

**LANKA**

# **GUARDIAN**

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**CONSTITUTIONAL COUP: The great disorder**

— *Mervyn de Silva*

**DISSOLUTION: The ultimate weapon**

— *Maurice Duverger*

**SPOTLIGHT on Speaker and Supreme Court**

— *Manik de Silva*

## **THE TIGERS**

*S. Murari*

*D. B. S. Jeyaraj*

*Hamish McDonald*

**THE PLANTATIONS: Paul Caspersz**

**ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: S. Sathananthan**

**GULF AND NEWS: Douglas Allen**



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## TRENDS

### AI WILL LOOK BOTH WAYS

*Amnesty International will in future look at human rights violations by armed opposition movements too. After a week long meeting in Japan the London based international human rights organisation's governing council decided that it would also target opposition movements which abuse human rights; but the core mission will remain seeking the release of prisoners of conscience, working for fair trials for political prisoners, and seeking to end torture and extra judicial killings by governments.*

*Representatives of 70 countries met in Yokohama. The council also decided to focus more on human rights abuses in Asia.*

### FREE TRADE WITHIN SAARC

*Sri Lanka wants trade barriers removed within SAARC. This will be taken up at the SAARC summit scheduled for November in Colombo. Preliminary discussions were held successfully when ministers met in July in Male.*

### TABS ON TWO NARCOTICS RINGS

*The Police Narcotics Bureaus is on the trail of two drug rings following the recent arrests of eight couriers at the Katunayake airport. The couriers were nabbed by PNB detectives after they had been cleared by Customs. The heroin seized over three weeks was valued at over Rs.5 million.*

## Briefly . . .

### TAMIL GROUPS WARY

● Tamil political groups in recent interviews have advised caution in responding to the LTTE's latest call for unconditional talks. The BBC said that LTTE leader Prabhakaran was prepared for unconditional talks with the government of Sri Lanka.

Leaders of other Tamil groups called for "extreme caution" in view of the LTTE's past record. One Tamil leader said that the LTTE leadership were "liars".

### GOOD, SAYS WORLD BANK

● The World Bank and the IMF are now certain to reward Sri Lanka with credit facilities worth 500 million dollars, the *Sunday Island* said quoting informed sources. A top monetary official had said that Sri Lanka had met all stipulated conditions.

Among the conditions laid down were the privatisation of all state owned businesses, commercialisation of state owned banks, and strict fiscal restraints.

### CRISIS ON THE THOTTAMS

● The plantation industry was facing perhaps the most severe crisis since the coffee crash over a century ago, Plantations Minister Rupa Karunatilake told a seminar in Colombo. Rubber prices continued to be poor and tea prices had taken a sudden dip, the minister said. In the minister's view there were two problems fundamentally; one the inability of the management within the sector to increase productivity; and two, the inability to evolve strategies to face increasing world competition.

The government was giving serious thought to these problems, and among several

alternatives considered "some form of application of private sector system of management in the state owned estates while the ownership of the land remains with the state is gaining acceptance", the minister said.

### NO BOTHER FOR INVESTORS

● The current political crisis should not bother investors, the leader of a Japanese business delegation said in Colombo. Mr. Kikuo Ikeda, a businessman and special assistant to the Japanese Foreign Minister, who was in Colombo with a Japanese delegation said that it was unlikely that Japanese investors would postpone

*(Continued on page 24)*

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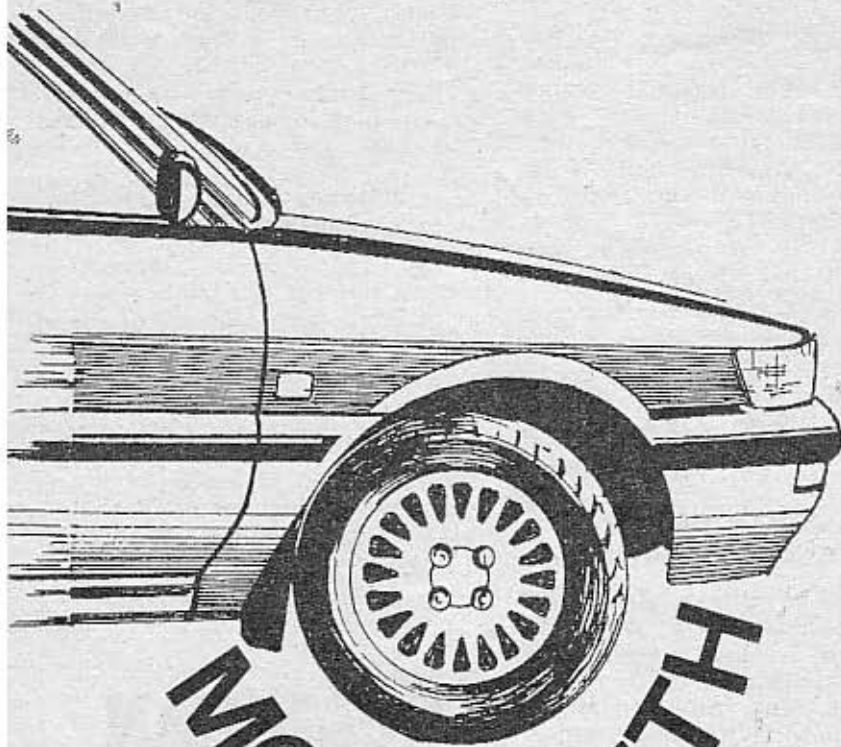
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# THE CRACK-UP CONTINUES

Mervyn de Silva

Although it has had rifts before, the UNP, the island's conservative party, the traditional defender of vested interests, has always succeeded in composing serious internal differences and personal conflicts, far more quickly and effectively than the centrist SLFP or the Marxist Left. Unity rather than disunity has been the hallmark of the UNP. Not any more.

What has caused so serious an internal conflict that leading party loyalists who have once held the most powerful portfolios can conspire against their party president who led them to so many electoral victories in the most unsettled, and the least congenial circumstances? Is it policy? Whatever its cosmetic touches, and grand populist gestures, the UNP policy is firmly rooted in the universally known IMF-World Bank philosophy. Private enterprise and the metropolitan affluent look forward eagerly to the day, not so faraway, when a Sri Lankan can go to his bank, and walk out with 10,000 dollars in travellers, cheques for his next trip overseas. Inquiries from prospective foreign investors and collaborators have been on the increase, with the JVP insurgency over and the LTTE badly bruised both here and in Tamilnadu, its all-important rear-base and sanctuary. State enterprises are being steadily privatised.

Relations with India have seen a qualitative improvement. Though some sections of Indian opinion may not be entirely pleased with what they suspect is a congenial anti-Indianism in President Premadasa's thinking, Prime Minister Narasingha

Rao's administration has shown every sign that it wants to get on well with neighbours, particularly the small neighbours now that relations with Pakistan have rapidly deteriorated largely because of the worsening Kashmir situation. Only the old discredited 'regional hegemons' in the Foreign Policy or Intelligence establishment would want to pursue the old policy of "weakening" neighbouring regimes or covertly undermining defiant neighbours.

In the US-led western community however there are some governments which adopt a line on Third World regimes which is not always the same as the American. Unless a country is a vital strategic concern of the US, Washington is usually satisfied that a formal adoption of free market economics will inevitably lead a Third World state towards participatory democracy and thus a social-political environment congenial to legal-institutional respect for "human rights".

However, there are western donors, especially in the European community, who either demand stricter adherence to human rights norms or believe that performance can be improved through diplomatic pressure or feel the need to exert such pressure because of various subjective factors. One such factor is the personality of the President or Prime Minister. In the latter circumstances, coercive diplomacy requires instruments — individuals, parties, factions or *ad hoc*, newly forged coalitions. "Human Rights" is the new platform; the latest weapon. It is also sometimes a large umbrella under which new oppositional coalitions can

be assembled, by the benign interventionist force.

From the JVP insurgency onwards, international Human Rights organisations have gathered voluminous evidence of H. R. abuses. Although some concede that the State's performance has improved, other champions of human rights have been far from satisfied. From the ghastly Richard de Zoysa tragedy, the efforts of such external organisations have been re-doubled. But these made no serious impact on the Premadasa regime. On the contrary, President Premadasa himself has exhibited a stubborn and aggressive defiance towards such external critics, while treating their local partners with a studied contempt. The same uncompromising attitude that characterised his reaction to the presence of the IPKF was evident in his closure of the Israeli interests section, despite persistent appeals from influential western agencies and personalities. Sri Lanka is too small and economically weak a country to behave like China, Malaysia or South Korea.

At the same time, the locally mobilised 'Human rights' campaign made little impression. President Premadasa treated the oppositional front under the H. R. banner with disdain.

To make a real impact on a regime impervious to criticism on the H. R. issue became a far more challenging task when the UNP acquitted itself quite well at the local polls. A more effective coalition had to be created to challenge the all-powerful presidency. It had to transcend the traditional Government-Opposition divide. The external attack

was not enough. It had to be an internal-external onslaught.

It was not difficult to forge an *ad hoc* anti-Premadasa alliance under the new flag of "parliamentary democracy"... and against presidential omnipotence. It was easy for two reasons:

(a) The class background of the incumbent which had already led to an increasingly visible clash of cultures — the westernised English-educated elite, and the 'high castes versus the rest.'

(b) President Premadasa's highly centralised and personalised system of government. Thus, culture and caste as well as the style of government. What was acceptable and in fact, humbly

accepted, from President J R, was intolerable in his successor. When Mr. Lalith Athulathumudali referred at the Nugegoda meeting to the "alienation" of the educated, he offered the audience and the would-be analyst an invaluable clue.

To reinforce unwittingly the meaning of that 'clue', Mr. Premadasa was spending most of his time out of Colombo, the power-centre of the cosmopolitan ruling strata, the real wielders of political power since independence. Caste has always been a factor of serious electoral consequence, and yet only one factor in a larger equation. It has now become a major factor in a new equation.

When the famous document sees the light of day, some of the "charges" may shock the newspaper reader — not so much for its serious content but by its tone. It may support our reading of a 'clash of cultures, in as much as it reflects the class arrogance of the not-so well-bred English-educated who still believe that political power is their heritage.

