

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:25:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223508111

Documents (100)

1. [*Military says gunmen ambush Sri Lanka passenger bus, killing child, 3 women*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

2. [*Colombo suicide blast kills nine, 95 wounded*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

3. [*Military says gunmen ambush Sri Lanka passenger bus, killing child, 2 women*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

4. [*Forces foil Tiger attempts to mar Eastern Poll*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

5. [*How Tamils divided Tamils...*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

6. [Do not recruit civilians, allow them passage](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

7. [WILL THERE BE A 'MOTHER OF ALL BATTLES' FOR KILINOCHCHI ?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

8. [6th Ld Explosion kills 10, injures 20 including minister in southern Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

9. [Tamil families fleeing Pooneryn seek Government safety](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

10. [20 killed in horrific Sri Lanka bus blast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 200911. [5th LD Explosion kills 10, injures 20 including minister in southern Sri Lanka](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 200912. [Brighter future for children](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 200913. [East like phoenix rises from ashes](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 200914. [Female suicide bomber kills dozens in Sri Lanka ; Suspected Tamil Tiger targets packed northern refugee camp](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed byPublication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 200915. [EC reiterates support for Lanka's sovereignty](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press

16. [2 plead guilty to charges of trying to supply arms to Tamil rebels](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

17. [TAMIL MAN RECOUNTS TALES OF HORROR IN SRI LANKA WAR](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

18. [Civilians seek Forces' protection in Jaffna , Pulmodai](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

19. [Bus Bombing Marks Sri Lanka Anniversary](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

20. [2 plead guilty in NY terrorism case](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

21. [Military: Gunmen kill 4 on Sri Lanka bus](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

22. [Relatives bury Sri Lankan high school baseball players killed in suicide bombing](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

23. [ASSEMBLY TN LANKA TWO LAST CHENNAI](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

24. [We can now give others a lesson or two - Air Force chief](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

25. [Bomb blast in Sri Lanka capital wounds nearly 50: official](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

26. [SRI LANKA : GROWING UN CONCERN AS CIVILIANS IN 'SAFE ZONE' COME UNDER FIRE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

27. [A wake up call for democracy](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

28. [UN worker injured in Tiger shooting](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

29. [At least 23 killed in Sri Lanka bus bombing: officials](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

30. [LTTE fighters kill 17 citizens, army says](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

31. [NEWSDIGEST 1500](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

32. [*Bomb blast in Sri Lanka capital wounds 45: hospital*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

33. [*Troops move into Kilinochchi*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

34. [*The Tamil Nadu dilemma*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

35. [*Terrorism and the challenge to diplomacy in Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

36. [*Sri Lankan Navy rescues 71 Tamil civilians: military*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

37. [Abide by int'l law: AI](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

38. [Terrorism Guilty Pleas by 2 in Sri Lankan Separatist Group](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

39. [Men accused of aiding Sri Lankan rebels](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

40. [Parties unhappy over EU comments](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

41. [11 dead, over 90 injured in suicide attack in Sri Lanka capital](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

42. [*Female bomber kills 28 in Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

43. [*Sri Lanka arrests suspect on bus explosion*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

44. [*Tens of Thousands at Risk in Sri Lanka as Fighting Escalates*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

45. [*Tigers accused of rights abuses*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

46. [*Sri Lankan celebrates 60th anniversary, as bus attack blamed on rebels kills 12 civilians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

47. [*SRI LANKA : WOMEN PRAY FOR SONS, HUSBANDS CAUGHT IN CIVIL WAR*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

48. [Bomb blasts: Six suspects arrested](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

49. [Wanni patients transferred to Trinco hospital](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

50. [Headlines in major Indian newspapers](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

51. [Response to Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

52. [No let up in air strikes: Defence Spokesman](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

53. [Hundreds women can only pray in Sri Lanka SRI LANKA : Women Pray for Sons, Husbands Caught in Civil War</u>](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

54. [HR situation deteriorating - UTHR\(J\)](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

55. [Clashes kill 35 in northern Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

56. [More civilians reach safe area](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

57. [Where is the SAARC Convention on terrorism?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

58. [Issue names of IDPs, Sangaree tells authorities](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

59. [Opportunity to make terrorism history](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

60. [Sri Lankan president urges calm after bomb kills 20](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

61. [Independent humanitarian monitors in Sri Lanka SRI LANKA : UN Supplies to Rebel-Held Areas Will Resume](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

62. [Call for 'genocide' stories from Tamil residents](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press

63. [Vigilance and more Vigilance](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

64. [NEWS DIGEST 1700](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

65. [Suicide Tiger base bombed in Sri Lanka : defence ministry](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

66. [Sri Lanka 's Wild East Plans First Vote in Over 10 Years](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

67. [At least 20 killed in Sri Lanka bus bombing: police](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

68. [Blast in Colombo kills 21](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

69. [SRI LANKA : CIVILIANS CONTINUE TO FACE DEADLY DAILY THREAT](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

70. [A slaughter waiting to happen Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

71. [Tiger chief honours suicide bombers who hit Sri Lanka base](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

72. [Majority support assured at Security Council against discussing SL](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

73. [Long-Term Potential On Hold](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

74. [*Shattering of a pipe dream*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

75. [*14th batch of patients and civilians trapped in Mullaithivu evacuated with the Naval assistance*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

76. [*INDIAN HYPOCRISY and Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

77. [*Truce not a ceasefire*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

78. [*ETHIOPIAN TROOPS LEAVING SOMALIA*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

79. [Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, Jan. 7](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

80. [Army captures Chalai](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

81. [Tamils stage protest outside UK Parliament for ceasefire in Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

82. [A slaughter waiting to happen Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

83. [Govt. ready for impartial probe](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

84. [VOA NEWS: 12 POLICE OFFICERS KILLED IN SUICIDE BOMB ATTACK IN SRI LANKA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

85. [Eight killed, 95 injured in explosion in Sri Lankan capital](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

86. [Grasp of political reality in the East](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

87. [Dehiwela Disaster](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

88. [To Win the War and Lose the Peace](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

89. [Sri Lanka : Rebel bases bombed; clashes kill 30](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

90. [SLDF condemns Maheswari Velautham killing](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

