

Norachcholai — definitely not a safe site for the main power supply

The recent April 2001 offensive 'Agni Kheela 1' which led to large scale army casualties — about 1000 — on the war front should make the CEB engineers realise the strength and the determination of the enemy to destroy the Sri Lankan State and its economy. In spite of the heavy presence of the military — land sea and air, along the North East coast, large stocks of deadly weapons have reached the LTTE by sea.

In this context what is the security guarantee that can be given to the 4km long coal unloading jetty, in the Kalpitiya sea, the life line of the Norachcholai power station which is to be the main power supply. It is argued that if the jetty is destroyed in a bombing attack, it can be repaired. But it can be bombed again, as it is a sitting duck. Why fish in troubled waters? What will be the fate of the country when such a large power plant becomes non operative? Why then construct this power plant which is so obviously vulnerable to enemy attacks? Isn't it foolhardy for the CEB to be so arrogant?

The engineers should be more realistic in

this matter. Are they not aware how ineffective the Navy is to prevent the movement of LTTE boats? So the army retreat should serve as a lesson for the ardent promoters of Norachcholai should not for God's sake, mislead the President by ridiculing the security dangers Norachcholai is faced with.

It is apt to quote here what *The Island's* Defence Correspondent (May 6, 2001) has said about the 'Agni Kheela' debacle — 'The painful fact is that the army advanced on the most obvious target, the A9 highway, a strategy that shows no imagination at all on the part of the Generals'. The same can be said about the debacle the Norachcholai Power Plant will be faced with the painful fact is that the CEB is determined to go ahead with Norachcholai, the most obviously vulnerable target in the Kalpitiya sea, avoiding the best and safest site Mawella in the South, a strategy that shows no imagination at all on the part of the CEB planners regarding the security problem at Norachcholai the CEB planner's stupid reaction is 'Ha — ha — haa!!'

Now two years have passed since the President ordered the CEB to look for another site for the coal power plant. But the CEB seems to be stubbornly continuing with its confrontational stance in defying the decision taken by the President. It adamantly sticks to Norachcholai which even on engineering grounds is the worst site according to local and foreign experts, who have been engaged on coal power studies for a very long time.

The CEB is determined not to move to Mawella in the South, ranked the best site after Trinco, while the crippling power crisis is on the horizon. Then certainly let the accusing finger be pointed at those who defied the President's order without looking elsewhere for scapegoats.

The promoters of Norachcholai are advised to read *The Island's* editorial on April 24, 2001 and the lengthy publication on the same page. The leading article in *The Island* — April 23, 2001 — is also enlightening 'LTTE talking Peace but preparing for War'.

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