What anyway is the objective outcome of this unfinished business? It has exposed the disunity of the United National Party and in so doing, accelerated the process of structural crack-up that is now the main feature of our society. Race, class, caste . . . . . these are the fault-lines of societal disintegration, the most important consequence of the national crisis.

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# Government, party politics and question of authority

Maurice Duverger

“Party unity obviously increases government authority: the Assemblies turn into a Rump-Parliament in which well-ordered applause replaces debate: at the most, discussion is limited to technical criticism on points of detail formulated by deputies against particular ministers and never questioning the general policy of government (this system is well developed in Soviet Russia). In practice an appearance of democracy and parliamentarianism cloaks strict dictatorship. Accounts must also be taken of the structure of the single party and of its true position in the state. A non-totalitarian party may allow the development of limited opposition and thus introduce a degree of flexibility into dictatorship. A party that is not completely integrated with the state may itself constitute an opposition force; sometimes Fascist single parties have risen against the conservatism of the regime and have had to suffer severe purges and much capitis diminutio. Furthermore some are outside the government and in practice impotent, like the Portuguese National Union whose activity is slight. With these reserves single party has certainly been the means employed to conserve the external forms of a democratic regime with balance of powers and limited government while an authoritarian regime with an omnipotent government was substituted for it. It represents the contemporary political incarnation of the hermit-crab technique, consisting in emptying a political regime of all reality and substance, preserving only the externals like an empty shell in which an entirely different system is installed: thus in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the progressive separation of king and cabinet enabled the old absolute monarchies to transform themselves into parliamentary democracies.

*Excerpts from the writer's classic study of political parties.*

Although it has not carried out so radical a transformation, the two-party system too has strengthened the authority of the government but without destroying the apparatus of democracy. We have seen that it tends to substitute concentration of powers for their formal separation, but this concentration operates to the advantage of government and to the detriment of parliament. The party becomes a means of ensuring the domination of parliament by government, for the latter is controlled by the party leaders, whose subordinates are the deputies who form the majority in parliament. The internal hierarchy of the party is, in a sense, projected on to the organization of state institutions. Inside the government party solidarity becomes the reinforcement and the cement of ministerial solidarity; in relations between cabinet and House the authority of the supreme leaders of the party over the elected representatives establishes the subordination of parliament to government. Thus a Liberal writer, Mr. Ramsay Muir, could write of cabinet dictatorship. The internal hierarchy of the party is moreover not the only means of increasing the prestige and authority of the government; the two-party system also entails a radical transformation of those means by which each of the powers influences the other which are characteristic of the parliamentary regime. The ways in which parliament can influence government lose their importance or their individual significance. The vote of censure or that of no-confidence, which in theory enable parliament to overthrow the cabinet, can no longer achieve this result, except for snap votes if the margin between majority and minority is slight, but these are always the exception. With this one reserve only weakness or relaxation of

discipline within the government party can make it possible for parliament to recover its prerogatives and overthrow the cabinet. Of course the exercise of power always creates divisions within the party in office; it heightens the conflicts between internal fractions and the contrast between moderates and extremists, but these dissensions rarely go so deep as to cause a split. At most, some deputies of the majority party will be found abstaining (and more rarely voting against the party) on a motion of confidence in order to show their disagreement with the leading fraction, so long as the margin between majority and minority is adequate for the display of bad temper to cause no damage. The government often uses the vote of confidence as a weapon to restore discipline within its party: it compels the internal opposition to surrender by challenging it and threatening it with expulsion.

The right of dissolution makes this weapon highly effective. If the government sends deputies to face the electorate as a consequence of a split in the majority party the dissidents will be in grave danger of being defeated at the new elections; by setting up against them orthodox candidates the leaders of the government party will in a single-ballot system put them in an awkward position. Thus the traditional means for interaction between parliament and government are transformed into means for action by the government on its own party. A kind of ‘general post’ is produced: the internal hierarchy of the party becomes a link between public institutions; the official links between public institutions strengthen the internal hierarchy of the majority party. The modification is however one-sided: only the means by which parlia-

*(Continued on page 7)*

## KEEP OUT : ARMY TOLD

The political crisis saw an unusual response from Army Commander Hamilton Wanasingha. Reacting to reports that some senior officers had "engaged in political activities", the Army Chief cracked the whip. At a conference, General Wanasingha told the top brass that their duty was to respect the Constitution and carry out the orders of the legally constituted government. The *Sunday Times* said:

This move by the Army top brass was prompted by reports that certain officers had allegedly engaged in activities, involving politics the official said. One senior officer, according to this source, had met a UNP dissident leader.

The Army is reported to be probing, the conduct of this senior officer to decide whether disciplinary action should be taken against him.

In a strongly worded address to

the special meeting held in Colombo the Army Commander stressed the task of the Army was to safeguard the country from security threats.

Explaining the constitutionality of the impeachment process, Lt. General Wanasinghe told his men to refrain from taking sides and warned them not to spread rumours by talking amongst themselves. In keeping with the Constitution, the service Commanders and the Police Chief had pledged to uphold, the Constitution and follow the orders of their Commander-in-Chief the President.

## Not the president's men

Manik de Silva

President R. Premadasa is a rather chastened man now, having overcome an unsuspected challenge to him. The usually sedate politics of Sri Lanka witnessed some fast-moving and stunning developments during 28 August—3 September: defectors from the ruling United National Party (UNP) joined hands with the opposition to impeach the president; the president prorogued parliament; four UNP ministers resigned; the president goaded most of the UNP defectors to backtrack.

The parliamentary coup was led by two UNP dissidents: Education Minister Lalith Athulathmudali and ex-minister Gamini Dissanayake. The duo secretly mobilised a majority of MPs—party defectors and opposition MPs—to sign a motion of impeachment and presented it on 28 August to the Parliamentary Speaker Haniffa Mohamed. The speaker, a UNP stalwart who has fallen out with the president, used his discretionary powers and entertained the motion before informing the president, who must have been shocked at the unprecedented development.

The shock was all the greater because under the Sri Lankan Constitution the president is head of state as well as head of government. The parliament

merely has legislative functions and can only impeach a president successfully if it musters a two-thirds majority. Under the proportional representation system of elections, it is extremely difficult for any party to obtain that strength in parliament. The UNP and its ally, the Ceylon Workers Congress, currently hold 125 seats in a house of 225, with 13 seats vacant.

If the speaker had not sided with the dissidents, the president could have dissolved parliament and called fresh elections to the legislature. In the event, on 30 August Premadasa chose to prorogue the opening of the next parliamentary session to 24 September. His aides got to work on identifying the UNP dissidents, many of whom were persuaded to withdraw their signatures from the resolution, which remained unpublished in the parliamentary agenda. Some of the ex-defectors claimed they had been misled or misrepresented, while others said their signatures may have been forged. Four ministers, including Athulathmudali, resigned. The government parliamentary group met on 2 September when the 116 MPs present expressed confidence in the president and resolved to inform the speaker.

A president can be impeached for mental or physical infirmity, intentional violation of the constitution, treason or bribery, abuse of power or moral turpitude. The Parliamentary Privileges Act forbids pre-publication of a resolution due to come up in the house. But the dissidents' resolution is known to have adduced specific grounds covering the gamut of causes for impeachment. If the speaker reverses his decision, the president could dissolve parliament.

If the speaker decides to take up the resolution at the next session, only a two-thirds majority can refer the issue to the Supreme Court for inquiry and report. If the Supreme Court finds the resolution justified, parliament must again endorse it with a two-thirds majority before the president is removed. It is unlikely that the dissidents could muster such an overwhelming majority. Their strategy must be to persuade the speaker to keep the resolution pending to prevent the dissolution of parliament and garner a simple majority to keep defeating the government and embarrassing the president on other issues—a highly improbable scenario according to most analysts.

(Courtesy F. E. E. R.)



# Rebel UNP men deny Indian hand

Rebel ruling United National Party legislators seeking impeachment of President Ranasinghe Premadasa denied that India and some western countries were behind their move.

Former Education Minister Lalith Athulathmudali denied the report appearing in a section of the local press that India had pressurised few Tamil members of Parliament to back the move, behind which there were also some western countries.

He was addressing a press conference along with Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, a former Minister.

Meanwhile, Mr. Chandra Gankanda, junior Minister for Handloom Industries, has also resigned from the government and his resignation was accepted. He is the fourth minister to resign from the Premadasa Cabinet following a notice seeking impeachment of the President was entertained by Parliament Speaker M. H. Mohammed. The other two ministers are Mr. G. M. Premachandra and Mr. Laxman Seneviratne.

"We did not have anything to do with any foreign country and we will not have anything in the future (in this connection)," Mr. Athulathmudali as-

serted.

## NO CASINO CONNECTION

Mr. Athulathmudali and Mr. Dissanayake also denied that owners of the recently banned casinos were funding the move adding "only the conscience of the MPs were funding the move."

Asserting that none of the UNP members supporting the impeachment move had anything to do with casino owners, Mr. Athulathmudali recalled that a local newspaper had some time back printed a picture of President Premadasa's wife with Joe Sim, who used to be known as Casino King.

A Hong Kong national, Joe Sim, was expelled from Sri Lanka.

On the claim of the Government group that at least 116 UNP members have put their signatures pledging support to President Premadasa, Mr. Athulathmudali said at least 80 percent of 125 UNP members had said: "We are on a correct path and they would support us at time of voting" on the motion in Parliament.

## MAJORITY REGAINED

The UNP, meanwhile, has claimed having regained its lost majority in Parliament to

defeat the impeachment motion against President Premadasa. But rebel UNP leaders alleged the MPs were being made to retract their position supporting the impeachment move "under duress".

As many as 116 of the 125 UNP MPs had given written assurances to Prime Minister Wijetunga, that they had not signed an impeachment motion, the State-run *Sunday Observer* said.

## Government . . .

(Continued from Page 5)

ment can influence government are deprived of efficacy or completely diverted from their original purpose, to the extent of becoming weapons enabling the cabinet to make recalcitrant representatives to the line. The means by which government influences parliament are modified in operation but not in result; they remain devices for exerting pressure on parliament.

