

Charge of the Lion Brigade

SRI LANKA'S EPIC VICTORY OVER TERRORISM

Patali Champika Ranawaka



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October 2009

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ISBN 978-955-98843-1-2

Cover design and layout by : T. P.G. Amara jeewa

Printed by :
Neo Graphics
No 143,
Udahamulla Station Rd
Gangodawila
Nugegoda
011-2820220, 011-4563285

Photographs courtesy of Chathura S. Kodikara, Ishara S. Kodikara, Chamila Karunarathna and Ministry of Defence

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A Necessary Introduction





The triumph of Nationalism over Marxism, Despotism and Terrorism

On 19th May 2009, having listened to President Mahinda Rajapaksa's victory address to the nation made in Parliament, I set off to attend an almsgiving ceremony in Rajagiriya. Along the road, it was heartening to see jubilant crowds celebrating our long-awaited triumph over the barbaric Neo-Nazi terrorism of Velupillai Prabhakaran (VP). However, I was very concerned to receive an SMS quoting Kumaran Pathmanathan (KP) of the LTTE as having announced that 'VP is alive and very much safe'. I promptly contacted a number of journalists to verify the information and, to my dismay, their replies were in the affirmative. It was only when I got through to one of my friends in the Army that I was convinced beyond any doubt that VP had been killed and his body recovered.



When the almsgiving was over, I joined Dr. Ven. Omalpe Sobhitha Thera and Ven. Athuraliye Rathana Thera in watching the breaking news on television showing pictures of VP's dead body. For us, it was more than just a dead body. It symbolised the end of a dreadful nightmare and the beginning of a new era of peace in Sri Lanka. We also saw people taking to the streets with lion flags and dancing with joy. Among them, it was ironic to see a strong sympathiser of the LTTE who once attacked our nationalist colleagues when they staged a peaceful protest against the LTTE's Pongu Tamil (Reawaking Tamils) festival in Colombo. As we watched these pictures on television, we remembered with much gratitude the enormous sacrifices made by the heroic members of our armed forces to bring joy to the lives of all peace-loving Sri Lankans, irrespective of age, caste, creed and ethnicity.

VP and his LTTE are no more. Many Tamil racists refused to acknowledge it, believing that VP was immortal. Even Vaiko in India once said that their Sun God, VP, could never be killed. When I met some of the LTTE cadres who surrendered, I asked why they and their leaders had been reluctant to change their original war strategies when it was very clear that they would never be able to stop the advance of the Sri Lankan forces, at least after the fall of Silawathura in September 2007 and Kilinochchi in January 2009. In response, the cadres told me that they too had posed the same question to Pottu Amman when they were encircled

by the Sri Lankan forces at Pudumathalan. He told them not to panic but to place their confidence in VP, for he was invincible. Pottu Amman convinced them to believe that a miracle was in the offing. However, in the end, dozens of senior cadres of the LTTE and about 9,000 others defied the orders given by VP and Pottu Amman and surrendered to the Sri Lankan army.

For decades, VP shaped Sri Lankan society. He was the centre of gravity around which others gyrated. His Nazi-like activities changed our lives. He was the 'author' of our politics. Professor A.J. Wilson, a relative of Chelvanayagam, once told the Tamil diaspora that the Sinhalese should never be pushed too far. History showed that whenever the Sinhalese were pushed to the wall, they fought back bitterly. He also reminded them that the Chola emperor was defeated by King Vjayaabahu - a Sinhalese - and not by the Indians. Prof. Wilson was correct. For a period of two and a half decades from 1985 to 2009, VP was beating us. He pushed us to the wall. In the end, we had no alternative but to fight back.

Since the triumph over the evils of the LTTE, there have been subtle attempts to sideline genuine patriots by a slew of pseudo-patriots who have suddenly emerged from nowhere to hog the limelight. If the nationalists who made immense contributions towards changing the course of the recent history of our motherland do not contain this undesirable situation, there is every possibility of these pseudo-patriots



influencing the people with anti-nationalist views. The victory over the LTTE is only a paradigm shift and nationalist forces are now duty bound to see the country moving towards the desired goals, preserving its sovereignty and safeguarding its newly-gained freedom against pro-LTTE foreign elements and their local lackeys. In the meantime, we should regain our lost economic and social opportunities and prepare the nation for 'a great leap forward'.

As a child, I saw many posters put up in public places displaying the faces of 'wanted' Tamil terrorists. For me it was something similar to what I saw in cowboy movies like 'For a few dollars more', in which the sheriff was hunting for criminals in his domain. As an Advanced Level student, I had the misfortune of witnessing some of the deplorable incidents of July 1983. We were happy to have established a good rapport with Tamil friends living in the plantation area close to our residence at Bulathsinhala. During the harvesting period, they used



to be with us in our paddy fields, assisting us with our work in many ways. It was disappointing to see them harassed by elements of the then UNP regime.

I also saw the country being pushed into an era of chaos where the derailing of trains, burning of buses, killing of armed service personnel and mass killing of civilians in Nayaru and Kokilai was the order of the day. Although I was politically conscious of all that was happening in the country, there was nothing I could do other than be a passive spectator.

When I entered the University of Moratuwa in 1985, it did not take long for me to realise that politically-conscious batchmates of ours were sympathetic to the cause of the Tamil terrorists. Politics in universities at that time was dominated by Marxist ideologists. They argued that the Tamils in Sri Lanka had a right to self determination or secession. The JVP, as it was in its 1982 manifesto, took a



similar stance. According to the JVP, under the socialist system, the problem of 'national oppression' could be addressed by granting self rule. However, even at that time there was a divergence of opinion among JVP cadres and this became obvious whenever a group of JVPers openly campaigned for a separate Tamil homeland. They failed to convince me.

In 2007, as the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, under whose purview the Department of Wildlife Conservation functions, I participated in a memorial ceremony held in the Wilpattu Sanctuary. It was an event held in memory of 18 employees of the Department of Wildlife who were killed by the LTTE. The group of terrorists had been returning to Wilpattu having accomplished its mission of indiscriminate killing of over a hundred innocent pilgrims in the vicinity of Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi in Anuradhapura when they ran into the Wildlife Department employees. While participating in the ceremony, I could not help going down the memory lane twenty two years to the day to when I heard the horrible news of the Anuradhapura massacre in 1985. That piece of news made me so emotional. It was a turning point that inspired me to adopt an in-depth analytical approach to the so-called Tamil problem.

I identified the limits of Marxism and Liberalism and, as a result, I was attracted to the 'Jathika Chinthanaya' propagated by Professor Nalin De Silva, Dr. Sooriya

Gunasekara, Dr. Gunadasa Amarasekara and a few others. Without much publicity, we formed a student movement based on the 'Jathika Chinthanaya', posing a challenge to Marxist ideologists who dominated the university. Being unable to face the ideological challenges posed and the physical harassment inflicted by other Marxist groups - particularly the Independent Student Union led by Dayan Jayatilleka - the JVP, which remained a proscribed outfit at the time, formed a strategic alliance with us. We fought against the Independent Student Union and defeated them comprehensively.

Thereafter, we observed how the J.R. Jayewardene regime gradually swallowed the bait of devolution proposals offered by the Indian government. In 1981, the District Development Council (DDC) system was introduced and implemented with the concurrence of Buddhist monks and all political parties - including the TULF - as a final solution to whatever political problems prevailed at the time. Religiously observing Chelvanayagam's theory of 'a little now and more later', all the Tamil parties started agitating for more regional powers, later.

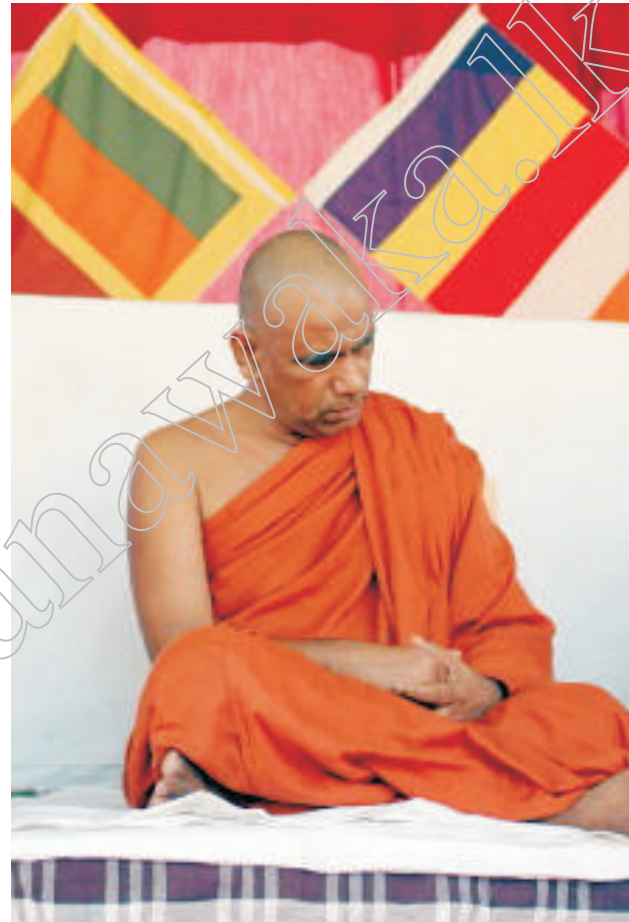
When it emerged that the J.R. Jayewardene regime had accepted the Provincial Council System in 1986, all nationalist forces and the then main opposition party, the SLFP, hurriedly formed a broad political organisation called 'Mawbima Surekeeme Viyaparaya' (Movement to Protect the Motherland). I joined the organisation, which subsequently



held very successful rallies in Kandy, Nuwegoda and many other areas of the country. The success of these rallies alarmed the UNP regime and as a result JRJ announced at a public rally in Nuwegoda that he would not implement the Provincial Council system as envisaged by the Indian government. However, being a shrewd politician, JRJ moved to divide the national movement into two factions. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike led one faction (Mawbima Surekeeme Sanvidhanaya), supported by Ven. Bengamuwe Nalaka Thera, Gamini Iriyagolla and others, while Ven. Maduluwawe Sobhitha Thera led the other (Mawbima Surekeeme Viyaparaya), supported by Dinesh Gunawaradana, Prins Gunasekara and others. We joined the latter and the JVP too joined it with the ulterior motive of using it as a patriotic cover to launch its Bolshevik revolution at an appropriate time.

In April 1987, the JVP got into the Pallekelle and Ratmalana military bases and managed to remove a few automatic weapons. With that success, they announced the formation of an organisation called 'Deshapremi Janatha-Viyaparaya' (DJV), ostensibly to protect the motherland from a possible Indian invasion.

The JVP founder and its leader, Rohana Wijeweera, had written a thesis in 1986 to elaborate his Marxist reading of the Tamil separatist movement. The first edition of that book, published in January 1986, clearly took the position that India should be protected from a possible Balkanisation



process by the US and Western imperialism with the connivance of Tamil separatists. But he was very careful not to mention that the US was supporting Sri Lanka through its blue-eyed boy - Lalith Athulathmudali, then Minister of National Security.



However, contrary to what had been said in the first edition of the book, in its second edition, published in December 1986, Rohana Wijeweera had taken an anti-Indian stance. It was reported that this change of attitude was due to the miserable failure of JVP attempts to cultivate political links with India. At that time, India had opted for other Marxist groups and the Tamil terrorists to wage a proxy war against the JRJ regime due to the Sri Lankan government's anti-Indian and pro-Western stance. With mass killings carried out by the LTTE, JRJ was forced to make a choice between 'the devil and the deep blue sea'. Having once promoted anti-Indian groups, especially through his Prime Minister Premadasa, it was an irony of fate for the JRJ government to have to go to the Indians seeking help. JRJ had no alternative but to decide to crush the nationalist forces at any cost.

He gave the order to open fire at the May Day rallies of 1987 and, as a result, two participants were killed at the Abhayaramaya Temple, Narahenpita. I was present at the time and the students there did not panic, contrary to the expectation of JRJ. Instead, the angry students rallied behind us, giving much strength to the nationalist movement.

JRJ's next move was to arrest student leaders. Although I managed to escape, Ven. Athuraliye Rathana Thero and a few others were arrested and jailed in June 1989.

During this period, JRJ made some controversial political moves. He signed the infamous India-Sri Lanka accord with Rajiv Gandhi accepting a historical Tamil homeland, agreeing to merge the Northern and Eastern Provinces and establishing a Provincial Council system similar to that in India. Worse, he allowed the Indian army to enter Sri Lanka and carry out operations. Although we protested through non-violent means such as bhikku rallies, fasts and mass processions, there was no marked change in JRJ's attitude. Instead, he played into the hands of the JVP/DJV military strategy when he used brute force to suppress the peaceful protest campaign staged at Pettah on 28th July 1987. Two of our student leaders from the University of Moratuwa - Nimal and Clifford - were killed while I was at the epicentre of the protest campaign. We were confined to the Mahabodhi premises without food or water. Subsequently, I saw over 147 dead bodies at the mortuary while one Dr. Salgado was carrying out autopsies. The carnage and bloodbath around me reaffirmed my determination to fight, not only JRJ but also Tamil terrorism.

The JVP/DJV continued with their dirty terror campaigns. We members of the nationalist movement based on nationalist ideology tried our best to stick to our commitments. When JRJ tried to implement the Thirteenth Amendment in 1988, we as students of Moratuwa University launched a fast-unto-death campaign in protest. Unfortunately, we were alone. The JVP disliked such non-violent initiatives as they thought



that they would distract students from the true Bolshevik revolution. I figured that we were going to get sandwiched between JRJ's anti-JVP offensive and the JVP's dirty terrorist tactics against JRJ.

I thought that we had a golden opportunity to change the entire scenario at the presidential election scheduled for December 1988. We were agitating for a common presidential candidate and I was instrumental in initiating discussions between political parties. Accordingly, on 6th July 1988, one of the top leaders of the JVP, Ananda Idameegama, met Mr. Anura Bandaranaike at the latter's residence. An all party committee was appointed to investigate the disappearance of Ruhunu University lecturer Wannigama, who was a theoretician of the JVP. We managed to convert this forum into a fully-fledged all party alliance against the JRJ regime.

The JVP/DJV launched a series of violent hartals, work stoppages, strikes, assassinations and attacks on quite a few military installations. The country was in chaos. Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam - a member of the all party committee - once told me that JRJ had sincerely confessed to him the chaotic situation in the country.

Looking back, I consider it a great opportunity to have known many political leaders of the calibre of the late Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam (leader of the ACTC), the late Mr. M.H.M. Ashraff (leader of the SLMC), the late Mr. Uma



Maheshwaran (leader of the PLOTE), the late Mr. Abdul Aziz (leader of the ACWC), the late Mr. Chanaka Amaratunga (leader of the Liberal Party) and, most importantly, the late Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike (leader of the SLFP), as well as Mr. Dinesh Gunawardana (leader of the MEP) and Mr. Rukman Senanayaka (leader of the ELJP), who all participated in these discussions.

We knew that the discussions would run into some snags as at the very beginning the SLFP was trying to cheat the JVP while the JVP was trying to undermine the SLFP. Having understood the situation, Prime Minister Premadasa, India and the Western lobbies intervened to drive a wedge between the SLFP and the JVP. The discussions failed. But it was a rare opportunity for me to listen to many valuable and divergent views from a broad political spectrum. Naturally it helped me immensely to broaden my own



knowledge of political history and the attitudes of the Tamil separatist movement and Muslim fundamentalists.

Although I totally opposed the JVP's call to boycott the presidential election, I did not cast my ballot in favour of any candidate. Having failed to proceed any further in changing the prevailing atmosphere, I authored a book 'Apey Maga' (Our Way) in 1989, identifying the Sinhala Buddhist ideology and its historical responsibility. While being critical of the dirty guerrilla tactics of the JVP, I warned students of the risks involved. We were successful in keeping the JVP at bay in the Universities of Moratuwa and Colombo.

