

Voice of Shakthi Thursday 05 July 2001

The recent statement by the Government that the ethnic crisis should be solved solely by military means adds yet another dimensions to the level Sri Lankan politics have descended to these days. The statement flies in the face of all the pious pronouncements President Kumaranatunge and Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar has made on various occasions that only a negotiated solution can solve the crisis.

It also goes against all the advice the Government has received from local and international bodies including foreign governments and human rights organisations, from the business community and academics and, most importantly, from the majority of people in Sri Lanka who have voted again and again for a just and honourable peace.

The reason for the Government's about-face is not hard to fathom. Buffeted by Opposition [parties](#) and from within its own ranks over a no-confidence motion and aware of its own rapidly growing unpopularity, it is not surprising to see the Government throwing caution to the winds and scrabbling for whatever convenient excuse it can muster to retain its hold on power.

By launching its latest military strike in Jaffna - which has been condemned by two of Sri Lanka's strongest allies at present, [India](#) and the United States - or by labelling its strongest opponent the UNP as LTTE sympathisers, the Government, in our opinion, is trying once again to cover up in own ineptitude in statesmanship, economic management and the maintenance of law and order which beset the country.

So it has chosen that often-used tactic to divert the attention of the population from these major issues by its latest [exercise](#) to wipe out terrorism once and for all. Even if it means the loss and maiming of hundreds and even thousands of civilians and Sinhala and Tamil youth from mostly rural areas, the Government may believe that their so-called tough stand against terrorism will once again bring home the bacon among the majority Sinhala community when it comes to winning their vote.

The by-product of this of course will be the re-planting of the [seeds](#) of communal tension in the minds of some Sinhalese. It is a tried and tested method employed by both major political parties over many years. One would like to think that after more than two decades of destruction of life and property this appeal to Sinhala chauvinism may not find the same resonance among the general community as it once did. But the fact that it still remains a powerful threat may explain why both the UNP and JVP are moving on egg-[shells](#) on this issue these days.

Hopefully, the Sri Lankan people will rise up and demand an end to this political charade and hold their political masters to account more rigorously than has happened up to now. We can only wait and hope.