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Back to the labyrinth with flags of bygone Kingdoms,  
Whence Time, relenting, liberated them  
For the brief, sweet breath, betrayers fouled  
Quoting Scripture on Permanent Revolution.*

*Clowns donning mantles from History's dustbin  
Sullyng clean Red Armour with dollar jackboots*

U. Karunatilake

# India and the LTTE

S. Murari in Madras

“**C**ongratulation to SIT, now trace and arrest all Indian links”, says a hoarding up in Madras, right at the doorstep of Malligai, the official headquarters of the Central Bureau of Investigation team probing the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

Whether the SIT deserves praise for having tracked down Sivarsan and Subha despite the vast network the Liberation Tigers Eelam had built up in this part of the country or condemnation for failing to capture them alive, is a matter of opinion. But the challenge thrown by the assassination of Mr. Gandhi on Indian soil cannot be met unless India severs links with the LTTE. That calls for a whole new approach.

The LTTE has been able to build a vast base in Tamil Nadu over the years, thanks to the cloak and dagger diplomacy that has characterised India's Sri Lankan policy from 1983. It is a tragic irony that like Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, LTTE's Velupillai Pirabhakaran too was a monster of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's creation.

From the very outset, India's Lankan policy was neither open nor guided by enlightened self-interest. Neither Mrs Gandhi nor her son supported the Tamils' demand for a separate Eelam or the right to self-determination because of the repercussions this could have in Jammu and Kashmir. Yet, they nurtured their armed struggle, using the militant groups as bargaining chips in dealings with Colombo.

The facade maintained by Mrs. Gandhi that there were neither militants nor training camps on Indian soil, but only political activists, fooled not least of all Colombo. It was a dangerous game to play, for the Tamil separatists were directing their struggle from Tamil Nadu and were, in the bargain, proving to be a source of inspiration for chauvinists here.

During the honeymoon with the militants, Mr. Morarji Desai alone had the guts to go against the tide and point out the basic dishonesty of India's meddling in Sri Lankan affairs while condemning Pakistan for doing so in Kashmir and Punjab. It was then argued that India could not remain unconcerned when over 200,000 refugees had crossed over to Tamil Nadu.

In the immediate aftermath of the July 1983 island-wide anti-Tamil riots, there was even a clamour for a Bangladesh-type operation by India in Sri Lanka. But Mrs. Gandhi stayed her hand because unlike Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, the Tamil United Liberation Front's A. Amirthalingam was not the undisputed leader of the island Tamils. Mrs. Gandhi followed the absurd policy of using the militant boys as pressure groups to coerce Colombo to negotiate with the TULF. And Mr. Gandhi gave tacit recognition to these groups by involving them in the Thimpu talks.

It was obvious to all but the mandarins in South Block that the LTTE would soon be a thorn in the Indian side since it was

even then the most powerful and the most ruthless group devoted to the cause of Eelam. The right lesson was not learnt from the massacre of the Indian-trained Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation by the LTTE in 1986. Mr. Pirabhakaran had made no secret of his plan to make the Eelam of his dreams a one-party state.

When the militant groups began resisting pressure, the Tamil Nadu Government, at New Delhi's behest, cracked down on them in October 1986. Much is being made of the fact that the then Director-General of Police (Intelligence), Mr. K. Mohandas, disarmed the militants without firing a single shot. The fact is that up to that point of time, the militant groups had respect for Indian authority because they wanted India's support to achieve their goal.

When New Delhi wanted the LTTE, at the Bangalore South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation summit in November 1986, to sell the proposal to trifurcate the Eastern province and merge the Tamil areas in the east with the north on the basis of contiguity, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. M. G. Ramachandran, ordered the arms seized from the LTTE restored to it. New Delhi baited Mr. Pirabhakaran with the offer of making him Chief Minister of the enlarged Northern province. But Mr. Pirabhakaran told the then Indian High Commissioner, Mr. J. N. Dixit, that he was already the *de facto*

ruler of the north and wanted the east also.

Mr. Pirabhakaran came back from Bangalore to find his wireless sets seized by the police. Within a day of his commencing a fast, MGR restored them to him. But New Delhi was not prepared to forgive him so easily. From January to May 1987, Jaffna reeled under an economic blockade imposed by Colombo and New Delhi refused to intervene. All the while, fuel and other essentials were going from Tamil Nadu, thanks to MGR.

Even when the Sri Lankan forces launched Operation Liberation in April that year, New Delhi kept aloof. Yet, MGR got the Assembly to pass a resolution in support of the Tamils and in the name of providing relief to the refugees, passed on Rs. 4 crore, all government money, to the LTTE to buy arms.

India's policy in the post-agreement period was again dictated by the LTTE. India was ready to recognise the LTTE as the dominant group, but not the sole spokesman of the Tamil people. Mr. Pirabhakaran agreed to go along with India and got the first instalment — Rs. 50 lakh — of the promised Rs. 1.5 crore for "rehabilitation" of his cadres.

But within three months, he had turned the Tamil people against India by engaging the Indian Peace-Keeping Force in a war of attrition. Once the IPKF failed to disarm the Tigers, India lost whatever little leverage it had with the Sri Lankan Government. The accord itself eventually collapsed with the exit of the IPKF.

From October 1987, when the conflict with the IPKF started, to August 1988, when the remaining LTTE militants in Tamil Nadu were deported to Jaffna, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) was negotiating with the LTTE. And the LTTE cleverly exploited the differences among different agencies to further its cause. It continued to ferry arms from Tamil Nadu, bring the wounded there for treatment and carry on hostile propaganda even while our soldiers were fighting a futile war on the island.

It was during this period that the LTTE developed a contempt for India's territorial integrity and started treating Tamil Nadu as an extension of Eelam. With the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam rolling out the red carpet in the post-IPKF phase, the Tigers came to believe they could get away with, literally, murder.

The Ramanathapuram shoot-out in February 1990 the massacre of Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front leader K. Pathmanabha and others in Madras in June 1990, and the abduction of Indian customs officials and fishermen, were all pointers to the emerging threat from the LTTE.

The tragedy was that even the Chandra Shekhar Government only exploited this threat to get rid of the DMK Government.

Now there is the cry that Mr. Gandhi's assassination should not go unpunished. There is talk of India planning to seek the extradition of Mr. Pirabhakaran and Kittu. All this is not in the realm of practical politics, for, if Colombo could lay its hands on

Mr. Pirabhakaran, it would hang him twice over.

On a more sober level, it is said that in the name of fighting the LTTE, India should not forget the hapless Tamils and should nudge Colombo to grant them the political rights that they have been long denied. However, such counsel does not take into account the ground realities in Sri Lanka.

India's options are very limited, if past blunders are any guide. It can no longer fight a proxy war with either Colombo or the LTTE, using other Tamil groups as cat's paws. The anti LTTE group are all with Colombo now though they still believe India has a role to play.

An option is to carry the battle against the LTTE into Sri Lanka, stopping short of another IPKF-type operation. The US attack on Libya and Israeli hot-pursuit raids on Palestine Liberation Organisation positions in Lebanon are mentioned as examples of strategy to combat terrorism at one's doorstep. But the fact is that it is no longer a bipolar world and the US may no longer allow India to play the role of regional policeman.

Besides, unlike during the days of the IPKF when the LTTE was pushed deep into the jungles, the leadership is now well entrenched in thickly populated Jaffna and the cadres scattered elsewhere in the north and east. The Tigers also have no fixed positions except in places like Elephant Pass, Palaly, Karainagar and the Mannar islands, which also houses Sri Lankan army, navy and air force camps.

*(Continued on page 24)*

# Who was 'Sivarajan'?

An exclusive investigation

D. B. S. Jeyaraj

The 90-day manhunt is over. Sivarajan or 'One-eyed Jack', the mastermind behind the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, is dead. Who was this Sivarajan? What was his real name and background?

Here is a brief life-sketch compiled from telephone interviews with close relatives, schoolmates, former Udupiddy residents and ex-comrades from various militant groups.

'One-eyed Jack' used many aliases, including Sivarajan, Rajan, Rajah, Arumai, Aravinth, Raghuvaram, Raghu and Raghupappah. *His real name however was Packiachandran, and he hailed from Udupiddy, a town about 32km from Jaffna city and about 3km inland from coastal Velvetithurai.*

*Packiachandran's father was Chandrasekharam Pillai, a teacher of English at the Udupiddy American Mission School, leading educational institution in the area. Chandrasekharam Pillai was a native of Udupiddy and lived in the northern part of the town near the Veerapathira Temple. The postal address was Veerapathira Koyiladdy Vadakku or Veerapathiran Temple, North Area). Packiachandran was named after his parents, taking Packia from his mother's name, Sivapakiam, and the Chandran from his father's. He was the eldest child and born in 1958, the year of the first major anti-Tamil pogrom in Sri Lanka.*

*D. B. S. Jeyaraj, was The Hindu's Colombo Correspondent. He now edits Senthamarai, a Tamil weekly in Toronto. He worked for the ISLAND.*

Packichandran's social origins are interesting. He was neither a Vellala, the numerically dominant caste in Jaffna, nor a Karayar, a numerically smaller caste heavily concentrated in the coastal region. *He belonged to a sub-division of Chettis called Thanakkarar, a small trading caste which traces its origins to the Thana Vaisya Chettiers in India. The Thanakkarar community in Udupiddy is concentrated in the Veerapathira Koyiladdy, Mottai-pulliyady and Vasigasalaiady areas. Interestingly, the Thanakkarar of Udupiddy claim that they are superior to both Vellalas and Karayars and they have certainly enjoyed some power and influence in the vicinity.*

Young Packiachandran was *inculcated with Tamil nationalist feelings at a very tender age by his father. Chandrasekharam Pillai, although an English scholar, was a staunch supporter of the Federal Party and later of the Tamil United Liberation Front. In this, he strayed from the beaten track of politics in Udupiddy. The political star of Udupiddy in those days was a leftist called R. R. Dharmaratnam who belonged to the 'Trotskyite' Lanka Sama Samaaja Party. The people of Udupiddy were not enamoured of Leon Trotsky, but they strongly supported the 'son-of-the-soil' Dharmaratnam when he contested the Udupiddy parliamentary constituency. The votes from Udupiddy town, however, accounted for only 11 per cent of the Udupiddy electorate. Dharmaratnam never won, but he always gained the electoral support of the people of the town.*

*Chandrasekharam Pillai and his young son, however, defied the local*

*current and supported the Tamil nationalist candidates, K. Jeyakkody of the Federal Party and T. Rasalingam of the TULF, against Dharmaratnam. This tendency to defy local opinion incurred the displeasure of the people of Udupiddy. This tendency or trait became more pronounced later when Packiachandran joined the LTTE and incurred the wrath of many a Udupiddy resident.*

Packichandran was a *clever student at the local American Mission school. He had an aptitude for languages and passed his General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) examination with flying colours. He was studying for the GCE Advanced level which would have enabled him to enter the University, when his father died in late-1977. Being the eldest child, he had to bear the family burden and dropped out of school.*

The family paid a large amount of money to an agent from Udupiddy who *promised Packiachandran a lucrative job in west Asia. The agent defaulted and the young man became extremely frustrated. He then entered government service as a worker attached to the Electricity Board. He served as an Electricity Board employee in Trincomalee and Batticaloa in the Eastern Province for some time.*

While *working in the East, Packiachandran was once arrested for distributing leaflets containing pro-Eelam views. While in custody, he scribbled 'Long Live Tamil Eelam' slogans on the walls of his cell and his plate. He was severely assaulted for this and had to be hospitalised.*

*Later, in Jaffna, he was arrested once again for posting Tamil Eelam*

posters and was detained at the Jaffna Fort Camp Prison. When the large-scale anti-Tamil violence occurred in July 1983, Packiachandran was apparently locked up inside the Dutch Fort. He was released shortly afterwards and promptly joined the ranks of the militants.

