

## Views on current reality

### **Sabesan-Australia**

In spite of the highly politicised cease fire agreement of 2002, places like Sampoor fell to Sri-Lankan forces when the natives fled under the barrage of falling bombs. Today, Tamils are killed on a daily basis and their properties are stolen or destroyed elsewhere. In light of this, the next move on peace talk has stalled abruptly. The government that frequently declare that it is willing as ever for peace talk, do not hesitate to intensify aerial bombardment and shelling from land and sea. In fact the government preaches one thing and practices another. We are now concerned about the direction on which the Tamil freedom struggle is proceeding.

**For what reason are the Tigers interested in peace talk when the Sri Lanka government and the international community are not positively approaching the ethnic problem? Are the Tamil Tigers militarily weakened or have they confronted any military setbacks? How long can the Tamils tolerate human rights abuses and loss of lives and properties of its people? These are some of the questions that confront us regarding current sate of affairs of Sri Lanka. Our aim is to present certain information and views pertaining such questions.**

In light of the present happenings in Sri-Lanka, many issues that could not be proved during the time of previous peace talks, as to the real intension of the Sri Lankan government, are now being brought to light. The actions of the Sri-Lankan state clarify the ulterior motive and real intension of the government. In light of the current happenings the western world that branded Tigers as a terrorist organisation and imposed sanctions are making amends now. In the past, when successive Sri Lankan governments reined terror on Tamils, foreign governments simply expressed sympathy towards Tamils. Hardly any of these countries came to the help of the Tamils to restore their lost rights or to warn the Sri Lankan government about the breach of Tamil human rights. Today foreign countries are beginning to be aware of the hypocrisy of the Sri-Lankan government and are ready to intervene on the Sri-Lankan ethnic problem. Some foreign countries are now getting actively involved in the ethnic issue in Sri-Lanka and are keen to present alternative proposals to safeguard the rights of Tamils and thereby justify their liberation struggle.

The western world that cherish democratic principles once believed that Sri Lanka too adhere to the democratic principles and rule of law they cherish. Even today some countries of the western world is reluctant to accept that a democratic country like Sri Lanka cannot do wrong to one section of its people. Nevertheless, some of the foreign countries have come out of this mind set to realise that in a small island where Singhalese majority and extreme Buddhist nationalism are prevalent, democratic principles in a unitary state can go wrong easily. **We have reason to believe** that many foreign countries will join others to accept this harsh reality and voice their concern in the open.

No doubt these developments are not over night happenings but are the results of our long struggle for freedom.

Immediately after the September 11 attack on America, many liberation movements were put in one basket and given a terrorists label. It was a boom period to rouge countries like Sri Lanka where human rights breaches were carried out with impunity. Today many countries clearly distinguish between true liberation struggles and terrorism of fanatics. This is being openly discussed in many forums because of the repercussions from certain quarters. Right from the start countries that took a harsh approach on the activities of the Tigers are beginning to realise their miscalculations and looking for ways and means to relax their erroneous stand point. The view expressed by the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission is an ideal example to this. Although some foreign countries took a firm stand towards the Tigers at one point this view is rapidly changing. In all fairness these countries are now reconsidering their stand towards the Tigers. While this is a desirable development in favour of the Tigers those countries are now doubtful of the intention of the Sri-Lankan Government. In fact the faith and trust the donor countries placed on the Sri Lankan government are getting weaned. As a consequence Tamil struggle for freedom is being well understood by these countries. **One can now realise that the Sri-Lankan government will be hell bent on dragging the Tigers into a compelling war to tilt the balance in their favour.** The hypocrisy of Sri Lanka is to distract the world opinion and to drag the Tigers into a compelling war needs to be understood by us.