By then, the death squads of both factions were after me. I had no alternative but to go underground. Subsequently, I was abducted and detained. At the detention camps in 1989, I saw how JVP leaders, who were venerated as demigods by dedicated JVP cadres, betrayed their own cause. Twenty years later, similar acts of betrayal were committed by LTTE seniors when they were caught by the security forces. Later I contributed to 'Divaina', writing a series of articles titled 'Amu Sohonaka Wilangulaa' (Chained in a Cemetery) narrating my experience and what happened in the camps.

I find it extremely difficult to forgive both the JVP and the Premadasa regime for what they did to our intelligent and educated rural youth. Once during an interview with Qadri Ismail of the Sunday Times, I said that while Royal College

had gained its freedom in 1948 and Ananda College in 1956, the central colleges were still struggling to gain their freedom. I explained to him that the envisaged democratisation would be hard to come by since the elite could crush it easily due to the wrong strategies adopted.

My wrath towards Premadasa found no bounds when he gave a new breath of life to the LTTE. We formed a citizen front to fight against Premadasa's gross violations of human rights. Mahinda Rajapaksa and Mangala Samaraweera were in the forefront of those activities.

In 1991, when Premadasa violently suppressed our movement, we formed another movement in 1992 and named it 'Janatha Mithuro' (Friends of the People). Although it was ideologically a green movement that was patronised by a wide spectrum of people, our primary agenda was to regain the lost democracy in the country. We fought hard with the Premadasa regime. Although he jailed and suppressed us, he failed to stop us. We were at the forefront when the PA defeated the UNP at the crucial Southern Provincial Council election in 1994. We also supported the People's Alliance led by Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga in the 1994 general election, although we knew very well that CBK was an anti-nationalist and staunch supporter of federalism. We had no alternative but to support her in the interests of bringing democracy back to our motherland.



When CBK tried to introduce the Federal Package after having liberated Jaffna in 1995, we were the first to expose it. Without wasting time, the National Bhikku Front was formed. As there was a strong need for a new Sinhala Buddhist movement, I moved to help the bhikkus to identify genuine patriots for the purpose of fighting the Federal Package. The National Joint Council and the 'Sinhala Weera Vidahana' were formed and we were very much encouraged by the development. The National Joint Council held an open debate on CBK's political package at BMICH. Professor Tissa Vitharana, S.L. Gunasekara and I were the speakers at the debate. It was moderated by Lasantha Wickramatunga, who subsequently converted to evangelism. The debate was highly successful. People from all walks of life including the elite of Colombo started establishing contact with us.

The LTTE attack on the Central Bank on 31st January 1996 sent ripples through the Colombo middle class and the elite. This generated a fresh interest among people to fight the ruthless LTTE and many groups and individuals, including victims' families, came forward to help us. The attack also created a fear psychosis. When the Sri Dalada Maligawa was attacked by the LTTE, our Bhikku Front organised a peaceful procession demanding that the LTTE be proscribed. The success of this protest campaign saw CBK banning the LTTE. Having achieved this local victory, we launched an international campaign to name the LTTE a terrorist organisation and have it proscribed worldwide.



The LTTE exploded a bomb at Maradana on 6th March 1998. It took the lives of a dozen innocent people including two girls of Gothami Baliika Vidyalaya. The bomb blast had a significant impact on people's thinking and, as a result, the National Movement Against Terrorism (NMAT) was formed. Mrs. Shiranthi Mala De Silva played a pivotal role in its formation and some military officials too expressed their



desire to join it. Thereafter, whenever the LTTE attacked innocent people, we took to the streets in protest in order to raise the necessary public awareness.

The formation of NMAT was a huge success. A website against LTTE propaganda was launched and within one year and email network among Sinhala expatriates had been established. I personally travelled to cities such as London, Paris, Rome, Milan, Melbourne, Sydney and many others in order to organise resistance movements against the LTTE. Exhibitions, musical shows, CDs, DVDs, books, leaflets etc. were effectively used to propagate our message against the LTTE. However, our immediate enemy at the time was not the LTTE but the Norway-backed peace propaganda programmes like Thawalama and Sudu Nelum that had been launched by the government. Also, we published a booklet titled 'A three year comprehensive military strategy' in January 1999 with the intention of encouraging interested parties to study how the LTTE could be defeated.

When our armed forces were heavily battered on the Wannu front from 1st to 9th September 1999 onwards, we were there to raise the morale of our forces. I addressed the retreating northern forces in Vavuniya to stabilise their confused mindset. We were ever grateful to a few patriotic soldiers and officers in our armed forces for stopping the 'Unceasing Waves' of the LTTE at Vavuniya North. If not for their timely action, even Vavuniya too would have gone under Neo-Nazi LTTE rule.

We also stressed the need to put the country on a war footing, to prevent all districts falling into the hands of the LTTE. Although many military leaders agreed with our proposal, faint-hearted political leaders refused it as they were all out to appease the LTTE. It was unfortunate to note that all three presidential candidates from the major parties - Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga (PA), Ranil Wickremasinghe (UNP) and the JVP - advocated peace at any cost at the 1999 presidential election. We subsequently launched a boycott supported by Ven. Gangodawila Soma Thero. Many patriotic Catholics and some others led by Rev. Oscar Abeyratne and also many Catholics living in Italy and other countries too extended their support to our boycott campaign.

Thereafter we saw the most tragic and unbearable military setback in our recent history. The Paranthan-Elephant Pass military complex and the Jaffna-Palaly military complex were encircled. It came to light that CBK was discussing terms of surrender with India. There was no time for us to waste. We hurriedly formed Sihala Urumaya to prevent the CBK regime surrendering to the LTTE. Leading patriotic lawyer Mr. S.L. Gunasekara and prominent politician Mr. Tilak Karunaratne (MP) and I were elected as the main office bearers of the new party. Behind the scenes, we were actively supporting our brave military leaders to protect Jaffna at any cost. We held several meetings at army headquarters to plan out a propaganda strategy to raise the morale of armed service



personnel and the people living in the North and East vulnerable to LTTE attacks.

A few months after the formation of Sihala Urumaya came the August 2000 general election. Since there was hardly any time for us to prepare ourselves for the polls, we couldn't achieve much. However, we managed to muster a sizeable vote base, especially from the middle class of the Colombo district, where I topped the Sihala Urumaya preferential votes. Anyway, by then, we had every reason to be happy as we knew that our plans to hold Jaffna had worked out. The impact we made as a nationalist movement during that period prompted the JVP to form many fronts to address the patriotic audience.

The most significant achievement of the nationalist movement during that period was its ability to scuttle the Federal Package. CBK along with Ranil Wickremasinghe and with the blessings of Western embassies in Colombo had set the stage to introduce proposals for a Federal Constitution to parliament. In protest, our Ven. Hedigalle Wimalasara Thero started a fast-unto-death campaign the day it was tabled in parliament and the response to our protest from the general public was very encouraging. Having assessed the tide, the JVP took to the streets in protest while the UNP decided to remain neutral. CBK had no alternative but to withdraw her proposals, conceding victory to the nationalist movement.



In 2001, the LTTE attacked Katunayake Airport, crippling our ailing economy that had already suffered due to the Asian recession. Seizing the opportunity like a hawk, the UNP orchestrated an anti-government campaign, followed by a coup in parliament. Sihala Urumaya at that time had been sidelined due to some malicious propaganda against it, and the shattered CBK government had to give way to Ranil Wickremasinghe and his proposals for a power-sharing deal with VP.

VP used the so-called peace agreement signed on 22nd February 2002 to his maximum advantage. Having kept a close watch on the situation in the North and East, I openly issued a warning to Ranil Wickremasinghe, saying that there was every possibility of VP not only acquiring air power but also nuclear weapons. The confession made by KP to our intelligence services in 2009 proved my predictions.



Having come to power, Ranil Wickremasinghe showed his inherent hatred towards the Sinhalese and especially Sinhala Buddhists. Anti-Buddhist elements around him were making hay while the sun was shining. The time was ripe for bhikkus to step forward. We set the stage in 2003 for the formation of the National Sangha Council - a powerful new bhikku front led by Ven. Ellawala Medhanada Nayaka Thero. Many prominent and respected bhikkus like Ven. Dr. Omalpe Sobhitha, Ven. Kotapola Amarakitti, Ven. Athuraliye Rathana, Ven. Kolonnawe Sumangala, Ven. Uduwe Dhammaloka and later the most popular Dhamma preacher at the time, Ven. Gangodawila Soma, supported the Bhikku Front. Unfortunately, the sudden and untimely demise of Ven. Gangodawila Soma Thera sent shockwaves through the country and it had a ripple effect. There was justification in pointing the finger towards evangelical forces given the circumstances in which the Venerable Thera passed away. The Buddhists were roused from their slumber and we stepped forward to galvanise them into collective action.

Militarily and politically speaking, Ranil Wickremasinghe was a prisoner of his own making. India did not show any mercy towards him as his intentions of inviting US-led UN forces to the country were known to the Indian intelligence services. Parliament was dissolved and, having formed the United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA), CBK called for a general election. Fortunately, we had the political foresight to read the game plan of CBK and her cohorts. They intended to

continue with the so-called peace accord and change the unitary nature of the country to a federal model.

We quickly got together to form the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) to block CBK's plans. The stunning victory we secured in the April 2004 general election with the support of urban and suburban middle class voters made it clear to others that the nationalist movement was a force to be reckoned with.

The personal ambition of CBK, who had never been a patriot, was to change the constitution and remain in power. Using Mr. Kadirgamar as a mediator, the JVP wanted to use CBK as Kereneski of Russia.

Being aware of the crucial role the LTTE defectors group was playing in upsetting the LTTE's plans in the Eastern Province, we did not hesitate to help them whenever it was found to be necessary. However, to appease the LTTE, some political leaders were all out to betray the renegade group. It was heartening to note that orders received by patriotic military officers from those leaders to betray the LTTE defectors were ignored.

As expected, the UPFA won the election and moves by CBK and the JVP to install Mr. Kadirgamar as the new Prime Minister were frustrated by the JHU and its nationalist allies. The appointment of Mahinda Rajapaksa as the Prime Minister of the new government showed that the Sinhala Buddhist wave was prevailing in the country.



In 2004, the country had to face the worse natural catastrophe in recent history - the tsunami. However, it was an opportunity for us to show the world how our bhikkus could react, not only to any political calamity in the country but also to natural disasters. CBK, with the connivance of Western forces, was trying to make the tsunami a blessing in disguise. Their attempt to hand over the North and East on a platter to VP through P-TOMS was foiled by the fast-unto-death campaign of our Ven. Dr. Omalpe Sobhitha Thera and the decree issued by the Mahanayakes of all three Chapters.

Although our political dealings, strategies and moves were sincere in aiming to preserve the national identity of the country, this was not the case with the JVP. The JVP insincerely tried to emulate us once again to achieve their ulterior objectives. But their miserable failure to achieve the desired results made them resign from the government.

As soon as our bhikkus got elected to parliament, we forwarded a draft act requesting the demerger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces and it was subsequently allowed by the Supreme Court. Thereafter, we went before the Supreme Court seeking its ruling to hold the presidential election in 2005. Despite the SLFP's objections and the JVP's silence, the Supreme Court gave its ruling in our favour. The UNP plan was to have the general election before the presidential election as they thought it would be advantageous to them. We foiled it and set the course of the

country once again. Defeating terrorism and the preservation of the unitary system of the island were the main conditions put forward by our bhikkus to the presidential candidates seeking their response. Ranil Wickremasinghe ignored it, as expected, assuming he would be able to rely on some elite bhikkus to win. He was proved wrong once again. Mahinda Rajapaksa won the election on Sinhala votes and silenced the racist parties like the SLMC and CWC, the so-called kingmakers of our country. The rest is history.

Patali Champika Ranawaka





In the Land of 'IFS AND BUTS'

Three years is a very brief period of time in which to turn the tables on a sophisticated enemy after many decades of war. But that is exactly what our heroic armed forces did when they annihilated the entire leadership of the LTTE, especially its megalomaniac Neo-Nazi leader Velupillai Prabhakaran (VP), whose image had been inflated by Tamil separatists for over a generation. Armed with a comprehensive politico-military strategy, the Sri Lankan forces recorded an indelible mark in the annals of global counterterrorism.



The maiden steps of this journey were taken on 28th July 2005 from the Mavil Aru anicut (Mahaweli Amuna).

By then, the LTTE had already entered the record books as the only terrorist organisation in the history of the world to possess missiles, artillery guns, rockets, small war planes, naval attack craft and submarines. It had carried out a series of assassinations of political leaders, including heads of state. One Sri Lankan president (Ranasinghe Premadasa) had been killed by the LTTE, while another (Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga) had been partially blinded in a suicide attack that nearly claimed her life as well. The LTTE had also murdered former Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi, thereby challenging the most formidable power in the South Asian region. It had successfully resisted Indian (IPKF) occupation in Sri Lanka, killing over a thousand Indian Jawans (1987-1989).

For nearly three decades, the LTTE had been striving to build a de-facto state - equipped with a conventional army, navy and air force, a police force, a judicial system, banks, television and radio stations and an administrative service - in the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka, which together encompass nearly 60% of Sri Lanka's coastline and 25% of the landmass.

It had entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Wickremasinghe regime (2002-2004) that went beyond the confines of the Sri Lankan constitution, and it

was using this agreement to elevate its de-facto state to a de-jure Tamil Eelam. Its global influence was such that quite a number of foreign nations, especially in the West, had rushed to accord parity of status to Sri Lanka and Tamil Eelam, despite the LTTE remaining a banned terrorist organisation in many countries, including the US and India.

On the other hand, the government of Sri Lanka was in a rather precarious politico-military position. It was struggling to contain the LTTE. The Sri Lankan armed forces had to a great extent lost their will to fight in the LTTE's 'Unceasing Waves' operation of 1999. The LTTE, meanwhile, had successfully used the MoU to encroach on territory and consolidate its position, both on land and in the sea (2002-2004). It had laid siege to all the strategically important military locations (Palaly-Jaffna High Security Zone, Trinco-Mutur Zone) with forced Tamil resettlements and a ring of bases equipped with heavy weapons. There was a justifiable fear among the military hierarchy that Trinco harbour and the Trinco-Habarana main supply route would be cut off if the LTTE were to restart the military conflict, interrupting the supply route to the North and risking Jaffna falling into the hands of the enemy.

The LTTE had also been infiltrating areas outside the North and East, including Colombo, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Monaragala and Hambantota. This was to make it easy to carry out massacres and explosions, which the LTTE hoped would paralyse the entire country.



Its propaganda network, meanwhile, had been feeding thousands of media outlets with glorifying accounts of the dedication and fighting spirit of the LTTE. Coupled with this, stories had been floated of how the LTTE had purchased sophisticated military hardware. Many people had fallen for these theories and believed that the military prowess of the LTTE was far superior to that of our forces. The impression created was that the LTTE was invincible.

Most importantly, there was a notion that VP was a war genius. He was dubbed far superior to Sri Lankan military leaders and perhaps a better conventional war strategist than Napoleon or a superior guerrilla war strategist to Mao Zedong of China or Vo Nguyen Giap of Vietnam. This puffed up image of VP had partially crippled the fighting spirit of the military and political hierarchies on this side of the divide.

The Sri Lankan forces had been considerably demoralised by the Elephant Pass debacle (2000). Following this, invitations had been given to a few international agencies to conduct academic programmes for commissioned officers and the general public. These courses - sugar coated as programmes on 'conflict resolution' - were aimed at further weakening the fighting spirit of the forces.

Such strategies have regularly been employed by state and non-state actors, especially during protracted wars.



For instance, Vietnam's General Giap - one of the best military strategists of the last century - once publicly admitted that his party's famous Tet offensive (hundreds of simultaneous suicide attacks on the US occupying forces in Vietnam in 1968) had been intended to destroy the will of the enemy, whom it was finding difficult to defeat militarily.