91. [SHELLING ON LANKAN HOSPITAL KILLS 11](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

92. [18 injured in bus blast outside Colombo](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

93. [Adding strength to a dignified peace](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

94. [12 civilians killed in Lanka's fresh bus blast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

95. [M.I.A. accused of terrorist imagery](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

96. [Navy to the rescue](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

97. [No reversal in Northern liberation - President](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

98. [Only talking will stop the killing MOHAMMAD KHATAMI](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

99. [SRI LANKA : U.N. WILL RESUME AID CONVOYS INTO REBEL-HELD AREA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

100. [AFP 0800 GMT News Advisory](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2008 to Mar 30, 2009

Military says gunmen ambush Sri Lanka passenger bus, killing child, 3 women

Associated Press International

July 12, 2008 Saturday 12:35 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 402 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Suspected rebel gunmen ambushed a crowded passenger bus as it traveled down a small rural road in southern Sri Lanka, killing a 9-year-old boy and three **women**.

The attack Friday came amid a sharp spike in fighting in the war between government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels in the northern jungles, and underscored the rebels' continued ability to strike deep inside government-controlled territory.

A group of gunmen hiding by the side of the road near the southern village of Buttala raked the passing civilian bus with gunfire, said military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara. The bus driver sped through the ambush, only stopping when he reached safety, Nanayakkara said.

He blamed the rebels for the attack, which he said killed a boy and three **women** and wounded 25 others.

Troops were sent to the remote site to try to find the assailants, he said.

Rebel spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthirayan could not be reached for comment. The **Tamil Tigers** have been blamed for scores of suicide bombings and other attacks on civilians and are listed as a terror group by the United States, European Union and India.

The rebels were blamed for a strike in Buttala on Jan. 16 in which assailants bombed a bus, gunned down the fleeing passengers and attacked nearby farmers as they retreated into the forest, killing 32 people.

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting since 1983 to create an independent state for ethnic minority Tamils, who have been marginalized by successive governments controlled by ethnic Sinhalese. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

The government has stepped up fighting around the rebels' de facto state in the north in an effort to deliver on its promise to crush the group by the end of this year.

Fighting along the northern front lines Thursday killed 19 rebels and two soldiers, the military reported Friday.

Military says gunmen ambush Sri Lanka passenger bus, killing child, 3 women

Both sides routinely exaggerate enemy casualties and underreport their own, and it was not possible to verify the accounts because reporters are barred from the war zone.

The attack came as the government tightened security around the capital, Colombo, ahead of a major cricket tournament with rival India and a high-profile South Asia summit that begins at the end of this month.

Nanayakkara said beefed-up security for those events would not leave other parts of Sri Lanka vulnerable to further rebel attacks.

"In all parts of the country, we have security arrangements," he said.

Load-Date: July 12, 2008

End of Document

Colombo suicide blast kills nine, 95 wounded

Indo-Asian News Service

May 16, 2008 Friday 1:57 PM EST

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Length: 585 words

Byline: Report from Indo-Asian News Service brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 16 -- Seven police personnel and two civilians were killed and some 95 wounded when a suspected Tamil Tiger suicide bomber rammed his motorcycle into a police bus in the heart of the busy Sri Lankan capital at midday Friday.

The attack occurred close to Hotel Hilton, opposite a Buddhist temple known as Sambodhi Vihar and also not far from the heavily guarded office of President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara told IANS that the dead included seven police personnel, three of them women, and two civilians who were passing by.

"An LTTE suicide cadre riding a motorcycle rammed onto a police bus carrying anti-riot squad police personnel," Nanayakkara said. The military blamed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) for the attack.

There was panic as the bomb exploded with a deafening roar. It was heard in large parts of Colombo.

Among the injured were personnel from the police and other security forces as well as civilians.

According to the military spokesman, the LTTE suicide cadre targeted the bus in the Fort area, also close to the office of the state-run Lake House group of newspapers.

A couple of other police vehicles were also damaged in the powerful blast, which was heard in large parts of Colombo.

A man in the area said the explosion was so massive that he first thought there had been a major earthquake.

Said Nanayakkara: "Unable to face the military thrusts in the north, the LTTE has taken this opportunity to (attack security forces)."

The authorities quickly closed the road for investigations, creating huge traffic snarls.

Hector Weerasinghe, director of the Accidental Services of the Colombo National Hospital, said that 95 patients were brought to the hospital with multiple injuries. "Nine people were dead on admission."

Colombo suicide blast kills nine, 95 wounded

"Our statistics show that there are 30 police personnel and three soldiers among the injured in addition to civilians. They are undergoing various medical investigations. Depending on the nature of the injuries, they will be directed to other units in the hospital," Weerasinghe told IANS.

He said about 15 patients had sustained serious injuries and were warded at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

The attack occurred hours before President Rajapaksa was to swear in, at his office about 100 meters from the blast site, the newly elected members of the Provincial Council of the eastern province, which the military seized from the **LTTE** last year.

Chandrapala Liyanage, director of the Presidential Media Unit, said the swearing in ceremony "will take place as scheduled" at the Presidential Secretariat".

President Rajapaksa, who has hailed the election outcome in the eastern province as a victory for democracy, charged the **LTTE** with "cowardice and brutality".

"With this bomb attack on a busy street, the **LTTE** has again demonstrated its total commitment to violence and terror to achieve its separatist goals in Sri Lanka and its absolute contempt for democracy and human rights.

"Repeated savagery of this order underlines and reiterates the need for concerted action by all those who cherish democracy, human rights and the value of civilized society, to eradicate the menace of terrorism of which the **LTTE** remains the bloodiest example today.

"Your continued patience and restraint in the face of such undisguised savagery is the best way to assist the security forces to succeed in their operations to defeat terrorism in our country," he said.

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Load-Date: May 16, 2008

Military says gunmen ambush Sri Lanka passenger bus, killing child, 2 women

Associated Press International

July 11, 2008 Friday 7:07 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 404 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Suspected rebel gunmen ambushed a crowded passenger bus Friday as it traveled down a small rural road in southern Sri Lanka, killing a 9-year-old boy and two **women**, the military said.

