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- HOME
- DAILYNEWS ONLINE
- News
- Editorial
- Business
- Features
- Political
- Security
- Sport
- World
- Letters
- Obituaries

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## Miliband, Kouchner and Hillary Clinton - Fishing in troubled waters

Dr. P.A. Samaraweera

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband and France's Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner having failed to persuade Sri Lanka for a ceasefire had written an article to The Times of London on April 30 calling Sri Lanka's role as, 'Victory without humanity can be no triumph'.

Sri Lanka having endured the bitter consequences of fighting for nearly a quarter of a century with the world's most lethal terrorists and when the Army is hoping to finish off, a European delegation consisting of Miliband and Kouchner arrived calling for a ceasefire.



David Miliband



Hillary Clinton



Bernard Kouchner

They said they were backed by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as well. Last week there was an outcry against her

for her controversial statement that, 'the failure to protect civilians in Sri Lanka is truly shocking'.

They pressured the Government to end the offensive against the terrorists. The irony is that when the war is nearly ending and the tigers are on the run and besieged Miliband says, "... Now is the time to end the fighting..." Obviously, the trio had thought that Sri Lanka was under their thumbs and they little realized that on the Government side there were men of 'steel' (The Defence Secretary and the Army Commander) who had survived suicide bomb attacks.

The Government had politely declined saying that there was no need for a ceasefire as the military actions were now on a 'Humanitarian Operation'.

From what had transpired it had now become obvious that Miliband's and Kouchner's talks were tilted in favour of the LTTE. This is confirmed from the article written to (a) The Times of London and the letter written to (b) Subramaniam who was on a hunger strike and who ended the fast after Miliband's letter.

| News | Editorial | Business | Features | Political | Security | Sport | World | Letters | Obituaries |

In Miliband's article to the Times of London he had highlighted the need for a ceasefire. Here are some proposals and suggestions to : Web Editor

- (a) The Sri Lankan Government to set up a ceasefire in place, preferably under UN auspices
- (b) UN to send a Mission into the conflict zone to help to assess and address civilian needs
- (c) To allow the UN, aid and international agencies and the media access to the conflict zone and so on.

Sri Lanka is at war and any agencies or media personnel allowed into the war zone could run the risk of being taken hostage and thus make the current situation more complicated.



In the letter to Subramaniam who was on hunger strike, Miliband had explained, "... the strenuous efforts the British Government is making to secure a ceasefire..."

The five conditions S. made were:

- (a) An immediate and a permanent ceasefire
- (b) A reversal of the UK's decision to classify the Tigers as a terrorist group
- (c) A UN backed Referendum on an independent Tamil State in Sri Lanka
- (d) Provision of medical aid and other facilities to the civilians in the war zone.

Considering the above, it is not surprising that Miliband and Kouchner made desperate attempts to push through a ceasefire. During the press conference Kouchner had said, "...We tried very hard - We insisted and insisted for a ceasefire..." In the same way why didn't the delegates pressurize the LTTE as well to release the civilians?

The UK, US and France mollycoddled the Tiger supporters most of whom had come as refugees. Now that the war is coming to an end and as they want the war on, these pro-Tiger lobbyists not only go on demonstrations but also disrupt the peace by throwing missiles, blocking roads and breaking into Embassy properties.

By doing these they pressurise these countries to persuade Sri Lanka for a ceasefire. So for the West getting around the problem of pro-LTTE demonstrations is to call for a truce, despite repeated truces in the past running aground, thereby give a life line to the terrorists at Sri Lanka's cost.

From the recent episode it appears that the delegates of the team had veered towards the terrorists. At one stage, the UK and US even proposed safe passage to the LTTE leaders as a way of ending the conflict. Why don't the UK and US do the same in Afghanistan and Iraq? It is because of these dual policies of the West that they had lost their credibility. So it is no wonder that countries like North Korea and Iran do not wish to be on their beck and call.

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