VP was using the same tactics to destroy the willpower of the Sri Lankan state and its people. Unfortunately, not everyone was able to see through the LTTE plan.

The media and civil society organisations were used to the maximum to discourage the State from launching further operations against the LTTE. Western embassies were channelling millions of dollars to NGOs and INGOs to use media persons, academics and even artists to push for a 'peaceful resolution' to a non-existent 'ethnic conflict'.



It should also be noted that almost all heads of state who had ruled the country since the outbreak of war, including J.R. Jayewardene (1977-1988), R. Premadasa (1989-1993), Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga (1994-2002) and Ranil Wickremasinghe (2002-2004), had been emotionally blackmailed or intimidated by the elite and eminent persons close to them. These political busybodies had created a fear psychosis in the minds of their leaders, claiming that any act of aggression against the LTTE would be met with unimaginable levels of violence. It would kill the leaders themselves, their kith and kin, and there would be havoc in the country, these leaders had reportedly been warned.

Even Indian leaders had succumbed to this psychological warfare.

The other key argument was that the Sri Lankan economy was too fragile to sustain a long drawn out war. There was also a fear that in the event of the LTTE attacking vital Sri Lankan economic targets, as they did in the period between 1995 and 2000, the national economy would collapse. The Sri Lankan economy was heavily dependent on foreign loans, grants and markets. The opponents of warfare argued that a prolonged war with the LTTE would adversely affect both the export and import sector and foreign reserves.

Some academics had predicted that an intensification of warfare would lead to Western countries slapping economic

embargoes on Sri Lanka and thus isolating us. Hence the government was strongly advised against initiating any fresh offensives.

In addition, a theory was woven around the domestic politics of India to the effect that any offensive against the LTTE would destabilise Tamil Nadu and thereby the central government of India. It was also expected that domestic compulsions would compel India to intervene and prevent such offensives.

Hundreds of pseudo-peace mongers, who had formed a slew of organisations to protect the LTTE, insisted that the International Community (IC) would not allow the Sri Lankan government to launch such attacks against the LTTE.

The so-called Peace Co-Chairs (the US, EU, Norway and Japan), who were pushing for a 'peaceful resolution', vehemently opposed the use of military means against the LTTE. Even political parties, including the two principal parties - the UNP and the SLFP (under CBK) - the JVP (before 2000) and almost all leftist parties, were advocating the principle of appeasement. They were either scared or had been bought over. The most popular argument was that Sri Lanka was in a no-win situation, so let us build a Singapore of our own in South and let the LTTE do what it likes in the North and the East. The so-called business community had joined this bandwagon too.



These were the challenges or politico-military conditions that confronted us.

It is therefore worthwhile exploring and analysing how Sri Lanka got out of this quagmire of defeatism and steered the course for a historic victory against the world's most ruthless and sophisticated terrorist organisation within a span of three years, and with zero support from any military superpower.

The superpowers, on the other hand, more often than not, fail miserably in their efforts to rout terrorism. For instance, the US and UK-led NATO forces that invaded Afghanistan to crush Al Qaeda and the Taliban in 2001 have been virtually

demoralised by the terrorists. The State Department itself has admitted its setbacks. The same thing has happened in Iraq, and the Obama administration is already on record on its exit strategy. In the process, the US-led allied forces have committed gross crimes against humanity, killing more than one million civilians and displacing over four million from their places of origin.

The world's most sophisticated military force, the Israeli Army, has failed to contain Palestine's Hamas and Hezbollah of Lebanon. Even the mammoth Indian army is struggling with its Islamic separatists and Naxalite terrorists without much success.

True, there are a handful of exceptions.

Russia defeated Chechen separatists. Peru, backed by the US, defeated the Shining Path Maoist militants, and the Turks were able to crush Kurdish separatism, also with US support.

However, these terrorist groups were far weaker than the LTTE.

So the triumph of Sri Lanka over the LTTE is a feat that should be celebrated globally, because here is an achievement that has no parallels in the contemporary military history of the world.



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The Battlefield PREPARATIONS

In 1998, the National Movement Against Terrorism (NMAT) published a document titled 'The way to defeat the LTTE'. It proposed to the Chandrika Bandaranaike government a three year comprehensive strategic plan, focused on galvanising the entire nation for a war against terrorism, making quantitative and qualitative improvements to the Sri Lankan armed forces, developing a national war economy and mobilising an international front against the LTTE. These themes were elaborated in 29 working programmes to be implemented according to a defined timetable.



The then SLFP-led CBK regime rejected this plan outright, castigating us as warmongers and chauvinists who posed an obstacle to defeating LTTE terrorism.

Instead, the government wholeheartedly embraced a dual-faceted strategy based on a confederal political solution and a Western-aided limited military operation called 'war for peace'.

The watershed moment of the modern nationalist movement came in 1995. For the first time in history, a cadre-based, nationally conscious bhikku front (the National Sangha Council) and a youth movement were formed to fight the confederal package – the political solution envisaged by ex-US Ambassador Teresita C. Schaffer and the LTTE Neo-Nazi Tamil separatist terrorists.



In 1998, the nationalist campaign was further strengthened by the formation of the National Movement Against Terrorism, widely known as NMAT. We were able to gather patriotic bhikkus, academics, intellectuals, businessmen, students and the informed public under a single umbrella and mobilise them against moves to weaken the Sri Lankan state.

It was prematurely transformed into a political party under the name Sihala Urumaya, with a view to establishing a mainstream political platform to boost the morale of the nation following a series of military debacles under the Chandrika Bandaranaike regime.



Between 2000 and 2004, we managed to spread the wings of the movement still further and, at the 2004 general election, we proved to the world that the nationalist movement was a force to be reckoned with.

The closely fought presidential race of 2005, which pitted nationalist forces against the anti-nationalist elite, was the turning point in the modern political history of Sri Lanka.

All the anti-nationalist forces, including the LTTE and Western powers, underestimated our courage and determination and said that we were only paying lip service to a cause. This was proven wrong and the victory recorded by nationalist forces at the 2005 presidential election marked a paradigm shift in the Sri Lankan polity. For the first time, the nation saw the emergence of political determination to eradicate LTTE terrorism.

What happened after that is known to everyone. However, it is still worth shedding some light on factors that contributed to the historic victory over the LTTE.

In any war, there are a few decisive factors that make a military victory possible. Among them are:

1. Political determination of the leadership, social mobilisation and having a comprehensive politico-military strategy;
2. Quantitative and qualitative nature of the armed forces;
3. Conditions of the enemy forces;
4. Military leadership, strategies and tactics;
5. External factors like international pressure, political stability etc.





The Political Determination of the Leadership, Social Mobilisation and a **COMPREHENSIVE POLITICO-MILITARY STRATEGY**

Demilitarisation, **D**emocratisation, **D**evelopment

Political power refers to the ability of the State to change society. Orthodox thinking says that the State is comprised of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. But in a practical sense, the three elements of the State are economic formation, social consciousness and military formation. The latter is most relevant when dealing with insurgencies and counterinsurgencies. That is why military philosopher Karl von Clausewitz said that war is an extension of politics.

The most crucial factor in defeating terrorism is the determination of the political leadership.

According to our constitution, the elected president is the head of state, chief executive and head of the armed forces, so the determination of the executive president to annihilate LTTE terrorism is the key to success.



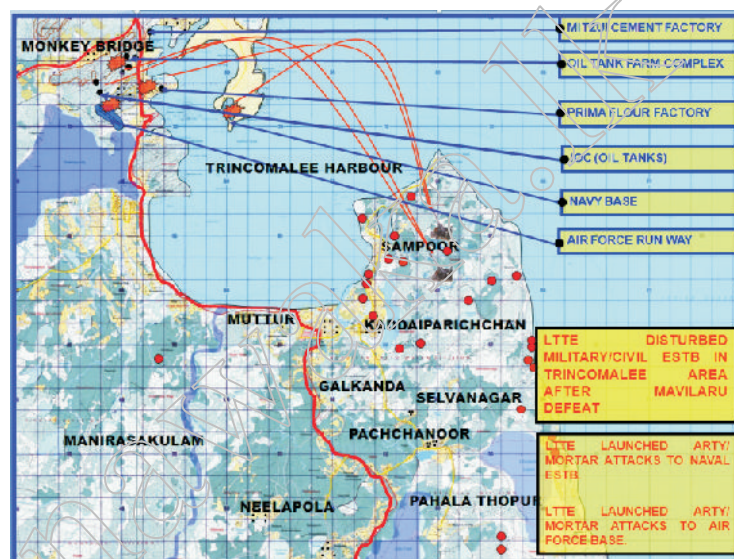
Charge of the Lion Brigade

This personal determination should be transformed into a social determination of all sectors, mobilising them to implement the plan. The active participation of people in the war is the first and foremost condition in winning any war waged by a head of state.

In the Sri Lankan scenario, the key was the active support given by nationalist forces to President Mahinda Rajapaksa in the 2005 presidential race and during the humanitarian operation that followed (2006-2009). Day by day these forces gathered momentum and defeated the various conspiracies that were hatched to scuttle the military offensive against the LTTE.

Initially, the country was divided. But as the winning streak continued, it became a single monolithic social mind of every citizen, beyond any social division or caste, creed, class or ethnicity. It was a righteous or just war against modern day barbarism.

The comprehensive politico-military strategy is comprised of three elements - Demilitarisation, Democratisation and Development. Demilitarisation was meant to completely annihilate the LTTE. While decimating the LTTE, elections would be held to choose elected representatives of the people. This would rule out permanent military rule of people's affairs. While this process was underway, development plans would also be implemented. The launch of Northern and Eastern development projects would



galvanise the people's trust and confidence in the government's democratisation process. The Mahinda Chinthanaya or President Rajapaksa's election manifesto envisaged this 3D comprehensive politico-military strategy. Later on, everyone would see that it had been successfully implemented.

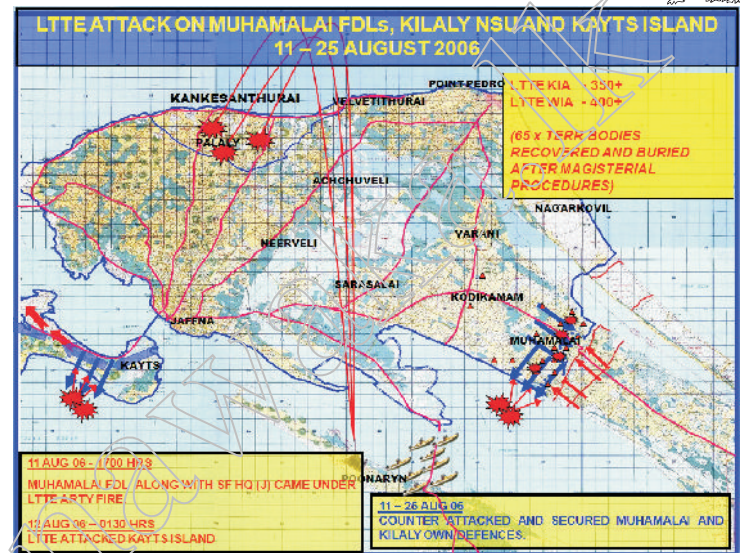
The LTTE closed the Mavil Aru anicut on 18th July 2006, hoping to achieve a long term military goal. It made a declaration to the world that it had closed the anicut because the Sinhala government was refusing to implement a pledged water project to Tamil areas (Sampur). But its ulterior motive was to chase out Sinhala and Muslim



inhabitants from south of Trincomalee, so that it could occupy those areas and finally lay siege to Trinco harbour, airport, city and the main supply route from Habarana to Trinco (Illustration I). Its aim was to encircle Trinco and take over Trincomalee Bay and the entire city. Simultaneously, it wanted to launch an attack on Jaffna by infiltrating and overrunning the Muhamalai-Nagarkovil Forward Defence Line. If this strategy had worked, the LTTE would have been able to take over the Jaffna-Palaly High Security Zone as well.

In 2000, the LTTE had made an unsuccessful attempt to overrun Jaffna-Palaly military complexes. The attempt was foiled because our forces managed to replenish their supplies through the main supply route via KKS and Trincomalee. Keeping that in mind, this time the LTTE planned to besiege and destroy Trincomalee first.

This strategy was fully exposed by the events that followed. On 25th April 2006, it made an assassination attempt on the Commander of the Sri Lankan army. Then it closed the anicut and chased out thousands of innocent civilians from Seruwila, Kinniya and Muttur divisions. Heavy guns, which had been deployed during the so-called peace time (2002-2004), were put into action by the LTTE and the Muttur jetty fell to the terrorists. It went on to attack Trincomalee harbour and tried to sink the Jetliner ship, which could have acted as a barrier to prevent other vessels moving out of the harbour (Illustration II). Following this, the LTTE launched attacks on



the Muhamalai-Nagarkovil axis, using its full conventional strength.

After the closure of the Mavil Aru anicut, there were a few obstacles and constraints to waging a full scale war against the LTTE. The wounded army commander was convalescing in hospital. The Defence Secretary's action plan to reorganise the forces had only just commenced. There was a shortage of manpower and military resources. Furthermore, people were scared of waging a full scale war, fearing it would devastate the entire country. Simply put, if people south of Trincomalee had vacated their villages, our forces would have been encircled by a hostile community.



Against all these odds, a decision was taken to act fast and decisively. By launching these attacks, VP and the LTTE had given us a justifiable reason to wage a full scale war against them. It was the only option left too. While Mavil Aru was under siege, our parliamentary group leader Venerable Rathana Thero visited the conflict area to assess the situation, as we thought that the people should not be allowed to vacate their villages. Our campaign to persuade the fleeing villagers to stop and return to their own places was a success. (During the first week of the Mavil Aru siege (25th to 30th July 2006) it was only the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) who supplied essential items to the displaced.) This was immediately followed by a decision by the President to launch a humanitarian operation to open the gates of Mavil Aru.

Simultaneously, Senior Presidential Adviser Basil Rajapaksa was entrusted to take care of the IDPs.

The UNP and the JVP both held press conferences referring to our initiative as an act of adventurism for cheap publicity. They sought a solution to the problem through dialogue. However, the JVP later abandoned its passive resistance and actively participated in the civil affairs of IDPs. The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress made a political blunder by accusing the Sri Lankan armed forces of the incidents in Sampur and surrounding areas. Most importantly, people were by then starting to develop a patriotic determination to fight the LTTE and they were responding to war efforts positively.



In the meantime, our forces had captured the Mavil Aru aricut and later defeated the LTTE in the Mutur-Kattaparichchan and Muhamalai-Nagarkovil areas simultaneously. Victory in these two decisive battles brought back the lost courage and determination of our forces.

Another important aspect of social mobilisation has to do with the strength of the economy to sustain the war. Many groups and economists had created the impression that our economy was not in a position to do this. They had warned that if the LTTE went on to destroy economic nerve centres such as power generation plants, reservoirs, ports and airports, the whole economy would collapse.

Many people reminded us of how the failure to sustain the war had led to the defeat of Germany in the Second World (Europe) War, while the US and the USSR, which had a smooth flow of resources, had triumphed in warfare. Also,



parallel to the decline in oil prices (to USD 10 per barrel in 1989), came the decline in the military prowess of the USSR. Meanwhile, the Sandinista government was overthrown by the people only a year after the Contras started attacking economic nerve centres in Nicaragua in 1979.

VP too tried this CIA-inspired Contra-style approach in the period between 1996 and 1999, bombing the Central Bank, oil refinery, World Trade Centre, airport etc. However, the Sri Lankan economy was resilient enough to absorb those shocks.