The attack came amid a sharp spike in fighting in the war between government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels in the northern jungles, and underscored the rebels' continued ability to strike deep inside government-controlled territory.

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He blamed the rebels for the attack, which he said killed a boy and two **women** and wounded 26 others.

Troops were sent to the remote site to try to find the assailants, he said.

Rebel spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthirayan could not be reached for comment. The **Tamil Tigers** have been blamed for scores of suicide bombings and other attacks on civilians and are listed as a terror group by the United States, European Union and India.

The rebels were blamed for a strike in Buttala on Jan. 16 in which assailants bombed a bus, gunned down the fleeing passengers and attacked nearby farmers as they retreated into the forest, killing 32 people.

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting since 1983 to create an independent state for ethnic minority Tamils, who have been marginalized by successive governments controlled by ethnic Sinhalese. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

The government has stepped up fighting around the rebels' de facto state in the north in an effort to deliver on its promise to crush the group by the end of this year.

New fighting along the northern front lines Thursday killed 19 rebels and two soldiers, the military reported Friday.

Both sides routinely exaggerate enemy casualties and underreport their own. It was not possible to verify the accounts because reporters are barred from the war zone.

Military says gunmen ambush Sri Lanka passenger bus, killing child, 2 women

The attack came as the government tightened security around the capital, Colombo, ahead of a major cricket tournament with rival India and a high-profile South Asia summit that begins at the end of this month.

Nanayakkara said beefed-up security for those events would not leave other parts of Sri Lanka vulnerable to further rebel attacks.

"In all parts of the country, we have security arrangements," he said.

Load-Date: July 12, 2008

End of Document

Forces foil Tiger attempts to mar Eastern Poll

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 2, 2008 Friday 4:26 PM EST

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Length: 2286 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 2 -- The events that unfolded in the North East and also in the South during the past two weeks were common features of the Tiger outfit's attempts in reaching one single objective.

The **LTTE** show off in the Jaffna FDLs, the inhumane bomb explosion targeting innocent civilians in Piliyandala on April 25 and the abortive air raid in Weli Oya on April 27 were part of one campaign that they are currently engaged in.

Those were only a few incidents that were witnessed by the people. But there are a lot of undercurrents by the **LTTE** yet to be exposed. Their only intention is to prevent their second humiliating defeat in the East. This time they are trying to prevent their defeat within the democratic process following their humiliating military defeat.

What is most important is that the **LTTE** was much more concerned about the Eastern election than any other matter. That was why they made every possible attempt to foil the Government's bid to establish true democracy in the East by creating an atmosphere conducive to conduct a free and fair election.

Succeeded

Have they succeeded in foiling the Government's attempts to conduct a free and fair election in the East? The Tiger outfit has miserably failed in all their endeavours though many people thought that they have been successful.

First they tried to stop other political parties from contesting the Provincial Council election.

They had one special objective in that attempt. That was to prevent the Tamil political parties from contesting the election especially for the Eastern Provincial Council which had been de-merged from the North following a ruling by the Supreme Court.

The only exception for the Eastern Provincial Council election is the Tamil National Alliance which is hell bent on the agenda of the Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. Except for the TNA all the other Tamil political parties are contesting the election nominating their Eastern leaders as their candidates.

So the **LTTE** has miserably failed in maintaining the idea that all Tamil political parties are for the North East Tamil homeland concept since many of the Tamil political parties contesting the forthcoming election are trying to build a separate Eastern leadership that does not depend on the Northern leadership. Many of these political parties are rejecting the idea of having a Northern leadership for the Eastern people.

Forces foil Tiger attempts to mar Eastern Poll

Therefore, all Tamil political parties except for the Tamil National Alliance has attacked the very foundation of the North-East Tamil homeland concept by contesting the election.

The Thamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal led by Pilleyan which is ardently campaigning for a separate leadership for the Eastern Tamils has become the prime Target of the LTTE at present.

Under these circumstances the Tiger outfit is reportedly making many attempts to create mayhem in the East to send a message to the South and also to the international community that they are very much in control of the East despite their military defeat. They want to show that despite their military defeat they are still enjoying public support in the East.

However, the Security Forces and the Police operating in the East have foiled almost all their attempts to sabotage the Eastern election campaign. Due to a well-organised intelligence network established in the East and also due to the public support entertained by the Security Forces after the liberation of the East many of the terror plans to sabotage the election campaign have been exposed.

According to defence sources a Tiger team led by 'Keerthi' has landed in the Peraru jungle recently with the objective of sabotaging the Eastern election. He has been specially assigned for this task and sent from Wanni since the Tiger cadres clandestinely operating in the East have failed in their endeavour of sabotaging the election campaigns by political parties.

Tigers

Intelligence reports indicate that this Tiger team had landed north of Trincomalee while a group of Sea Tigers were confronting the Navy in the sea north of Trincomalee. A group of 60 Tiger cadres have reportedly landed with the objective of reaching Batticaloa and Trincomalee via jungle patches in the East.

A number of claymore attacks on Security Forces operating in Thambalagamuwa on the Trincomalee-Habarana road were reported recently as a part of the Tiger attempts to sabotage the election campaign. But the Tiger cadres involved in these sabotage acts have been careful not get exposed to the Security Forces and the Police since such arrests would foil all their major plans in the East.

However, Security Forces have been able to get vital information on the Tiger terror plans as the LTTE had used some civilians supporting them to carry out these claymore attacks. In return the LTTE had offered big sums for these civilians to carry out these claymore attacks.

The poor public support towards these Tiger cadres reaching the East has foiled their attempts. Meanwhile, the Security Forces operating north of Trincomalee have been able to recover an explosive- filled brassiere which could be aimed at targeting a VVIP attending the election campaign.

It has been detected by the Security Forces from a civilian in Kinniya in Trincomalee. A Tiger cadre has handed over the kit to this civilian to keep it with him until it is taken back. According to sources the civilian has been paid by the LTTE for his service.

The Security Forces found this type of suicide kit for the first time. They have made this suicide kit filling the brassiere with explosives which cannot be detected by the Security Forces and the Police during a body search since it had been made so craftily.

