

# TAMIL NATION

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## Rajiv Assassination & the Madras media

Are some sections of the Madras media (both Tamil and English) acting as propaganda arms of the Sri Lanka government? This question is being raised following what appear to be deliberate sustained attempts by some newspapers not only to pin the crime of the Rajiv killing on the LTTE, but also to create a hate campaign against all Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India - although the top investigating team has yet to disclose any evidence to incriminate the LTTE or Tamil refugees in India.

Meanwhile, in an attempt to further strengthen the propaganda efforts in Tamil Nadu, the Colombo government has sent a once-active Eastern province politician Mr. Mashoor Moulana as Press secretary to the Deputy High Commission in Madras. Mr. Moulana arrived in Madras by Air Lanka flight on 16th May.

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# RAJIV GANDHI ASSASSINATION : WHO ARE THE BENEFICIARIES?

When a crime of awesome proportions is committed, involving the life of a national leader whose influence transcends national boundaries, it becomes obvious that the perpetrators of the crime were intent on playing for high stakes. When the conspirators behind the crime were obviously thinking big, and the daring and cool expertise and sophistication indicates international ramifications, it was unfortunate that attempts should be made by small-time politicians and sections of the media to reduce the tragedy to parish-pump levels.

The methodology behind the Rajiv Gandhi assassination (high-tech), the choice of the assassin (a woman), the nature of her mission (suicide), the timing of the assassination (in the midst of an election), and the location (Tamil Nadu) are all factors that are not only extraordinary in themselves, but point to a conspiracy in which each of these factors take on a special significance. Were they chosen for mere convenience and opportunity, or were they deliberately intended in order to bring about a pre-determined conclusion about the guilt?

It is not often realized that in every major assassination plot, where the victim is a public figure, always surrounded by people, covered by several layers of security both visible and invisible, the risk factor is bound to be enormous. Whoever who planned the assassination have to ensure not only a fail-proof mode of execution (with alternate fall-back strategies) but also a convincing cover-up which would be effective enough to throw the scent off themselves, at least until the time the scent becomes cold. For nothing can be a greater nightmare for the conspirators than a failed assassination - with all the grave implications that

could flow from a discovered plot.

In the lack of tangible evidence so far, it is to be expected that the PRESUMPTION of guilt would keep pointing to the LTTE - for reasons which have been enumerated with

national figure within the party to replace Mr. Gandhi; the path being made easier for the ascendancy of Hindu fundamentalism, far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, a possible tie-up between the BJP and Ms. Jayalalitha, an immediate

neighbourhood could be even more far-reaching. In Sri Lanka in particular, Rajiv's absence from the Indian scene could be seen as a diminished Indian influence in that country's internal affairs. With little Sri Lanka now going in for Chinese supersonic jet fighters, not to fight the Tigers, but to "defend the island's air space against hostile, unidentified intruders detected frequently by radar and to protect her territorial waters" (in the words of Lankan Air Force Commander Air Marshal Terrence Gunawardene), there is an emboldened military thinking on the part of Colombo. Only the politically naive will fail to realise what is

meant by "hostile" unidentified intruders", and whom they mean.

The second question that needs to be asked is: WHO BENEFITS BY RAJIV GANDHI'S ASSASSINATION? Certainly not the Eelam Tamils. Their cause is virtually lost, at least temporarily. Certainly not the Eelam Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu who are vicariously suffering the hostility of some men in high official positions in the bureaucracy, all because of the media build-up against the LTTE. In consequence of all these, the beneficiaries cannot

(Continued on Page 12)

## VIEW POINT

thread-bare regularity in the Indian media, reasons based on popular perceptions and prejudices, both rational and logical and in many instances emotive, and vengeful. In fact, irrespective of whether they were concerned in the assassination or otherwise, the LTTE itself should have anticipated it - given the hostility they had already incurred among the middle-class opinion makers in Tamil Nadu.

While no one can, and should condone such a dastardly act as the assassination of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, it also becomes the responsibility of politicians and the media to act with moderation and restraint and not hinder the process of investigation, either wittingly or unwittingly. It is an essential part of any cover-up operation that the path of the investigators is strewn with false trails and "red herrings" calculated to lead them into blind ends.

The first common sense questions that one has to ask in the wake of such a momentous event are - 1. What are the political consequences of the assassination? 2. WHO ARE THE BENEFICIARIES? An objective assessment of the consequences within India is easy: the virtual end of the Nehru dynasty; the debilitation of the Congress-I as a future political force, in the absence of a single

decline in the political fortunes of the DMK, as well as a reversal for Dravida Tamil nationalism in general.

The consequences in India's

## The previous assassination attempt in Colombo



Assassination attempts against world-renowned political leaders like Mr. Rajiv Gandhi could come about in two ways: one, a homicidal impulse on the part of one individual who nurses a strong grievance, either personal or political, or group of persons who share that grievance; two, a large-scale assassination-operation involving highly specialised agencies, the motive behind which would be to alter the complexes of power, either in the country, or in the region, or the world. Falling into the first category is the above assassination attempt by a Sinhala naval rating in Colombo, shortly after the Rajiv - Jayewardene accord was signed four years ago.

# TAMIL NATION

"Truth and knowledge are an idle gleam if they do not bring power to change the world."  
Sri Aurobindo

Recognising that to change anything it is necessary to understand that which we seek to change, the TAMIL NATION is concerned, not only with providing information but also, with furthering an understanding of the issues that confront the Tamil national movement. Recognising that, in the end, we truly understand anything only to the extent that we have been able to change it the TAMIL NATION is concerned with changing those material conditions of existence which continue to oppress and discriminate against the people of Tamil Eelam. The Tamil Nation is rooted in the growing togetherness of the Tamil people and it seeks to focus attention on the unjust relationship between nations without a state and nations that have attained state-hood. And the TAMIL NATION exists to debate and campaign for the radical changes necessary, both amongst the Tamil people and outside, if the struggle of the Tamil people for national self determination is to be won.

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# SINHALA TERRORISM IN CALIFORNIA!

Terror tactics are being employed by the Sinhala expatriate community in California, as well as other Sinhala residents in the United States to abort an academic conference to be held at the Sacramento campus of the California University. The research conference with international participation is sponsored by the California State University Department of Government and the International Federation of Tamils, and is titled - **Tamil Eelam - A Nation without a State.**

The Conference is scheduled for July 19-21 at the University, and twelve topics have been selected for discussion. Research papers will be presented by academicians and other professionals, many of whom are non-Tamils.

The government of Sri Lanka, fearing a serious discussion, and validation of the rights

of the people of the north and east of Sri Lanka, has demanded cancellation of the Conference.

The initial demand came in the form of a telephone call. The individual identified himself as the Sri Lankan ambassador to the U.S. He insisted that the conference be cancelled on the grounds that two of the conference organisers were "known terrorists". The University authorities, having found no proof of these allegations, responded with a refusal to extend Sri Lanka Government censorship to their campus.

That did not stop the opponents to the conference. The University started receiving threatening calls. A Mr. Walter Jayawardene, had made several phone calls threatening to do everything to disrupt the conference. A Mr. Tilak Peiris had threatened to bring busloads

(about 5,000) of protesters to the conference. Several other protest letters and threatening letters have been written by Sinhala professionals in the U.S. to the University President, the Governor of California and others in the University.

"These threats appear to be shades of the type of government-sponsored terrorism that has become the order of the day in Sri Lanka", says a Press release issued by the Conference conveners. "These efforts are proof of the Sri Lanka government's urgent desire to stifle the freedom of expression of its minorities, not only in their own country, but even in a country which values the individual's freedom of expression above all else".

## Lanka acquiring F-7 jet fighters

The Sri Lankan Air Force will shortly acquire a new squadron of supersonic jet fighters to defend the country's airspace against intrusion by unidentified aircraft, according to Air Force Commander Air Marshal Terrance Gunawardena.

In an interview published in *The Island* newspaper the air chief said the new aircraft would be used purely for defensive purposes, as a deterrent and would not have any offensive role.

"A fair amount" of detection of unidentified aircraft was being made in the country's airspace and the new aircraft would act as a deterrent, he said.

The report did not mention from where the F-7 interceptors were being acquired. But informed sources said they were Chinese aircraft, which are a modified version of the Soviet MiG-21.

Air Marshal Gunawardena said that the air force was forming a new squadron for the F-7s and pilots were being trained to fly the aircraft.

"He said the F-7s were not being acquired primarily to fight the Tamil Tigers in the north-east, although the interceptor, like most modern fighters, do have a secondary ground attack capability," the report said.

The interceptors could be used for ground attacks, "but it is not worth it when you can do the job with smaller aircraft," he said, adding that if at all they were used it would be in "very very extreme circumstances."

## That 'Sacramento call' Mystery solved

A few hours after the receipt of the news of the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, an anonymous telephone caller had rung up India West, an ethnic Indian weekly in California claiming to represent the LTTE, and claiming "his group" was responsible for the assassination. The Indian media had given some prominence to this report sent by UNI, and this report was exploited by several persons with an animus towards the group. It is now known that the "anonymous" caller was again one of those Sinhala expatriates making liberal use of the phone for threatening calls, against the Sacramento conference.

The UNI report said: "The caller contacted the weekly... and first asked to speak to a specific reporter who was not in at that time. A staff member who received the call, offered to take down the message, if there was any. 'Write it down', the caller said and began: 'We claim responsibility for the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. We are Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam'. 'Where are you calling from?' the staffer asked. 'Sacramento'. 'Who are you? Give me your name'. 'I can't'.

The weekly reported the call to the Federal Bureau of Investigations.

## Mercenary's claim to kill Rajiv a hoax

Scotland Yard is said to have dismissed as a "hoax" the claim by a British mercenary that he had been approached by some people in London, about two months ago to carry out the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi.

"Scotland Yard is not inclined to attach weight to this known hoaxter's claims," sources told PTI.

The "mercenary", who gave his name as Kevin Mason, 53, and said he was an ex-special airservice personnel, has according to Scotland Yard, has played such "hoax" on more than one occasion in the past. The man often changed his name but his address and telephone remained the same. Scotland Yard has said in response to queries about the "hoaxter's" antecedents.

Scotland Yard has also confirmed that the man at no time had served with the British special air services, as claimed by him, and that neither he nor anyone else had passed on any information to British intelligence about a possible plot to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi, the sources said.

## Govt. ceasefire for Vesak

A three-day ceasefire went into effect from midnight on the 26th May in Sri Lanka's embattled north-east between the Government security forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), military officials said in Colombo.

The "cessation of offensive operations" was declared by the military to mark the main Buddhist festival of 'Vesak', marking the birth, enlightenment and death of Lord Buddha. It will continue till the night of May 29.

This is the second ceasefire between the warring sides since fighting broke out a year ago. A 10-day ceasefire in early January ended when the Government rejected a unilateral truce offer by the rebels.

## China supplies jets to Lanka

London, May 25 (PTI): China has supplied two FT-5 trainer jets to the Sri Lankan air force and four F-7 interceptors are due to be supplied before the year-end according to *Jane's Defence Weekly*.

Colombo decided to obtain Chinese jet fighters in 1989, having phased out its Soviet supplied MIG-15 and MIG-17s in the mid-1970s.

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# RAJIV GANDHI ASSASSINATION

## WOMAN SUSPECT ONLY

### 'TIP OF THE ICEBERG'?

The investigating agencies are not ruling out the possibility of a "foreign hand" in what appears to be a deep-rooted conspiracy to kill Rajiv Gandhi.

Initial pointers to the involvement of a Sri Lankan Tamil woman in the assassination are considered to be only the "tip of the iceberg" and the agencies are going into the whole ramifications of an international plot.

Whichever agency is behind the brutal murder, the commissioning of a Sri Lankan Tamil, immediately shifts the blame on to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The smuggling of provisions and fuel from here and the reign of terror along the Tamil Nadu coast a few months before the DMK Government was dismissed, removed what little sympathy there was for the militants.

It was both convenient and often plausible to blame the Tamil Tigers for any violence here and with incidents such as the gunning down of EPRLF men, including its leader, Padmanabha, in Madras itself, the LTTE demonstrated that it had free access to Tamil Nadu and could perform any task it wanted.