The Sri Lankan government spent an average of Rs. 21-23 billion annually during its defensive operations against the LTTE from 1991 to 1994. This was 4% of the national GDP. During its offensive operations like 'Riviresa-Jayasikuru' between 1995 and 2001, our defence budget rose to an annual average of Rs. 50 billion. But this was still only 4% of GDP. Interestingly, even during the so-called peace period of 2002 to 2005, the Sri Lankan defence budget stood at Rs. 67 billion per annum, once again 4% of GDP. Finally, during the real offensive period of humanitarian operations (2006-2009), our average defence budget rose to Rs. 165 billion annually. However, this amounted to no more than 4.5% - 5% of the national GDP.

The fact that we managed to keep our defence budget below 5% of GDP even while waging an all-out war against

terrorism shows our economic strength. It should also be noted that we maintained this percentage despite skyrocketing oil prices and inflation in 2008 and global recession in 2009.

Also, thanks to the vigilance of the forces and the people, we managed to prevent the LTTE from inflicting major damage to economic targets as it had done previously.

The people of this country, especially the poor working class, should be commended for the patience and dedication they displayed, despite the spiralling cost of living, and for their decision not to participate in agitations and general strikes aimed at destabilising the South. When the civilian and social difficulties borne by the public during the JVP's terrorist insurgency between 1987 and 1990 are compared with the burdens of this period, it is clear that the people went on with their day to day activities with very few hindrances during the biggest military conflict in Sri Lanka's history.





Quantitative and Qualitative Nature of SRI LANKA ARMED FORCES

It is very important to have the necessary manpower to win a war.

During ancient times, manpower was the only factor in conquering land, winning wars and occupying conquered territories. Later, the lethality of the weaponry used, training, organisational factors, the mode of transport and communications, the maintenance of supply lines, comprehensive war strategies, manoeuvrability and battle tactics became more important than the number of soldiers.

Centuries ago, we experienced South Indian invasions at regular intervals, mainly due to their superior manpower. Mao Zedong's Red Revolution against the Kuomintang was a success because Mao commanded superior and organised manpower.



The same scenario saw Giap (1953-1975) beating the sophisticated US forces.

The most important factor in our success against the LTTE was our superior manpower. We practiced the theory of concentration. That was how our military leaders were able to form many fighting formations, fronts and concentric defence lines, enhancing the mobilisation and manoeuvrability of our forces. The LTTE was fully aware of this fact. That is exactly why it made use of the so-called peace campaigns 'White Lotus' and 'Thawalama' to prevent southerners joining the army during the 'Jayasikuru' operation (1997-2000). This time, there were no such enemies within. Sinhala youth joined the forces in massive numbers to protect their motherland.

Over 18,000 Sri Lankan armed forces personnel sacrificed their lives on the battlefield from 1980 to 2006. The LTTE too acknowledged that during the same period, over 18,000 of its cadres had become so-called 'Mahaveeras'. According to independent analysts, this figure could have been anything between 22,000 and 24,000. Whatever the exact number, it is clear that the ratio of combatants killed in action on either side is approximately one to one.

This means that the LTTE could not have sustained a prolonged battle with the Sri Lankan forces. It has been estimated that in 2006, when the LTTE commenced their so-called Eelam War IV, the LTTE had 15,000 trained and

organised cadres, and an equal or greater number of active paramilitary men and supporters.

The Sri Lankan government, on the other hand, had been able to raise the strength of our combined forces to 300,000. The killing of a single combatant may thus have affected the LTTE twenty times as badly as our forces. In other words, every time a cadre of theirs was killed, the LTTE had to kill over 20 soldiers if they were to defeat our forces.

History makes it clear that this is a target the LTTE could not achieve. If we had continuously attacked the LTTE without any 'peace breaks' for at least three years, killing an average of 5,000 LTTE cadres per year, we could have annihilated the LTTE. It was this simple arithmetic that finally led to the success of the Sri Lankan armed forces. Regular recruitment drives, the concentration of the forces, the use of our full strength on the enemy, the absence of peace talks or peace breaks and sustaining our energy until the end was the basis of the three year comprehensive military plan executed by the Sri Lankan forces.

By the time the war was brought to an end on 22nd May 2009, nearly 40,000 LTTE cadres had been killed in action - from 1980 to 2009. Also, some 25,000 Sri Lankan armed forces personnel had sacrificed their lives. Civilian casualties remained below the 1,000 mark in the period between 2006 and 2009. LTTE claymore mines claimed over 250 lives, and more or less an equal number of Tamils were killed by the



LTTE as they tried to cross over to government-controlled areas during the last phase of war. When we compare these figures with those from Iraq, where 4,000 Allied soldiers lost their lives while some 650,000 civilians were killed (up to 2009), it goes without saying that our forces carried out the most efficient, humane and righteous operation in the contemporary military history of the world.

Malicious campaigns against military operations by INGOs, NGOs and even the state-owned media, with slogans such as 'Not a single youth, Not a single cent to war' in the period from 1997 to 2001 saw over 25,000 soldiers desert the forces. Operation 'Jayasikuru' was defeated not in the Wanni but in Colombo itself, by enemies within the government.

In addition, our forces were facing another challenge as experienced soldiers and war veterans who had joined the forces between 1984 and 1987 were opting to leave after completing 20 or 22 years of service with their pensions, as they were entitled to do.

Despite the odds and high intensity of the fighting in the Wanni, only 92,000 new recruits were taken to the Army, Navy, Air Force, Police and Civil Defence Force in 2008. Over 11,000 deserters rejoined the military in the same year, making it possible for the forces to concentrate the Wanni with enhanced strength to finish off the LTTE in its stronghold.



Many military analysts predicted major casualties among soldiers in the event of our forces reaching the LTTE's strongholds in the Wanni and further interior. They argued that in such an eventuality, our forces would be overstretched and thereby vulnerable to LTTE attacks. Others predicted a lightning strike by the LTTE, using its full strength to overrun our FDLs, resulting in a major retreat by panic-stricken soldiers. This kind of overstretching, abdomen attacks and fighting against our FDLs had happened in the past, especially during Operation 'Jayasikuru'.

This time too the LTTE tried these tactics, but it failed to achieve what VP expected because we had many fronts, FDL rings and additional forces to handle intruders and



infiltrators. On the other hand, enormous manpower strength was mobilised to maintain peace in the already liberated Eastern Province and to protect vital installations in other areas, thus avoiding explosions, VIP assassinations and massacres.

The qualitative nature of the armed forces is as important as the quantitative. The quality of any armed force depends on the power of weapons, training, organisation and technology used. Our national liberation struggles against colonial rulers failed to bear fruit primarily because of our weak firepower. Although our heroic ancestors fought with righteous intentions, compassion, patriotic determination and superior tactics, they were destroyed by the superior firepower and technology used by the colonial rulers in transportation and communications.

The LTTE used the so-called peace periods (1985-2005) to equip its cadres with many sophisticated armaments. Between 2002 and 2005, it formed three conventional forces with heavy artillery guns, rockets, missiles, pedal guns, battle tanks, fast attack boats, submersible vessels, diving scooters, fixed wing aircraft and helicopters, compelling our forces to acquire equal or more lethal armaments to be on par. When the LTTE captured two howitzer guns from the Mullaitivu base in 1996, our forces hesitated to buy MBRLs to match them. The result was the LTTE using these guns to overrun Elephant Pass, which was within the artillery range of the Jaffna-Palaly military

compound. If not for the assistance from Pakistan, we would have been defeated on the Jaffna front as well.

The first initiative made by the Defence Ministry under its new leadership was to establish a research centre under the command of the Secretary of Defence. Various inventors and researchers came forward and new innovations were brought into the forces. An instrument that could be used to defuse remote-controlled claymores and modified versions of battle tanks and navy speed crafts were produced. If we had initiated this production line in the early 1980s, it would have become a big industry and saved a lot of foreign exchange and commissions made by arms dealers and their political stooges.

The next crucial step was to establish a state-owned procurement company to purchase armaments. This was a major leap forward in enhancing discipline and morale among soldiers. In the 1980s and 1990s, the battle cry of the soldiers was 'we sacrifice, they earn'. In those days, the adage was that 'war in the Western world is a science, in Asia an art, and in Sri Lanka a business'. In that sense, the integrity shown by the Defence Secretary and three forces commanders was commendable. Notwithstanding economic constraints, we procured the required number of armoured tanks, heavy guns, rockets, missiles and anti-missile systems, attack craft, battleships and fighter planes, plus what was needed in terms of modern communications equipment, including a 3-D radar system and even UAVs.



Within a year, our forces had been modernised and were on par with any modern army in the world. Neither VP and the LTTE nor the Western powers anticipated that the armed forces would be upgraded in such a way.

Politicians, including H.E. the President, gave only the politico-military goals to be achieved by the forces. There was no political interference in defining the military agenda. Political divisions, a cancer within our armed forces, were totally eradicated.

The administrative structure too was revolutionised with the introduction of meritocracy over bureaucracy. Battle-hardened leaders emerged as commanders. New welfare schemes were introduced to uplift the living conditions of war hero families using the 'We Support Ourselves' campaign. There was a time when some depraved elements of society used to wait like vultures to exploit our soldiers when they returned home for holidays after hard work at the battlefield. Attitudes were drastically changed, while enhancing the dignity and self respect of the soldiers. This was manifested by the drastic drop in criminal charges against deserters. Finally, the human being behind the weapon was given a task to fulfil. The entire country was unified and a single force marched forward with its head held high.

The other important factor was training. The Special Task Force, the Army-Special Forces and the Commandos

remained very small groups. The main problem in the 1980s and 1990s was that although the number of personnel in our forces was over 100,000, the number of fighters specially trained to combat guerrilla warfare remained a mere few thousand. We therefore could not engage the LTTE head on because we had an equal or lesser number of combatants for direct fighting.

Within months, our special forces were trained and their numbers increased several times, so that they could outnumber the frontline LTTE fighting formations. The Navy and Air Force also trained their special forces to help ground forces if and when necessary. Even part of the Civil Defence Force was upgraded into special units, so that they too could make a contribution. The upgrading of numbers and training of the Civil Defence Force was a crucial factor, because it was they who really protected the cities and villages, as well as protecting the rear.

Civilians too joined Civil Defence Committees, and their vigilance was very helpful in identifying and destroying the LTTE's sleeper cells in other parts of the country. It was this constant state of alertness that prevented major counterattacks by the LTTE outside the main theatre of war.





The Enemy Position DILEMMA OF THE LTTE

Though VP appeared confident, he faced many a politico-military dilemma throughout the conflict. First and foremost, he was a prisoner of his own ideology. VP could not settle for a halfway or intermediate solution that fell short of Tamil Eelam.

When India introduced the Provincial Council system to Sri Lanka, which provided for even greater devolution of power than had been given to Indian States, VP rejected it outright, knowing perfectly well that India could not go beyond what Tamil Nadu had in the solution that it advocated for the North and East. When the Indo-Lanka or Rajiv-J.R. Accord was signed in 1987, the LTTE claimed that 683 cadres had already been killed by the Sri Lankan forces.



VP rejected the PC system saying that it would be a humiliation and betrayal of those members who had sacrificed their lives for Tamil Eelam.

When the newly-elected CBK government proposed a confederal system in 1995, VP once again rejected it, maintaining that over 3,000 LTTE cadres had given their lives for Tamil Eelam.

It was later revealed that he had raised the same issue when G.L. Peiris signed an agreement with Anton Balasingham (Oslo Pact) to explore the possibility of a federal system based on the right to internal self-determination on 5th December 2003. As far as VP was concerned, his solution to the problem was either peace in Tamil Eelam or eternal peace in the graveyard. The souls of dead LTTE cadres were haunting VP, or so he pretended.

Having failed to convince VP to accept a federal solution, Western countries subsequently claimed that it was a futile exercise to talk to VP and the LTTE. As a result, the European Union, which had been a safe haven for the LTTE, was compelled to proscribe the stubborn LTTE, also because they considered its attitude an insult to their dignity. The US had done the same.

VP then entered into discussions with the newly-elected president, Mahinda Rajapaksa, for a game of cat and mouse in the early part of 2006, only to display his intransigent nature. Both sides were playing for time.

While talks were going on, President Rajapaksa was able to build strong relationships with the newly emerging powers like China, Russia and India. This meant that, as far as the international arena was concerned, the ever-obstinate VP was fully exposed and cornered. This was an essential first step in destroying him externally.

The second challenge for VP was his lack of manpower. His much publicised victories of the 'Unceasing Waves' operation (1999-2000) were actually pyrrhic victories, meaning ones with huge costs. The LTTE admitted that more than 12,000 cadres had been killed in action between 1995 and 2001. Before that, the death toll was 3,000 (1983-1995). This shows that the Sri Lankan forces had inflicted irreparable damage on the LTTE. Although VP claimed a military victory, he could not convert this into a political victory.

VP entered into a peace agreement with the Ranil Wickremasinghe regime in 2002 with the intention of buying time to recruit cadres to rebuild its depleted strength. He also needed to translate his military victories into political endorsement, both locally and internationally, and to seek cover against global anti-terrorist sentiment etc. VP's tentacles were spread all over the country by way of staging Pongu Tamil (Reawakening of Tamils) festivals and forming Makkal Padai or people's militias. However, it was later proven that these forced recruits were unable to bear the



brunt of intensified war. They surrendered to the Sri Lankan forces in massive numbers, totalling around 9,000.

Over the years, it has been proven that the success of VP was based on the availability of cadres from the Eastern Province. Following the defection of Vinayagamoorthi Muralitharan, popularly known as Karuna, with 3,000 cadres, hundreds of them were reorganised and armed against the LTTE. The LTTE therefore faced a dual problem. One of the reasons why VP hurriedly declared war against the Sri Lankan forces at Mavil Aru was that Pottu Amman, his intelligence chief and archrival of Karuna, had discovered that Karuna was building a new military organisation with the help of Sri Lankan forces. The LTTE wanted to stop it at any cost, without giving the Karuna-Pillayan faction an opportunity to regroup.

Actually, VP was able to chase Karuna loyalists out of the Eastern Province, carrying out assassinations and using the gullible political hierarchy in Colombo. But it too came with a devastating cost.

Thanks to the power-hungry rulers of the Colombo elite and the Western powers, it was possible for VP to form a conventional armed force, though he was unable to sustain it. The LTTE could not bear the weight of conventional structures when confronted with a mighty conventional force. This same phenomenon was seen in Afghanistan in the case of Taliban. Militarily speaking, what VP should have



done after the Mavil Aru-Vakarai defeat was to convert his conventional force into a decentralised guerrilla movement. But VP hesitated to adopt that strategy, even at the final hour, resulting in a crushing defeat for the organisation.

Although VP's dictatorial, Neo-Nazi leadership could be said to be the basis for his success, this egoistical attitude of not consulting others or seeking consensus among at least the senior leaders was his weakest point as well. He killed his deputy Mahattaya in 1992, expelled and attempted to kill Karuna in 2004, and carried out hundreds of internecine killings in order to crush dissent. Although he was called the Sun God by his followers, VP was throughout the conflict an eternally insecure, weak leader.

The premature death of the respected LTTE military commander Balraj (who was once attacked by our heroic



LRRP group and flown to Singapore for treatment by the Sri Lankan government in 2003) and the death of Balasingham created considerable vacuums in the structure of the LTTE. Ageing, an increasing number of marriages among experienced cadres and the fat cat attitude of these families were some of the problems VP was facing. On the other hand, the top leaders were suffering from a fear psychosis and had to restrict their movements due to regular LRRP infiltrations of the Wanni jungles and air targeting of fortified bunkers. Very often, the LTTE's senior leaders were physically unable to command, creating organisational problems as well. When they were encircled, all the top leaders got trapped like mice.

In the modern world, every guerrilla leader has to face the challenge of time. They should either win or die in the first 30 years. VP found himself in the final years of this guerrilla cycle. On the other hand, the Tamil people were getting fed up with his seemingly never-ending war. It should be noted that not a single protest campaign was launched by Jaffna or Trinco Tamils in favour of the LTTE, even when Tamil Nadu and the Tamil diaspora were strongly agitating on the streets in the first half of 2009.