Strange as it may seem, Packiachandran's first choice of group was the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) and not the LTTE. There had been for several decades an undercurrent of hostility between the predominantly "Karayar" Velvettithurai and the predominantly "non-Karayar" Udupiddy. The original leaders of TELO, Than-gathurai, Kuttimani and Jegan of Velvettithurai, had all been killed in the Welikade Prison massacre. The new leader was Sri Sabaratnam from Kalviyan-kadu whereas the top leadership of the LTTE was essentially from Velvettithurai.

A second reason for a large influx of Udupiddy youth into TELO was the phenomenon of Das, the TELO military commander. Das was himself from Udupiddy and because of this, many local lads joined his movement. Packiachandran and Das were of the same stock but not directly related. (Das was murdered in 1986 by the Bobby faction of TELO at the Jaffna Hospital premises.)

Packiachandran joined TELO and left for India in October 1983. He is said to have received military training at a camp near Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu. He was then posted to the propa-ganda wing of TELO and inter-acted a lot with students in Tamil Nadu as well as Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Fluent in English, Packiachan-dran also had a smattering of Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada and Hindi and spoke Tamil with an Indian accent.

While in the TELO, Packiachan-dran was closely associated with the group's Velvettithurai compon-ent. Unlike most Udupiddy youth, Pakiachandran had great rapport with the VVT group.

His political mentor within TELO was Mano Master from Velvetti-thurai. Soon problems arose within the TELO and a large number of Velvettithurai youth led by Mano Master broke away, left South India and returned to Sri Lanka. In late 1984, 'Sivarajan' or Packi-chandran was one of them.

Back in Sri Lanka, Mano master continued to function within TELO, claiming he was the rightful heir to the Than-gathurai-Kuttimani tradition, Pa-ckiachandran, while still sympathe-tic, no longer functioned within the Mano Master led faction of TELO. When TELO robbed the Killinochi bank, the LTTE re-acted sharply. Mano Master was killed by Ravindran alias Pandi-thar, the then LTTE leader.

With Mano Master's death Vel-vettithurai became the monopoly of the LTTE. TELO militants from VVT either dropped out of militancy, or joined the LTTE.

Packiachandran, along with other ex-TELO militants like Sathi, Ra-mesh Rangan and Babu, joined the LTTE. His new LTTE nom-deguerre was Raghu. He functioned for a long time within the political wing and was responsible for the collection of funds from Udupiddy and adjacent areas.

Packiachandran was, according to Udupiddy residents, extremely ruthless in extracting money. Udupiddy was not traditionally supportive of the Tigers and Packiachandran was the only person from his clan who was a senior member of the LTTE. This did not endear him to many. He is reported to have virtually terrorised the local popu-lation, at times even pointing a gun at the victim. He was apparently impartial in this fund collecting, on one occasion seiz-ing (SL) Rs.25,000 from the dowry money of an aunt on her wedding day and diverting portions of the wedding feast to nearby LTTE camps. An uncle who had just sold some property found his Tiger nephew appropriating one lakh of rupees.

Raghu also earned the hatred of Udupiddy residents for his part in the killing of Pooranashanthi, the widowed mother of five children who was allegedly an informant working for the IPKF. Although Raghu did not kill her personally, he is said to have warned her one day be-fore her death. The children are now in an orphanage and the town people remain very angry over the whole affair. Another killing, that of an Udupiddy youth Kamaradas, who belonged to a rival militant group, is also ascribed to Raghu.

Packiachandran alias Raghu is also reported to have warned his first cousin who was an ex-TELO militant to flee the country. The man took the cousinly 'advice' and is now in the West.

According to informed sources, Packiachandran alias Raghu seems to be have been the "visi-ble target" for the subterranean hostility in Udupiddy towards the LTTE. His own high-handed be-haviour, on top of the maverick attitude of both father and son, has contributed to this sentiment. Raghu's unpopularity in his native place can be gauged by an Udupiddy woman's reaction upon hearing that 'Sivarajan' was dead. She quoted from the ancient Tamil poet Auvaiyar's "Kondraiventhan": "Oorudan pa-haikkin verudan kedum." ("In-curring the enmity of the village will result in destruction down to the roots.")

In 1987, Raghu was injured du-ring a skirmish near the Jaffna Fort. He lost his left eye, there-by earning the sobriquet, "One-eyed Jack." When the confron-tation with the Indian Army began, Raghu is said to have shifted from the Peninsula into the Eastern province. He came back in early 1988 and functioned un-der the Vadamarachchi commander Ruthrapathy Sridhar alias 'Major James' of Velvettithurai (VVT).

On one occasion, 'Major Ja-mes' launched a successful at-tack on an IPKF sentry post. The first rocket-propelled grenade was fired by Packiachandran alias Raghu. Later, when 'Ma-

James' was summoned by LTTE Supremo Prabhakaran to the jungles of the Wannai for "consultations," Raghu functioned for about a month as acting Vadamarachchi commander. Despite this, Raghu was not promoted and continued as a lieutenant.

Mystery surrounds Raghu's movements after the departure of the Indian troops. He was not sighted in the North afterwards and one view is that he was in Batticaloa. According to an account put out in Sri Lanka, he had bungled some assignment relating to the Muslim population and had been "thrown out of the movement." He then left for India. Another version is that he had "dropped out of the movement" in late-1989 or early-1990 and left for India. The question raised by both versions is: Was this hardcore LTTE cadre, trained in the use of various types of weapons, working for some other powerful external "agency" in addition to the Tigers? But the versions put out in Tiger country could be a cunning camouflage or cover-up story.

The more prevalent view among Sri Lankan Tamils from the Udupiddy area is that Packiachandran never stopped working for the LTTE. His assignment subject to a particular time frame, would have been perhaps to eliminate certain persons and indeed this seemed his area of expertise. *It is vital for the SIT investigation to establish, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the status of Packiachandran alias 'Raghu' alias 'Sivarajan' in the LTTE organisation and hierarchy.*

Contrary to the reports put out in the Indian media citing investigative or intelligence agencies, 'Sivarajan' was not the LTTE's "intelligence chief." At least until recently, the head of the LTTE's intelligence wing has been "Pottu Amman," who is well known among Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups and is a very senior functionary.

Further, contrary to reports which have appeared in some sections of the Indian press, even Packiachandran's many detractors from Sri Lanka say

that he did not smoke or drink — at least publicly. Also, he was not known to have had any relationship with any woman or women in Sri Lanka.

Packiachandran's mother is still alive. So are his three brothers and two sisters, all younger to him. One brother is living abroad, another is a technician in Sri Lanka, and a third is a member of the LTTE. All three are married. One sister was born mentally handicapped while the other, a schoolteacher, is unmarried.

There have been reports in the Indian press that both the "human bomb" Dhanu and "Subha" were relatives of Packiachandran on his mother's side. The mother, Sivapackiyam, is from Chavakachcheri. The relatives whom this writer interviewed (from Canada) were all on Packiachandran's paternal side; while confirming that Sivarajan's mother was from Chavakachcheri, they could not shed much light on his maternal relatives at this point.

(Frontline)

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Army successes fail to shake Tamil Tigers' hold on north

# Mauled, but unbeaten

Hamish McDonald in Colombo, Jaffna and Madras

Despite heavy casualties at the hands of the Sri Lankan army in the recent battle for Elephant Pass and the Indian crackdown on their Tamil Nadu support base after the murder of former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, the separatist Tamil Tigers appear to be in a position to hold out indefinitely in their stronghold in Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna peninsula.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) drew a lot of blood when the army was obliged to send an 8,000-strong amphibious force to rescue the besieged 800-man garrison at Elephant Pass, a causeway on the highway to Jaffna. By their own count the army lost 178 men. Many Colombo analysts say the true figure would be double that.

But LTTE spokesman Anton Balasingham admits to setbacks in the Tigers' attempt to seize Elephant Pass, and puts the movement's casualties at about 500 killed and 1,000 wounded. Other observers say the LTTE dead could number nearly 1,000. The army's northern region commander, Maj.-Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa, said LTTE radio traffic listed 955 names. Although each side presents a post facto strategy of drawing the other side into a killing zone, a guerilla movement with perhaps 8,000 fighters cannot afford conventional battles.

The costly success has provided a much-needed boost to the army's standing in Colombo. After its brutal clampdown on the extremist Sinhalese leftist movement, the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP), in 1989-90, the military's reputation had suffered in the inconclusive fight that resumed with the LTTE in June last year.

Many senior army officers are now eager to keep up the pressure on Jaffna, bringing into action new equipment that has started arriving from China in recent weeks. This includes a dozen 130 mm artillery pieces, six jet fighter-bombers, 43 armoured vehicles, and three Shanghai-class patrol boats. The new weapons will tip the balance between the two forces. Brig. Asoka Jayawardhana, commander of the Vavuniya base, admits that superior training, tactics and mobility give the LTTE the edge in the field.