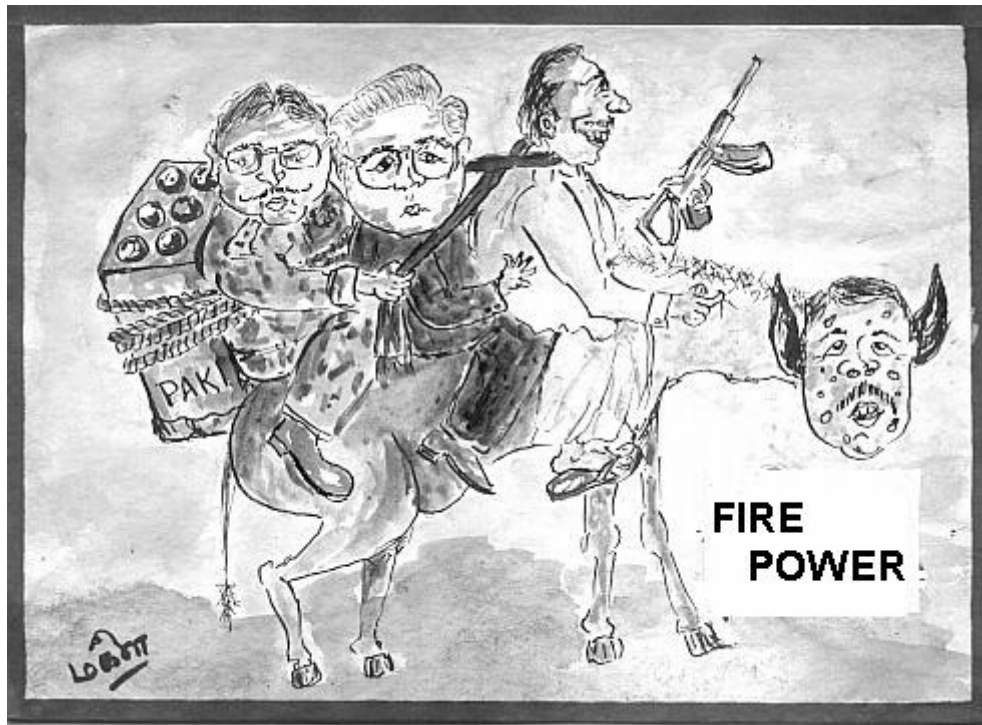
We therefore urge our people to view the actions of the Tigers from a perspective of a compelling war. **Their patience, tolerance and the manoeuvring need to be viewed from this angle.** It should be appreciated that the Tigers are forced by elements beyond their control to fight a war. Their commitment to take part in the peace process as equal partners in search of liberty, equality and justice get shattered every time by acts of vengeance from the Sri Lanka government. This is the current reality.

In this context we are genuinely concerned about the military strength of the Tamil Tigers and their balance of power. We wonder whether the Tigers have enough men and material to meet the military push by the Sri-Lankan state. In other words we wonder about the military power of the Tigers. **What is military power? Show of force is not a military power. True military power is safety of the forces and to act whenever it is deemed to deliver, provided it is an absolute necessity. It is important to understand this strategy and to appreciate the sacrifice of the Tigers.**

Today the Sri Lankan government is trying to strengthen its balance of power. While cease fire agreement is in force the government forces want to show off their strength through "Fire power". When an army deliver its maximum thrust through indiscriminate use of ammunitions to achieve a goal in a small theatre of operation it is called "war of fire power". Sri Lanka army is indulging on such a dirty warfare. We have been informed that in one instance alone more than 2000 artillery shells were fired in a day. You do not need to be a rocket scientist to calculate the cost of the war at the rate of Rs 75,000 or Rs 100,000 per shell. Today the island nation is spending Rs 400 corers for its war on Tamils

by taxing the Sinhalese. **When the whole world applied pressure on Sri Lanka to start peace talk with Tigers the government's response was to drag the Tigers into a compelling war.**

Fire power war can bring some success to a small theatre of operation but it is foolhardy to believe that a battle could be won with this approach. **In reality the Sri Lankan government is indulging on such a war with a political agenda.** It is unwise to confront the government's action in full force and sacrifice men and materials. At this stage it is not the time to counter the madness of fire power from the government but to stick to our tactics and not to fall into the government's calculated trap.