This so-called liberator of the Tamil people was using brute force for nothing more than his personal glory. Thousands of Tamil people silently prayed that the LTTE would be finished. They simply crossed over to government-controlled areas and subsequently voted with the government (2007 in the



East, 2009 in the North). The so-called Eelam Tamils in Western capitals also slowly conceded that the LTTE was close to its end and their investment going to waste.

On the other hand, patriotic forces had been able to galvanise the true Sri Lankan diaspora community to fight against the LTTE.

After the 9/11 attacks, it was revealed that the LTTE had been sharing its technology with other international terrorist



outfits. When the US forces were trying to hunt down the LTTE, VP asked KP to betray the connections he had cultivated in East Asia to the CIA. But the US intelligence services revealed that the LTTE had been able to infiltrate their State Department as well. Reliable sources revealed that the LTTE was a partner in Khan's nuclear ring that operated between East Asia and North Africa. The Indian defence establishment also got to know that the LTTE had been infiltrating the opposition BJP and was trying to enhance their relationship with Congress, although it had killed its former leader Rajiv Gandhi.

Though Indian politicians joined hands with Tamil Nadu political circles, the Indian defence establishment knew very well that it would soon be opening its second front in Tamil Nadu if it allowed the LTTE to build up a power base there. VP was equally aware that India as a whole was willing to have a 'regime change' in Tamil Eelam! That is why his political show in Tamil Nadu failed to deliver the goods.

VP therefore had to rely totally on Western powers. But Sri Lanka was firm in its position and was fast cultivating China and Russia, the newly emerging super powers of the multi-polar new world, while playing with India and Pakistan diplomatically. The new Asian hemisphere from Iran to Japan, including China, Russia, India and Pakistan, firmly supported Sri Lanka to dramatically change the old world order. VP could not understand this emerging phenomenon as he was living in a bygone era in which the West



dominated. His diaspora consultants also regarded the West as the only International Community that mattered.

These are the local and international complications faced by the LTTE. It simply overestimated its military strength, old military strategies and bargaining power with Western countries, while underestimating the strength of the nationalist forces, the Sri Lankan armed forces and the new Asian alliances and their new geopolitical ambitions.





The Military Leadership STRATEGY AND TACTICS

For VP, the most sentimental part of the initial phase of the humanitarian operation was that he had to fight with his own mirror image. The Sri Lankan forces were adopting the same tactics - forming clusters of small group-operated deep penetrating units to hit and run - that the LTTE had once used against them to such devastating effect.

By 2005, VP was confident that he had the conventional capacity to fight the Sri Lankan forces in his Northern and Eastern territories, with superior manpower and firepower. In fact, this overestimation was the Achilles heel of his military thinking. He did not have the capacity to sustain a prolonged battle with the Sri Lankan forces. In the 1980s, with the aid of Indian operatives, the LTTE had successfully adopted guerrilla tactics to attack the Sri Lankan military, forcing it to retreat. A few hundred LTTE cadres were able to hold off a few thousand members of the Sri Lankan forces. This time, hundreds of thousands of Sri Lankan soldiers adopted guerrilla-style warfare against a few thousand LTTE cadres! How could VP survive? He could not. The most successful strategy adopted by our forces was to get the 1980s young VP to meet the 2000s old VP on the battlefield.



The Vietcong called that type of small group operation 'Blooming Lotus'. It was a strategy that they used to great effect in the famous 'Tet offensive'. 'Blooming Lotus' - or rather its mirror image - was successfully adopted by our military leadership.

Earlier, the response of our forces to the LTTE's dirty war tactics was to attack and take revenge on whoever was there, full of anger and hatred. That hatred towards innocent Tamil civilians caused immense damage to the Sri Lankan forces. They were actually playing into the hands of the LTTE, while RAW operatives were just waiting for a Bangladesh Mukthi Bahini-style operation from the Tamil terrorists (1984-1987). The US-led forces committed this grave mistake in Korea, Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos, and they are doing the same in Iraq and Afghanistan today.

The same mistake was made in the South when the Sri Lankan forces tried to deal with the guerrilla attacks of the JVP in 1987 and 1988. Even non-JVPers were tagged as JVP cadres, and human rights abuses resulted in the government becoming increasingly unpopular, both locally and internationally. A no-win situation emerged in 1988.

However, in mid-1989, a few intelligent Sri Lankan army officers started to use 'mirror image' tactics against JVP military cadres. Clearly identified targets were summarily destroyed, avoiding mass arrests and torture. Inexperienced JVP military leaders met their experienced mirror images. One Munasinghe, a top JVP leader, was

shot at Ratmalana, instilling fear in the others. Within six months, all the military-politico leaders of the JVP except Somawansa Amarasinghe were eliminated. Somawansa Amarasinghe sought RAW help to retreat to India.

After an unsuccessful LTTE attempt on the life of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga in 1999, President Kumaratunga sanctioned the use of the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol. However, both President J.R. Jayewardene and President Premadasa were too scared to resort to that kind of strategy, for fear of the LTTE's response. Even President Kumaratunga attempted to seek an assurance for her life when VP asked for her assistance in sending Balasingham to the UK for medical treatment in 1996.

The initial operations of our LRRP were highly successful. They were able to kill a few top LTTE leaders, including the head of the air wing, Shankar, who was a strongman and close ally of VP. They also nearly took the life of the LTTE's military leader, Balraj. People called this unit the MAHASON force - a local devil that attacks and kills people without leaving a trace. The iron curtain or myth of the impenetrability of the Wanni was exploded. Small, brave and well-trained groups successfully infiltrated LTTE strongholds where artillery guns and fighter jets were unable to perform ('Jayasikuru' 1997-2001). If we had tried similar attacks against the LTTE in the 1980s, the conflict would not have gone beyond our control.



One of the key purposes of VP's plea to sign the so-called peace accord in 2002 was to neutralise the LRRP. During that period (2002-2005) the LTTE killed most of the LRRP operatives. The Millennium City exposure is a classic example of political betrayal of the military.

It has been shown that the 'Blooming Lotus' strategy was most effective when it came to crippling the LTTE's supply route, forward defence lines and even its senior leadership. Small groups are beautifully practical and equally lethal. The 'Jayasikuru' operation proved that mass scale induction of heavy weapons and manpower could be counterproductive, expensive and destructive. Between 1997 and 2000, over 12,000 soldiers sacrificed their lives, lost thousands of acres of gained territory and left behind significant amounts of equipment, thus helping the enemy. VP was expecting to use his newly-acquired heavy weapons, including the howitzers, MBRLs and armoured tanks. But small penetrating groups threw the LTTE off course, and it could not use these standoff weapons.

Giap practiced the same tactics against the US army, which had superior firepower.

The same strategy was adopted in the sea. Earlier, fairly organised Sea Tigers were easily able to destroy our battleships, causing heavy damage. The Sri Lanka Navy formed a small fast boat squadron with very high mobility to limit Sea Tiger movements.

The use of clusters of small groups on land and in the sea was both speedy and economical, as damage to them was manageable.

One of the main objectives of our forces was to understand the LTTE. Its discipline, degree of obedience, pathways and supply routes, the way it organised before major attacks and the general response of its cadres when hammered and scattered was studied carefully. Most analysts, as well as the general public, had a notion that LTTE cadres were subject to rigid discipline, which they showed by swallowing cyanide. But this was imposed on them with the use of intimidation. If that fear could be removed, they would become very timid and ordinary. Even VP and his high commanders proved that they were a bunch of fearful, greedy and disloyal people.

Cadres followed orders as directed, like robots. But if something happened unexpectedly, they were not creative enough to adjust the execution of an operation appropriately, fearing that this would go against the rules. For example, when a few LTTE suicide attackers were entrusted with the mission of destroying the World Trade Centre (1997), they only partially executed the plan. They simply exploded themselves when they were trapped in the Lake House building, because they only had orders to attack the World Trade Centre. If they had been creative - like the Mumbai attackers - they would have developed an alternative plan and inflicted tremendous damage. The



same thing happened when LTTE cadres who were tasked to attack and destroy the airport got trapped (2008). A few of them exploded themselves when they realised that their plan had been foiled. This clearly showed that if we could undo a simple part of their grand plan, they would become panic stricken, since they lacked the ability to adapt to a new situation. Their iron will and discipline could easily boomerang on them.

Thanks to the Premadasa regime, the LTTE had developed a new operational strategy to encircle and destroy our military bases. In 1990, they successfully isolated, surrounded and destroyed a number of military bases along the A9 road, including Mankulam, Kilinochchi and Paranthan, compelling the Sri Lankan forces to withdraw. They then adopted the same strategy to destroy Pooneryn and Elephant Pass (1991 and 1993), and the Sri Lankan forces suffered heavy losses. Our forces were unable to read the LTTE's strategy and plan innovative moves to protect our bases. This lethargic attitude finally led to the total destruction of the Mullaitivu base in 1996, then both Kilinochchi and Paranthan in 1998, and Elephant Pass in 2000.

However, this time our military strategists correctly read the LTTE's tactics. Focusing on one base camp, they physically observed the camp and its surrounding area. Then they planned out the operation phase by phase. It involved hundreds of cluster groups. Each of these groups was

tasked with particular military targets - bunkers, trenches, bunds or vital installations. When the offensive began, they spread all over the surrounding area, guided by intelligence operatives. They clustered in stages and then thousands attacked in waves. A spatially-distributed wave was transformed into temporally-distributed waves. That was how the LTTE was able to destroy Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi and Elephant Pass. If we had deployed small groups around our bases, we could have intimidated and cut their line of command and wave-like combatant movements. If we had been successful enough to break one line completely and make the LTTE panic, they would have retreated. So this new anti-wave encirclement strategy was used to protect our Forward Defence Lines and bases. As a result, no such unceasing waves were experienced during the fighting in the period between 2006 and 2009 from the LTTE side.

The other point was that we were able to identify their supply and transport routes, both on land and in the sea. As far as land is concerned, they used to move from Wanni to the East using forest patches and wildlife corridors connecting protected areas.

One important thing our army did was to block these routes effectively and deploy ambush teams to restrict their movements. In the operations in the Eastern theatre in 2006 and 2007, LTTE pathways from Mullaitivu to Panama were cleared. It was later reported that when Ramesh came with a team of reinforcements to rescue Bahnu in 2007, he was



chased back to Wanni. The same thing happened when VP and Pottu Amman tried to break our line and retreat to the Mullawelli and Oddusudan jungles in 2009. After our forces liberated the East in 2007, LTTE leaders still bragged about how they would return to Thoppigala and wage a guerrilla war. But the effective severing of pathways saw guerrilla teams led by Ram being easily vanquished in the Kokkadicholai and Yala-Panama-Lahugala jungles. In this way, the Tamil separatists saw their final ray of hope fade away.

The Sri Lankan forces adopted a multi-front theory in which combatants moved like water currents, using the least resistant places to break through. This strategy was first adopted during the Mutur operation in August 2007. The LTTE was able to capture the Mutur jetty and use heavy weapons to attack Trinco harbour and the military complex. Our forces made a multi-front pincer movement towards Mutur, aiming for the LTTE's base complex in Vakarai. Clustered small groups were then put into action, one after the other, to hit and destroy LTTE bunker lines in the forefront, preoccupying the LTTE cadres. This is how we made our breakthrough, after keeping them busy with the task of reconstructing and protecting their bunkers for days, exhausting them, so that their cadre lines became elongated and thinned out. At this point, the LTTE was forced to make a choice, because they could not resist our forces on every front. Next our forces advanced like flowing

water, through lowland and with less resistance. They split their front into several sections, attacking both the tail and the head of the LTTE lines simultaneously. Unable to face this multi-front military juggernaut, the LTTE retreated. That was the winning formula of our forces.

The LTTE was forced to withdraw from Mutur to protect Sampur. Then they had to leave Sampur to protect their base complex in Vakarai. Finally, they were partially destroyed and totally evicted from Vakarai as well.

A modernised version of this multi-front manoeuvring experience of the Eastern theatre was introduced in the North on the Wanni front too. First the Sri Lankan forces created a single front (58-Silavatura), then two (57-Madhu), three and four (Task Force I and II - either side of the A9), five (59 from Nedunkerni-Weli Oya), and then another two fronts in Muhamalai (53) and Nagar Kovil (55). It took several months to exhaust the LTTE cadres in the Mannar and Madhu areas. Then the mobilisation process commenced.

Unlike in the 'Jayasikuru' operation where we had only one front, this multipronged attack could not be resisted simultaneously by the LTTE. So it was forced to prioritise the fronts it would concentrate on. The LTTE chose the Muhamalai-Nagarkovil axis and the Kilinochchi axis over the other fronts. So the forces moving via the A32, A9 and Weli Oya could advance swiftly. While the LTTE was



entrenched in its own trench-cum-bund in Kilinochchi, our forces had gone all the way through Vedithalativu-Nachchikuda-Pooneryn to Paranthan (58) and Pulliankulam-Mankulam-Kokawil (Task Force II) along the A9, sandwiching the LTTE in Kilinochchi. The LTTE was trading land for time when our forces marched continuously through multiple fronts into enemy territory wherever possible, inflicting heavy damage on them.

In the chronicled history of Sri Lanka, King Dutugemunu (130 BC) was among those who successfully adopted this multi-front strategy. The famous epic about the Ten Commanders (Dasamaha Yodhayas) clearly spelt out the nature of the multipronged attack that defeated King Elara. King Vijayabahu I also used a multi-front strategy to defeat the mighty Chola Emperors Raja Raja and Rajendra (1077 AC). King Vijayabahu was a master military strategist who went a long way to beat a Chola emperor whose flag carried a Tiger emblem. Most Tamil racists saw VP as a reincarnation of this Chola Emperor.

As far as modern military history is concerned, it is Napoleon who is best known for adopting the multi-front strategy. He used it to defeat the mighty Prussians, and then the combined armies of the Russians, Italians and Spanish. The defeat of Prussia and the strategies of Frederick the Great resulted in the Prussian-German philosopher Karl von Clausewitz studying Napoleonic strategies and formulating counterstrategies to form a modern army for Germany.

Germans adopted these new theories laid down by von Clausewitz to win over their rivals in the First and Second World Wars.

With this multiple war front where each front was a complete mini Army, the command structure of the forces was also reformed. Meritocracy was introduced over seniority and bureaucracy. New, young, talented and determined commanders were given tasks to expedite the comprehensive military strategy. They were very successful and even the morale of low level soldiers was considerably increased, describing the qualities of their commanders as 'better come in front than go in behind'.

Also, military hardware and other logistical supplies were given on time, ignoring the traditional bureaucratic red tape.

As far as the LTTE was concerned, its command structure was in a state of complete retrogression. Old, lethargic, individual strategies were adopted even at the eleventh hour, when their top leadership was totally surrounded.

The LTTE's greatest strength was its pre-emptive strikes on military or political targets. Its massive attack on the IPKF at Jaffna University slowed down to some extent India's major operation 'Pawan' (Wind), which was aimed at disarming the LTTE. The attack on police stations in the East on 11th June 1990 completely surprised the Premadasa regime. Likewise, the newly-elected CBK regime was completely taken aback



by the assault on Trinco harbour and the SAM attack on the Sri Lankan Air Force (19th and 28th April 1995).

The final major operation launched by the LTTE terrorists was the closing down of Mavil Aru. But from there onwards the Sri Lankan forces took the initiative. Earlier it was the LTTE who decided the Ws - where, when, why and for what - in the war. But it was now the Sri Lankan forces who decided the time and venue of the battle. Our forces had been on a defensive war footing earlier, but subsequently launched the offensive, forcing the LTTE to take to its heels.