Security Forces believe that the same type of suicide kit was worn by the female suicide cadre who attempted to assassinate Minister Douglas Devananda at his office in Colombo in the middle of last year.

The detection of this suicide kit was a clear sign that they are trying their best to induct suicide cadres as part of their campaign to sabotage the Eastern election. It was evident once the Security Forces arrested a female suicide cadre from Batticaloa last week. She confessed to the Security Forces that she had reached Batticaloa by sea.

Forces foil Tiger attempts to mar Eastern Poll

She had confirmed reports that a Tiger team specially assigned to sabotage the election had landed at a point south of Kuchchaveli in Trincomalee district.

However, the poor response to the LTTE from the public who are now living peacefully in the Eastern province without any harassment has foiled all their attempts. It has become an easy task for the Security Forces and the Police to detect suspected Tiger cadres due to increased public support extended to them by persons providing information about such Tiger attempts.

According to Eastern Security Forces Commander Major General Jammika Liyanage the Security Forces are well aware of the Tiger plans to sabotage the election in the East and are making all possible arrangements to counter such terror plans.

The jungle terrains in the Eastern province especially north of Trincomalee have received the special attention of the Security Forces in their effort to counter Tiger movements into Batticaloa and Ampara districts.

Since the Tiger outfit has lost all their bases in the East after the Security Forces took full control of the province last year, Tiger cadres clandestinely arriving in the province from Wanni tend to take cover of thick jungles for their terror operations.

So the strong presence of Security Forces in these jungle patches will contribute immensely to foil Tiger operations.

Apart from this 40 additional Army platoons will also be deployed in the East to assist the Police to maintain law and order in the province in the pre and post election period.

According to Eastern Security Forces Commander Major General Liyanage a total of 20,000 Security Forces personnel apart from the Police will be deployed to strengthen security in the Eastern province in view of the PC elections.

Commanding

Brigadier Dampath Fernando, General Officer Commanding 23 Division in Batticaloa and Brigadier Janaka Walgama General Officer Commanding 22 Division in Trincomalee also affirmed their commitment to create a conducive environment in the East to conduct the provincial council election.

It was in such a background the LTTE made several abortive attempts to boost its image and to show off to the world its presence through the brutal attack targeting innocent civilians at Piliyandala killing 26 people and injuring several dozens.

After a long lapse, the LTTE air wing also made an abortive attempt to target Security Forces establishment in Welioya using their obsolete aircraft.

However, the LTTE is no longer keen to use their airwing to boost its image internationally since they have failed in all endeavours of destroying Security Forces installations.

However, it was patently clear that the LTTE was making all these attempts targeting the Eastern elections though they accused the Government of making use of military operations in favour of the Eastern election campaign.

But in reality it was the LTTE which is desperately engaged in this campaign aiming at the Eastern election to prevent its second defeat in the Eastern province to cover up its shameful position once the Eastern population fully rejects the LTTE at the May 10 Provincial Council Election which would create a devastating effect on the future existence of the LTTE.

Army undaunted despite false accusations in media

Forces foil Tiger attempts to mar Eastern Poll

The country witnessed a well orchestrated plan to tarnish the image of the security Forces last week especially after the military operation in Jaffna FDLs in Muhamalai and Kilali on April 23. Many media institutions tried to expose it as a debacle in Muhamalai exaggerating the number of Security Forces personnel killed during this attack.

Despite the figures given by the Sri Lanka Army many media organisations speculated on the number of soldiers killed during the operation. For some media the number troops killed exceeded 165 while some other gave a figure exceeding 200. Their intention was clear.

They wanted to portray it as a debacle not knowing the fact that the Sri Lanka Army was fully responsible for each and every soldier killed during such military operations.

It was true it took time to give the correct figure on the number of Security Forces personnel killed during the battle. The final figure confirmed by the Army Headquarters now stands at 83. It declared this figure after verification of all the facts about the missing personnel too.

The number also includes the number of soldiers who were declared missing during the battle.

However, giving a casualty figure is a somewhat difficult task. As the Army officials have to count the soldiers with even small injury to its casualty figure. It was true that the number of casualties were relatively big compared to the recent battles. But can any body describe it as a debacle?

It is doubtful whether these critics have put headlines to their sexy stories completely forgetting the 25 years long history of the North East conflict.

It was true that many called it a debacle once a full Division in Elephant Pass had to withdraw up to Palali exactly eight years prior to the Muhamalai incident took place last week.

It was believed that more than 1,300 troops were killed during this withdrawal. Once again in Mullaitivu the Security Forces lost more than 1,500 troops once the LTTE surrounded the isolated Mullaitivu military complex and killed our soldiers within a single night.

The media had the full authority to call them debacles as Security Forces not only lost manpower but also the ground to the LTTE. But at the Muhamalai incident they lost only 83 Security Forces personnel and they gained control of the Tiger territory ahead of the Security Forces defences and are still dominating that area despite false media reports.

The incident had not affected the morale of the troops engaged in the Wanni battlefield.

It was just 24 hours after the Muhamalai incident that troops operating under the 57 Division in Vavuniya completed their long awaited mission taking full control of the Madhu shrine without firing a single bullet within that sacred area.

It was a big achievement for the troops.

Thereafter, troops advanced some three kilometres ahead of Madhu shrine area without stopping their mission at the Madhu shrine.

Even on the Weli Oya front troops made considerable advance into Tiger territory killing dozens of Tiger cadres.

On Wednesday early morning the troops operating under 58 Division made major progress by capturing yet another Tiger base in Veppankulam and Kallikulam areas. This area also included a big earth bund constructed by the LTTE along the Uyilankulam-Andankulam road.

It was through the intercepted radio transmission of the LTTE the Security Forces observed that the 18 Base of the LTTE is also located within that area. Tiger cadres suffered heavy casualties losing 42 of their cadres during this battle.

Forces foil Tiger attempts to mar Eastern Poll

The 6th and 12th battalions of the Sri Lanka Gemunu Watch and the 10th Battalion of the Gajaba Regiment took part in this battle and fought relentlessly to capture this Tiger territory.

As these military operations continued successfully despite adverse media reports on the Muhamalai incident the recruitment drive of the Army also continued. There was a big response from the youth even the day after the incident.