But after the imposition of President's rule there was a drive against them and their activities were brought under control. Many of them were supposed to have left the State,

while those who remained here assumed a low profile.

AIADMK assurance: The AIADMK reportedly sent word to the LTTE that there was no animus against the group and the party would, if voted to power, take up the Sri Lanka cause afresh to work for a fresh, honourable agreement.

The investigating teams are wondering if in such circumstances, the LTTE would carry out such an assassination, which would further tarnish its image and incur the wrath of Tamil Nadu and India.

Keeping the LTTE aside for the moment, the agencies are looking into the possibility of foreign powers or their agents hatching the conspiracy to eliminate Rajiv if only to ensure that the Congress (I) does not return to power, as was expected and to create an atmosphere of uncertainty in the country as part of the much talked of 'destabilisation theory'.

Though they were not willing to name any country, it was clear that they were thinking of both immediate neighbours and more powerful ones who would be interested in India continuing with her uncertain and unstable Governments and coalitions.

They have also not ruled out the hand of the 'Khalistan' militants and the possibility of a larger truck with Sri Lankan Tamil-militant groups. Even the role of lesser known seces-

sionist Tamil groups, who were actively working for or advocating a Tamil nation are being put under scrutiny.

Focus on the woman: As the Sri Lankan Tamil woman with the 'bomb belt' was suspected to belong to suicide squad, interest centres on where she came from and who was working with her on this plot.

Besides spreading the dragnet in the villages around and also in Madras, the agencies are making enquiries in all other States and also with the Indian missions abroad, in case she had taken a visa recently to visit India. Any information about her from any quarter may throw more light on the conspiracy.

Confusing scenario: Overall, the initial investigation scenario to be "quite complex and confusing" at the moment and once the identity of the prime suspect is established, there could be a breakthrough, the agencies hope. But unless the woman's environment and antecedents are also known, the 'larger conspiracy' theory may be difficult to unravel.

With both Central and State agencies fully involved and entrenched in the investigations, some vital clues could take them forward. And for this, they are looking for cooperation from the people who could provide some inputs to reconstruct the gruesome tragedy. (The Hindu)



THE FINAL MOMENTS OF RAJIV GANDHI: The suspected assassin (in the centre of the picture above) waits in line with a garland in hand along with Congress (I) worker Latha Kannan (at right) and her daughter Gokila (at left) to greet Rajiv Gandhi as he arrives at the venue of the public meeting at Sriperumbudur.

Picture below shows Congress-I M.P. Jayanthi Natarajan identifying the body of Rajiv Gandhi.

## Rajiv killing worries Lankan Tamils

Rita Sebastian reporting from Colombo writes:

Once the details of assassination became clear, and the possibility of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) being implicated was publicly articulated by Indian politicians, there was considerable concern among the Tamil community about the impact of the assassination on the Sri Lankan question.

The general expectation within the Tamil community was that Rajiv Gandhi would be returned as India's next Prime Minister, and that he would provide a stability in India that would in turn result in a more activist role by India in creating the conditions conducive for the peaceful resolution of the island's national question.

The assassination came at a time when Sri Lankan President Premadasa was in the process of formulating a new peace initiative with LTTE. It came about through initiatives within the government and the President appointing a committee to explore possibilities of negotiations between the government and the LTTE. The committee was directed to examine a time-table, the issues, and the modalities for such a discussion.

The issues were to include devolution, the unit of devolution and conditions for a cessation of hostilities.

The opinion within the government was that these initiatives should take place before a new Indian government took over in Delhi so that the majority Sinhala opinion would not feel that the peace talks were at the insistence of India.

The feeling was that once the peace process had been set in motion, and a new Indian government dominated by the

Congress (I) would be supportive of the process and contribute to the resolution of the conflict within the broad parameters of the Indo-Lanka accord.

The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, however, could reverse this entire process. India might further disenage and distance itself from the political and military aspects of the Sri Lankan civil war.

There is bound to be increasing pressure from within South India, where more than 200,000 refugees and displaced Sri Lankans are living, that they be returned to Sri Lanka.

Their return would cause further confusion and place a severe strain on the capacity of the government to rehabilitate refugees. International relief organisations like the Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) are finding it extremely difficult to continue working within a complex security environment.

A new refugee crisis would further strain and stretch the resources and the institutional capacity of these organisations. President Premadasa may also come under increasing pressure from the military and political hardliners in the country who will convince him of the futility of negotiations with the LTTE in the present context.

The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi not only robbed India of its political and colourful leader of the decade, but also destroyed the prospects for peace in the near future for millions in the North-East of Sri Lanka who have been subjected to unimaginable suffering, deprivation and misery.

## International ramifications to be probed

The Hindu's special correspondent in New Delhi reports:

A possibly larger conspiracy with international ramifications is very much part of the ongoing investigation's brief into the "Rajiv Gandhi assassination case". It is reliably learnt by The Hindu that the identification of the possible woman assassin is not the only task which the high-level probe seeks to accomplish.

Even as the investigation is in the process of piecing together the entire sequence of events all possible leads are being worked upon in the case, which by the sketchy evidence available till date, suggests a well-planned and executed conspiracy.

The Special Investigation Team of the Centre Bureau of Investigation is working on all possible leads. The smallest possible lead is being followed up by the hastily assembled team of officers.

According to a preliminary and prima facie assessment the CBI is likely to send teams not just to neighbouring Sri Lanka but also to other, still-to-be named foreign countries. Teams will be sent to all those countries if and when the need arises.

Motive the eluding factor: Regarding the possible involvement of the LTTE the motivations of the organisation are being studied in detail. The all-important question of motive is, yet to be finally settled, though the needle of suspicion decidedly points towards LTTE at this stage.

The question doing the rounds is: Does the LTTE gain by this obvious attempt at meddling in the affairs of another nation in such a brazen



and far-reaching manner? Did not the timing of the assassination have a direct bearing on the elections and the events to follow in the changed, second phase of the election campaign?

On the other hand what does the militant group gain by this dastardly act? Those in the know do not rule out the possibility of the LTTE having a rather long memory and not forgiving Rajiv Gandhi for his role in sending the IPKF to Sri Lanka.

But this question is far from

settled as the long and, possibly, tortuous investigative process indicates in its fifth day. Officials are piecing together the sketchy details that are available. Specially valuable has been the recovery of photographic evidence.

The buck does not stop with the 'woman assassin', it is felt even though the overriding priority at this stage appears to be to establish her identity. It is not yet proved beyond doubt that the woman was, in fact, a Tamilian.

## Karunanidhi's comment

The DMK president, Mr. M. Karunanidhi said in Madras that the former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi had promised to help the LTTE if he came back to power. 'Only those who do not understand the relationship established between Rajiv Gandhi and the LTTE in March last are trying to sidetrack the issue (assassination)', he said at

a news conference.

When his attention was drawn to the meeting between the LTTE and Rajiv Gandhi in March, Mr. Karunanidhi said even when he was the Chief Minister and Rajiv Gandhi the Prime Minister, the thinking was in favour of helping the LTTE.

# Rajiv Gandhi assassination

Who is this male in this picture?

## What People say

as reported in  
the Indian Press

"The investigating agencies have new leads which clearly point to the involvement of the LTTE... however, there was no clinching proof - prima facie evidence, to suggest the LTTE involvement"

- Dr. Subramanian Swamy,  
Union Law Minister

"We are deeply perturbed that these international conspirators are trying to link us with this tragedy. This is a tragedy where we express our shock and anguish over the incident".

- LTTE spokesman  
Anton Rajah in London

"I saw the alleged assassin standing standing along with a girl and a woman. We were even talking about her heavy make-up and joked that only such people will join the Congress-I..."

- AIADMK Union Secretary  
V. Marimuthu

"It is strange that the Tamil Nadu Pradesh Congress Committee president Mr. K. Ramamurthy and the CLP leader Mr. G.K. Moopanar were not present at the scene when Mr. Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated..."

Orissa Chief Minister  
Biju Patnaik

"She (the suspected assailant) was wearing salwar-kameez with tricolour borders and spoke in fluent English first, I asked her to speak in Tamil as I don't know English. Her Tamil was very much like ours and with no Lankan trace. She claimed that she was from Kancheepuram..."

- A.K. Sulaiman,  
Sriperumpudur Congress-I  
leader injured in the blast.

"We are sure and confident that we will ferret out the truth..."

- Mr. Vijay Karan,  
Director of CBI

"The assassination was carried out by an Indian group with the connivance of the LTTE. Any terrorist group in India by itself does not have the (technical) ability to undertake such a task."

- EPDP statement in Colombo

"I appeal, rather demand, that the Centre should take immediate action to see that all Sri Lankan Tamils are sent back, which should take place immediately."

AIADMK leader Jayalalitha

"There was no evidence of LTTE activity anywhere in the state in the last three months. Even local villagers in the coastal areas have said that life was very calm."

- Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary  
T.V. Antony.



The investigating agencies are looking for the 30-year-old man seen in this picture. Because of his presence near the suspected assassin of Rajiv Gandhi minutes before the explosion, they think this man may be able to throw more light on the incident. A scribbling pad, similar to the one he is seen holding in the photograph, was found on the dais but it was blank.

Raj Chonkar at Madras reports for THE INDEPENDENT, Bombay  
28 May 1991

## LANKAN GOVT USED LTTE RIVALS TO ELIMINATE RAJIV?

Although it is widely reckoned that notorious Sri Lankan Tamil militant outfit, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is responsible for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi near Madras last Tuesday, a section of those connected with the ongoing investigations believe that it may be the handiwork of one of the other militant groups with tacit approval of the government of Sri Lanka.

Since the modus operandi of the murder has all the trappings of the LTTE, and since the LTTE is the most prominent group to have a dedicated suicide squad, the natural finger of suspicion points to them. However, if it is true that the assassin was hired by some outside agencies to execute the crime, then this goes against the mode of work by the LTTE who have never played the role of mercenary before.

One of the various theories which have been advanced is that the woman assassin may have been one of the victims of rape during the operations of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka, but this has been shot down because of the time lag.

The entire operation was so slick that it cannot be attributed

to a loner bent on personal revenge.

Investigation authorities are certain that the entire plan was well thought out to the last detail and definitely involved a considerable number of people well-versed in Gandhi's movement patterns as well as in the handling of explosives.

A section of the investigators also strongly believe that the report about Gandhi's meeting with a section of the LTTE in New Delhi in March is accurate, thus further eliminating the involvement of the Tigers in the assassination.

Though the Congress-I had denied the report in the Madras based English daily, *The Hindu*, which first reported the meeting between Gandhi and the LTTE in its edition dated May 25, the statement issued by Congress spokesman Pranab Mukherjee is ambiguous. Further intelligence sources have confirmed the March 5 meeting.

All this, including the denial by the LTTE, seems to exonerate this militant outfit, but it is

learnt that the special investigating team will continue to pursue this line of inquiry until they can firmly establish either of two things - that the LTTE is not responsible or that it was indeed another group.

Unconfirmed reports say that a section of the other Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups had received word about the March meeting between Gandhi and the LTTE and they felt that if Gandhi came to power, as the indications were, it would be detrimental to the interests of these groups which are strongly opposed to the LTTE.

The reports also say that these groups felt that if Gandhi came to power it would mean the resurgence of the LTTE as the dominant group in north-eastern Sri Lanka and that any settlement between the militants and the Lankan government over the ethnic tangle would see the LTTE as the dominant outfit in the embattled north-east.

Nearly all the anti-LTTE Sri Lankan militant groups, nota-

bly the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Front (EPRLF) and the Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF) were quick to issue statements condemning the action of the LTTE which robbed India of a great leader.

However, the investigators are pursuing all angles to the assassination and are hoping for a breakthrough regarding the identity of the woman and her antecedents. The hope that the videotape of Gandhi's visit, which was recorded by a private videographer hired by the Congress-I, would have some important footage about the actual explosion and scenes immediate prior to the detonation, were dashed. It is believed that the videographer had rushed to get a shot of Gandhi as he was approaching stage.

Meanwhile IG of the CBI, Karthikeyan, when contacted, reiterated the stand taken by the government that any information divulged to the press regarding the progress of the investigations would hamper the ongoing inquiry.