The other important factor was the rapid movement and mobility of our forces. Earlier, when they captured an area, it took several months to consolidate before the next operation. On the other hand, peace talks gave the LTTE enough breathing space to regroup and consolidate its positions. But this time our movements were like multiple unceasing waves without interruption - no peace talks or breathers. Having completely won the war in the East in July 2007, our forces immediately shifted to the Wanni theatre, leaving very little time for the LTTE to prepare for the onslaught.

Another factor that contributed to our success was our ability to block the enemy's supply route. Parallels of what we did could be drawn from the India-Bangladesh-Mukti Bahini joint operation in East Pakistan in 1971. On 4th December 1971, India declared war to liberate Bangladesh

(East Pakistan, some 1,200 miles away from the other part - West Pakistan). Before that an invasion took place. The RAW systematically used Mukti Bahini to sink Pakistan's supply ships in Dhaka ports. They did the job effectively, isolating East Pakistan for a short period. Indian armed forces used that to launch a blitzkrieg and reach Dhaka, occupying it on 14th December 1971, within a matter of ten days. The isolated Pakistani army duly surrendered to the Indian army on 16th December 1971.

In the same way, cutting off two of the main sea routes used by the LTTE - from Vedithalativu to India and from Mullaitivu to East Asia - was essential. With precise targeting, our brave Navy personnel were able to destroy seven floating armouries of the LTTE in 2006 and 2007 in deep sea battles near Malaysia-Indonesia and Australia. Completely surprised, VP sacked his procurement chief KP and Castro was appointed to oversee the procurement department. Finally, our forces were able to secure the entire western coast from Colombo to Jaffna, restricting the Tamil Nadu-Kerala-Wanni supply route, while imposing a sea blockade in the Chalai-Trinco sea area to cover the Mullaitivu-East Asia supply line.

Meanwhile, the major roads towards Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Vishavamadu, Pudukudduyirippu etc. were successfully blocked, cutting off supplies to top LTTE bases. This strategy of cutting off routes was used effectively in the eastern theatre as well as in the Wanni.



Operation WANNI

How the Lion Vanquished the Tiger



Operation Wanni was launched on 2nd September 2007 with the liberation of the Silawatura area. Until then, the Sri Lankan forces had built up a strong presence along the Vavuniya-Medavachchiya-Mannar main road. But areas north (Madhu) and south of this road were held by the LTTE. The southern region included Nochchiyagama in the Anuradhapura district and Vilpattu in the Puttalam district. The LTTE used these areas as launching pads to attack civilian areas nearby and to infiltrate Colombo and Negombo. After 1985, these areas were somewhat abandoned with the closure of Wilpattu Park.



The Sri Lankan forces operated from Wilpattu and liberated the entire area, including the fishing village of Silawatura.

The 58 Division was tasked with capturing the western coastline along the A32 road from Mannar to Pooneryn. The aim of this operation was to reopen an alternative land route to Jaffna and give some additional security to the northwestern coast. It would block both the LTTE's supply routes, via Kerala and Tamil Nadu, while giving some additional security to the Norochcholai coal power plant and oil exploration sites in the Mannar Basin. Meanwhile, the 57 Division was assigned to liberate the Madhu area and the 54 Division and Task Forces II and III were sent to secure the line along the A9 north of Vavuniya.

The 59 Division commenced its operation from Weli Oya, aiming to liberate the Nayaru-Kokilai lagoons and Nedunkerni so that the LTTE could not further infiltrate the Weli Oya-Padaviya area. The LTTE was by then bluffing as to how it would liberate the entire Weli Oya area up to Trincomalee. The deployment of the 59 Division towards Nedunkerni-Oddusudan-Mullaiyaweli and Mullaitivu was the boldest decision taken at that point, since it was aimed at attacking the strongest position of the LTTE.

This multi-front strategy was extended by mobilising the 53 and 55 Divisions in the Nagarkovil-Muhamalai area. The LTTE had strengthened these land strips since it believed that one day it could penetrate and destroy the Sri Lankan

forces there and conquer the Jaffna peninsula. So mobilisation of these two divisions to attack and inflict damage on the Forward Defence Lines created a lot of issues for the LTTE [See Pg 64 for the Illustration].

Having multiple fronts, with each being a complete armed front, could be explained as a segmenting of the forces to a certain extent. Initially, it looked like a chaotic arrangement. But it was controlled chaos, aiming at dividing enemy fronts and conquering them. According to the 'Blooming Lotus' principle, hundreds of small groups operated beyond our line of control, harassing the LTTE and tiring its cadres.

As in the Eastern theatre, this strategy worked very well. The LTTE was forced to make choices. It was forced to conduct a defensive war, carefully picking their battles. The LTTE was not in a position to resist all the fronts simultaneously, due to limitations in manpower and firepower. Again, as in the Eastern theatre, with multiple fronts and controlled chaos, the LTTE had to prioritise its battles, undermining many of the fronts.

It seemed as though the LTTE was determined to protect the Jaffna line and areas southwest of Kilinochchi. Thus the brunt of the war was borne by the 57, 53, and 55 Divisions. Some military analysts announced to the world that the 57 Division was stuck in the Madhu area. The LTTE employed its dirty war tactics, using Madhu Statue and the sacred area around the church for war purposes. Mannar Bishop



Rayappu Joseph, known to be a staunch LTTE supporter, allowed his juniors to carry the statue into LTTE dominated areas in Vellankulam. The aim of the terrorists was to rouse Catholic religious sentiments in South Asia as well as in Europe against the government and drag the Vatican into its dirty war. But the very patient 57 Division liberated the entire Madhu area on 24th April 2008 - after seven months of hard fought battles - without harming the church. Building on this, the 58 Division liberated the Adampan area north of Mannar on 9th May 2008.

While the 57 Division was confronting the LTTE, the 58 Division moved further north to take over the Sea Tiger base at Vedithalativu. During the 'Jayasikuru' operation of 1999, the forces fought hard to take over this base, but were unable to do so. This time, the LTTE had hardened its resistance. The 58 Division turned the other way, distracting the LTTE. Bypassing the enemy front, it attacked the LTTE from the opposite side, where they were least expected. These flexible strategies completely outsmarted the LTTE.

With the fall of Vedithalativu, the 58 Division moved to the strategic junction of Vellankulam. The LTTE base complex in the Mallawi area was situated half way along the Mankulam-Vellankulam road, which was one of the main supply routes from the west coast to the Wanni. After liberating Giant's tank and the rice bowl area, the 57 Division moved to Kalvilan and Thunnukai. As the LTTE focused on the advance of the 57 Division, the 58 Division pushed through

strong resistance and entered Vellankulam in August 2008, giving a breather to the 57 Division by taking over strategic Mallawi and thus completely cutting off the LTTE's supply routes.

It should be noted that by this time our forces were moving through heavy jungles instead of using the A9 road. They had built their own supply routes and did not depend on a single one. They thereby avoided the high casualty rates reported in the 'Jayasikuru' operation along the A9 road (1997-2000).

Afterwards, the 57 Division moved to Akkarayankulam, where the deadliest battles took place. When the 57 Division reached the Akkarayankulam tank area, they confronted a new LTTE war trap - a 'trench-cum-bund' with a human shield. The bund was built in a somewhat sophisticated way, considering the elevation and contours of the area. It is believed that the architect of this trap was none other than Theepan, promoted as the LTTE's overall military commander after the premature death of Balraj on 20th May 2008. The primary aim of the 'trench-cum-bund' was to act as a natural barrier against the advancing troops. As the LTTE's overall strategy was to trade land to buy time, it had to delay the rapid advance of the forces. Its other idea was to make use of the expected monsoon rains to create huge water bodies in low-lying areas around Kilinochchi to act as water traps with floating mines. The



LTTE thought that this would give them a chance to separate our forces and defeat them comprehensively.

Most Tamil separatists were propagating the idea that Kilinochchi would be the Stalingrad of the Sri Lankan forces when the monsoon set in between October and February. Theepan and his men came forward and bitter fighting erupted.

The multi-front mode of operation showed its great advantage here too. As the 57 Division was entrenched in Akkaryakulum, so was the LTTE. The 58 Division marched northwards, while Task Forces II and III moved to Pulliankulam-Kankarayakulam and then to Mankulam alongside the A9, cutting off the supply routes to Mankulam and Mullaitivu. The 59 Division made swift progress. They passed Janakapura, overrunning the 1-4 Base Camp complex, and reached Alumpeal, covering the entire Kokilai lagoon on 11th November 2008. The 58 Division made highly strategic military gains when they reached Pooneryn and opened the land route to Jaffna on 18th November 2008. As a result, the grand plan of the LTTE to encircle the Jaffna peninsula using Pooneryn as a launching point was totally foiled. On the same day, using a pincer movement and attacking from the side, Task Forces II and III were able to capture an equally important location - a hub - Mankulam [Illustration - Pg 64].

The LTTE and VP realised that while they were heavily occupied in the Akkarayankulam bund and Muhamalai-

Nagarkovil axis, the Sri Lankan forces had rapidly advanced forward into other important areas. It showed that the Sri Lankan forces could outmanoeuvre the LTTE and weaken and subject it to dilemmas, as all its strategies were obsolete and rigid. While the LTTE's strategy of trading land for time and not engaging on all fronts resulted in it choosing Kilinochchi as its centre of gravity, the Sri Lankan forces showed their ability to outwit, outsmart and outmanoeuvre the LTTE. VP's inflated 'war genius' ego was deflated as never before.

After the Sri Lankan forces reached the Mallawi area, the LTTE opened another front. This was a political front that involved organising the Tamil Nadu people. Suddenly a chorus of anti-Sri Lankan government slogans came from every part of Tamil Nadu and political parties were agitating for Tamil Eelam. VP openly declared that capturing Kilinochchi was simply a daydream of President Rajapaksa. Government spokesmen announced that the Sri Lankan forces were at the periphery of Kilinochchi town. The LTTE took the bait. Sri Lankan propaganda machines manufactured various stories to match the agendas of the LTTE. The security forces were actually advancing as slowly as possible. Since the LTTE was heavily engaged in the Muhamalai, Nagarkovil and Kilinochchi areas, the Sri Lankan forces were rapidly advancing towards strategically more important Paranthan Junction (58 Division) and were also aiming to cut off the Oddusuddan-Mullathivu supply routes (59 Division) [Illustration - Pg 64].



As far as the Wanni theatre was concerned, Paranthan was the natural centre of gravity of the war. If the Sri Lankan forces captured Paranthan, the two strongholds of the LTTE - Kilali-Elephant Pass and Kilinochchi - would be effectively wedged. Separation of these two nerve centres would result in a divide and conquer strategy. But the LTTE and VP focused on political agitations and their dignity was attached to Kilinochchi. Agitations in Western capitals and in Tamil Nadu were rotating around Kilinochchi, which was considered to be the war capital of so-called Tamil Eelam.

The Sri Lankan forces exploited this situation to the maximum. A mirror image of the LTTE's 'Unceasing Waves' operation of November 1999 was launched. Our forces launched overwhelming attacks with high speed and mobility. The LTTE had no time to think, prepare or counteract. It was a blitzkrieg in every sense. On 1st January 2009, the 58 Division captured the most strategic Paranthan Junction. Then the 57 Division captured Kokavil and took over southern parts of Kilinochchi. Thereafter, the 58 Division moved southwards, effectively sandwiching Kilinochchi. Then the LTTE knew that it was going to get encircled. It hastily retreated to the Vishwamadu area. On 5th January 2009, the 53 and 55 Divisions came forward and demolished the LTTE's Muhamalai-Nagurkovil Forward Defence Lines. The LTTE then realised that the 58 Division was moving fast towards Elephant Pass and the Kilali



lagoon. As a result, it finally decided to retreat from Kilali-Elephant Pass, where it had triumphed in 2000.

On 9th January 2009, the combined 53-55 Divisions met the 58 Division at Elephant Pass, ending the 20 year old LTTE occupation of the A9 road. Within nine days (1st to 9th January 2009), our forces were able to liberate some 40 kilometres, all the way from Kokavil to Muhamalai. Finally, those who died to liberate the A9 had got their deserved respect and martyrdom. Although the LTTE tried hard to protect Kilinochchi for political prestige, the reason for blocking Muhamalai-Nagarkovil was entirely military. At the



outset, they wanted Elephant Pass to launch the final assault to take over Jaffna. VP, however, knew very well that over 30,000 soldiers and the bulk of the battle tanks and heavy guns were deployed to save Jaffna. The LTTE wanted to stop this military power from being used and wanted to cripple the capacity of the Sri Lankan forces to launch a mass scale offensive.

The 59 Division bravely moved without hesitation to Kumalamunai and Mullayawelli, effectively cutting the LTTE's main supply route to Mullaitivu. The 58 Division rapidly moved along the Paranthan-Mullaitivu road, isolating the Vishwamadu and Pudukudyiruppu strongholds. The 59 Division made further inroads and captured areas south of the Nandikadal lagoon and the LTTE's military capital of Mullaitivu on 25th January 2009. Only then did the battered and outwitted VP realise that since they were entrenched in Kilinochchi, the Sri Lankan forces were making major strides and completely sealing the entire coastal area from Mullaitivu to Trincomalee for the first time in Eelam War history. It should also be noted that because of the 59 Division's early capture of Oddusuddan and the Nandikadal South area, no LTTE infiltration or retreat to Weli Oya was possible. As a result, the final attempt by VP and Pottu Amman to retreat into the Oddusudan jungle was foiled [Illustration - Pg 66].

The 55 Division came with another surprise when it moved boldly from Chundikulam to Chalai via lagoons and wetland

on 5th February 2009. They finally captured Chalai, the main Sea Tiger base that Soosai used to mount attacks on the Navy. The Navy was also encircling the entire area, obstructing Sea Tiger movements.

The government then declared a 'No Fire Zone' in the Vishwamadu area to absorb Western and Indian pressure on human rights issues.

Showing its ruthlessness, the LTTE forced Tamil civilians to follow as it retreated. After the much publicised Kilinochchi debacle, VP reappointed KP as his international coordinator and suddenly there was a chorus of agitations speaking of a humanitarian crisis. Everyone seemed to accept that the LTTE was on the verge of defeat. The Vishwamadu area was LTTE's main supply base. Their so-called airports, weapon factories and communications infrastructure were all based in this area. The Pudukudyiruppu area was generally used as the residential area of the LTTE top leadership.

The 58 Division made its next move by moving north of the A35 road, while the 57 Division was emerging from the Iranamadu tank area. Task Forces II and III were operating in the general area along Udayarkattu tank. Task Force IV was moving east of Udayarkattu. Then Soosai and Theepan tried another tactic. They flooded the whole area, breaking the bunds of the tanks. Their strategy was to allow the 58 Division to move towards Vishwamadu and then to blow up the Udayarkattu tank bund, thereby obstructing the forward



march of the 58 Division.

Simultaneously, they planned to blow up the Iranamadu tank bund so that the 57 Division too would be hit by floods, thus isolating the 58 Division (Illustration VIII). The coordinated attack via land and flooded area on the 57 and the 58 Division had the potential to inflict heavy damage on the Sri Lankan forces and the State's will to fight the war. Such a situation would leave space for it to negotiate another peace accord, the LTTE would have thought.

It blew up the Udayarkattu tank bund, but failed to achieve the desired effect on the 58 Division. Having anticipated the LTTE's dirty war tactic, the 57 Division hurriedly captured the bund of the Iranamadu tank to prevent it from being blown up. Two suicide cadres who were entrusted with the mission to blast it surrendered to the 57 Division. Finally, the flooding caused by blowing up the tank bund inflicted damage on the LTTE.



The civilians moved away from Vishvamadu, followed by the LTTE. The LTTE was confined to Pudukudyiruppu and the government declared a new 'No Fire Zone' from Pudumathalan to Vadduwal. One of the aims of the 'Jayasikuru' operation was to capture Pudukudyiruppu - operating from Oddusuddan - in 1999. But a pre-emptive LTTE attack on Oddusuddan reversed the gains of 'Jayasikuru'. Now the same area was encircled by the 53, 55 and 58 Divisions, Task Forces II, III and IV and the 59 Division. The 57 Division was operating as a rearguard support to deal with possible LTTE attempts to break through.