But the army's growing strength seems to worry Colombo more than it does the LTTE. Since the war with the Tamils broke out in 1983 the army has tripled in size to 77,000 men. As well as making increasing demands on the budget, the military is starting to be seen as a political player for the first time since the country's independence — something which causes deep unease in a country with no martial tradition to speak of. "The government wants to give the military just enough to beat the Tigers, but no more," said one diplomat.

The government is also enjoying greater independence in its relationship with India. Gandhi's assassination, blamed widely on the LTTE, has removed the last elements of Indian Government tolerance of the Tigers. The Tigers retain a pool of support in the coastal settlements facing the Palk Strait where nearly every fisherman has relatives in Jaffna.

But in Tamil Nadu as a whole the mood of state politics has swung from outright sympathy in the mid-1980s to fear and anger. The shift began when the Tigers took on the

Indian peacekeeping force (IPKF) in 1987, and became more marked when the LTTE gunned down Indian-backed rivals in Madras itself in June 1990. Chief Minister J. Jayalitha is a Congress ally and won the May-June elections partly on pledges to root out the Tigers.

But the attitudes of Tamil Nadu and New Delhi could change quickly if the Sri Lankan army did start advancing into Jaffna. Given the sorry human-rights record of the ill-trained government troops, and the casualties they would take on the way in, massacres of civilians would be almost inevitable. A large percentage of Jaffna's 1 million people would seek refuge in Tamil Nadu, where the present 210,000 refugees are already putting pressure on resources and jobs. New Delhi would get appeals to intercede.

As it is, the Sri Lankan Government of President R. Premadasa is taking advantage of India's failed peacekeeping role and subsequent retreat to flout the humiliating geo-political riders attached to the 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka peace accord. Voice of America was given the go-ahead to build a broadcast relay station in Sri Lanka, and India's longstanding fears of an American "spy station" on its doorstep were ignored.

Premadasa himself is preoccupied with sustaining the economic boom that started in the Sinhalese-dominated south last year — when GDP growth hit 6.5% — and spreading his poverty-alleviation programmes to backward areas where the JVP exploited unemployment worries. This depends on continuing to attract tourists, investment in the thriving stockmarket and

IMF-World Bank restructuring credits.

Colombo has already drawn enough international criticism over the estimated 30,000 executions—including citizens who disappeared in the crack-down—by police and army death squads during the anti-JVP campaign. Amnesty International, a US Congressional sub-committee and relevant UN agencies are all making inquiries. But the government is stonewalling.

Analysts see a dichotomy in Premadasa's response to the outside world. As one put it: "There is a struggle between those that think Sri Lanka should be a modern nation state integrated into the world economy, and those who have medieval views, who think the high point was the civilisation of the 12th century based on a uniform culture, language and religion. Premadasa embodies this contradiction in his personality."

Most concede that Premadasa is not personally anti-Tamil. But he cuts himself off from foreign contact, has not travelled outside Sri Lanka since becoming president and rarely meets foreign leaders or diplomats. Attempts at outside mediation have come from several sources including a Norwegian group, the Quaker church and the Commonwealth. None have been taken up.

As for direct negotiations, both the government and the LTTE profess willingness to talk, but without much obvious conviction. The Tigers announced a unilateral ceasefire at the New Year, but this lapsed after several days. After the LTTE broke a truce last year with the abduction and murder of hundreds of policemen from isolated stations, the army believes any truce proposal from the LTTE is merely a tactic to allow resupply.

The government's conditions for talks are: agreement that

the armed struggle be abandoned after a political solution; participation by other Tamil groups; and acknowledgement of the indivisibility of Sri Lanka. The LTTE wants unconditional talks and spokesman Balasingham said it was still willing to discuss the setting-up of a Tamil state within a federal structure. The LTTE has invited Colombo to send a Tamil minister, S. Thondaman, to Jaffna for talks.

The government may do just that. Meanwhile, it has joined in setting up an all-party parliamentary committee to draw up peace proposals for the north and east. But there is considerable scepticism whether the LTTE seeks to gain anything other than tactical advantage in the talks. The Tigers now have undisputed power in the north. Most Sinhalese are resigned to Jaffna being a no-go area.

## Rough ride to Jaffna

The car zigzags through the last army roadblocks on the western outskirts of Vavuniya, the northernmost town controlled by the government on the main road to Jaffna. For about a kilometre down the road, it is no-man's land. As the car slows to skirt a large crater, the Tigers appear silently: four teenage boys in camouflage, rubber thongs on their feet, and toting assault rifles. One has a walkie-talkie radio in his pocket; bicycles are propped against a ruined house.

The boys remain stern-faced and vigilant while checking identities. At a second roadblock further on, more teenagers guard a shed stacked with grain sacks.

Beyond this frontline is a sparsely populated Tamil zone

"Emotionally and psychologically there are two nations," said a Tamil in Colombo. "If the government continues to cut off support lines to the people in the north, people will get used to living without the (Colombo) government." In Jaffna itself, the population is wearied by privations but still supports the Tigers.

"There are many things with the Tigers with which you can disagree," said Fr Nathan, a Roman Catholic priest in Jaffna. "But they are the people who keep the Sri Lankan army from coming in here and committing atrocities. Only after the Sinhalese accept that we have a right to stay here as a nation, as a people, not just as individuals, could we accept a settlement. But frankly I would be very sad if they (the LTTE) settled for anything less than Eelam (homeland). After all this suffering, we would be back to square one."

where life is slipping back to a pre-modern era. Power lines are down, the few trucks and motorcycles move at night when the Sri Lankan air force cannot strafe traffic. Oil lamps glow in the few hamlets, and fires burn outside isolated houses to keep wild animals away. At Madhu, the night hides a vast settlement of 27,000 Tamil refugees from the fighting.

But at Poonaryn, the only road access to Jaffna since the closing of Elephant Pass, the rising moon reveals intense activity in the midnight hours. Dozens of trucks line up along the approaches to a causeway. Long lines of men in sarongs and tattered shirts hold up bicycles strung with sacks, boxes and even live goats. Across a 500-m stretch of the Jaffna

*(Continued on page 16)*



Tigers thrive on recruits brutalised by atrocities

## Cyanide edge

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is anxious for a political solution if only the Colombo government would talk, according to Tiger spokesman Anton Balasingham. Not so, says a diplomat in Colombo, who calls the LTTE a Frankenstein that has no interest in giving up the gun or sharing power with anyone else.

By all accounts, the LTTE is one of the world's most effective guerilla forces — as demonstrated by the heavy casualties it inflicted on 60,000-strong Indian peacekeeping force in 1987-90, its almost certain role in the assassination of India's Congress party leader Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan defence minister Ranjan Wijeratne, and its protracted clash with an 8,000-strong Sri Lankan force in July-August.

Yet, at the heart of this well-organised and well-funded movement is an extremely primitive — and to students of extremist movements, familiar — psychology: the surging energy of youth channelled into a cult of suicide.

Orchestrating this cult is an unimpressive, inarticulate individual with a genius for improvised battle tactics, whose secretiveness has served to enhance a carefully fostered mystique. The king of the kids in the LTTE is V. Prabhakaran, who admitted in one of his rare interviews that the cyanide pill carried by LTTE fighters and cadres is the movement's talisman.

Prabhakaran told the Madras-based newspaper *The Hindu* in 1986: "Carrying cyanide on one's person is a symbolic expression of our commitment, our determination, our courage. This gives our fighters an extra mea-

sure of belief in the cause, a special edge."

To some Tamils familiar with the workings of the LTTE, the recruits — mostly coopted in their sub-teen years — are already socially dead. Young recruits are carefully nurtured by LTTE cadres. "They are put through tests," said a Tamil political activist in Colombo. "The most important test is detachment from the family. They no longer belong to their family; the movement becomes the family.

"The organisation demands total loyalty, total commitment. If they are so ordered, they will have to kill their own parents. They are to put no value on their own lives."

Once inducted, the first lesson a recruit learns is total obedience. A source in Madras said that in the mid-1980s death was invariably the LTTE penalty for any questioning of superiors. "They had what was called the 'green boat'. The offender was taken to a beach, executed, and the body dumped out at sea with the stomach cut open so it would not float."

For many Tamil children, the response to the LTTE has been conditioned by long years of war marked by atrocities on both sides. "When the children arrive here, we find they have been brutalised," said S. C. Chandrahasan, a Tamil lawyer who works with Jaffna refugees in Madras. "They are beyond parental control, insensitive to death and violence. They know nothing about the country, but they're experts in every kind of firearm."

Chandrasan said that the refugee influx to India last year included scores of youths who had fought with the Tigers in

Sri Lanka. "Their pattern of behaviour was different from that of the average person. They have been built up by militant groups which adopted Marxist doctrines in order to justify one-party rule. They are not willing to see the other person's viewpoint. Even [listening to] the views of another person was objectionable. We tried to break this down by getting them into sports, where they could learn to win and lose. But there was a hard core we could not reach. They did not open to us."

Diplomats in Colombo said that as well as carrying out cold-blooded killings among non-Tamil groups, the LTTE has also deliberately exposed the Tamil population to retaliation by Sri Lankan forces. A massacre at eastern Kokkaddicholai village on 13 June is cited as a case in point. The Tigers planted a mine in the village to kill an army officer. "They could have got him on the road well away from the village," said a diplomat. "But they wanted a reaction, and [even had the press statements] ready." In retaliation, the army went on a rampage, killing 52 Tamil villagers.

Yet, even Tamils who criticise Prabhakaran and the LTTE as fascist concede that it carefully tends its relations with civilians. Their support is not principally based on fear," said a Tamil lawyer in Colombo. "They ensure that institutions continue to function: schools, food distribution and welfare. They are sensitive to the need to maintain a measure of popular support."

"Also, [Colombo] has virtually driven the Tamil population to the LTTE by its brutal repression, particularly the bombing of civilian areas. People saw

that even at the height of the [Sinhalese extremist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna] uprising there was no bombing in the south. Nothing transformed Tamil opinion as much as that. Then there was the economic blockade for 14 months. There is no power, hardly any fuel. Nor is there any alternative democratic leadership to turn to. Most of the professional and educated classes who might have resisted the LTTE have moved out."