## EPDP COMES UNDER SUSPICION

The Times of India  
News Service

Even as the bomb blast probe centres on establishing the identity of the woman assassin, the special investigation team (SIT) is looking the possibility of the involvement of a non-LTTE group in the Rajiv Gandhi killing.

Sources connected with the investigation are credited with the view that though the LTTE may not have had a strong motivation for the assassination, this did not apply to other militant groups.

The sources said the LTTE, far from wanting to liquidate Mr Rajiv Gandhi, had entertained hopes of establishing

with him a meaningful contact, for which the spadework was started in early March. The LTTE hopes were shattered with the assassination.

Though the Congress spokesman, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, has denied reports of Mr Gandhi's meeting with an LTTE representative, it is reliably learnt that such a meeting took place on March 5 at 10 Janpath. A trusted LTTE emissary, Mr. Kasi Ananthan, is believed to have had a 40-minute discussion with the former Prime Minister.

Mr Gandhi, who had received a three page memorandum articulating the LTTE stand on the Tamil

Eelam issue, raised some points to be elaborated. These were conveyed to the LTTE supremo, Mr. V. Pirabhakaran, who sought to follow up the March 5 meeting. Another LTTE emissary, identified as Mr. Arjun Sittampalam, was sent to New Delhi last month.

The sources did not confirm whether the second meeting had materialised. However, they maintained that Mr Gandhi had indicated his willingness to continue the talks with the LTTE after the elections.

Other Militants: The SIT focus on the possibility of involvement of a non-LTTE

... Continued on page 10

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# A Mahabharata story

&

# the Tamil Eelam story

# GOGGLES by C.P. Goliard

# Mahatma Gandhi and Tamils

Sir Richard Attenborough's 1982 movie on Mahatma Gandhi was undoubtedly one of the cinematic masterpieces of this century. So much has been written and discussed about it, but one aspect which has not been brought out was the movie's failure in highlighting the influence Tamils had on young Gandhi.

Long before Gandhi met Nehru, Netaji and other Indian National leaders, he was influenced by the Tamil workers during his 22-year sojourn in South Africa. In numerous instances, Gandhi has recorded in his autobiography, how Tamils influenced his thoughts and actions during his sociopolitical agitations in South Africa. Gandhi noted,

"The affection that the Dravidians in South Africa showered on me has remained a cherished memory. Whenever I see a Tamil or Telugu friend I cannot but recall the faith, perseverance and selfless sacrifice of many of his compatriots in South Africa. And they were mostly illiterate, the men no less than the women. The fight in South Africa was for such, and it was fought by illiterate soldiers..."

Please note the last sentence in which Gandhi has used the phrase "fight in South Africa" and the clause "fought by illiterate soldiers". In the current Eelam war, some cynics criticise the LTTE for exploiting the teenage boys and girls to combat situations. By this yardstick, Gandhi also should be reprimanded (posthumously) for organising "illiterate soldiers".

Also, one chapter of Gandhi's autobiography was devoted to an indentured Tamil labourer named Balasundaram. It was captioned simply as "Balasundaram". Let us read again in his own words, how Balasundaram's plight influenced Gandhi's actions.

"I had put in scarcely three or four month's practice, and the (Natal Indian) Congress also was still in its infancy, when a Tamil man in tattered clothes, head-gear-in hand, two front teeth broken and his mouth bleeding, stood before me trembling and weeping. He had

forgotten word in the Sinhalese lips.

Some cynics may also ponder how on earth I can compare the LTTE, with Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence. Again no one other than Nehru himself (in 1963) have commented on the futility of non-violence as an effective tool for liberation struggle in the latter half of this century. Nehru had noted, "The efficacy of non-violence is not entirely convincing. None of us would dare in the present state of the world, to do away with the instruments of organized violence".

Though the cyanide capsule of the LTTE rebels has become a subject of derisive comments among many "analysts" (which include the so-called Tamil intellectuals), in my opinion, it symbolises in one way as subcription to Mahatma Gandhi's cherished ideals of a freedom fighter; abandonment of the fear of death. For those who do not possess the will-power to concentrate on the aimed target, the cyanide capsule symbolises suicidal tendencies. But only those whose aims are not crooked can answer Gandhi's ultimate challenge to a freedom fighter; abandonment of the fear of death.

employer... The magistrate convicted Balasundaram's employer. "Balasundaram's case reached the ears of every indentured labourer, and I came to be regarded as their friend... There was nothing extraordinary in the case itself, but the fact that there was someone in Natal to espouse their cause and publicly work for them gave the indentured labourers a joyful surprise and inspired them with hope".

This incident occurred in 1894, the year after Gandhi had arrived in South Africa. How much self confidence the Balasundaram case would have brought to the 25-year-old Gandhi, who failed miserably in his first case at Bombay and as a result left for South Africa is not at all difficult to guess. However, this incident failed to find a place in the 1982 Gandhi movie.

After 22 years of social service in South Africa, Gandhi returned to India in 1915 and set up his Satyagraha Ashram in Ahmedabad. Again, Sir Attenborough's movie did not provide any clue to the original composition of the Ashram members, though Gandhi himself had recorded it for posterity. Gandhi noted in his autobiography,

"The Satyagraha Ashram was founded on the 25th of May 1915. There were at this time about thirteen Tamilians in our party. Five Tamil youngsters had accompanied me from South Africa, and the rest came from different parts of the country (India). We were in all about twenty five men and women. This is how the Ashram was started. All had their meals in a common kitchen and strove to live as one family..."

Editorial Note: We hope to publish this column - GOGGLES - as a regular feature in succeeding issues. In explaining why he chose the pseudonym 'C.P. Goliard,' the author says: "Historically, goliards were the medieval poets, who wandered from place to place engaging in intellectual duels and bawdy bar room fights. The initials C.P. stands for the place from which this particular Goliard comes from - Parithu Thurai/Cotton Port".



been heavily belaboured by his master. I learnt all about him from my clerk, who was a Tamilian. Balasundaram - as that was the visitor's name - was serving his indenture under a well-known European resident in Durban. The master, getting angry with him, had lost self-control, and had beaten Balasundaram severely, breaking two of his teeth.

"I secured the (medical) certificate and straightaway took the injured man to the magistrate, to whom I submitted his affidavit. The magistrate was indignant when he read it and issued a summons against the

distractions. Then, and then only, you will succeed in your aim".

This simple story from the epic Mahabharata still holds true to the current environment in Sri Lanka. A cursory glance of the liberations struggles around the world in this century should reveal that they are not "100 yards dash runs". In contrast, they are "marathon runs", lasting 26-odd miles. Here, we can confidently equate miles to years. The Indian independence struggle, after Gandhi gained leadership in 1919, took 28 years to reach its fruition. China's liberation struggle (for the same end, but with different means) under the leadership of Mao Tse Tung took almost the same amount of time.

## Eelam starters

Considering this fact, how many of the Eelam starters are still in the field of liberation struggle? In 1983, there were half a dozen runners. The TULF was the first to lose its

steam. It believed in the "Bangladesh model" of liberation carried out by Indira Gandhi. After Indira Gandhi's assassination in late 1985, the TULF had nothing to show for their liberation struggle aim. The next five years (1986-90) saw the pathetic fall of quite a number of Tamil militant groups due to their lack of precision of the original aim. Militant groups such as the TELO, EPRLF, PLOTE and ENDLF behaved just like Guru Dhronachariyar's mediocre students of archery. In contrast, only the LTTE has the unblemished record of not faltering in their original aim. They have yet to bring the mango down but have gained the grudging admiration of their adversaries for their persistence and tenacity of their struggle.

Just a few months before his death, Jawarhalal Nehru was asked, "What in Mahatma Gandhi's thinking most impressed you and your countrymen?". The Indian statesman replied as follows: "His (Gandhi's) analysis of the situation in India was essentially that we were suffering terribly from fear, so he just went about telling us; 'Don't be afraid. Why are you afraid? What can happen to you?'. In essence, according to Nehru, Gandhi's prime motivational contribution to the Indian freedom struggle was dispelling the sense of fear among the Indian natives. Similarly it can be said that only the LTTE has dispelled the sense of fear which prevailed among the Eelam Tamils not long ago.

## A forgotten word

Even a decade ago, when addressing Tamils, derisive epithets such as 'Panamkottai' were so common among the average Sinhalese. The LTTE's strategy in the political struggle of Tamils made 'Panamkottai' a

The demonstration lesson for the day was to pluck a hanging mango with an arrow from a big tree located 100 yards away. Both Pandavas and Kauravas were assembled at Guru Dhronachariyar's archery camp. The first student archer to be called for the test was Duchchadanan. The Guru pointed at the mango, hanging in the top branch of the tree and asked Duchchadanan to take aim. Before the release of arrow, the Guru directed a few pointed questions at Duchchadanan.

"Can you see the mango?"  
"Yes sir."  
"Can you see the twig on which the mango is hanging?"  
"Yes sir."  
"Can you see the numerous leaves in that branch?"  
"Yes sir."  
"Can you see the two birds sitting on that branch?"  
"Yes sir."  
"Can you see the big trunk of the tree?"  
"Of course sir."  
"Can you see me?"  
"Definitely sir."  
"What else can you see?"

by Sachi Sri Kantha

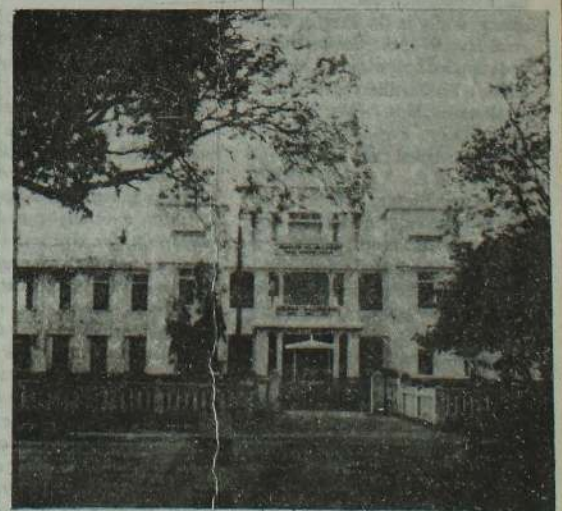
"I can see the grasses under the tree as well as my colleagues near me". Guessing what will be the outcome, the Guru asked Duchchadanan to release his arrow. As the great Guru expected, the mango did not fall. Then, Dhronachariyar called Bhiman to take a shot and asked the same questions Bhiman also answered in the similar fashion as done by Duchchadanan. And the outcome was also the same. Bhiman was followed by Duriyodanan and the Guru's son Aswathama. All repeated the same answers to the same questions posed by the Guru. But they were not successful in plucking the mango with the arrow. Finally, the Guru called his beloved and brilliant student Arjunan to take aim at the mango. And he posed the same questions to Arjunan too.

## Only the stalk

"Can you see the mango?"  
"No sir."  
"Can you see the twig on which mango is hanging?"  
"No sir."  
"Can you see the numerous leaves in that branch?"  
"No sir."  
"Can you see the two birds sitting on that branch?"  
"No sir."  
"Can you see the big trunk of the tree?"  
"Definitely no sir."  
"Can you see me?"  
"I cannot see you sir?"  
"So, what can you see now?"  
"I can only see the stalk by which the mango is hanging from the twig". Pleased with his answers, the Guru asked Arjunan to release his arrow. And, as the Guru expected, Arjunan brought the mango down. To his other dumbfounded students, the Guru then taught the moral of that day's lesson.

When you are aiming for one thing, concentrate only on your aim and do not be concerned by the surrounding objects and

## In memory - 10 Years Ago Today!



On this day, 10 years ago, on the night of June 1, 1981, the Jayewardene government burnt down the Jaffna Public Library in a despicable act of heartless vandalism and cultural genocide. 97,000 volumes, including some rare ola manuscripts were destroyed. Above, the Public Library building designed in Dravidian architecture by Tamil Nadu experts, as it looked before the destruction.