As time was running out, VP took a decision to attack the encircling line of PTK on 8th March 2009. His aim was to break through our line, go behind and attack from there. The LTTE expected that such a breakthrough would put our forces on the defensive. The LTTE had engaged a similar tactic during the 'Jayasikuru' operation in 1999 and had managed to breach our FDL. VP wasn't aware that the Sri Lankan forces had learned their lesson from the past and had formed four lines to resist any such possible intrusions. Behind the line, the 57 Division was also on guard. VP's old tactics did not work. The LTTE intruders were trapped, outgunned and destroyed. But VP failed to learn from the experience.

He planned another assault. This time he selected his best fighters. His so-called elite forces were called upon. The Charles Anthony Regiment, Imran Pandian Regiment, Jeyanthan Regiment of the East and the Malathi and Soothia Women Regiments were tasked with the job. Theepen was appointed the overall commander. Amitab, Gadafi, Keerthi, Durga, Vidusha, Swarnam, Jeyam, Banu and VP himself were there to execute this major assault. Their key aim was to use an 'Unceasing Waves' style operation to create an opening for the top leaders to escape to the Weli Oya jungles. But they did not know that the Sri Lankan forces were waiting to coax the LTTE to launch another attack so that the troops could inflict maximum damage on them. It was common knowledge that with fast

depleting cadres, the LTTE was carefully picking battles in order to avoid manpower and equipment losses.

The 58 Division made an overt signal that it was moving towards the Puthumatalan area, but suddenly changed course and moved southwards, parallel to the Nandikadal lagoon. The 53 Division also moved westwards and joined the 58 Division, thus completely encircling PTK, while VP and the clan were still planning their counterattack. VP, Jeyam, Swarnam and Bhanu were fortunate enough to wade through the lagoon and get to the 'No Fire Zone' in Wellamullivaikal on 1st April 2009.

In this instance, the Sri Lankan forces used the 3E principle - encircle, envelope and eradicate. The LTTE's access was completely cut off and it was a death ground battle for the LTTE's elite forces. They were outgunned and annihilated on 5th April 2009. Over 700 trained cadres - including senior leaders like Theepen, Amitab and many others - were killed, while another group with over 200 cadres surrendered to the Army, exploding the myth of the LTTE's dedication to its cause and to taking cyanide. A lot of armaments, battle tanks, artillery guns, paddle guns, aircraft, submarines and well-fortified bunkers were captured. It was the modern day Vjithapura Battle. (King Dutugemunu defeated the main battalion of Elara at Vjithapura Fortress in 123 BC.)



It was following the crucial Anandapuram battle that the world came to know that the LTTE had lost the war and the days of VP and his strongmen were numbered.

This series of defeats saw the LTTE intensify its political campaign. In the run up to the Indian Lok Sabha polls, there was an opportunistic formation of a coalition in Tamil Nadu led by Jayalalithaa. VP was under the impression that neither Congress nor the BJP would muster even 200 seats and that both would seek Tamil Nadu assistance to form a government. As such, if Vaiko, Ramadoss and Nedumaran with Jayalalitha were able to get 25 seats, they would become kingmakers, VP thought. So he signalled to Jayalalitha that she could claim the Premiership if the opportunity came, on the key condition of a ceasefire in Sri Lanka.

In addition, VP sent over 300 members of his political unit to Western capitals to organise agitations, fast-unto-death campaigns etc. KP was working with the US and UK governments - and even UN officials - with the blessings of his leader. The desperate LTTE proposed a UN intervention as a rescue plan. The EU countries too were invited to push this move against Sri Lanka's sovereignty, on the insistence of Norway. The Hillary Clinton, David Miliband and Ban Ki Moon trio of busybodies



worked tirelessly to ensure that a UN resolution would be moved through the world body in the guise of an intervention to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe, invoking the UN's Responsibility to Protect (R2P). The Western media was used to the maximum to give a grossly distorted picture of Sri Lanka's war in order to prepare the ground.

The US Pacific Command team rushed to Sri Lanka to prepare an assessment report. VP's plan was to drag the war as long as possible. An assortment of foreign ministers from various parts of the world sought appointments to visit Sri Lanka and debates were initiated at the UN Security Council and in the UNHRC.



Tamil Nadu elections were due on 13th May 2009 and the results were scheduled to be announced on 16th May 2009. The Indian Congress (I) was worried that any major debacle in Sri Lanka before these polls would badly affect its chances of clinching Tamil Nadu.

In the meantime, a pause had been declared from 13th to 16th May 2009, barring any major offensives. The Sri Lankan government issued a statement declaring that 'As combat operations are over, no heavy weapons in and around the 'No Fire Zone' will be used'. Just before the elections, Sonia Gandhi quoted this Sri Lankan government statement when addressing an election rally in Tamil Nadu, informing people that the fighting was over and therefore heavy guns would be silenced.

However, on 8th and 9th May 2009, the LTTE claimed that over 1,000 innocent civilians were killed, attempting to substantiate this claim through the use of satellite images given to the media by the US government. It was very much

Army Movements in the Northern Theatre



58	57	Task Force 2	Task Force 4	59	55	53	Task Force 3
Division	Division			Division	Division	Division	



part of a plan engineered by the LTTE to rouse the Tamil Nadu people against Congress by creating the impression that it was lying to them when it said that the war in Sri Lanka was over.

The results of the Tamil Nadu polls were an overwhelming success for Congress. Jayalalithaa and the LTTE bandwagon came in for a major drubbing. The Tamil Nadu people had taken Sonia's word - or rather the Sri Lankan government's guarantee - seriously. The artificial political waves created by the LTTE and its allies in Tamil Nadu thus boomeranged on them, while the political diplomacy of the Sri Lankan government triumphed.

By then, the 58 Division had launched quite a bold humanitarian operation on 20th April 2009, penetrating into the 'No Fire Zone' in Puthumatalan and dividing it into two. As a result, nearly a hundred thousand people were able to cross over to government-controlled areas. That rescue operation gave the Sri Lankan government the necessary muscle and moral right to counter LTTE propaganda in Tamil Nadu and other parts of the world.

Following this move, VP and his senior leadership were confined to the Wellamullawaikal area. From there they continued to use thousands of civilians as cannon fodder. However, as its air wing was destroyed after the abortive attempt on our Air Force Headquarters and the Air Force Camp in Katunayake on 19th February 2009, our air force

was in total control of the air space. This helped a lot in monitoring both civilian and LTTE movements. Aerial photographs taken by UAVs were widely used to assess the true situation in the 'No Fire Zone', as against the war tactics of the US government in support of the LTTE.

The LTTE, meanwhile, was able to build a huge earth bund south of Wellamullawaikal, being under the impression that the 59 Division would not be able to cross the Nandikadal lagoon and open a new front on the 'No Fire Zone'. The 'No Fire Zone' had been re-demarcated, enabling the security forces to use appropriate weapons freely in the areas under their control. The commander of the 55 Division was transferred to the 59 Division and they were able to cross the huge earth bund, outmanoeuvring the LTTE's waves of suicide attacks on 12th May 2009.

When VP saw all his plans being foiled, he made a last ditch attempt to escape using diplomatic channels. His aim was to bring United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon to Mullaitivu. The ICRC team too was brought there and 'third party mediation' was sought from the international community.

KP announced that the LTTE was ready for a ceasefire and was willing to surrender to a third party. The same sentiments were echoed by the US State Department. The Tamil Nadu election was over on 13th May 2009. The next day, the 58 and 59 Divisions moved from the north and



These maps show the progression of the final battle between the LTTE and Government forces.

Prabhakaran is the figure in red.



south of the 'No Fire Zone' and merged in Wellamullivaikkal, taking control of the entire coastal belt of Sri Lanka for the first time in three decades.

On the same day, Sri Lanka submitted its claim to extend its continental shelf to the UN, since the Sri Lankan government had become the sole ruler of its shore, territorial waters and continental shelf.

By then, VP and his gang were encircled and entrapped. The civilians, meanwhile, were defying the LTTE. Thousands crossed Wattukadal and entered Mullaitivu.

KP and the US-UK intelligence services began to map out a strategy to get VP and his trapped seniors out of Sri Lanka. By then, Sri Lanka's situation had been dubbed internationally as a hostage situation. There were a few occasions in the history of such scenarios on which the perpetrators had been allowed to go free on the understanding that they released civilians. This



happened when Islamic extremists hijacked the New Delhi IC814 Indian Air plane with hundreds of civilians onboard on 24th September 1999. The US intervened in that instance and got the terrorist leaders released. They were allowed to slip out to Afghanistan. The US and UK governments were thinking along the same lines and made a valiant attempt to get the Sri Lankan government to declare an amnesty for the LTTE leaders so that they could escape. However, having fought one of the contemporary world's most protracted wars, the government of Sri Lanka was in no mood to give in to the requests of the West. It saw through their designs.

Many reports that emerged after the war ended - including some filed by Tamil nationalists - referred to a US-engineered plot to smuggle Prabhakaran and his 47 top leaders out of Sri Lanka and send them to a secret location in a landlocked central European nation.

The UN Secretary was compelled to postpone his proposed plan to visit Sri Lanka because the Sri Lankan president was away in Jordan attending the G11 Summit. Instead, his chief of staff Vijay Nambiar - who maintained close links with KP - visited Colombo but was unable to go to Mullaitivu as planned by the LTTE.

When this move also failed, the LTTE attempted to get the wives and children of top leaders to mingle with civilians so that they could move to Mullaitivu, where UN officials, diplomats and members of international agencies were present. After that, the top leaders were slated to surrender

to the ICRC under the supervision of UN officials. It was leaked that the US ambassador was very much part of this conspiracy.

Sensing what was going to happen, the Sri Lankan government denied these agencies and officials access to Mullaitivu. Instead, they were directed to Settikulam, where trapped civilians were being sent.

VP realised that his strategy to use surrender as a smokescreen to escape was not possible. He was compelled to change strategy once again. He then got Nadesan and Pulidevan - his so-called political leaders - to surrender to the 58 Division, thinking that this would neutralise the 58 Division. The plan was for others to mingle with civilians and attack the 59 Division and slip in to the Mullavelly jungles. That plan was executed on 16th May 2009. Wave after wave of suicide boats and other teams of Black Tigers were in action. But the 59 Division was well prepared. VP's elder son and the pilot teams were shocked when they were directly confronted by the determined Sri Lankan soldiers, who by then had braved a series of attacks from suicide units. The LTTE teams perished - including VP's son - and on hearing their fate, VP retreated to his original position.

Although certain groups and individuals criticised the Sri Lankan government for killing the family members of LTTE leaders, the fact remains that their lifestyle was totally different from that of civilians. They were embedded in the



war. All family members had received weapons training and were involved in fighting. In short, they were combatants and fully-fledged terrorists. If they had been spared, bloodlines could have been used to regroup other terrorists under the LTTE banner.

Having failed to breach the FDLs of the 59 Division, VP and his gang decided to attack the other lines. They tried to break through the FDLs of the 53 Division on 17th May 2009 and they were partially successful in breaching the first line. But when reinforcements were sent, they were trapped. Most of the cadres were killed.

VP was able to move to the north of the Nandikadal lagoon where the water level was very shallow. Other leaders like Pottu, Soosai, Swarnam, Jayam and Bhanu are supposed to have been killed on 17th and 18th May 2009. Although the LTTE destroyed part of their armaments, the Sri Lankan forces discovered a huge haul of weaponry including heavy guns and armoured cars. The date of 18th May 2009 entered the history books as the day of the reunification of the Sri Lankan state. It was on this day that the entire country was liberated from the clutches of the LTTE terrorists and unified under the Lion Flag after three decades.

The following day, on 19th May 2009, when the president was addressing parliament, VP was surrounded and killed. Most Tamil separatists did not want to believe that VP was mortal and would die one day, since he had been elevated

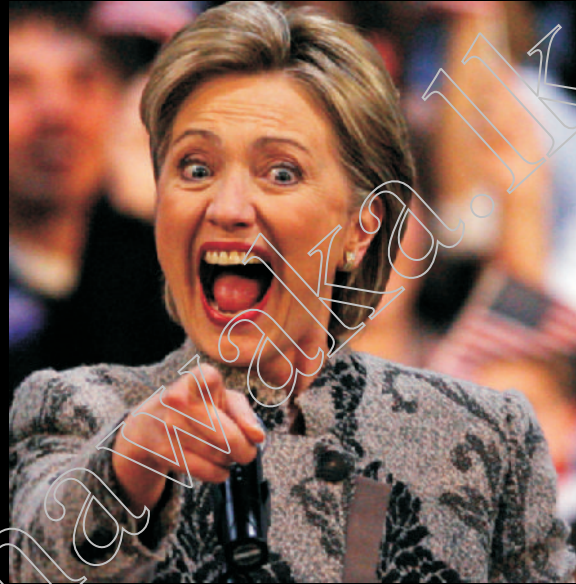
to the status of a god. He was referred to as the Sun God and was believed to be immortal. Many people - even on this side of the divide - believed that if he was trapped, he would not surrender or allow himself to be captured alive. There were reports that VP was always accompanied by a loyal person with a can of petrol so that his body could be burnt after he took cyanide.

The irony of this story is that neither VP nor his close lieutenants took cyanide, although they got thousands of juniors to end their lives by doing so. All the top leaders, including VP, were timid and tried hard to save themselves at any cost. Search operations conducted later revealed that over 9,000 LTTE cadres surrendered to the army. Hundreds of them mingled with civilians. Some top leaders too were arrested among civilians. Families of most of the top leaders were carrying gold and money for their final liberation!

Nearly 300,000 innocent civilians were finally liberated without any harm being done to them, ending the long drawn out, ruthless, barbaric era of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.



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Managing **EXTERNAL FACTORS**

Two types of external factor affected Sri Lanka's war against terrorism. The first had to do with the economic, social and - most importantly - political stability of the country. The second was the degree of international support or intervention.

More than local Tamils and Tamil expatriates, it was foreign powers with vested interests in Sri Lanka that helped the LTTE to build its capacities and become the most sophisticated terrorist group in the world.



The first seeds of Tamil terrorism were sown in the early 1970s. Having identified the geopolitical strategic value of Sri Lanka, a few Western nations secretly supported the terrorist movement in taking its baby steps. Visiting the rehabilitation centres in Settikulam, it is clear that a substantial section of the surrendered LTTE cadres speak Sinhala. This is because they were living in areas like Matale, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya and few other places, mainly in the plantation sector in the Central Province. They were to migrate to India as per the Sirimavo-Shastri Pact of 1964, but a foreign-aided massive colonisation process forced them to settle in the Wanni. The Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation and the Gandhian Movement were in the forefront of constructing these villages of war. These two organisations were funded by a few Scandinavian nations and powerful Western countries through RedBarna and Sarvodaya. Ironically, one of the most vocal crusaders against violence was instrumental in resettling thousands of India-bound families in the Wanni for a future war against Sri Lanka.

It should also be remembered that a number of countries used their best soldiers to train LTTE leaders, in addition to some 40,000 Tamil youth trained by India in order to fight a proxy war against Sri Lanka. The LTTE was provided with expertise and sophisticated equipment by the same powers. Constructing sea tunnels, submarines, airstrips and fast craft, smuggling heavy guns, battle tanks and fighter aircrafts, making chemical weapons etc. would not have

been possible without the clandestine support of the Western powers. They also sent a handful of mercenaries - as they did in Southern Sudan - to train the LTTE on how to use high-tech equipment and armaments. It is a known fact that INGOs, NGOs and fundamental religious sects were used to funnel these human resources to the battlefield.