Tamil observers note that the Tigers' rise has paralleled the decline of traditional patterns of authority — including the increasing rejection by women of their traditionally subservient role in Jaffna society and a fall in religious observance among the Hindu population.

Prabhakaran's emergence reflects these social changes. Although the son of a government official, he belongs to a lowly fisherman's caste. Most of the inner circle of LTTE leaders are of this caste — and also from Prabhakaran's village, Valvettiturai. Prabhakaran had little formal education and speaks little English. He has not travelled except to India, rarely makes public appearances, and is believed to be paranoid about rival Tamil groups gaining access to the population.

The political wing of the LTTE, the people's Front of Liberation Tigers, is a feeble appendage of the fighting force. Its leaders, notably Balasingham and Yogaratnam Yogi, are widely seen as having little influence. Ideologically, the LTTE still subscribes to somewhat dated concepts of political liberation, and London-educated Balasingham remains apparently infatuated with now-discredited Third World movements. "They have not absorbed the transformations in the rest of the world," said a Colombo Tamil. "They are not concerned how they relate to

international opinion." Yet this has not hampered the LTTE.

The alienation of even educated Tamils from Colombo has ensured a good degree of support among Jaffna Tamils outside Sri Lanka. As well as the 210,000 in Tamil Nadu, perhaps another 200,000 are scattered around the world. This diaspora is regularly tapped for funds. In some cases, threats are made against relatives still in Jaffna. "The LTTE has more branches outside Sri Lanka than Colombo has embassies," said one source. □

H. M.

### Rough ride to Jaffna. . .

*(Continued from page 14)*

Lagoon, a battered steel ferry comes into sight, an outboard motor revving furiously.

On the northern side, the causeway is also busy with men transshipping supplies from trucks and bullock carts. At dawn, the ferry will be hidden away from possible air attack. The town of Jaffna itself is dark and silent: the power station was wrecked by government forces soon after fighting recommenced in June 1990.

In the morning, a seaplane circles the city on a spotter mission for the government, but people move around freely. Air force bombing ceased last August, when the 400-year-old Dutch fort on the waterfront was abandoned by the army after a costly two-month siege. Tiger guerillas, some barely into their teens, now occupy the fort. Around them is a wasteland: streets of shattered buildings and a gutted public library.

With only 20 to 40 trucks a day getting through stringent army checks at Vavuniya and Mannar, and 48 items totally embargoed — including fuel, electrical batteries and medical dressings — the prices of daily necessities are five times those in the south of Sri Lanka. Petrol costs US\$30 a litre; only the Tigers, international agencies and a few public transport operators run motor vehicles. Some Jaffna residents coax their motorcycles along on kerosene, having got them started with a few drops of petrol in the carburettors.

"People have learned to live with a bare minimum," said Fr Nathan, a Roman Catholic priest. "They are using up their savings, selling their jewellery, getting money from their relatives abroad." The state-owned Bank of Ceylon branch in Jaffna operates without interference from the LTTE, but has to ration out cash which is topped up every two months by a ship sent from Colombo.

Returning to the government zone is more nerve-racking than leaving. After the last Tiger checkpoint just north of Vavuniya, the road crosses a rough trestle-bridge and runs through open ground towards fortified army positions. Passengers must walk ahead of the car. Young Sri Lankan soldiers don helmets and run at a crouch to take up positions around the vehicle while it is searched for bombs. The Tigers are just 500 m behind. To one side, a line of Tamils queue up with their bicycles and empty containers, waiting to get into Vavuniya's markets.

Loose ends throw doubt on Gandhi murder theories

## Stranger than fiction

If the plot that killed former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi unfolded like the pages of crime novel, that may not be surprising: key elements of that operation, notably the use of explosives and electric triggering devices sewn into the assassin's belt, appear to have been inspired by the Frederick Forsythe thriller *The Negotiator*, copies of which have sold out in Madras.

The assassins approached their quarry with all the deliberation of the genre. Arriving in Tamil Nadu boat from Jaffna on 30 April, the group met landlord and smuggling boss Shanmugam who guided them to a series of safehouses run by sympathisers of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). On 8 May they carried out a dry run at an election campaign meeting addressed by former prime minister V. P. Singh.

On the evening of 21 May, having ingratiated themselves with local Congress party figures, two members of the team slipped through security lines at Sriperumbudur where Gandhi was due to speak. Others watched from a distance. A young Madras photographer, hired by the assassin, stood by to take pictures. As Gandhi walked from his car to the dais, the young woman assassin approached with a garland, bent down, and triggered her belt bomb.

The aftermath too has classic crime thriller overtones. The local police panic. The site is left unguarded after Gandhi's body is taken away. Only when forensic scientist P. Chandrasekharan strikes out on his own are vital clues assembled. The assassin's face is found intact, along with fragments of the belt, wires and traces of

explosive. The Hindu newspaper finds the photographer's camera intact and runs blurred pictures of the assassin and the group leader, who was posing as a reporter. Senior police official D. R. Karthikeyan is detached from New Delhi to lead a special Central Bureau of Investigation task force, and the case soon begins to make significant headway.

Working from the forensic and photographic evidence, Karthikeyan's team quickly rolls up the LTTE support network that aided the assassins. Reports say they also knew from radio intercepts that the group leader, a 33-year-old one-eyed man called Sivarasan; and a back-up woman assassin were still in the country after failing to rendezvous with a getaway boat from Jaffna. Finally, on 20 August, Sivarasan and the women are cornered by police in neighbouring Karnataka state. They and five others take cyanide in LTTE fashion. Sivarasan shoots himself in the head as well.

What is missing so far is the positive link to the ultimate instigator, and a clear motive. The involvement of ethnic Tamils, the location and the suicide element all point to the LTTE. "How is anyone else going to find a Sri Lankan lady willing to blow herself up?" said one diplomat.

The plot looks neat — almost too neat. Why would the LTTE take the risk of hiring a photographer if it proposed to hide its hand? Why did Sivarasan and his group not get back to Jaffna in the four or five days before the pictures were published? Why were so many LTTE sympathisers involved in such a sensitive operation? How did they get through security? Was

it only police carelessness that allowed Shanmugam to escape from custody, to be found dead later — an apparent suicide.

Conspiracy theorists have had a field day, working back from the question "who benefited?" The most obvious beneficiary goes beyond most imaginations: results from the first day of voting on 20 May indicate Congress would have lost seats but for the sympathy factor. The Sri Lankan leadership hated Gandhi's assertion of an Indian Raj and has been helped by the backlash against the Tigers. But Colombo has virtually no ability to operate covertly in Tamil Nadu.

For its part, the LTTE denies any involvement and professes not to know the alleged assassins. Spokesman Anton Balasingham suggested a host of Indian groups or aggrieved Sri Lankan individuals could have done the job. He said the Tigers had twice sent emissaries to talk with Gandhi in New Delhi in March, and had found him cordial.

Many other sources, including rival Tamils and foreign diplomats, believe otherwise. They said the LTTE could have feared Gandhi's return to power would lead to renewed Indian meddling in Sri Lankan affairs.

Tiger leader V. Prabhakaran is also said to have held a deep personal grudge against Gandhi for having been put under arrest while visiting New Delhi, and over the deaths of close colleagues during fighting with the Indian peacekeeping force. This school of thought assigns a degree of "irrationality" to Prabhakaran.

(F. E. E. R.)

# Ethnic relations in the plantation sector

Paul Caspersz

Few perhaps would disagree that ethnicity is the dominant problem in Sri Lanka, though there will be serious disagreements about the determinants of this problem.

But what is precisely the problem of inter-ethnicity in Sri Lanka? On a question so critically important it is necessary to have an approach that is as little negative, and as much constructive and positive, as possible. Such an approach would demand that the problem of inter-ethnicity be seen as a challenge of building a common Sri Lankan consciousness and identity. Identity relates to the objective condition while consciousness relates to the subjective awareness and acceptance of the identity.

A national consciousness becomes a problem only in a plural society in which there are many nationalities or nations and many religions and distinct cultural groups within the nation-state. The problem then is to achieve an overarching national consciousness that transcends, without denying, the particular consciousnesses and identities of the different nations, nationalities, religious and cultural groups.

In Sri Lanka the plurality is linguistic, socio-economic and religious and — for want of less incorrect words — is caste-determined and ethnic. To substantiate the plurality of our society by citing census and survey figures is unnecessary and can only be distracting. On the other hand, it is necessary to outline the problem as clearly and practically as possible.

The problem is how a Sinhalese who speaks only Sinhala may achieve an identity and attain a consciousness that

allows for the identity and consciousness of the Tamil who speaks only Tamil. Or how can a Hindu allow in that person's identity and consciousness for the identity and consciousness of others within the nation who are Buddhists, or Muslims, or Christians? The problem — approached also from the aspect of the socioeconomic crisis — is how a Sinhalese or a Tamil, educated at Ladies or at Royal College, and speaking English at home, can have the same national identity and consciousness as a youth in the Sinhala or Tamil rural or estate hinterland. How does one's particularist identity and consciousness within one's particular group relate to one's national identity and consciousness within one's nation?

A simplistic response would be that these particular identities and consciousnesses are relics of an inferior stage of development of the forces of production, destined to yield to a larger national identity and consciousness when the forces of production change. Particularist identities, according to this view, are the only ones possible in primitive or feudal societies where the means of production are severely localized and the means of communication are restricted. But they are destined to disappear as new social configurations take the place of the old.

In fact, however, the history of many societies has shown that there is no automatic change in the superstructure of consciousness and identity when there is a transformation of the material base on which the superstructure rears itself. An all-embracing national consciousness simply does not emerge spontaneously when an economy breaks out of its feudal shell

and becomes a bourgeois-capitalist society.

The history of the past few hundred years and recent events in various parts of the world show us that more or less tribalistic identities and consciousnesses persist tenaciously in capitalist America, in the socialist Soviet Union, in Britain, Canada, France, Belgium, and Germany. The phenomenon of ethnicity and national language or religion politicized to the degree of demand for political separation appears also in various countries of contemporary Asia and Africa: the Karens in Burma, the Muslims in the Philippines, the Kurds in Iraq, the Sikhs in India, the Baluba in Zaire, the Buganda in Uganda, the Ibos in Nigeria, etc. It is only that the caste of politicized ethnicity are borne with less difficulty, in the richer countries than in the poorer ones.

