Tamil children have been killed, the reply was broadcast. She was not substantiating the statement. It was very significant that the labour party MEP Robert Evans was suggesting a Kosovo-Montenegro like solution for Sri Lanka at a brief moment of the discussion. But the pro-LTTE MP who has been repeating LTTE slogans in the past did not say how the LTTE is going to form a state from a 50 square kilometre size area from which they fight now nor did anybody asked him that question. Its population, kept under the threat of gun, is constantly running away from the area at the risk of life, according to reports. But Lord Naseby immediately reacted to Robert Evans by telling that the vast majority of Tamils living in Sri Lanka do not want a two state solution. And he said when the British were seeking a solution for Northern Ireland they did not consider a two state solution. The British Tamil Forum spokesman said they wanted a two state solution for Sri Lanka's problem. Sinhala Association President Douglas Wickramaratne said that it is ridiculous that people talk about a Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka, since 60 percent of the Tamils live outside the Northern and Eastern provinces of the country. He said over two thousand years, Sri Lanka has been one unitary country governed under one king. He further said since 1985 Sri Lanka has been negotiating with the Tamil Tigers. He said during this time the LTTE have used every ceasefire to rearm themselves and prolong the war. Wickramaratne said a dually elected government under a democratic system has every right to suppress terrorism hurting the people. A paediatrician who did not announce her name and spoke from the audience said she has had personal experience of dealing with the parents of child soldiers who have left Northern and Eastern provinces just because they feared that their children would be kidnapped by the LTTE. She said children are being kidnapped for war by the LTTE as UNESCO reports very clearly show. More than 50 Sri Lankans who expressed that they wanted to participate in the discussions by email did not even had the courtesy of receiving a reply. An organizer at the studio said there had been too many emails to be replied to. But all prominent British Tamil Forum members were there to be seated and allowed to ask their propagandist type questions. Ultimately, they did not make any results since neither the questions nor their representative's replies failed to make any impressions. Courtesy: Defence.lk