# KURDS AND THE PEOPLE

## By Nadesan Sa

The plight of the Kurdish people has received world wide attention during recent weeks. But, the focus of such to the Kurdish people rather than to the equally important need to address the root causes of their suffering a marked reluctance to address the demand of the Kurdish people for the recognition of their to self determine unwillingness to discuss the basis on which such 'order' may be built. In August 1985, immediately before to settle the conflict between the Tamil liberation movement and the Sri Lankan government, Nadesan Sa publish here the concluding instalment of a revised version of that article - an article which remains topical

### FROM THE FIRST INSTALMENT...

For sometime prior to 1918, the Kurds formed a part of the Ottoman Empire. The first World War brought Great Britain, France, Czarist Russia and later the United States together on one side and Germany and the Ottoman Empire on the other. It was with the defeat of Germany, that the map of the Middle East came to be redrawn by the victorious Western allies.

In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson's program for world peace stipulated that the non Turkish nationalities of the Ottoman empire would be 'assured of an absolute unmolested opportunity of autonomous development'.

It was the ancient Indian political analyst, Kautilya who observed that your enemy's enemy is your friend. Not unlike President Bush's recent call for the overthrow of President Saddam Hussein by dissidents from within Iraq, President Woodrow Wilson's promise of autonomy to the non Turkish nationalities of the Ottoman Empire, was not unrelated to the war effort in which the United States and its allies had been engaged....

The 1970 Peace Treaty between the Kurds and Iraq, proved to be the beginning of the end of Barzani phase of the Kurdish struggle.

The Iraqi government carried out a few of the terms of the agreement. Some economic development in Kurdistan was begun; a Kurdish University was opened; however essential Kurdish demands - political autonomy in Kurdistan and a Kurdish share of power at the centre - remained unfulfilled.

In the meantime by the early 1970s, Iraq had become the Soviet Union's principal ally in the Persian Gulf area. By 1974, the Soviet Union had supplied Iraq with 188 combat aircraft, 1300 artillery guns and 20 small naval ships. In March 1974, Soviet Defence Minister Marshal Grechko visited Iraq and openly condemned the Kurdish 'revolt'. The Kurd leader, Barzani who was once an exile in Moscow was no longer in favour. He was a victim of the changed geo political interests of the Soviet Union in the Middle East.

On the other hand, Iran had become the primary alliance partner of the United States in the Persian Gulf. In May 1972 President Nixon visited Iran. The Select Committee on Intelligence of the U.S. House of Representatives (under the chairmanship of Otis Pike) disclosed, on November 1 1975, that the Shah had been able to convince Nixon during the visit that the United States should provide covert aid to the Kurds. After the visit Nixon ordered the CIA to deliver millions of dollars worth of Soviet and Chinese arms and ammunitions (some of which

were collected in Cambodia) to the Kurds. The Pike Committee Report charged:

"The President, Dr. Kissinger and the Foreign head of state (the Shah) hoped our clients (the Kurds) would not prevail. They preferred instead that the insurgents (the Kurds) simply continue a level of hostilities sufficient to sap the resources of our ally's neighbouring country (Iraq). This policy was not imparted to our clients (the Kurds) who were encouraged to continue fighting. Even in the context of covert action, ours was a cynical enterprise."

The Minority Rights Group Report on the Kurds details some further aspects of the US involvement:

"The US wanted to neutralise the danger of Iraqi damage to its interests in the region, particularly in relation to Iran and Israel. In 1972, the fact of Israeli support of \$50,000 monthly (so it was rumoured) for Barzani became public knowledge with a report by the American columnist, Jack Anderson, based on a CIA report...For the Kurds, the tragedy of such support was that it was provided to encourage Barzani to wage war on Baghdad but not to achieve autonomy. If the Kurds won outright they would cease to be the debilitating factor against the Ba'ath that the US, Iran and Israel all wanted. It was vital therefore to ensure both that the Kurds continued to fight Baghdad, but also that they would never win."

"In summer 1972, Barzani, encouraged by Iran, the United States and Israel, consolidated his control of the Kurdish area, and

increased his demands to include wider military and political authority, making provocative statements about foreign support. The difficulties with Baghdad centred on particular issues, such as the delineation of the Kurdish area, the manner of KDP participation in government, and continued Kurdish relations with Iran...The census to establish where Kurds formed a majority was another bone of contention. It was repeatedly postponed...The Ba'ath did not wish to cede Kirkuk to the Kurdish area on account of its oil (not dissimilar to Trincomalee in Tamil Eelam)... On 29 September 1971, the situation deteriorated greatly with an unsuccessful attempt on Barzani's life... (The Ba'ath made) the serious charge of large scale acts of rape committed by pesh mergas (Kurdish freedom fighters) and the burning of villages known to be loyal to the government...The KDP replied with similar accusations against the government, the most serious of which remained the question of Arabization of Kirkuk and its environs. For an outsider it was virtually impossible to tell which side was being less truthful...The efforts by the Soviets to mediate were unsuccessful..."

In March 1974, despite the terms of the March 1970 Peace Treaty, the Iraqi government proclaimed its new constitution and said that they would impose it unilaterally, with or without the consent of the Kurds.

"The Ba'ath may well have thought that the Kurds were divided and undecided how to proceed, and that it could therefore impose its own position. New splits had occurred within the Kurdish ranks in early 1974. Two KDP Central Committee members broke with Barzani, accusing him of rejecting

"The US wanted to neutralise the danger of Iraqi damage to its interests in the region, particularly in relation to Iran and Israel. In 1972, the fact of Israeli support of \$50,000 monthly (so it was rumoured) for Barzani became public knowledge with a report by the American columnist, Jack Anderson, based on a CIA report...For the Kurds, the tragedy of such support was that it was provided to encourage Barzani to wage war on Baghdad but not to achieve autonomy. If the Kurds won outright they would cease to be the debilitating factor against the Ba'ath that the US, Iran and Israel all wanted. It was vital therefore to ensure both that the Kurds continued to fight Baghdad, but also that they would never win."

democratic practices, of kidnapping and executing a number of Kurdish leaders and of identifying the destiny of the Kurds with himself (an understandable shortcoming of any charismatic leader)..." (Minority Rights Group Report - The Kurds, 1985)

The Kurd leadership rejected the so called Autonomy Law proclaimed on the 11th of March 1974.

The support promised by the United States contributed to the firm stand taken by Barzani.

"...Barzani had already asked for and received assurances from US officials in Iran. He is reported to have told these officials 'This is what they have to use against us. If you will give us arms to match those arms we will fight. Otherwise we will make peace. We don't want to be massacred.' Barzani confirmed the veracity of this deal subsequently. 'Were it not for American promises we would never have become trapped and involved to such an extent.'" (Minority Rights Group Report - The Kurds, 1985)

In the event, the Iraqi proclamation of March 1974 was followed in April with the launch of another Iraqi offensive. Seven Iraqi divisions, including two armoured divisions, supported by 200 bombers and fighter bombers, were sent into Kurdish territory along three fronts.

"Alarmed at Iraqi success, Iran increased support of the Kurds, providing long range heavy artillery support (which the Iraqis could not match) and possibly Iranian troops dressed as Kurds... The war reached a point where Iraq could not win unless Iranian support was cut off and failing that faced the prospect of all out war with Iran. Neither country wanted this." (Minority Rights Group Report - The Kurds, 1985)

Having secured a stalemate on the ground, the Shah of Iran concluded the Pact of Algiers with the then de facto ruler of Iraq, Vice President Saddam Hussain on the 6th of March 1975. The agreement was made public on the 15th of March. The Shah, in return for withdrawing support for the Kurds, received a favourable settlement from the Iraqis on Iranian navigational rights on the Shatt al Arab

waterway. The Shah and the United States had won.

On his return from Algiers, the Shah summoned Barzani to Tehran and told him that Iran was withdrawing all aid to the Kurdish resistance and was recalling all arms and supplies. The Shah ordered Barzani to halt all military operations against the Iraqis.

On the 18th of March 1975, 16 years after his return from exile in Moscow and after three cease fires and interminable 'negotiations', Mulla Mustafa Barzani gave the

order to the Kurdish army to abandon the struggle. Thousands of Kurds, though not all, returned their weapons.

The Kurds learnt once again that Governments have no permanent friends - they have only permanent interests. This time round, Barzani went to the United States where he was to die of cancer in 1979. It was the turn of the United States to grant 'a safe haven' to the Kurdish leader whom it had used to further its geo political interests in the region.

Judy S. Bertelson concludes:

"The Kurdish strategy for attaining their basic goal of autonomy within Iraq was to fight the Iraqi central government until the resulting stalemate might cause a change to a regime in Baghdad more favourable to an agreement with the Kurds. At the same time the Kurds tried to gain as much external support as possible from international organisations and from nation states opposed to the Iraqis."

"This strategy had several effects on the international context. First of all, the inability of the Iraqis to put an end to the 'Kurdish problem' for 14 years contributed to the instability of the central Iraqi government in Baghdad. This instability, combined with the constant need to deploy a major segment of the Iraqi army against the Kurds, severely limited the Iraqi government's actions in the international arena and also diverted funds from Iraqi development projects."

"The constant turnover in the Iraqi central administration resulted in a continual shifting of alliances in the Middle East/Persian Gulf area,

depending upon the ideological strain of whatever Iraqi government was in power at any given time. For other nations, Iraq's 'Kurdish problem' allowed them a certain amount of leverage in their dealings with the Iraqi government. If the Iraqi government acted in a belligerent fashion toward Israel, Kuwait, Syria or Iran, then these national governments could retaliate by aiding the Kurds. The aid that the Shah of Iran provided the Kurds was particularly difficult for the Iraqis to handle. In the end the Iraqis had to concede to Iran navigational rights on the Shatt al

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# PEOPLE OF TAMIL EELAM

## Satyendra

of such attention has more often than not, related to the immediate need for humanitarian assistance for suffering and pain. There has been a willingness to talk about 'safe havens' and 'food drops' but self determination. There has been a desire to indulge in the rhetoric of a 'new world order' but an early before his participation at the talks convened by the Indian Government, at Thimpu in Bhutan, Satyendra wrote an article entitled 'TAMILS OF SRI LANKA, KURDS, AND BHUTAN'. We discuss topical and relevant today.

*Arab waterway (a major point of contention in Iranian Iraqi relations for years) in order to stop Iranian aid to the Kurds."*

*"The Shah of Iran was never willing to go as far as he could have for the Kurds, even in terms of weapon supplies. Kurdish nationalism in Iraq was in the long run,*

*is a weak Ba'athist Iraq without Saddam Hussein. But if Saddam Hussein's grip on the Ba'athist party cannot be shaken, then, when all is said and done, a weak Iraq with Saddam Hussein is preferable to an Iraq without 'a Kurdish problem'!*

*It appears that the words of the*

*The international community is concerned to prevent the break up of Iraq. It seeks the continued support of Turkey as a 'buffer' in the Middle East. It is concerned to prevent the emergence of a Shiite Iraq which may align itself with Shiite Iran. The preferred option is a weak Ba'athist Iraq without Saddam Hussein. But if Saddam Hussein's grip on the Ba'athist party cannot be shaken, then, when all is said and done, a weak Iraq with Saddam Hussein is preferable to an Iraq without 'a Kurdish problem'!*

*disadvantageous for Iran. The Shah could not really allow Brazani to succeed because of the effects such success might ultimately have on the Kurdish population living within Iran's borders. For Iran (and the United States) the Kurdish fight against the Iraqis was a convenient way of keeping Iran's chief rival off balance. When it became advantageous for Iran to come to an agreement with Iraq, the Kurds were abandoned"*

After the exit of Mulla Mustafa Barzani, the Kurd struggle in Iraq was increasingly split between the KDP led by one of Mustafa Barzani's sons and a new party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) which has in recent years put guerillas backed by Syria into action against Iraqi forces. The KDP has functioned from Iran whilst the PUK, led by Talabani has faced attacks from both Turkey and Iran. In 1983, the PUK concerned with confronting all three major regional powers at the same time, was forced to enter into negotiations with Baghdad.

It appears that today, the international community's limited support for the Kurds is simply a convenient way of keeping President Saddam Hussein off balance. That support does not extend to recognising the right to self determination of the Kurdish people. The international community was willing to launch an attack to free Kuwait from President Saddam Hussein but it hesitates to free the Kurdish people from an equally alien domination.