Some political analysts have made the mistake of underestimating the strength and resilience of separate identities based on language, real or imagined ethnic belonging, religion, or a varying combination of these. They would then argue that these separate identities have no right to exist and are in any case anachronisms and are doomed to disappear. Others seek to accommodate and even to promote the identities of smaller groups within a larger political identity, defending their right of self-determination, extendable even to the right to secede. One then scrutinizes the texts of the masters (and, if we read Rosa Luxembourg, the mistresses too) to find support either for particularistic nationalisms or for transcending internationalisms. In fact, however, in the best of these writers, when at their best, there is profound

*(Continued on page 20)*

## NEWS AS MYTH

Douglas Allen

**W**e can understand the effective formulation and perpetuation of false stories in terms of the need by those in power to deflect attention from domestic problems and discontent; the need for U.S. multinational corporations and banks to have access to and control over the world's most attractive sources of oil; the need by the U.S. to use its military superiority to reassert its domination over the Third World and to counter Japanese, Pacific Rim, and Western European economic challenges; the need by Bush to change his previous "wimp" image and improve his ratings; and so forth.

Similarly, one can analyze much of the war-as-myth, in the first sense, in terms of the media's role not only in reporting highly censored and limited accounts, but also enthusiastic mindless cheerleader and as itself creating and perpetuating much of the mythic "news."

Psychological explanations also help us to understand the mythic function of these widely believed untruths. For example, before and especially during the Persian Gulf war, most of the public was led to believe that perhaps the major characteristic of the U.S. antiwar movement had been its mistreatment of returning troops from Vietnam. Mainers rushing to the Bangor airport, even at 2.00 am, to meet returning unknown Persian Gulf troops, frequently cited this as their first reason; collective guilt over the abusive treatment (by others) of Vietnam War troops and the desire to do the right thing this time. Of course, very few in the antiwar movement ever spit on or heaped verbal abuse on returning Vietnam War troops; a larger number of returning soldiers, who had become critical of the war, became appreciated and honored

participants in the antiwar movement; and by far the largest number of returning troops were simply ignored since they were not a target or a pressing concern on the antiwar agenda. Yet the historical and factual record has had little effect on the psychological and political use of this and other myths by politicians and the media.

So why is it necessary even to consider the traditional use of myth by those who believe and "live" myths? Because after providing the necessary historical, economic, political, military, psychological, and media explanations, one has the feeling that she or he hasn't made sense of the whole story. Something else, something more is also going on that perplexes, frustrates and is usually ignored by some of the antiwar movement and, more generally, the Left.

### Myth as "true story"

Bangor area responses, especially the central airport happening, point to the fact that something else was going on. Many reactions were so excessive that they seemed, at least partially, to elude any rational explanation. Some Mainers said that they did not want to miss "the experience"; that the airport event was "the experience of a lifetime." In certain respects, there was for some participants an atmosphere approaching a religious pilgrimage. There certainly was a carnival-like atmosphere of intense emotional celebration. Some regarded the troops the way they might basketball superstar Michael Jordan or music superstars Michael Jackson or Bruce Springsteen; screeching, aggressively seeking hundreds of prized autographs, asking/begging for medals uni-

form buttons, or other "icons"/momentos.

The "something more" dimension is illustrated by observing that factual and historical considerations often seemed totally irrelevant to participants, perhaps similar to the irrelevance of such evidence to the mythic faith of certain religious people. Some of the returning troops, when they deplaned at Bangor, seemed initially confused and even embarrassed by their heroic idealization and the falsification of their actual role in the Gulf war.

Participants in local antiwar groups provided a more accurate account of what occurred and then were frustrated by the seeming irrelevance of what they were saying for those caught up in the military victory euphoria. While we indicated that we were glad these men and women had returned safely, we pointed out that most of these troops sat rather bored in the desert for four months (the most difficult part of the whole experience according to most of them), encountered no real danger, and then came home. For those who did some fighting, what does it tell you when 2,000 sorties of bombing missions are flown daily over Iraq and usually not even one plane is shot down? What does it tell you when U.S. planes simply slaughter retreating, often unarmed, Iraqi troops without any U.S. casualties? And yet these returning troops are idealized into unprecedented heroic dimensions, regarded as if they had suffered through the most life-threatening war conditions of, say, W W II, Korea, or Vietnam and finally overcame a strong opposing military force. "Something else" is going on.

It is my interpretation that at least some of this perplexing "something more" is not fully mythic in the strong sacred narrative sense, but it can be understood, analogously, as fulfilling mythic functions, as part of a reconstituted secular mythology. That is, without the clear articul-

ation of a sacred narrative — as one often finds with Sinhala Buddhists, Hindu Tamils, and others in Sri Lanka — and usually without the traditionally prescribed, formalized, ritual re-enactments, the Persian Gulf “story” reveals various mythic features.

For many rushing to the Bangor International Airport, for example, this was a self-transcending experience, emotionally charged, a “peak experience,” opening them up to something bigger than normal life. As with so much religious experience, they stated that their Persian Gulf experience was overwhelming, “inexpressible”; that you had to experience its reality yourself to know what it meant. They experienced the returning troops not as fully human, imperfect, flesh-and-blood individuals, but as romanticized, idealized, attaining an exemplary status with little regard to their actual historical existence. During these emotionally charged encounters, the returning soldiers, if not “deified,” sometimes attained a more-than-human status common to “lower” spiritual, historical, and political figures in various mythologies.

The mythic behavior at the airport (as reflected, more generally, in the mass media) allowed participants/believers, at least temporarily, to make sense of and endure their present existential crises: poverty, unemployment, suffering, alienation, lack of meaningful, alcoholism community, domestic violence, and so forth. Some structured meaningful order was at least temporarily created out of their normal, chaotic, fragmented existence. They were participating in something value-affirming and ultimately significant in contrast to their everyday existence. There was a spiritual, ethical, and communal dimension to their participation. They waved flags, brought yellow ribbons and flowers, and sang religious and political songs. Some came close to “worshipping” the bigger-than-life soldiers. For a few hours at the airport, many felt themselves part of a meaning-

ful community, even with very different Mainers they had never met.

### Conclusion

I have tried to show, through local illustration, that an understanding of “myth” sheds light on U.S. reactions to the war with Iraq. The first sense of myth, the creation and perpetuation of untruths, helps us to get at most of the economic, political, ideological, psychological, military, and media dimensions of U.S. responses to the Persian Gulf crisis. It is important for us to expose the truths and realities versus the myths.

It has also been my view that a second sense of myth, analogous to that of religious narratives believed as true stories, sheds light on some of the U.S. response. The first sense of creating and popularizing fictitious accounts and other untruths is often related to the second sense: Something analogous to the nature and function of traditional religious stories is fueled by historically and factually false accounts. But countering the untruths does not necessarily remove the believed myths or mythic behavior. I have suggested that in this second traditional sense of myth, U.S. responses to the causes, conduct, and aftermath of the war reveal mythic features.

This second more controversial interpretation could be developed by uncovering deep political, economic, and cultural, “secular” myths (often having a religious “aura”) that have defined much of U.S. history. Many of us, for example, grew up with a U.S. mythology by watching hundreds of cowboy-and-Indians movies, war movies, and other forms of socialization. We developed an ideology, a shared belief system about the United States, which could never stand the test of historical, or economic justification. We had shared stories that told us that white people came to this country and settled and civilized it for the

most noble moral, political, and religious reasons; that “God is on our side”; that “the U.S. has never lost a war”; that we are good and our opponents evil; that we are an egalitarian (classless) society with unlimited opportunity and social mobility; and so forth. Such myths gave many of us a sense of being part of a meaningful united whole, justified our country’s behavior at home and abroad, and were re-enacted through flag waving, prayers, patriotic songs, and other “rituals”.

In many respects, more honest recognition and analysis of poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, militarism, and imperialism, the Vietnam War, Watergate, ecological devastation, and other historical developments helped to demythologize and debunk some of these mythic, “sacred” beliefs. Part of the recent mythic behavior, of reacting to the Persian Gulf war as myth, involves a process of remythologization, of at least partially retelling and re-enacting some of those earlier stories about United States, “our way of life,” and the world.

### Ethnic relations...

*(Continued from page 18)*

awareness of the complexities of the problems of allowing genuinely for legitimate sub-identities within the imperative of an over-arching national or even international identity. Indeed — and here the insight is at its profoundest — it is only by allowing freedom for the assertion of sub-identity that the ideal of the over-arching identity can best be achieved, and once achieved, guaranteed for the future. To really and truly accept the right of self-determination, even the right to secession, is perhaps the safest guarantee that the right will, in fact, not be exercised!

Next: Migration and Identity

# Environmental Policy and Development Strategy

S. Sathanathan

## 1. Introduction

During the 1970s, policy makers within government became increasingly aware of the need to arrest environmental degradation and its consequences as part of the broader development strategy. A given programme of economic development was to be assessed not merely on the basis of its contribution of goods and/or services to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but also in terms of its environmental impact. The importance of a coordinated programme of environmental management was recognized and it was reflected in Article 27(14) of the 1978 Constitution. The National Environmental Act of 1980 was the first legislation which specifically addressed the question of environmental management. The Central Environmental Agency (CEA) was set up under the Act in 1981 as the institutional framework for implementation.

Two other environment specific legislations were enacted: the Coast Conservation Act of 1981 and the National Resources Energy and Science Authority Act of 1981 (Jansen, 1989:5), although about 50 legislations have been introduced over the years which have greater or lesser relevance to environmental conservation (Wickremasinghe, 1988: 114-15).

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The preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for each economic initiative to ensure that it is 'environment friendly' was made mandatory in 1984.

A task force was appointed by the then president in 1983 to design the National Conservation Strategy. The Strategy was formulated by 1988 (CEA, 1988) and it was a 'general statement of programmes and principles'. The CEA translated it into an Action plan: 'a of policy guidelines and action oriented plan that the Strategy could be rapidly transformed into implementation programmes' (CEA, 1990:2).

The present essay will assess these current initiatives against the historical backdrop, provided by the evolution of official policy for environmental management in Sri Lanka beginning more than a century ago. Environmental management is here understood to be an ordered and dynamic relationship between nature and society in which matter and energy are exchanged between the two without reducing the capacity of nature to contribute to the reproduction of society.