According to the Army 250 youth have joined the Sri Lanka Army within the first two days following the incident.

That means the troops have not given up their task despite all these adverse media campaigns aimed at discouraging the battle against **LTTE** terrorism.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: September 16, 2008

How Tamils divided Tamils...

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

October 14, 2008 Tuesday 1:58 PM EST

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Length: 2108 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 14 -- The world has been misled to believe that it was the Sinhala majority that divided the Tamil community, through the disinformation campaign of the LTTE. But, the truth is quite different to the disinformation campaign of that deadly terror movement.

The division of the Tamils were written on May 14, 1976, by Tamil political leaders who misled their own community for political gain. It was on that day, the infamous Vaddukkodai Resolution gave birth to, making a treacherous call for separation.

Distant dream

It resulted in many Tamil youth, forming groups as militants, to fight for an impracticable demand for separation, which was a distant dream. They all had the tag 'Eelam' on their heads.

They fought each other for supremacy. Many of them later realised that separation was a distant dream and returned to the democratic fold. The LTTE continued with the separation tag on its head for survival.

It is no exaggeration to state that this country has reached a critical juncture. No Head of State, in the past nor present, ever dreamt of a war within this country. Terrorism dragged the country to war. And violence, continues for the thirty second year in succession. During that period, several 'Peace Pundits' habitually attempted to portray that the Sinhala majority administrations were racist.

The Government of the day of President Mahinda Rajapaksa, too was viewed in that manner, by the squint eye of those self proclaimed Peace Pundits. Belying all such Cassandra-like prognostications, Presidents of the past and present extended the hand of friendship to the LTTE. But, the LTTE bit that hand of friendship. Isn't it clear that it was the LTTE which dragged this country to war, time and again?

The division

Let us now get back to the period where the dark clouds began to hang over the peace loving Tamil population of this country. The division, of the once united Tamil people of this nation, was written on May 14, 1976.

A Resolution was moved seeking a separate State at the Vaddukkodai meeting of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) on that ill-fated day. Those who moved that resolution were living in a dreamland but never dreamt they would perish sooner or later, as a result of such a perilous resolution.

How Tamils divided Tamils...

May 14, 1976 was a jubilant day for the then TULF high - command. Crowds thronged the meetings they addressed in that year in preparation for the July 1977 General Election. What more?

That dream was confined as the theme on every political platform. In the true sense, the intellectual Tamil political leadership knew it was only a distant dream. As usual, it was only a political slogan to mislead the Tamil voters.

The tragedy of the Vaddukkodai Resolution was that Appapillai Amirthalingam, a much respected leader of the Tamil community himself was a victim of LTTE terrorism, that was born as a result of that resolution. When Amirthalingam realised that a separate state was impossible within this small island nation, he had a change of heart.

Truly, he was a democrat, who believed in the divinity of democracy. Hardly two years later, from the Reporters' Gallery in the old Parliamentary Complex in Colombo Fort, I reported Opposition Leader, Appapillai Amirthalingam's speech on the debate to extend the State of Emergency by a further month on December 19, 1978. He said - 'Mr. Speaker, people who have broken the law must be caught and punished.

Whether they are Tigers or Lions, they must be caught and punished and, that is the duty of the Government'. Amirthalingam further stressed that innocent law abiding citizens must be able to go about their normal vocations without being attacked.

While Amirthalingam expressed and stressed such democratic ideals during that debate, his colleague, M.Sivasithamparam interrupted Amirthalingam several times to scream, 'We want Eelam and we will continue to demand Eelam'.

An angry Industries and Scientific Affairs Minister, Cyril Mathew hitting back on Sivasithamparam said, 'Sir, I have also got to say the truth. There is also a political terror group stalking this land today, that is killing at will'. Hell broke out in Parliament that day as Amirthalingam looked a dejected man.

The TULF Members forced the leadership that the party should leave the Chamber. Amirthalingam was the last of the 17 TULF MPs to leave the Chamber that evening. As they were leaving, Minister Gamini Dissanayake said, 'Certainly, that is not the Gandhian way of principles! All I can say is, Mahatma Gandhi would have been ashamed of disciples of this sort'.

The reason for the TULF to leave the Chamber had nothing to do with the ethnic problem nor the demand for a separate state during that debate. Home Affairs Minister, K.W. Dewanayagam pointed out to the Speaker that an accused in the Alfred Duraipappa (slain Mayor of Jaffna) was seen in the Public Gallery in Parliament.

The difference

Sivasithamparam claimed the man in the Gallery was not a Tiger. In reply, Prime Minister R.Premadasa in a jocular mood quipped, " Mr. Speaker, it is the Hon. Sivasithamparam who knows the difference between a 'Tiger' and a 'Non-Tiger', because he lives with them".

With that being the state of affairs in the North and East three decades ago, smuggler turned terrorist, Velupillai Prabhakaran began his violent campaign against all Governments in power, under the guise of seeking a resolution to the ethnic strife.

But, at the back of his mind, he used the TULF slogan of a separate state to mislead the Tamils for his survival. Prabhakaran used several MPs in the 1977 Parliament to defend his terror group.

One of them were the vociferous speaker, Vettiveli Yogeswaran from Jaffna. It was quite unfortunate that Yogeswaran, his wife Sarojini, a former Mayor of Jaffna and Amirthalingam were gunned down by the very LTTE, for whom they spoke in defence, in the hallowed Chambers of Parliament.

In this tragic journey which now spans over three decades, the majority of the TULF, have now turned as the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), except for the strong minded, Veerasingham Ananda Sangaree, who yet braves the

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dreaded LTTE. The TNA is the mouth piece of the LTTE at present. But, the ruthless Tigers have not spared those in the TNA, who voiced democratic views to find a lasting solution.

How long could Tamil politicians survive in this manner is the question. The cream of the Tamil politicians had been wiped out. Only a few more of them are left. Tamil political parties are in disarray. The LTTE resorts to brazen attempts to kill all opposed to them. Race, religion or colour do not matter to the venomous minds of the LTTE. We all have witnessed many a horrendous act of the LTTE. Even pregnant Tamil women are used on suicide missions. What more brutality than that?