The international community is concerned to prevent the break up of Iraq. It seeks the continued support of Turkey as a 'buffer' in the Middle East. It is concerned to prevent the emergence of a Shiite Iraq which may align itself with Shiite Iran. The preferred option

*the constituent peoples. Order and stability are not always found in the status quo; on the contrary, when the tectonic plates underlying the nation-states begin to move, you heighten the pressure by failing to recognise new realities. The second lesson has to do with the duty to intervene when a states central leaders order their army to kill the people. The United States does not have the ability to intervene militarily in the self defeated Soviet Union (or in China) as it does in defeated Iraq, but Americans now know they have the obligation to apply all the economic and diplomatic pressure they can bring to bear. The human rights dimension can no longer be derided as goody-goody; television pictures of 'bloody Sunday' and instantaneous commentary have made moral judgment and the force of global revulsion a part of real politik." [William Safire, The New York Times, reported in the International Herald Tribune, 30th April 1991]*

The story of the Kurds of Iraq is not without its lessons for the people of Tamil Eelam as well.

Let us learn that national liberation movements are stubborn and deep rooted. There is a 'natural pressure towards ethnic autonomy' and pressures are heightened rather than lessened by a failure to 'recognise new realities'. Seventy years after the Treaty of Sevres in 1920, the Kurdish national liberation struggle has not been suppressed. The Kurdish nation has survived the machinations of powers much more powerful than itself. The

*Let us learn that if the post war years from 1945 to the 1980s belonged to the anti colonial liberation movements, the 1990s will prove to be the decade of post colonial national liberation movements. It is no accident that we hear the voice of emergent nations being raised within existing state boundaries in the Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe, in Yugoslavia, in the Middle East, and in the Indian region. Some may perceive these national movements as 'common threats' against the stability of the existing world power structure, and choose to describe them as 'sub nationalisms' and seek to build a common front against their growth. But by denying the 'new reality' they will only serve to heighten the 'natural pressure toward ethnic autonomy'.*

freedom fighters of the Kurdish people are called pesh mergas - which means literally those unafraid of death.

The pesh mergas of Kurdistan have kept alive the cause for which they were unafraid to give their lives. Let us learn that the cyanide capsule in the hands of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, is evidence enough that it

is not for glory or riches or honours that the people of Tamil Eelam fight but for liberty which no human will consent to lose but with his or her life.

Let us learn that each state has its own interests and that it is those interests that it pursues, whether overtly or covertly. Let us learn the importance of identifying the nature and content of the interests of those states that are concerned with our struggle. Let us learn that those who help us may be concerned to maintain a low level conflict which will further their own ends of keeping one state or another 'off balance'.

Let us learn that the interests of a state are a function of the interests of groups which wield power within that state and that 'foreign policy is the external manifestation of domestic institutions, ideologies and other attributes of the polity.' [Ole R. Holsti: Foreign Policy Decision Makers in In Search of Global Patterns: Collier Macmillan Publishers 1976].

Let us learn that the 'human rights dimension can no longer be derided as goody-goody' and that television pictures and instantaneous commentary 'have made moral judgment and the force of global revulsion a part of real politik.'

Let us learn that the pious

Let us also learn that the eventual success of any struggle is, not surprisingly, a function of the capacity of a leadership to mobilise its own people and its own resources at the broadest level. Let us learn that at the end of the day, we must secure our own strength in order that we may secure that which is right and just. The horizontal comradeship of the people of Tamil Eelam must be so consolidated and strengthened that it prevails over their differences and inequalities.

*Let us learn that if the post war years from 1945 to the 1980s belonged to the anti colonial liberation movements, the 1990s will prove to be the decade of post colonial national liberation movements. It is no accident that we hear the voice of emergent nations being raised within existing state boundaries in the Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe, in Yugoslavia, in the Middle East, and in the Indian region. Some may perceive these national movements as 'common threats' against the stability of the existing world power structure, and choose to describe them as 'sub nationalisms' and seek to build a common front against their growth. But by denying the 'new reality' they will only serve to heighten the 'natural pressure toward ethnic autonomy'.*

*Let us learn that in the same way as the colonial ruler was unable to prevent the rise of freedom movements, the 'great powers' of the emerging new world order will fail to suppress the national aspirations of the separate peoples living within existing state boundaries.*

*Let us learn that the East-West confrontation of the bipolar world is being replaced by the sharpening North-South conflict in the emerging 'new world order'. It is a North-South conflict which will increasingly bring into relief the national aspirations of the separate peoples of the third world, who by the end of this century will amount to 85% of the world's population.*

*Let us learn that whilst it is true that we live in a world made increasingly small and inter dependent, by the free flow of money and information across state boundaries, at the same time, the thrust for human rights cannot be denied because, in the end, this thrust represents the stubborn force of the human aspiration for equality and freedom - and foremost amongst all human rights and from which all other rights flow, is the right of self determination of a people.*

Let us learn from the experiences of the Kurds of Iraq. Wise men learn from the experience of others. The people of Tamil Eelam are a people - not without wisdom.

# American Bar Association Seminar on Sri Lanka : Text of Amnesty International delegate's speech

**M**y name is John Nides and I work for the American Section of Amnesty International. Amnesty is a worldwide human rights organization that works within a rather narrowly defined Mandate. For those of you not familiar with Amnesty, I would like to briefly describe what we do.

We work for the unconditional release of people imprisoned on the basis of their political beliefs, ethnic group, religion or sex as long as they have neither used nor advocated the use of violence.

We work for fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners. And we work for an end to torture and capital punishment.

The work of Amnesty members is further limited by what we call the own-country rule. With certain exceptions like death penalty work, some refugee work and ratification of international human rights law covenants, Amnesty members are prohibited from working on their own country. Amnesty members in India, for example, do not work on stopping human rights abuses being committed by their own government in Kashmir and Punjab.

## Focus on Government

Amnesty does not support or oppose any government, faction of government or ideology. We take no stand on territorial issues or separatist movements. We condemn human rights abuses by all parties-governments and opposition groups alike. But while we publicize and condemn abuses committed by opposition groups, we direct our efforts towards governments. Our work is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Governments have duties under international law, both customary and treaties, to protect the rights of their citizens. We routinely meet with representatives of governments; we do not accord militant, separatist or terrorist groups the status of governments.

The government of Sri Lanka had had to deal with two extremely violent insurgency movements in recent years - a Tamil separatist force in the Northeast, dominated by the LTTE and a Sinhalese nationalist group in the South, known as the JVP. Both the LTTE and the JVP have been guilty of widespread and brutal human rights violations.

I am going to describe today some of what has been going in the South for the last two years and speak briefly about what has been happening in the north, especially since the ceasefire ended last June and hostilities resumed. Then I am going to talk a little about the response of the Sri Lankan government to international pressure and the role of the United States in helping to stop the terrible abuses which continue as we speak.

Sri Lanka was once an island paradise. The paradise has turned into a hell for many Sri Lankans.

Gross and widespread human rights violations in Sri Lanka have been occurring since 1983. For the first four years the violations were concentrated in the northeast where opposition groups have been engaged in an armed struggle to establish a separate Tamil state since the late 1970s.

In response to the fighting in the northeast, the government gave extraordinary powers to security forces: the power to arrest and hold people incommunicado without charge or trial for long periods - conditions. In Amnesty's experience, that provide a ready context for deaths in custody, disappearances and torture. During some periods, Emergency Regulations were issued that permitted security forces to dispose of bodies without postmortem or inquest. The end result is that security forces appear to believe they can act with impunity.

When the JVP launched a violent campaign in 1987, security forces were given similar powers to use in the south.

In 1971 the JVP, (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna) a Sinhalese acronym for the People's Liberation Front, then a Marxist Leninist party launched an abortive armed insurrection. The government crushed the rebellion at a cost of several thousand lives. The leaders of the movement and thousands of followers were imprisoned. Following the change in government in 1978, those still remaining in prison were released. The JVP began to participate openly in politics on a platform of Sinhalese nationalism and opposition to autonomy for the Tamil regions. Following communal violence in 1983, the JVP was banned and it went underground. Its leaders began mobilizing to overthrow the government.

In July 1987, the Sri Lankan government signed an accord with the government of India permitting Indian troops to take charge of security in the northeast where Sri Lankan Tamil separatists in city of Jaffna.

## JVP opposed IPKF

The JVP strenuously objected to the presence of Indian troops and the terms of the accord and intensified its campaign to overthrow the government by force. The JVP (and its armed wing, the DJV (Deshapremi Janatha Viyaparaya) began killing members of the security forces, members of the ruling party and left-wing opposition groups as well as anyone else they considered a traitor to their cause.

During the presidential election of December 1988, the JVP threatened to kill anyone who voted. Nonetheless, Presidential elections took place accompanied by violence, political killings and intimidation attributed to the JVP the LTTE and to a lesser extent, disputes between other parties and settling of political feuds. After Premadasa won the election, the JVP continued its armed struggle. It called strikes and threatened to kill those who violated the strike order. In June 1989 the JVP ordered a transport strike that caused by hospital workers. The JVP became known as the little government for its ability to impose unofficial curfews.

When the new President reached an agreement with the Indian government for the total withdrawal of Indian troops by the end of March 1990, the JVP upped the ante on violence and announced it would kill relatives of security forces who did not resign. It started to make good on its threat.

Besides killing security forces

## John Nides

and members of their families, the JVP killed broadcasters, suspected informers, Buddhist clergy who supported the government, newagents who sold blacklisted newspapers and others. The bodies of JVP victims were openly displayed as a warning to others. Some bodies were mutilated with severed limbs or slashed sexual organs.

## Reign of Terror

The response by the security forces was a reign of terror. Posters were put in prominent places during curfew hours announcing that a dozen or more relatives of JVP members would be killed for each relative of a security personnel slain.

sives, members and supporters of lawful opposition parties, some of whom were said to have been arrested on the order of individual members of parliament who belonged to the ruling UNP party. At times, the background of the very brutal violence of armed opposition groups in the south appears to have been used as a cover by the government to suppress legitimate opposition.

## Abuses in the South

Extrajudicial executions and disappearances continued to be reported in 1990 even though the government claimed it had crushed the subversives. Compared to 1989, the level of abuses was down last year in the south. But this is not to say that the government had a good human rights record in the south in 1990. There were hundreds of extrajudicial executions and disappearances reported.

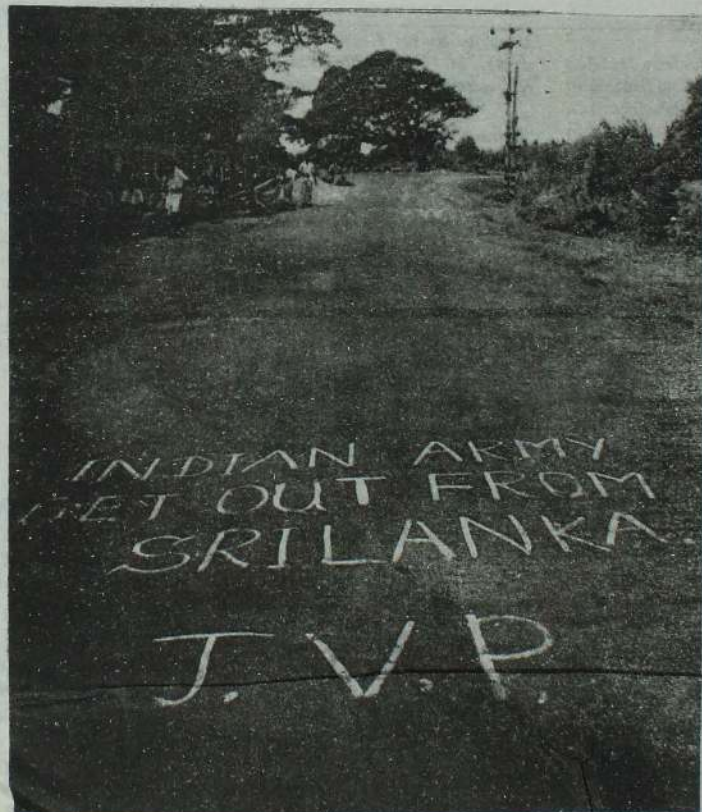
the security forces picked people up. Victims included former JVP suspects who had been previously detained and released and Tamil youths suspected of links to the LTTE. If the security forces couldn't find someone, they might detain the person's relative. In one reported case a six year old was detained in October by Kuliapitiya police who couldn't find the child's father.