Why did Western countries overtly and covertly support the LTTE? The answer is that the LTTE's liberal facade disguised the terrorist movement as a freedom struggle against oppression or genocide! Later, the very same nations became virtual hostages of Tamil expatriates, a by-product of the war created by them.

Quite a few Christian fundamentalist organisations and even the mainstream Roman Catholic Church (North) were actively supporting the LTTE until it was annihilated. The main LTTE bases were in the predominately Christian coastal belt. Unethical conversion had been the order of the day for a few decades and Tamil MPs, including slain parliamentarian T. Maheshwaran, protested against such conversions carried out in Hindu areas in the North and East as well as in the plantation sector. Christian bishops were the spokespersons of Tamils who are 90% Hindu.

The Church helped the LTTE in manifold ways.

One such example is the manner in which some 550 children were cheated and handed over to the LTTE for its final battle by Rev. James Pakianathan of the Valarayamadam Christian



Church in Puthumatalan. Despite the seriousness of the crime committed by the Christian priest, there wasn't a whimper - leave alone an apology - from the Christian church.

The same silence prevailed when the LTTE attacked Sinhala Christians in the North and East, and also when they vandalised Sinhala Buddhist temples in Western capitals. The Bishops' Council, which vociferously defended religious freedom and triggered the Balkanisation process - the fragmentation of big states into smaller nations on a religious basis - maintained a deadly silence in the face of anti-Hindu and anti-Buddhist activities and gross human rights violations by its shepherds in Sri Lanka.

The services of patriotic Sinhala Christians, who were in the forefront of the fight against LTTE atrocities in Sri Lanka and abroad, for example in Italy, must be commended.

Generally, Marxists like to propagate the argument that Western interest in Sri Lanka is largely due to oil, gas and other rare resources in the seabed of Sri Lanka. They argued that the Western powers were using the LTTE to wage a proxy war to destabilise Sri Lanka so that they could exploit its resources. This argument was further strengthened when Sri Lanka discovered oil and gas potential as well as thorium deposits off Mannar. (According to a seismic survey conducted by TGS NOPEC - a US-Norway company - from Mannar to Galle in 2003 and 2004.

When Sri Lankan experts measured our sediment pan and put together a claim for an extended continental shelf, it was revealed that huge oil and gas deposits might exist within it.) Although this argument cannot simply be ruled out, it isn't clear why Western countries would use the LTTE to destabilise Sri Lanka when they could easily have reinstated their stooges as rulers of the country, as they did between 1977 and 2005.

The JVP founder leader, Rohana Wijeweera, put forward the argument that Sri Lanka was not the only country in the Western agenda and what it was doing to Sri Lanka was part of a grand Western agenda to Balkanise the entire Indian subcontinent. This argument appeared fairly valid when India was a strategic partner of the Soviet axis. However, the scenario changed in the post-Cold War context. Gone are the days when India was viewed as an impediment to propagating Western agendas in this part of the world. Today, India has even entered into a nuclear pact with the US and the whole of Europe is wooing India as an opportunity. The West has also attempted to use India to drive a security wedge between China and Islamic fundamentalism. However, the West is yet to accept India as a modern and equally strong superpower. It is of the opinion that India is highly vulnerable to separatism and therefore will not be able to grow fast enough to become a superpower.



Sri Lanka's geographical location is the most important reason why it gets so much attention. It is best placed in the Indian Ocean to observe naval and air movements. The movements of over 70% of the oil trade and 50% of the shipping trade can easily be detected from Sri Lanka. All important air and naval routes fall through the waters of the jewel of the silk route. It should also be noted that China and India are expanding their naval and air capacities along the Pacific and Indian Oceans, challenging the US presence. In the Second World War, the command centre of the Western allied forces was situated in Sri Lanka and Churchill once said publicly that protecting Sri Lanka from the Japanese invasion was the most critical moment of the war. In the present information age, these Western powers need 'tower houses' to protect their interests. If they create an Israel-type new state - challenging India, China and perhaps Russia and Pakistan - they would always control the strings of the region.

One argument put forward as to why the US invaded Iraq at such tremendous cost was that it is from Iraq that the US could best control the Gulf sea routes, air routes and oil passages. This rejects the generally accepted assumption that the US invaded Iraq solely for oil. The annual war budget of the US in Iraq (USD 350 billion) exceeds the profits made on the oil produced by Iraq annually, giving some weight to the above argument.

Similarly, US interests in Sri Lanka too come with a long term goal. It was very strange that VP was waiting in the 'No Fire Zone' when it was crystal clear that he was being encircled and that the Sri Lankan forces were on the verge of an historic victory. While this baffled some people, VP and all the Tamil separatists who had placed their trust in Western powers and the UN system were optimistic that their long-standing allies would throw a lifeline to the LTTE leader and seniors. This was true. The Western powers, their secret agencies and the UN agencies were making desperate eleventh hour bids to rescue them. When everything failed - to their utter disappointment - they accelerated moves to try Sri Lanka at international human right courts.

The 'Eichmann' style arrest of KP, the former LTTE head of International Affairs and later its leader, helped to shed more light on how the US-led West managed Sri Lanka's war. While the modus operandi of the KP arrest has stunned the world, startling details as to how the West controlled Tamil expatriates while their secret service agencies protected the LTTE overseas leadership, including KP, have been revealed. It has emerged that the so-called Transnational Government of Sri Lankan Tamils, which was declared recently aping the Tibetans, was the brainchild of these secret agencies.

When VP entered into the ceasefire agreement in 2002, he mistakenly assumed that the government was not in a position to wage another war against the LTTE. One of his aims was to see that his organisation gained international



recognition and endorsement, and this he achieved to a certain extent through the agreement.

But when he sensed that international players were more inclined towards the Wickremasinghe regime, VP resorted to plan B. The LTTE formally withdrew from peace talks on 18th April 2003 and another pre-emptive strike was in the offing. This time, VP aimed to lay siege to Trinco harbour and simultaneously attack Jaffna. If he had been able to capture Trinco harbour, the Jaffna peninsula would have been effectively encircled by the LTTE. Parallel to this, violent and vociferous agitations were planned in Tamil Nadu to neutralise the ruling BJP regime. By dictating terms to Ranil Wickremasinghe, VP was hopeful that he could get a fully liberated Northern Province on a platter. But things were not as simple as that since the Ranil Wickremasinghe-Milinda Moragoda duo was able to encourage some people in the Western corridors of power to intervene. However, this is exactly what the Western nations wanted too, to play a big role in Sri Lanka's war.

Meanwhile, strong agitations by nationalist forces saw CBK withdrawing her support from the Wickremasinghe government. The JVP then started promoting Lakshman Kadirgamar as the next Prime Minister. Sensing possible US-aided UN intervention - Ranil Wickremasinghe's international safety net - the RAW of India encouraged the Mangala-Kadirgamar duo to act swiftly. CBK took over three ministerial portfolios - including defence - with the backing

of a Supreme Court interpretation that the subject of defence should be controlled by the executive president.

As Colombo witnessed a major polarisation of power, the LTTE rushed to form the Tamil National Alliance, an umbrella organisation for Tamil parties in parliament. However, shortly afterwards, the organisation received one of the biggest blows in its history as VP's Eastern Commander and one time blue-eyed boy, Karuna, defected in February 2004. VP used his Colombo contact, Emil Kanthan, via Puwanan, to bait CBK, killing Karuna's brother Reggie. Karuna fled the East.

After the new 'patriotic' government came into power on 18th April 2004, VP anticipated some military responses. But the government with the JVP as its key ally did nothing to strengthen the armed forces. VP tested the water by killing Kadirgamar. The result was more invitations from the CBK-JVP alliance to talk peace.

It is true that VP disliked Ranil Wickremasinghe. That is because he feared that Ranil Wickremasinghe would invite UN forces to Sri Lanka, thus upsetting his plans to make a unilateral declaration of independence. VP only wanted 'peaceful' international recognition so that he could establish Tamil Eelam at his own pace. That is why he killed Kadirgamar, who could canvass effectively at international forums against the LTTE.



VP was not aware of the fact that around 2004 the true patriotic forces in South were strengthening their ties with the rebel LTTE breakaway group and some patriotic military officers were sacrificing their lives to see the end of the LTTE.

The election of Mahinda Rajapaksa at the November 2005 presidential polls was the watershed moment for nationalist forces in Sri Lanka. VP held the view that Mahinda Rajapaksa was anathema to Western powers and thought the latter would soon move to destabilise the Rajapaksa regime.

Western diplomatic circles acted openly to block Mahinda Rajapaksa from being elected. Some foreign intelligence agencies spent millions of US dollars to buy minority parties and individuals. New media entities were created and existing ones were mobilised to kill the possibility of a Rajapaksa victory at the polls. Also, even the ruling party leader President Kumaratunga and her loyalists in the Cabinet avoided the campaign trail. Thanks to the JVP cadre machinery, JHU political manoeuvring and the strategies and pragmatic approach of a few SLFP leaders loyal to the Prime Minister, Mahinda Rajapaksa managed to win the presidential election. Western powers were furious and their diplomats were censured for having sent wrong situation reports.

Following their defeat at the polls, these powers slowly engineered a strategy to overthrow the newly-elected Rajapaksa regime. Saner counsel and a patient nation saw President Rajapaksa claiming a second victory over the West by annihilating the LTTE.

What the Western powers tried in Sri Lanka was a general strategy that has been adopted in dozens of countries since the Second World War. The twin strategies executed by the US in countries which refuse to bow down to their authority are called Operation Wolf and Operation Jackal. Direct military intervention, the assassination of heads of states, military coups etc. were dubbed Operation Wolf. That strategy was adopted in Chile, where the elected president Allende was assassinated in 1973. The assassinations of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan, Sheik Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh and Patrice Lumumba of the Congo, the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and the Balkanisation of Yugoslavia etc. are some other examples.

Operation Jackal, on the other hand, is far more clandestine. Triggering people's uprisings is the key feature of such moves. Kermit Roosevelt carried out such an operation to topple the Mossadeq regime in Iran. The Solidarity movement led by Lech Walesa of Poland, the democratic revolution of Aquino in the Philippines and Violeta Chamorro in Nicaragua are examples of such missions. Anwar



Ibrahim's Malaysian revolution and Aung San Suu Kyi's revolution in Myanmar are among the aborted attempts.

In the last three years or so, the international community and INGOs made sure that there was a slew of human rights violation allegations against the government of Sri Lanka. The IDP situation in Mutur of August 2006, the mass murder of French aid workers and omnipresent white vans became the recurrent themes of their slogans. However, not a word was uttered about LTTE atrocities against the Mutur Muslim population and the killing of Sinhalese using claymore mines.

Having liberated the Eastern province within a year, the government went on to complete the resettlement of over 150,000 IDPs by the time it celebrated the first anniversary of the war victory in the East. This was followed by local and provincial polls, for the first time in a decade.

At the provincial polls, the alliance between the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress - the only Muslim fundamentalist party in the world to be sponsored by Western embassies - and the UNP was convincingly defeated by the ruling coalition, which introduced the 3D process - demilitarisation, democratisation and development. Under the new administration, a massive development programme titled 'Reawakening the East' was launched. The human catastrophe that Western diplomats anxiously awaited was



averted. Pro-West critics were neutralised by the satisfactory conduct of humanitarian operations, resettlement and elections.

Once the move to mess up the East had failed, Western powers turned to the 2007 budget vote in parliament. By then, some 17 UNP members had defected to the government and Mangala and Sripathi had been evicted. When political stability was of utmost importance, the ruling SLFP and PA had only 66 MPs in the 225-member parliament. That was as a result of the JVP decision to break away with its 39 MPs, thus making the ruling coalition



a minority government. As far as the JVP was concerned, it had done the right thing under pressure from nationalist forces when it worked hard for Mahinda Rajapaksa's victory in 2005. But it committed the most traitorous act when it left the government and worked against Mahinda Rajapaksa during the most crucial hours of the war. The opportunistic moves of the Bolsheviks were exposed once again.

With Western backing, their stooge - the SLMC - crossed over to the opposition. But nationalist forces were awakened and national consensus was reached. This forced the JVP to abstain from voting and prevented some others from crossing over. The 2007 budget vote confirmed the political stability of the government, which was mandatory to continue the war against terrorism.

This was followed by provincial polls, held on a staggered basis. Along with the battlefield victories, election victories continued. This politico-military strategy exhausted opposition resources and went on to demoralise them completely.

The last ditch attempt of Western conspirators was to stage a general strike to cripple the government. Trade union action led by the JVP was a complete failure. It inflicted a devastating political blow to the JVP's image and split the party. Its leadership anticipated military reversals, economic recession and political instability so that it could stage another bloody Bolshevik revolution. With its moves to

cripple the economy boomeranging and seeing the triumph of nationalist forces, the morale of JVP cadres was deflated.

Provincial council elections wiped out the JVP, the one time most powerful cadre-based political force in Sri Lanka. Finally, when the 2008 budget was presented, no one was there to challenge it.

Western countries then abandoned the demoralised political parties and reverted to media movements and multi-religious organisations. Media freedom and human rights violations became their new slogans. When details of the funding of local media rights groups were revealed by members of the very same organisations, the champions of free media fled the country. One Christian fundamentalist editor who practiced journalistic fascism was shot dead and the accusing finger was pointed at the government.

When this too failed, the West tried to isolate Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council, with a view to imposing an economic blockade and slapping war crimes charges on Sri Lankan military leaders. The new 'Asian hemisphere' rose to support Sri Lanka, inflicting a crushing defeat on the Western power block. It was a major humiliation for the West after its abortive attempt to rescue VP and his cohorts. Western elements, especially the US bandwagon led by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, openly worked to block the IMF balance of payments loan to Sri Lanka. There too they failed.



Given the manner in which they carried out overt and covert operations against the Sri Lankan state, there is a strong chance of them infiltrating the ruling coalition, since all previous attempts to overthrow the government failed. They may use the federal elements within government ranks to undermine and destroy true nationalist forces. For this purpose, they will use both Wolf and Jackal-style operations. We should be mindful of these booby traps. We should be magnanimous and humble in our victory and should not allow the inflated egos of a few people to inflict a devastating blow on our national resurgence.

The duty of nationalist forces is not yet over. It has only evolved into a new shape with a new set of responsibilities. We must continue to march steadfastly to achieve national dignity and honour, while relentlessly fighting the anti-Sri Lanka lobby, both locally and internationally.



The Charge of the Lion Brigade

(with apologies to Tennyson)

Half a mile, half a mile
Half a mile onwards
Into the land of Tigers
Walked them in hundreds
"Forward, the Lion Brigade!
"Charge for the guns"
Into the land of Tigers
Walked them in thousands

"Forward, the Lion Brigade
Was there a man dismayed?
Not a single
Theirs not to fuss
Theirs not to mess
Theirs but to beat and rise
Into the land of Tigers
Walked them in thousands

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thundered
Stormed at with shot and shell
Boldly they walked with might
Into the land of Tigers
Walked them in thousands

Flashed all their guns bare
Flashed as turned in air
Charging an army, while
All the world wondered
Plunged into the gun powder smoke
Right through the line they broke
Tigers in their rage
Reeled under their strike
Shattered and smothered,
Then they walked back
All in their thousands

Cannon to right of them
Cannon to left of them
Cannon behind them
Volleyed and thundered
Stormed at with shot and shell
The heroes met their enemy at den
They had fought their battle so well
Came through the jaws of enemy hell
All in their thousands

When can their glory fade?
Or the mighty charge they made!
All the world wondered
Honor the charge they made
Honor the Lion Brigade
All in their thousands

(This poem was sent to me by a patriot)





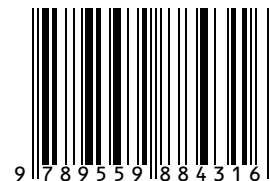


Charge of the Lion Brigade

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ISBN 978-955-98843-1-2



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Rs.350.00