Be it the North or South, it is time to stop hair splitting over the ethnic problem. Political parties should not absolve themselves from the process of finding a resolution to the problem. Always condemning the brutality of the LTTE will not help. Politicians must put the nation before themselves.

The All Party Conference should not look a cosmetic gesture, for parties to come, abstain or withdraw. Instead, all must join hands to exert maximum pressure on the LTTE at this point, where the LTTE looks weak, both militarily and politically. The LTTE, by its recent killings had not assured the international community of its credentials. Hence, this is the time most opportune for all political parties to speak in one voice against terrorism.

Resurgence

The resurgence of LTTE violence, in other parts of the country continues unabated, despite heavy setbacks they suffer in the battlefield. The people cannot always remind all our politicians of the need, to join hands to safeguard democracy, nation and the people. Politicians should realise that they are on a mission for the people. The crucial hour has come to speed up national reconciliation to seek peace.

Reconciliation and Peace are twin elements in a country's process of reconstruction and development. Politicians must seek the participation of the people to achieve those goals. Politicians should not await invitations to resolve national issues. Be they in the Government or Opposition, they must rid themselves of the phobia to hide behind power, or, to come to power early. And, national crises should not be made a bait to gain political advantage.

Lasting solution

While the political tug-of-war continued among all political parties for past three decades, to find a lasting solution to the ethnic crisis, the LTTE advanced to aircraft power. Did we ever think of the need to behave in a manner that would promote the desire to eliminate terrorism, to move towards reconciliation? Are we truly doing it now? All politicians must answer these national questions.

Playing the ball to each others court had been the practice for three decades. At least now, our politicians need to act with a sense of responsibility, towards a honest response. Traversing on such a path could be discomfiting. But, political party leaders and their parties should not live on petty agendas. The Opposition has a major role to play in that direction.

All politicians must realise that the LTTE is now in utter desperation, out to destroy the lives of important individuals. It wants to bring fear to the minds of the people and drive home the point, that the country is on the brink of a division, a dream that is now far from reality.

Political leaders of today cannot behave in a manner ignorant to the obvious needs of the people. Nor should they sacrifice national needs before the Altar for political gain.

Only devotion and commitment could stop the cyclonic ill winds that blow across this nation. Having suffered for over three decades due to ruthless terrorism, the people wish to live in a land devoid of racial conflict, terror, corruption and abuse of power. Politicians are bound to lead the nation towards the reality of that noble dream.

The extremist groups of the Sinhala society must now stop demonizing the LTTE. The LTTE has miserably failed in the battle field, as well as before the international community. Extremism from any quarter does not pay dividends.

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Those extremist groups must now let the Government and other political parties place their cards on the table in an open manner, that would hopefully bring about a settlement, acceptable to all, to this festering national agony. Those 'extremists' who stage protests and 'scream' as patriots, must realise that more we delay a resolution to the crisis, those who live fine would be our fortunate politicians. And, the not so fine are the unfortunate masses. If that is allowed to play, we would lack form and content in the direction towards stability as a nation.

Petty politics and the misconception of 'man before country', has dragged the nation into darkness over the years, since dark clouds began to hang over this thrice blessed land three decades ago. The crisis will prolong and drag us into further darkness if, both the Government and the Opposition continue to judge each other with suspicion and contempt, as they have done in the past.

The light

The people yearn to witness a process that is more responsive to humanity. Democracy must be defined to devolve power to the people, and not to satisfy the aspirations of a few politicians. People should not be destined to experience misadventures as a result of political errors.

The completion of the first decade of this century, is quite near and at hand. It's time to create adventures that we could be proud of, and leave them for our next generation. Could our politicians rise up to that challenge in a unified manner?

If they do, the people could see the light at the end of the tunnel. Then, the first century of this new millennium will no longer carry the dreadful plight of men, women and children with broken limbs and torn bodies as a result of terrorism.

Gone are the days of the Vaddukodai Resolution. It had died a natural death. Tamils do not now demand a separate state. Only the LTTE terrorists dream of separation. Many former Tamils militants have now embraced democracy. There's no reason at present, to suspect or hate the Tamil community.

Let not await another day, to build up partnership to take this country forward towards prosperity. That is the clarion call of the people to all politicians. Only a power sharing mechanism will strengthen democracy to bury separation. Terrorism could be buried with such a noble concept.

"Unity lies in the current of blood and not in torrent of words", said Rabindranath Tagore.

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Do not recruit civilians, allow them passage

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 17, 2009 Tuesday

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Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 17 -- The United Nations yesterday called on the **LTTE** to release the UN worker held hostage by them, to desist from further recruitment of civilians and to permit passage of tens of thousands of civilians remaining in the 'Vanni Pocket', including children.

A statement issued by the office of the UN Resident/Humanitarian Co-ordinator, Colombo said: "The United Nations' concern for the welfare of the civilian population caught up in the fighting has heightened based on reports received in the last few days. While the designation of the new safe zone has provided some respite for the tens of thousands of civilians trapped for weeks by heavy fighting which has killed and injured many people, reports from yesterday indicate that there was some fighting inside the zone. This fighting led to the deaths and injury to yet more civilians. The United Nations calls for the Sri Lankan forces and the **LTTE** to refrain from fighting in areas of civilian concentration. The **LTTE** continues to actively prevent people leaving, and reports indicate that a growing number of people trying to leave have been shot and sometimes killed. There are indications that children as young as 14 are being recruited into the ranks of the **LTTE**. Fifteen United Nations staff and 75 of their dependents, 40 of whom are children, and 35 of whom are **women**, remain in the same area, having also been prevented from leaving by the **LTTE**. Fifteen of these children have contracted respiratory diseases, a serious indicator for a population which is now in dire need of humanitarian assistance. We are acutely aware that the suffering of our own UN staff and dependents is just one part of a much larger picture. However their release would be a good gesture and would strengthen the capacity of the UN to assist the tens of thousands of people both inside the Vanni pocket, and the approximately 30,000 IDPs who have left for Government held areas. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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WILL THERE BE A 'MOTHER OF ALL BATTLES' FOR KILINOGHCHI?