## The Northeast

By late March of last year the Indian troops had completed their withdrawal from Sri Lanka. The Indian forces themselves were guilty of human rights violations during their stay in Sri Lanka. I suggest you read the Amnesty International report on that.

Following heavy fighting with rival Tamil groups, the LTTE quickly took control of the Northeastern Province, while it continued negotiations with the

# 'GOVERNMENTS HAVE DUTY TO PROTECT RIGHTS OF CITIZENS'



## A Flashback to 1987

On a public highway in south Sri Lanka  
An India Today Picture

A cycle of murder and reprisal killings followed. It is now thought that tens of thousands of people were extrajudicially executed or disappeared during 1988 and 89. The Sri Lanka government attributes a total of 6,517 killings between 1987 and mid-March of 1990 to the JVP. Thousands of people were killed or tortured by government security forces or disappeared while in custody. Victims included suspected subver-

In June, scores of corpses were discovered near former army camps, apparently the bodies of prisoners who had been kept in detention because of suspected links to the JVP. They were apparently killed by troops who were being redeployed to the Northeast to fight the LTTE.

Disappearances continued to be a problem in the south. Both uniformed policemen and plainclothed death squads believed to be associated with

Sri Lankan government with whom it had a ceasefire agreement.

In June the LTTE ended the ceasefire and took prisoner hundreds of police officers who had been ordered not to fight back if attacked while negotiations were going on.

Several hundreds of these policemen were executed by the LTTE. A policeman from Kalmunai police station who managed, despite his injuries,

(continued next page)



# 'SATYAGRAHA VIGIL' IN LONDON

## 5th April 1991

A 'Satyagraha Vigil' was held before the Indian High Commission in London on the 5th of April. The Vigil was organised by the International Federation of Tamils. A spokesperson for the Federation said: "The Vigil was intended to focus attention on the continued indiscriminate aerial bombardment of Tamil civilian population centres in the North and the systematic murder of Tamil civilians by the army and para military death squads in the East of Tamil Eelam."

A petition was presented by the International Federation of Tamils to the Government of India through the Indian High Commission in London. The petition appealed to the Indian Government and the people of India, with their strong commitment to human rights, to help to put a stop to the genocidal actions of the Sri Lankan government - actions which have also resulted in many thousands of people from Tamil Eelam seeking refuge in Tamil Nadu. It said:

"We appeal to the Indian Government and the people of India to pressure the Sri Lankan Government to conform to the rules of international humanitarian law and stop this genocidal attack on the people of Tamil Eelam.

We appeal to the Indian Government and the people of India to intercede with Sri Lanka and ensure that at least essential food, fuel and medical supplies are made available to the suffering civilian population in the Tamil homelands.

We appeal to the Indian Government and the people of India to alleviate the suffering of those thousands of Tamils who have fled their homeland in fear of death at the hands of the Sri Lankan Army and its para military death squads and who seek refuge in Tamil Nadu."

### Eastern Province

The Petition pointed out: "The Sri Lankan Government is engaged today in a genocidal attack on the people of Tamil Eelam.

On the one hand, the Sri Lankan Government seeks to terrorise the Tamil population in the North of Tamil Eelam, by resort to day and night

bombing of civilian population centres. On the other hand, the conclusion appears irresistible that steps have been initiated at the highest levels of the Government of Sri Lanka to eradicate the entire Tamil population from the Eastern parts of Tamil Eelam - either by killing them or by forcing them to flee from their homes. These actions of the Sri Lankan armed forces and para military death squads have been coupled with a Government imposed economic blockade of Tamil Eelam.

### Genocide Convention

Under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, acts of murder committed with intent of destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such, are considered as acts of genocide. The evidence points clearly to the conclusion that the violence unleashed by the Sri Lankan Government on the people of Tamil Eelam amounts to genocide.

In the North of Tamil Eelam, bombs are regularly targeted on refugee camps, whether they be situated in temples, churches or schools. Even hospitals with clear red cross markings have not been spared.

"Barrel bombs - 210 litre cast iron barrels packed with explosives, rubber and saw dust - rain down on residential areas with the most devastating effect; each bomb can destroy 20 houses. By its haphazard bombing of civilian targets in the Northern peninsula of Jaffna, the airforce is imposing an unofficial blockade which is bringing some parts to starvation. Helicopters, equipped with rockets and machine guns hover day and night over Jaffna city and the surrounding towns and villages, ready to strafe any moving civilians or vehicles.... The hospital has also been bombed and three weeks ago, a helicopter fired into the operating theatre, killing a doctor.... In an effort to dent civilian morale, they have also been showering the area with human and animal excrement." (The London Daily Telegraph, 13th September 1990).



There has been an embargo on the transport of essential medical, food and fuel supplies into Tamil Eelam. Hundreds of sick and wounded have died without medical attention. Many thousands of the people of Tamil Eelam, face death by starvation. The education of Tamil youths has been grievously affected and their safety is always in peril. Arrests and torture of Tamil children as young as thirteen is commonplace and occurs in Colombo as well.

### Cease-fire rejected

The Sri Lankan Government has carried out this genocidal attack on the people of Tamil Eelam under the pretext of carrying on a war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. However, the genocidal intent of the Government was made clear when it rejected the unilateral ceasefire declaration made by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on the 31st of December 1990 on the specious ground that there had been violations of the ceasefire by the LTTE. When the LTTE denied such violations and offered to participate in talks to set up a suitable mechanism to monitor the ceasefire, the Sri Lankan rejected that offer out of hand!

The present genocidal campaign by the Sri Lankan gov-

ernment is, of course, no fortuitous happening. It represents the culmination of the efforts of successive Sinhala dominated governments, over a time span of more than forty years, to change the demography of Tamil Eelam, to populate the traditional Tamil homelands in the Eastern parts of Tamil Eelam with Sinhala settlers, and thereby facilitate the subjugation of the people of Tamil Eelam.

Today, in 1991, from Pottuvil in the Amparai District to Thenmaravadi in the Trincomalee District, the Government has succeeded in driving Tamils from their homes and settling Sinhala people in these areas. The number of Tamils who remain in Batticaloa town and in Trincomalee town, are very few. The remainder have all left because they are afraid to remain in their homes. In the main streets, it is the army that moves about. The belongings in Tamil homes have been looted by the army and by the so called Muslim 'Home Guards'.

Only about 10% of those who have left their homes have gone to refugee camps because they are afraid of what will happen to them if they do go there. The remainder are trying to survive in the jungles, on land bordering the jungle, by the river side, and under trees. They have no shelter from sun

or rain and are leading a precarious existence, day by day. Thousands of Tamils in the Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai Districts are living today on tubers and roots dug from jungle land. They face death by starvation.

Almost the entirety of the Tamils in the Trincomalee District in the Eastern Province, have been compelled to leave their homes. The same is true of the Batticaloa District. The Tamils in these Districts in the Eastern Province have been unable to go to their farms, they have been unable to go to their work places, and they have been unable to go out to fish. The boats and nets of Tamil fishermen have been burnt. The land which belonged to the Tamil people is now being farmed by Sri Lankan army personnel, and by criminal elements and thugs amongst the Muslim people aided by so called armed Muslim 'Home Guards'.

There are several reports of large scale killings of Tamils. But because Tamils are fleeing from their homes, and because in many villages the entirety of the Tamil population have been killed without anyone remaining, it has not always been possible to obtain details of the killings. In Kalmunai, Sathurukondan, and Pillyaradi

(continued overleaf)

# AMNESTY DELEGATE ON LANKAN VIOLENCE

(continued)

to escape, said policemen from his station had been blindfolded with their hands tied behind their backs. They had been taken into the jungle, forced to lie on the ground and shot by local LTTE cadres.

Some Tamil policemen are still reported being held by the LTTE and some were released. On January 10 of this year representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross visited 43 LTTE policemen in LTTE custody in the Jaffna peninsula who had been taken prisoner last June. One of the 43 who needed medical assistance was released on the request of the ICRC.

### Abuses by the LTTE

The attack on the police stations began another round of

fighting. The LTTE forced the evacuation of major towns in the east in the face of advances by government forces. In October, the LTTE ordered Muslims in four districts including Jaffna (Mannar, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi) to leave or be killed. Tens of thousands fled.

The LTTE killed many hundreds of Sinhalese and Muslim civilians. In August, for example, the LTTE reportedly dragged 27 Sinhalese from a bus near Trincomalee and killed them. They also killed 140 or so Muslim worshippers in mosques in Kattankudy.

The LTTE was reported to have imprisoned numerous members or sympathizers of rival Tamil groups and held both Tamil and Muslim civilians for ransom. The LTTE is also reported to have tortured and killed prisoners in deten-

tion.

### Govt. Atrocities

The government of Sri Lanka responded to Tiger atrocities by resorting to some of the counter-terror tactics it had used in the south the year before. Thousands of defenceless civilians in areas recaptured by the government were killed. They were shot, bayoneted, hacked to death and burnt alive. Bodies were often left in the open. Some were identified as people who had been detained by security forces a few days earlier. Some bodies were burnt beyond recognition. Some were mutilated.

In Amparai District where the Special Task Force, a police commando unit was especially active, headless bodies began to wash up on the beaches in September.

In August (the 22 and following days), the army attacked two islands (Kayts and Mandaitivu) to the west of the Jaffna peninsula. Soldiers were reported to have shot innocent civilians in their homes and in air raid shelters. One eyewitness told how an entire family, including a 55 year old man and 49 year old wife, their two sons and one daughter were shot at home. There were other accounts of soldiers removing civilians from refugee camps and the bodies later being found with multiple stab wounds in the neck.

In the Amparai District, alone, more than 3,000 Tamils were killed or disappeared between June and October. In response to the killing of hundreds of Muslim civilians by the LTTE in August, Muslim groups, including ones armed

by the government, committed reprisal killings of Tamils in the east.

### Disappearances

Thousands of men and women were reportedly killed in custody following their arbitrary detention and disappearance by security forces in the northeast. The victims included babies only months old and their mothers, children under ten and people over 70 years old. In Batticaloa town alone, more than 1200 people reportedly disappeared between June and October.

Anybody suspected of contact with the LTTE including even minimal contact during the period when the LTTE controlled the area was at risk of being detained, disappeared or killed.

(To be continued in the next issue)

# THE TRAUMA OF A 62-YR OLD TAMIL WOMAN IN COLOMBO

Mrs. Florence Gnanakone is a resident of Hampden Lane, Wellawatte, in Colombo. She is 67-year old, a chronic diabetic, a heart patient and generally frail and weak.

At 11.30 p.m. on Thursday 9th May, she was arrested by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) at her residence, following a surprise raid on her house, and the discovery of a locked briefcase under her bed. As the briefcase did not belong to her she was unaware of the combination of lock. She requested the police to break open the briefcase.

Police found a passport of a Tamil youth, about a kilo of narcotics believed to be heroin, and a little cash. Mrs. Gnanakone told the police that a Tamil youth who was working in a video rental store who had in the past supplied Tamil video films to her had requested her to keep the briefcase in her residence a few days earlier. Household servants and girls boarded with her are witnesses

to this youth handing over the briefcase to her and the police were informed of this.

## Torture chamber

Mrs. Gnanakone was held incommunicado for nearly 24 hours in the CID questioning centre which has been notorious in the past as one of the torture chambers in Sri Lanka. Access to attorneys was denied, and she was produced before a magistrate in his private chambers, when she was remanded until the 14th June.

36 hours later, the youth who handed over the briefcase to Mrs. Gnanakone approached the premises and was identified by eye witnesses who were present when the bag was handed over. Mrs. Gnanakone's daughter, Mrs. Swendri Rajaratnam (42) of Ward Place, Colombo 7, who was visiting her mother's residence at that time, invited the youth into the house. When questioned, he said he had left a briefcase under Mrs. Gnanakone's bed

and had come to collect it. He was asked to go and check whether the briefcase was there. When he went inside the room, Mrs. Rajaratnam promptly locked the room from outside and informed the police.