## 2. Plantation Agriculture

The main environmental change in the country in recent times was caused by the massive land clearance of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, during the

establishment and expansion of the colonial plantation economy. The clearing of forests was aggravated by existing *chena* cultivation and was accelerated due to underdevelopment characterized by 'involution i.e., the decline of paddy cultivation and the consequent reversion to technologically less sophisticated *chena* cultivation. The forest cover was also depleted by felling of timber to supply plantation and domestic needs.

The environmental consequences of plantation agriculture were identified by an Assistant Conservator of Forests in 1885. He attributed soil erosion, the disruption of domestic irrigation by silt carried downstream by rivers and a drop in ground water supplies to the growth of plantation agriculture (Debates of the House of Representatives (Hansard), vol 10, 1951: 465-66). Although two Forest Ordinances were introduced in 1885 and 1907 (Nanayakkara, 1981: 6), the 1921 Lushington Report again drew attention to the declining reserves of timber and recommend large-scale reforestation (Sessional Paper (SP), no III, 1931).

The more direct role of the British colonial State in environmental degradation was highlighted in 1932, when the work of the Forest Department was described as resembling the depredations of a large-scale *chena* cultivator in his most

reckless mood (SP no VIII, 1932: 15). Noting that most of the rivers originated in the central highlands at an elevation of over 5,000 feet and that most of the lands adjoining the rivers were in private hands and subject to deforestation, the Executive Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands observed in 1935 that 'this unsatisfactory state of affairs' was the result of the injudicious alienation of forest land for planting purposes', particularly since 'large-scale planting operations have been started without previously testing the suitability of the species to soil and climatic conditions'. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that all plantation work in forest land above 5,000 feet should be discontinued' (Minutes of the Proceedings of the State Council (PSC), 1935: 671-73). But, apart from negative strictures on land use introduced under the Soil Conservation Act of 1951, few positive mea-

asures were initiated for environmental management.

The principal reason for this neglect was an avoidance of land reform in the Wet Zone (the south-western quarter of the island) which could interfere with the property rights of landowners and affect the profitability of plantation production carried on by foreign and local entrepreneurs. This was evident particularly in relation to the control of floods which frequently resulted in loss of life and considerable damage to property. Rather than sacrifice the interests of some owners of plantation lands to build flood control structures (because the construction of reservoirs to regulate river flows would inundate significant areas of land under plantation crops), a 1952 report of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) recommended merely that the adverse consequences of flooding be minimized: the best course

would seem to be the unheroic one of accepting the fact that floods will occur, abandoning any idea of preventing them by reservoir construction... and concentrating on mitigating the effects of floods in populated areas' (IBRD, Part II, 1952: 210). In this connection the economic constraints on both environmental rehabilitation and agricultural diversification in the short and medium terms were spelt out by the leader of the CP in 1951 (Wickremasinghe, 1951), and in 1958 he further argued the need for agricultural diversification and industrialization (Hansard, vol 30, V, 1958 : 2940).

Environmental management in plantation agriculture suffered further in the next two decades. The radical-populist rhetoric which demanded nationalization of plantations in the 1960s created uncertainty over future prospects and the owners of plantations avoided long term investments which are essential for environmental management.

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# The United Nations in Disarmament and Security — Evolution and Prospects

Jayantha Dhanapala

Member States do not want the United States and USSR alone to negotiate disarmament and security. At the same time, negotiations involving the entire United Nations membership is commonly regarded as unwieldy and impractical. What then is the optimum modality given the consensus that bilateral and multilateral negotiations are complementary? Pressures for expanding the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva have led to an agreement in principle that four new members should be admitted but the implementation of this remains overdue.

But it is not just the number of delegations around the negotiating table that will guarantee a more effective and durable disarmament agreement under the aegis of the United Nations. The circumstances must be right, so that all States are convinced that it is in their national interest to forge the agreements. Thus, for example, France in 1978 found that the time was propitious to re-enter the multilateral disarmament forums. The improvement in United States-Soviet relations has altered the atmosphere in the multilateral fora and in First Committee of the General Assembly more resolutions are now adopted without a vote than before.

Despite this, a number of "hardy perennials" are repeated as resolutions and calls are made on nuclear-weapons States to disarm, to cease the nuclear arms race and to halt testing. The United Nations role beyond providing forums for discussion and negotiation is essentially attenuated by the pursuit of the national interest of some States

who have the capacity to do so. The fact that dialogue takes place at all is obviously a positive development. A re-ordering of priorities in the disarmament agenda cannot be undertaken by the United Nations unless there is consensus among the Member States. A shift to regional disarmament and conventional disarmament is still viewed with suspicion by some States who maintain that the agenda of global and nuclear disarmament has not been implemented.

A point frequently made is that all nations want to safeguard their national security. The "realist" school would argue that national interests and not high moral principles dictate the actions of Governments. Indeed, we may find fresh evidence of this in recent events. But national security does rest on the common acceptance of certain principles such as compliance with international law and the non-use of force. These and other principles in the United Nations Charter ensure an orderly world of civilized international behaviour. National interests cannot dictate that the accepted principles be observed on some occasions only and not on others or that they be selectively applied with respect to some nations. The role of the United Nations in implementing the Charter principles consistently and without discrimination is therefore paramount.

The role of the United Nations on regional disarmament has attracted great attention. The United State-Soviet rapprochement and the ending of the cold war has led to a revived interest in achieving

regional disarmament and security. It arises from a conviction that the cold war transmitted malefic influences to regions exacerbating regional conflicts and even triggering off "proxy wars". It also arises from the recognition that insecurity and arms races in one region can have an impact on the rest of the global system. Many useful suggestions and proposals have been made, including the need for more regional consultations on global disarmament issues, such as chemical disarmament. The existing Charter provisions for regional arrangements can be utilized to ensure a close harmonious working relationship between the United Nations and the regional organizations. Successes achieved in some regions should not lead to the assumption that the world body is no longer directly relevant to the needs of those regions. Attempts to bypass the United Nations would have the cumulative effect of rendering the Organization impotent to carry out its Charter functions when called upon to do so.

A United Nations role as a "deus ex machina" is obviously unrealistic. Despite the great relaxation of tension internationally and the proclaimed end of the Cold War, United States, USSR and Great Power influences continue to hold sway. The vast majority of Member States are conscious of this and have reservations about welcoming the unanimity among the permanent members of the Security Council or the non-use of the veto. The United States emerged as the leader of a coalition upholding Charter principles and reinforced by the legitimacy conferred on their actions by Se-

curity Council resolutions. One may regret that the Security Council was not able to undertake, or at least to control, the military operations instead of simply authorizing, in general and implicit terms, the use of force by Member States. Among the questions asked therefore are whether similar action would be taken when Charter principles are violated in future and whether a United Nations directed operation would not have been more desirable.

In the wake of the Gulf War Security Council resolution 687 adds a new dimension to the disarmament process. On the basis of Chapter VII it imposes some specific obligations on Iraq, establishes a mechanism

for their implementation and provides for their verification. Will that constitute a precedent? Adding to the fact-finding tasks undertaken by the Secretary-General during the Iran-Iraq war, will it be a nucleus for a verification function within the United Nations? In fact this remains doubtful. Firstly, the legal basis is Chapter VII which concerns "the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression" (Article 39) and not disarmament. In this respect the resolution has a coercive aspect linked with sanctions against a State which having violated the Charter has to be prevented from aggressive behaviour in future. Secondly, the circumstances surrounding the Gulf War were, of

course, unique and are unlikely, to be repeated. Nevertheless the Security Council, on the basis of Article 26 of the Charter, is entitled to intervene in the disarmament process in cooperation with Member States. But such an action can only be efficient and durable if it is undertaken on a balanced and non-discriminatory basis. The dismantling of the Iraqi weapons arsenal could thus be seen as a Security Council decision aimed at a vanquished State which had been universally condemned as a blatant aggressor. It may not therefore be a pointer to a future role for the United Nations in disarmament and security in normal situations.

(Concluded)

## India . . .

(Continued from page 9)

Another option is to go along with the Sri Lankan Government's view that the LTTE has become a security threat to both the countries and it ought to be eliminated or weakened. This calls for joint military operations or at least India playing an advisory role. This option, put forward by Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Harald Herath during his recent visit to New Delhi, has not been received very favourably.

The only viable option is to wipe out all LTTE bases in Tamil Nadu, however long it takes, and nudge Colombo to strike while the iron is hot by offering the Tamils a comprehensive political package that will be an improvement on the controversial 1987 Rajiv-Jayawardane accord. The vicious crackdown in Tamil Nadu and the debacle in the battle for Elephant Pass have made the Tigers offer a ceasefire if Colombo is willing to resume talks without pre-conditions.

Despite the Sri Lankan forces' signal triumph in the Elephant Pass battle, President R. Premadasa has done well in renewing his call to the Tigers to come to the negotiating table.

However, Colombo now is deeply distrustful of the LTTE and is no longer ready to recognise it as the sole representative of the Tamils. This will prove a major obstacle.

And to the Tamils' ill luck, the President himself is facing an impeachment motion. In the present circumstances, the President cannot afford to placate the Tamils, least of all the Tigers.

In the ultimate analysis, the Tigers can be brought to the democratic path only if and when the people of Jaffna turn against them.

The island Tamils still tolerate the LTTE because they fear Colombo more. They are caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. The only way out is for Colombo to win their confidence by offering them a pack-

age that ensures genuine autonomy for the Tamil areas and makes the sacrifices of the last several decades worthwhile.

The road from Sudumalai to Sriperumpudur was paved with mines and body traps. The time has now come to strike out on a bold, new path to peace.

## Briefly . . . .

(Continued from page 1)

decision because of the current political crisis. An eight year revolt by Tamil guerillas had not deterred investment, he said.

A release from the Ministry of Trade and Commerce said that Minister A. R. Mansoor had told the delegation: "You have assisted us in many ways and emerged as our number-one aid donor."

## LALITH WELCOMES CID

● For minister and rebel UNP-er Lalith Athulathmudali told a press conference that he welcomed CID personnel if they would openly attend his press conferences "without posing as journalists and insulting journalists".

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