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

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Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 25 -- A combination of four factors namely weather, tiger resistance, Indian concern and the Governments professed commitment for civilian safety has served to circumscribe Colombo's intention of waging an all - out war to take Kilinogochchi. There was a moment when it could have done so. Colombo failed to seize the moment. That moment has now seemingly passed. At the moment the long awaited mother of all battles for Kilinogochchi taking place seems a remote possibility. Even the anticipated fall of Kilinogochchi seems unlikely to occur.

Former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein captured the world's imagination with his prediction about the 'Mother of all battles' in 1991 after seizing Kuwait.

The much-awaited mother of all battles turned out to be damp squib. It was a case of beginning with a tremendous bang and ending in a pathetic whimper.

Recent hype in sections of the media about the seizure of Kilinogochchi preceded by a fierce battle, brings back memories of the mother of all battles that never occurred.

If current politico - military realities are taken into account all indicators are that the anticipated mother of all battles for Kilinogochchi may not take place after all.

Multiple factors such as the serious concern evinced by New Delhi about the safety and security of Tamil civilians, the onset of North - Eastern monsoon rains, the defensive measures set in motion by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) and the pragmatically flexible military approach adopted by the Sri Lankan armed forces are leading to a dicey situation where Kilinogochchi's fate could be uncertain.

Kilinogochchi was a fast developing town in the Northern mainland until the ethnic conflict escalated. The town lies alongside the Jaffna - Kandy trunk road known as the A - 9 Highway

It was earlier part of the Jaffna administrative district. Kilinogochchi was re- demarcated as a separate administrative district with Kilinogochchi town as its capital.

The name Kilinogochchi is derived from "kili" meaning parrot and the tree " nochchi " (vitex negundo). Kilinogochchi district is a sprawling agrarian region extending even into the Jaffna peninsula in the form of Pachchilaipalli AGA division.

Although Kilinogochchi is a separate administrative district, it is also an electoral division forming part of the Jaffna electoral district when it comes to polls.

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It could be seen therefore that the name Kilinochchi refers to the town, administrative district, electoral division and in a general sense the outlying region.

In recent times, Kilinochchi shot to fame when it became the de - facto administrative "capital" of LTTE controlled territory in the North.

Kilinochchi itself was wrested back by the tigers from Government control in 1998 through phase - two of the LTTE military operation codenamed "Oyatha Alaigal" or ceaseless waves.

The ceasefire agreement of February 23rd 2002 saw a period of relative peace.

It was during this period that Kilinochchi acquired importance as the LTTE began setting up various structures like an administrative secretariat, political headquarters, military headquarters, peace secretariat etc in Kilinochchi town and its suburbs.

Many other LTTE controlled organizations like the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO) also set up office in K'nohchi. Other tiger departments like the radio "voice of Tigers/Tamil Eelam Radio" and TV " Nitharsanam/Tamil Eelam TV" also established themselves in the area.

Several Non - Governmental organizations, International NGO's and also International agencies located their regional offices in Kilinochchi. Visiting dignitaries, official delegations and key officials also met with LTTE officials including tiger supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran in K'nohchi.

It is against this backdrop that K'nohchi evolved into an unofficial administrative capital of the LTTE.

This phenomenon has afforded Kilinochchi a great deal of symbolic value. Militarily K'nohchi town does not have the strategic merits of even Paranthan situated four miles to its north.

Kilinochchi's short tenure of fame or notoriety as the LTTE "capital" has made it a prize target in Colombos calculations.

An ambiguous irony in this war is the "contradiction" visible between professed intention and actual implementation.

LTTE controlled territory is deemed as rightfully coming under Sri Lankan state writ and the people in those areas are legitimate citizens of this country. "re- unification" in essence is the rationale for war.

The manner in which the war is conducted suggests otherwise. It is as if war is being waged in a hostile country against an alien people. When military plans are formulated practically no concern is displayed for the fate of civilians.

Recently Defence secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa boasted that the Sri Lankan air force had conducted more than six thousand air raids as opposed to the six done by the LTTE.

The tragic irony of an air force bombing its own people on its own soil six thousand times seemed to be lost on the defence secretary.

Thus the Tamil people are constantly reminded that the war is against the LTTE and not them, but the way in which it is conducted makes the people feel differently.

There is also a tendency to revive the atavistic past and introduce some elements of it into the current war in a spirit of conquest.

When Parayaanaalankulam was captured, former deputy defence minister Anuruddha Ratwatte who fancied himself as a latter - day Sapumal Kumarama re-named it Sapumalpara.

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Even Chandrika Kumaratunga despite her enlightened approach towards the Tamil national question re-enacted a medieval pageant of sorts when Jaffna was taken. In an elaborate ceremony, Ratwatte presented to her a scroll in a casket announcing the capture of "Yapapatuna".

It is this mindset that is seemingly dominant when it comes to Kilinochchi. It is being projected indirectly as the tiger or Tamil capital. The hype is seemingly all about the imminent fall of an enemy capital.

Currently Kilinochchi is but an empty shell. The **LTTE** has withdrawn all its departments. The NGO's and INGO's have closed their offices. Even Government offices, departments, secretariat and hospital etc are re-located. Most people have left and it is fast turning into a ghost town.

In utilitarian terms Kilinochchi is of little practical value. It is not important even in military considerations as some other places like Paranthan, Thunukkai, Oddusuddan, Nedunkerni or Mankulam.

What it retains is the dubious prestige of having been a de - facto administrative capital of the **LTTE**. Given the Rajapaksa regime's penchant for crass exhibitionism, there is a need to take Kilinochchi and flaunt its conquest to the nation at large.

It is this notion of conquest, which gives Kilinochchi its enhanced prestige and symbolic value.

Militarily it is not of great importance though sections of the Colombo media are fond of describing each military advance as being of strategic importance.

The other side of this Kilinochchi obsession is among sections of the Colombo Tamil media and Diaspora.

Like their counterparts in the English and Sinhala media, Tamil media also allots to Kilinochchi, undeserving prominence as an important Tamil capital like how Madurai was to the Pandiyans, Thanjai/Uraiyoor/Gangaikondacholapuram was to the Cholas and Nalloor was to the Arya Chakrawarthy dynasty.