## Youths confession

Although the youth attempted to break loose and escape, with the assistance of the downstairs neighbours and a taxi driver, the suspect was caught and handed over to the Wellawatte police. The opposite house neighbour Mr. Hilton Perera, a Sinhalese, who is a Superintendent of Police (CID) was a witness and also communicated with the Wellawatte police.

The attorney who was appointed by her husband Mr. V.P. Gnanakone was told that the youth had admitted to the police that he handed the locked briefcase to Mrs. Gnanakone and that she was unaware of the contents. The attorney is Mr. Denzil Gooneratne. The police officer who informed the attorney is the Director, Narcotics Bureau.

Subsequently, visits were allowed and her daughter has seen Mrs. Gnanakone. As her medical condition was causing anxiety, the prison doctor agreed to immediate hospitalisation. However, undue pressure was brought to deny her medical attention. Finally on the 15th May, she was transferred to the General hospital. But within the next 48 hours she was again ordered back to the maximum security jail where there are no female wards to provide medical attention. Considering Mrs. Gnanakone's medical history and the mental torture she was undergone, the chances are that she might not survive this ordeal for long. Even if she does, the possibility of permanent damage to her faculties is high, unless she is treated in a more humane and civilised manner.

## Daily News report

On Monday the 13th May, the police provided misleading and factually incorrect information to the government-owned newspaper - the Daily News - which was slanderous and derogatory in nature. It was said that they were investigating her son who is a permanent resident of Singapore who is alleged to be involved in gut running and heroin smuggling for the LTTE. He is said to be owning two ships and is a millionaire, both false allegations. It is further alleged that he was connections with an interna-

tional narco-terrorist racket, and the millionaire son was using his mother's house in Colombo as a clearing house.

These newspaper reports have had the desired effect the police thought they would have. They have scared everyone, including some of the officers handling this case in various government departments from being helpful or treating her in a humane manner. This has also led to the diverting of attention of those involved in investigating the real drug rings operating in Colombo.

What is of greater concern is that witnesses who could have helped to clear the good name of Mr. Gnanakone and family members are "disappearing" and the police say they do not have their addresses or identity card details. The possibility of threats being made against their lives appear to be the reason why witnesses are uncooperative and wanting to disassociate themselves. There is every indication that obstruction of justice is taking place inspired by the racially motivated sections of the police and the media.

## THE TIMES OF INDIA

### 'LTTE CAN HAVE VERY LITTLE TO GAIN'

At a time when the investigating agencies are examining all possible theories in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, it would perhaps be rash to go along with the Tamil Nadu Congress president, Mr. Vazhappadi Ramamurthy, and point an accusing finger at the LTTE. Certainly, the locale, the high degree of motivation of the assassin and similarities with the explosion that killed Ranjan Wijeratne, the former minister of defence in Sri Lanka, prompts the suspicion that the murder was the handiwork of Tamil militants from across the Palk Straits. Nor do the reports that the LTTE was putting out feelers to Indian leaders to persuade New Delhi to intercede in Colombo necessarily absolve the group. It may be recalled that the LTTE also maintained contacts with the veteran TULF leader, A. Amirthalingam, in Colombo but this did not prevent a group of determined militants from murdering him in cold blood in July 1989. Indeed, the LTTE's record of ruthlessness and its intolerance of all those who are opposed to its violent methods give substance to suspicions of it.

Against this, however, certain questions remain unanswered. First, granted that Rajiv Gandhi went back on his mother's tacit support to Eelam, how does the LTTE benefit from the gruesome murder? Ms Jayalalitha's intemperate outburst against the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees is a pointer that the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi has forced all political parties in Madras to review their support to the Tamil struggle for a separate homeland. The assassination has, in addition, virtually guaranteed the political eclipse of Mr. M. Karunanidhi and nullified any possibility of a DMK government in Fort St.

George. Equally, even the suspicion of LTTE involvement in the Sripurambudur outrage will embolden Colombo to adopt a more hard-line policy against the Tamil militants. In particular, President Premadasa's government will be secure in the knowledge that the wave of revulsion in India will automatically exclude any counsel for restraint. Given these possible consequences, the LTTE, it would seem, has very little to gain by the assassination. But then, hard logic often plays no role in terrorism, and the possibility of a motivated group wreaking vengeance on a man who despatched the IPKF to Sri Lanka and inflicted heavy casualties on the militants cannot be ruled out. Hopefully, the investigations will help unravel the mystery and put an end to all forms of unhealthy and, more often than not, bizarre speculation. Rajiv Gandhi cannot be brought back to life, but the nation must know the identity of those who single-mindedly set about their task of subverting Indian democracy.

EPDP .....

Continue from Page 4

group in the assassination assumes significance in the context of the LTTE efforts to patch up with Mr. Gandhi.

Sources close to the investigation mention another Sri Lankan militant group, the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), in this connection. This group is believed to have the expertise with explosives that is generally credited to the LTTE. The sources are working on the theory that EPDP had the motive. The Rajiv Gandhi government had launched a crackdown on the EPDP at the instance of the EPRLF. Several EPDP cadres in Tamil Nadu had been arrested under the NSA.

## Jaffna girl in Colombo gets a shock!

From Rita Sebastian

Mabel Jebratnam was at lunch at her brother's seaside residence in Colombo when we called on them on Wednesday afternoon. She had only just returned from a leading girls' school where she teaches Chemistry to advanced level students.

Her father, a retired cooperative inspector, whom we met earlier in the morning, was debating how he would break the news to Mabel that she had figured in the investigation in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination when we called for her a second time.

The spectacled, olive complexioned 28-year-old was visibly shaken at the news. In no way does the soft spoken Mabel resemble the woman in the widely publicised photograph of the alleged assassin of Rajiv Gandhi.

"I am a Christian," was Mabel's response as she sat with us in a room where a picture on the wall proclaimed "God's unseen presence".

Mabel began her degree studies at the Madras Christian College in June 1985, staying at a Catholic hostel for girls. Later when she began reading for her Masters, she stayed with an aunt and uncle who were her guardians before moving to stay with the family of classmate.

"I got admission to do my M.Phil. but got the forms too late because I had returned to Jaffna by then, said Mabel. Even the letter informing her of the convocation on April 22 reached her too late to get to Madras and so she had to give it a miss, said Mabel, disappointed she couldn't make it.

What bothered both father and daughters was how on earth could anybody have linked her with the incidents in Madras.

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## 'SATYAGRAHA VIGIL' IN LONDON

in the Batticaloa District and in Veeramunai, and Thurainneelavanai in the Amparai District, Tamils have been killed without leaving a single survivor. Tamil women from the villages have been abducted and raped. Many of those who were abducted did not return alive. The so called Muslim Home Guards have helped in this genocidal attack on the Tamil population. The Sri Lankan army appears to have chosen the refugee camp as the appropriate symbol of the future that awaits the Tamils after the army action is over.

Many Tamils, including young women have been abducted from refugee camps by the Army and by the so-called

'Home Guards'. More than 400 Tamils were abducted from the refugee camp at the Batticaloa University campus and killed. Such abductions and killings have also taken place in the refugee camps in the Amparai and Trincomalee Districts as well. On the 13th of September 1990, the refugees in the Iruthayapuram, Pachainoor Refugee Camp were compelled to walk over a land mine 'for testing purposes' and in consequence one girl lost her eyes and another lost her legs when the land mine exploded.

There is insufficient food for those in the refugee camps. There are no medical supplies. In the Vantharumalai Univer-

sity refugee camp, 19 persons did not die without treatment. There is no milk powder for infants and the numbers who die of disease and malnutrition continue to rise day by day.

Those who have left the refugee camps to escape the attacks of the army and the so called Muslim Home Guards, and who live in the jungles and along the river banks, have no assistance what ever. Red Cross officials say that they can help only those in the refugee camps. This is the situation in the Batticaloa district in Vakarai, Kathirveli, Verukal and in the Trincomalee District in Kattaiparaichan, and Pallikudiyruppu....."

# LTTE'S OVERTURES TO MEND FENCES WITH INDIA

## Frontline

T.S. Subramanian

An unpublicised meeting between Rajiv Gandhi and Kasi Anandan, a Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) representative, that would have had far-reaching consequences if Rajiv Gandhi had been alive, took place on March 5 in New Delhi.

The meeting came about after the LTTE had made overtures to the effect that it would like to meet Rajiv Gandhi and mend its relationship with him. Kasi Anandan is a central committee member of the People's Front for Liberation Tigers, the political wing of the LTTE. He had left the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) to join the LTTE. He is also a popular poet.

The meeting, which lasted about 30 minutes at Rajiv Gandhi's residence, went off very well and the former Prime Minister suggested to Kasi Anandan that the LTTE wait till the elections to the Lok Sabha were over.

The LTTE representative informed him that the organisation wanted to "forget the past" and start a new chapter in its relations with him. Significantly, he told Rajiv Gandhi that the LTTE would "never act against India." The LTTE was looking forward to Rajiv Gandhi's return to power for it would enable India to take firm initiatives in solving the Tamil problem.

Rajiv Gandhi was equally effusive in his replies. He wanted Kasi Anandan to convey his "greetings to Prabhakaran" and that Prabhakaran should "continue the struggle." The former Prime Minister made detailed enquiries about the situation on the ground and what exactly was the current goal of the LTTE.

Rajiv Gandhi's "greetings" to Prabhakaran were later conveyed to the LTTE supremo, who was obviously pleased with the renewal of contact with the former Prime Minister.

The meeting ended with Rajiv Gandhi agreeing that the LTTE could and indeed should stay in touch with him.

Following the meeting, Kasi Anandan made statements urging that India and the LTTE should bury the hatchet. "We (the LTTE) want to be on the side of India and we also want India to be on our side. We have never worked against India at any time," Kasi Anandan said. He added, "The confrontation between the IPKF and the LTTE is an unfortunate chapter in our history and it should be totally forgotten by both the sides. As far as we are concerned, even when we fought India, we never sought help from Pakistan or China, which are inimical to India."

He also refuted the general impression that the LTTE had a report only with the Tamil Nadu Government and not the Government of India itself. "We have always maintained our contacts with Delhi and in future also we would like to maintain our communications with Delhi," he said significantly.

In the wake of the meeting with Rajiv Gandhi, the LTTE leader Sathasivam Krishnakumar alias Kittu, speaking from his residence in London, repeatedly appealed for "India's mediation" to solve the Tamil problem. He wanted India to pressure Colombo to halt its military operations in the Tamil areas of the island. He wanted a "powerful" country like India to mediate if and when negotiations were conducted between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government. Colombo should assure New Delhi that the Tamils would be provided with a security set-up under international safeguards and India should pressure the Sri Lankan Government to meet the genuine aspirations of the Tamils, said Kittu.

Later, Kasi Anandan reportedly met the officials of the

Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). Permission was also given to the LTTE to ferry the wounded LTTE cadres across the Palk Strait for medical treatment in Tamil Nadu, under President's rule. This had been stopped for a while after the Chandra Shekhar Government came to power.

In a significant remark, former Union Minister of State and Home and Congress (I) leader P. Chidambaram observed on May 5, "Besides our duty of providing shelter and protection to the refugees, we must offer refuge to the injured militants, provided they do not use Tamil Nadu as a base for their activities." Again, in a remark pregnant with meaning, Chidambaram stressed that the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987 should still be the basis for any future action and that it should bind both the Sri Lankan Government and the Tamil militants, with India offering its "good officers." He, however, wanted the Tamil Nadu Governor to discuss with the Centre the possibility of sending the Tamil militants, detained in special camps in the State, back to Sri Lanka.

All these remarks from Kasi Anandan, Kittu and Chidambaram did not go unnoticed in Colombo. There was also nervousness in the Sri Lankan Government about the prospect of Rajiv Gandhi becoming Prime Minister again as the Congress (I) was the only party which kept insisting that the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement should still be the basis for any fresh initiative to solve the Tamil problem. But Colombo considered the Agreement dead.

