



RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
RAJYA SABHA

Member of Standing Committee on Information Technology
Member of Consultative Committee on Finance
Member of Parliamentary Forum on Youth
Co-Chairman, Vigilance & Monitoring Committee, Bangalore Urban District

6th June, 2011

Dear

Shri Antony

I would like to bring to your notice a path breaking, Armed Forces friendly initiative by the UK Government where it proposes to convert its existing military covenant (a commitment to care for members of the Armed Forces and their families) into a Law.

As you are aware, the military covenant is an agreement under which the state pledges a duty of care towards its military personnel in return for the sacrifices that they make. The covenant officially applies only to the Army, but its core principles are taken to extend to the Air Force and the Navy. Although a long established tradition, the covenant is an unwritten understanding between the nation and the Armed Forces and is not legally binding.

This revolutionary move by the UK Government underlines the country's commitment and honour towards the armed forces personnel when they retire from active service and is worthy of emulation by India.

You are well aware of the bravery and sacrifices made by our defence forces personnel who are protecting the nation at the borders as well as fighting enemies within. Ironically, their sacrifices – of loss of life, limbs, staying away from their families for long durations – go unsung and unrecognized and there is no institutional mechanism that values, honours and rewards the unique service rendered by the members of the Armed Forces and their families.

In every civilized country, soldiers are treated as someone special and given far more attractive pay and perks than the civilians to draw in the best talents for preserving the sovereignty and independence of the nation. In our country, however, things are different. India is the only country where veterans are being treated in an unjust manner when it comes to pay and pension with one of their long pending demands for 'One Rank, One Pension' continuing to remain unaddressed by the Government.

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The Armed Forces constitutes a truly unique and dedicated group of people, whose sense of selfless service and nationalism is a matter of great pride and dignity. These proud men and their families have served our nation selflessly, with a certain belief that the nation and their people will look after them when their turn comes to be looked after.

I earnestly urge you to consider passing a UK-like law for India and demonstrate the nation's commitment to the honour and bravery of our retired Armed Forces personnel and their families.

Yours Sincerely,

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

Shri A K Antony
Hon'ble Minister for Defence
Government of India
New Delhi