Let us point out one thing. In Vietnam most of the wars were won by Americans but eventually the battle was won by Vietnamese and the Americans were ousted. Tamil Tigers have been defending their land for long with comparatively a smaller number of freedom fighters and with limited resources. We are proud of their achievement that a country's conventional army is kept at bay all the time. In the above context and in view of the on going developments outside Sri Lanka, the defensive tactics and the patience by the Tigers cannot be interpreted as their weakness by any means. **Fear not.**

Today ordinary Tamil citizens are being killed every day and the state government has unleashed terror on them. Their livelihood is ruined and they are starved and deprived of their rights by the Sri-Lankan state. Such atrocities by the state can rekindle trauma and agony among our people but one cannot deny the fact that such atrocities by the states existed in every struggle for freedom. During the World War II when Germany made an attempt to invade Britain many thousands of British were killed. The super power, America lost thousands of innocent people on September 11 terrorist attack. These are all

instances where even powerful states could not safeguard its own citizens. One should appreciate that a liberation movement can safeguard its own people only by safeguarding its authority, its independence, national integrity and its claim for liberation. The same applies to the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Elam. Our fighters are at the forefront facing barrage of enemy fire and thousands of artilleries in a single a day while preventing the enemy intrusion into our territory. If the Tigers were not there the Tamil community would have started to disintegrate a long time back. Therefore, it is the duty of the expatriate Tamil community to stand behind our freedom fighters and provide support. In other words we have to support our brothers who fight for our cause. **The answers to the current questions are in our hand.**

One wonders what will be next move by the Tigers. Depending on the circumstances and political climate the Tamil national leadership can make their own moves. As far as we are concerned we would like to clarify certain issues. In the present context peace talk can only be arranged by international community. In such an event either party can place their proposal. Some of it or all of it can be accepted or disagreed by the other. The peace talk may proceed further without any agreement being reached on initial issues. Reaching out an agreement is one thing and implementing the agreement is another. All in all, we can classify peace talk under two categories. As a stooge we can make a plea to the Sri Lankan government to grant certain rights to Tamils and wait for their response. Another way is to put forward our claim and keep talking from the position of strength, until it is realised by Sinhalese.

One crucial issue which could arise at these talks will be the Tamil lands in the hands of the state. The Sinhala nation is not going to give up the occupied land prior to talks. Some times during the talks pressure may be applied to get back the lands. If it is made known that the captured lands will not be given back, **then it is fare and justifiable to take it by force.**

At present, the Tigers have expressed their willingness to participate in the peace talk but the Sri Lanka government is not prepared. **The reason is the state government doesn't want to internationalise the Tamil problem for they fear that the Tamil liberation movement will get international recognition for statehood.** The international community is gradually losing its faith on the integrity and sincerity of Sri Lanka government. In the current climate there is widespread opinion in the world that the Tamils have serious grievances and these need to be addressed in the world forum.

The foreign countries involved in Sri Lanka crisis cannot move things overnight **but we have reasons to believe** that they have a solution to Sri Lankan ethnic problem. Proposed solution may be far beyond the Sri Lanka government's current stand and much below the aspirations of Tamils. Whatever the outcome may be the Tamil national leadership has warned all concerned foreign governments that it would not be possible to make Sri Lanka to agree even to the basic concepts of devolution of power. Yet some foreign countries are convinced that they can make a positive contribution to the Sri-Lankan ethnic issue. It is here that Tigers disagree with the international community. The

international community is also having differences in opinion among themselves to accommodate the aspirations of the Tamils.

Mahinda chinthanaya (Thoughts of Mahinda) was to oust Norway and implement his dream plan based on unitary state. He was unable to carry out any of his thoughts. On the contrary the international community is now considering self rule as another option. They are also now talking about the political structures of Scotland ,Wales and Ireland. Now they may have come to realise that Tigers are the only representatives of the Tamil speaking people.

**It is in this background that the Mahinda government is engaged in a war of fire power with Tigers. They are trying hard to compel Tigers to start a fire fight so that the peace talk can be dislodged.** We believe that the world community will make the next move cautiously. As mentioned earlier the national leadership of the Tigers is capable of making their own moves to suit whatever political climate or military thrust that prevails in Sri Lanka. We have trust and faith in them.

My dear readers,

We looked at the causes and our concern. Our liberation struggle for the freedom of Tamils in Sri Lanka has gone through many hurdles over many decades. The Tamil Diaspora in different parts of the world has an important part to play in our struggle. We have to think and act in one line at this juncture. It is not the time to waste our energy and worry over irrelevant matters. Let us get together and strengthen the hands of our national leader.

S. Sabesan

*The above article is an English transcript of a Tamil broadcast made on the "Thamilkural" programme on 02-10-2006, 3CR Radio, Melbourne.*