For Sri Lankan President R. Premadasa also, the very men-

tion of the Agreement was like the waving of a red rag in front of a bull. He had stoutly opposed the Agreement and even boycotted the signing ceremony. When he contested the presidency in December 1988, he openly demanded the withdrawal of the IPKF from the island and blamed the presence of the IPKF for the recrudescence of brutal violence by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramunna (JVP) in the southern parts of Sri Lanka.

Even seasoned Sri Lankan Tamils, who are antagonistic towards the LTTE, are reluctant to jump to the conclusion

that the LTTE is behind the assassination. "The LTTE is not so naive as to commit political harakiri by killing Rajiv Gandhi at this stage, when the elections are halfway through and there was a probability of his returning to power," an observer of the Sri Lankan Tamil struggle said.

A Sri Lankan Tamil leader pointed out that if it is proved that the LTTE was behind the killing of Rajiv Gandhi, it could be thrown out lock, stock and barrel from India. This would mean the loss of an invaluable sanctuary, so essential for any guerilla organisation fighting for a separate country.

## Rajiv Gandhi : A voice from the past

1985

India's prestigious news-magazine *India Today*, carried in its issue of February 15, 1985 long interview with Rajiv Gandhi. The first interview to an Indian publication after his electoral victory, it was conducted by Editor Aroon Purie and senior Editor T.N. Ninan. The following is the relevant excerpt pertaining to Sri Lanka and Tamil militants :

**Q : What are you going to do about the Tamil militants from Sri Lanka who are in Tamil Nadu?**

**A :** We do not have any hard information on this. They've presented me some pamphlets and leaflets that the Tamils - the refugees are printing. There is nothing we can do about that. Anybody is allowed to print whatever. We've checked it out, yes, people are printing them, but there is no training to

my knowledge. What we want in Sri Lanka is a settlement which will enable the refugees to go back. We cannot have 40,000 people here, maybe there are even more now. We cannot have people who have relatives closely related in Sri Lanka. What is going on there is really terrible. We feel that no military or enforced settlement would be conducive to the refugees going back so they must come to some sort of political settlement. We must create an atmosphere where these poor chaps can go back.

**Q : But it seems more and more difficult - this political settlement. What is your attitude towards a new state?**

**A :** I don't think we have come to that point yet. But it needs statesmanship and I hope that the people of Sri Lanka will rise to it.

Lankan Army General and wife killed by their own son?



The only Tamil army General in the Sri Lankan service - Major General E.G. Thevanayagam, and his wife (pictured above) are suspected to have been killed by their own 15-year old son, Dinesh, in their Hampden Lane residence in Wellawatte, Colombo. Mr. Thevanayagam, although promoted for his service in the Army never say any active service and is believed to have led a quiet life in Colombo, after controversy surrounded him while he was in Jaffna years before.

Having stabbed his parents, Dinesh is reported to have taken his father's car, a Volvo, and driven off "to attend a birthday party at Buller's Road".



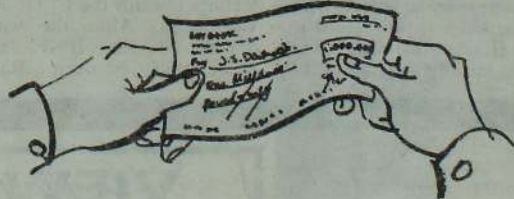

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## LTTE hand unlikely, says Anura

The leader of Sri Lanka's major opposition party, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, has expressed his reservation over reports suggesting that the LTTE was behind the assassination of former Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

In an exclusive interview to *The Times of India* the leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) said: "I just don't know what the LTTE would gain by killing Mr. Gandhi apart from antagonising the people of India and jeopardising the lives of Tamil refugees here.

He also expressed doubts that the LTTE would choose to commit the crime in Tamil Nadu, where the organisation would be the prime aspect.

# CORDIAL RAJIV-LTTE MEETING ON MARCH 5

The LTTE leader Mr. Sathasivam Krishnakumar alias Kittu has confirmed that a meeting did take place between the former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, and the LTTE representative, Mr. Kasi Anandan in New Delhi on March 5. The meeting led to a 'good relationship' between Rajiv Gandhi and the LTTE and therefore, the LTTE had no reason to kill him, Mr. Kittu added.

Mr. Kittu told *The Hindu* from his residence on London that the Sri Lankan Government was anxious about the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement being revived if Rajiv Gandhi were to return to power.

**Plastic explosives:** Answering a question on only the LTTE having the technology and precision to use the plastic explosives that killed the former Prime Minister, Mr. Kittu said India had supplied 'large quantities' of plastic explosives to all the Tamil militant groups when they were receiving training in arms in India. "In the battlefield, these groups did not get an opportunity to use them," he added.

Asked about the Congress (I) spokesman, Mr. Pranab Kumar Mukherjee's denial of 'the whole report' about the unpublicised meeting between Rajiv Gandhi and Mr. Kasi Anandan in New Delhi on March 5, Mr. Kittu said Mr. Kasi Anandan did meet Rajiv Gandhi on behalf of the LTTE. "I gave him permission (to meet Rajiv Gandhi). I am a Central Committee member of the LTTE. He asked me whether he should meet Rajiv Gandhi or not. He sought permission from me not only to meet Rajiv Gandhi but even to make arrangements to meet him. Rajiv Gandhi knew that Mr. Kasi Anandan is our political leader. Only after he knew it, he agreed to meet (Kasi Anandan). The meeting lasted 45 minutes. The

LTTE leader, Mr. V. Prabhakaran's permission was also given for Mr. Kasi Anandan to meet Rajiv Gandhi," Mr. Kittu said.

In the meeting between the former Prime Minister and the LTTE representative, Rajiv Gandhi said that he would do what was possible on his part to mitigate the hardship of the Sri Lankan Tamils, Mr. Kittu said, "Rajiv Gandhi said he had wanted to solve the Tamils' problem through the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement but certain unexpected incidents took place" the LTTE leader said from London.

Besides, Mr. Arjuna Sithampalam of London also met Rajiv Gandhi within two weeks of Mr. Kasi Anandan meeting Rajiv Gandhi, Mr. Kittu said. But, Mr. Sithampalam, an international banker, did not meet the former Prime Minister on behalf of the LTTE. He met Rajiv Gandhi on behalf of the Tamils.

**Good relationship:** "Even in that meeting, Rajiv Gandhi referred to the Tamil problem. He said he wanted to help the Sri Lankan Tamils and that the Tamil struggle was a just one. He said the Tamil struggle should not end in failure. At the same time, Rajiv Gandhi said his desire was that Sri Lanka should be stable. When you consider all this, anybody will understand that there was a good relationship between Rajiv Gandhi and the LTTE," Mr. Kittu said.

As far as the LTTE is concerned, there is no justification for the LTTE to have inimical feelings towards Rajiv Gandhi. The LTTE has never interfered in the local politics of India. So there was no room for the Congress (I) or Rajiv Gandhi to entertain any inimical feelings towards the LTTE and vice versa. After the withdrawal of the IPKF, the relationship between Rajiv

Gandhi and the LTTE was built up step by step. Therefore, there cannot be any connection between the LTTE and this murder," Mr. Kittu said.

On the assessment that only the LTTE cadres, including its women fighters, had the highest motivation to carry out such an assassination, Mr. Kittu said that the LTTE cadres did have the highest motivation but the LTTE could not be blamed for all the incidents. "There were several struggles under way in India to obtain their rights. It cannot be said that men taking part in these struggles are afraid of losing their lives. As far as this operation is concerned, our argument is that anybody can do it. Besides, when you look deeply at it, the Sri Lankan Government was worried that the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement would be revived if Rajiv Gandhi were to return to power," he said.



Kittu



Arjuna Sithampalam

When it was pointed out to him that the LTTE also would have been very apprehensive about the revival of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement, that it had derailed the Agreement in the past and so it had a strong reason to kill Rajiv Gandhi fearing his return to power.

Mr. Kittu replied, "The Agreement is a political problem. It is a big issue. We wanted to discuss it elaborately and solve it. It cannot be solved in one stroke. Just because Rajiv Gandhi died, nobody can expect the Agreement also to die. Such an argument is fallacious."

## THE JAFFNA INTERVIEWS WITH LTTE LEADERS

**BBC correspondent Christopher Morris and Thomas Abraham of THE HINDU** travelled down to Jaffna to interview senior LTTE leaders in the wake of the widespread suspicion that the LTTE was involved in the assassination.

Reporting to *The Hindu*, Thomas Abraham wrote: (Hindu, May 30) - "Senior LTTE leaders in Jaffna have emphatically denied any involvement in Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, and have described statements from Indian Ministers implicating the

LTTE as irresponsible and emotional.

"Mr. Yogaratnam Yogi, general secretary, LTTE's political wing, said: "We have been bailed by people from Ministers downwards, but without a shred of evidence. These are irresponsible statements based on an emotional outburst".

Mr. Anton Balasingam, LTTE's political adviser pointed out that the Tigers had issued a statement from London stating that they were not in any way involved. The Congress party is accusing the

LTTE. We are disappointed to note this. After all, Mahatma Gandhi and Mrs. Indira Gandhi were also assassinated, indicating that there many forces within India hostile to the establishment. We can't understand why we are being blamed."

Mr. Yogi felt the LTTE was being blamed because there would be a domestic backlash if anyone else was involved....

Questioned about the political motive the LTTE might have had in preventing Rajiv Gandhi from coming back to power and insisting that the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement be the basis for any political settlement, Mr. Balasingam said the assassination would not change anything if a Congress government came back to power. "The Congress party manifesto mentioned the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement, and any Congress government would have followed the same policy."

Mr. Balasingam also said that foreign policy in India was made by bureaucrats rather than politicians, and so assassinating Rajiv Gandhi would not really achieve anything.

Asked whether the widespread suspicion of the LTTE's involvement in the assassination would affect their relations with Indian political parties, Mr. Yogi said: "Without concrete evidence, it cannot affect us".

"About the possibility of Tamil refugees being asked to leave Tamil Nadu, Mr. Balasingam said: "I don't think these people will be thrown-out. For decades Tamil Nadu has been a refuge for them."

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world....."

\* Within the hours of the first public announcement of an assassination-attack, the public is informed that the police have established the identity of the assassin. Immediately, speculation begins on the subjects of the assassin's motive. The attention of the news-media, and the credulous public, is occupied with one question: "Will the assassin's true motive be revealed?". At that point, the successful cover-up of the assassination is proceeding under full steam.... Therefore, the hue and cry about the assassin's motive, leads us not toward the authorship of the deed, but directly away from it....

S. SIVANAYAGAM

## VIEW POINT

(Continued from Page 1)

be the Tigers themselves. The very justice of the Tamil cause in Sri Lanka could easily get smothered by these distractions.

As far as beneficiaries go, there might be some who have the motive, but not the capability to carry out such a daring operation. There might be others who may have the capability, but not a compelling motive. There might be yet other forces who have both, but not choose this course of action. It is left to each individual to speculate on these possibilities, according to one's mental conditioning and political awareness. But one fact that

stands out, as clearly as a pike-staff, is that the biggest beneficiary of the Rajiv Gandhi assassination is the Sri Lankan government. And the biggest of the benefits is that Tamil Nadu - their constant bugbear has been neutralised for good.

It seems pertinent here to quote some relevant extracts from a book written by the Editors of Executive Intelligence Review six years ago, entitled - DERIVATIVE ASSASSINATION: WHO KILLED INDIRA GANDHI?

\* "... Serious assassination plots against prominent public figures, are very complicated and far-flung affairs. Successful plots of this kind require resources of the scope available only to governments of powerful states, and

must have a major "insider" component within the security-screens of the intended victim. The post-assassination "cover-up" arrangements must be built into the design of the assassination itself.

\* "However, for a government to risk assassination of any public figure, especially a leading figure of government, is tantamount to an act of warfare. Generally, governments will risk such ventures only at the brink of warfare, or during wars. Otherwise, if any one or several governments wish an assassination conducted they must seek to induce some other government or some non-government agency with power like that of a government, to undertake authorship of the plot. There are non-governmental agencies with such capabilities in the