So the anticipated fall of Kilinochchi by the "opposite" side is opposed by a counter - argument in Tamil media that is two - fold. On the one hand we are told that K'nohchi will not be allowed to fall and on the other that the war will continue regardless of Kilinochchi's fate.

It is in this atmosphere pervaded by martial spirits that the fate of Kilinochchi town is being speculated upon. Great expectations have been aroused in the South about its imminent capture.

Some sections of the media have gone to the extent of stating that the armed forces are within a 1600 metre distance of Kilinochchi town limits. This news may provide a "feel good" feeling to many but ground realities are not so rosy.

The actual position seems to be this. The two closest points to K'nohchi held by the army are in the old Murugandy - new Kokkavil area and in areas south - east of the Akkarayankulam tank.

Both these locations west of the A - 9 are not along the highway though quite close to the road. The nearest villages along the A - 9 that are close to both points are either Kokkavil or Thirumurugandy.

Now Thirumurugandy is seven miles to the South of Kilinochchi. Kokkavil is nine miles to the south of K'nohchi on the A - 9. The shortest distance to K'Nochchi from Thirumurugandy and Kokkavil is along the A - 9.

As for Akkarayankulam, troops are currently in locations to the south of Akkarayan tank. The village Akkarayan is to the north of the tank. There is a C - grade road linking Akkarayankulam to Kilinochchi town. But that means a distance of 14 km.

There has also been a lot of hype about breaching the **LTTE** constructed bund and capturing Vannerikulam. It is certainly a military feat but again the geographical reality is that Vannerikulam is five km to the west of Akkarayankulam.

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This means the distance to Kilinochchi is even greater. Likewise, Jeyapuram that was taken recently is another four km to the west of Vannerikulam. These military accomplishments do not reduce the distance to Kilinochchi in any way.

Given these geographical realities it is indeed puzzling to witness gleeful declarations of the armed forces being within kissing distance of Kilinochchi town. (Maybe it's a flying kiss!)

Initially it was assumed that Kilinochchi would be taken by mid - October as further delay would have seen the Monsoon rains falling in late October. But the monsoon rains have begun even before the town fell.

In a bid perhaps to educate people of prevailing conditions the defence authorities released pictures of soldiers pushing vehicles bogged down on mud tracks. Since a picture is said to be worth a thousand words these demonstrated clearly the difficulties faced by soldiers in proceeding towards avowed destinations. In a sense, the bogged down vehicles were a metaphor for the war on Kilinochchi.

That the rains and weather conditions are dampening war efforts is crystal clear. This was why the armed forces wanted to take symbolic Kilinochchi by mid - October.

What went awry with these plans were two factors. One was the stiff resistance proffered by the LTTE. The other subsequent factor was India's role.

When the armed forces began nearing Kilinochchi via Akkarayankulam and Old Murugandy - new Kokkavil, the tigers changed tactics. The women's brigades and newly recruited/conscripted cadres were withdrawn from those frontlines.

Experienced cadres of Charles Anthony regiment under "ColAmithab were brought in. These cadres fought with dogged determination on multiple fronts in these crucial areas.

The armed forces with overwhelming superiority of numbers and military assets did manage to push through but the LTTE succeeded in holding them off for a long time thus delaying the military drive.

Even now the armed forces are close to the A - 9 at many places but are not attempting to occupy the road physically. On the other hand tiger resistance along the Pallavarayankattu - Jeyapuram - Vannerikulam, Akkarayankulam - Old Murugandy - new Kokkavil axis has been formidable.

Another development in the fighting was the use of the air force. At one stage Air Force planes and helicopters unleashed a barrage of bombs on Kilinochchi and outskirts. Several abandoned LTTE offices were hit.

Suddenly things changed. The LTTE began deploying its Radha anti aircraft unit in Kilinochchi and environs. When warehouses run by the TRO were being bombed the Radha unit allegedly engaged in anti aircraft fire.

Kanagasabapathy Harichandran alias Radha was at one time LTTE commander for Mannar and Jaffna. An alumni of Jaffna Hindu College, he was a bank employee in Colombo when July 1983 erupted. He joined the LTTE and rose up from the ranks.

Radha was killed in a bombing spree by the Air Force in 1987. The anti - aircraft unit (vimaana ethirpu ani) pioneered by Vaithilingam Sornalingam alias "ColShankar was developed further and re-named after Radha.

With Radha unit cadres converging in Kilinochchi the Air Force began targeting spots further north in Paranthan and also in areas like Viswamadhu and Puthukudiyiruppu.

It was at this juncture that India began intervening "diplomatically" on a humanitarian basis on behalf of beleaguered Tamil civilians. India did not demand that Colombo call off the war against LTTE but emphasised strongly that civilian safety and security have to be ensured.

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This "benign" intervention coincided with a lull in aerial bombardment. It also brought about greater consideration for civilian plight. President Mahinda Rajapaksa was so "moved" by Indian entreaties that he announced publicly of slow progress by the armed forces due to concern showed for civilian safety.

Up to now, New Delhi has not demanded an end to war against the LTTE. No Congress dominated government can do so. What India wants is a change in the way the war is being fought ensuring civilian safety.

Since most civilians in Kilinochchi and to the South of Kilinochchi had fled the areas there is little chance of innocent non - combatants being victimised if hostilities spread towards Kilinochchi.

This provided a window of opportunity to the armed forces. If they could advance swiftly in a few days time towards Kilinochchi then the town could be taken before Tamil Nadu public opinion consolidated itself and erupted on a mass scale.

Given these imperatives there was a spurt of military activity. Some analysts described it as a "race for Kilinochchi". If the armed forces could have taken Kilinochchi within a short time, then there was nothing anyone across the Palk straits could have done. Time was of the essence.

But the tigers fought back fiercely thus delaying and obstructing military plans. The past few days have seen enormous casualties on both sides. There are wild rumours about the figures. What is of importance here is the Defence Ministry decision not to reveal casualty figures on official websites.

The end result of all this is Kilinochchi's fate turning dicey. It is one thing to have taken Kilinochchi quickly but a prolonged battle targeting the town is likely to have an impact in Tamil Nadu.

With a Tamil Nadu all - party resolution demanding that the Central government should take steps to end the war in Sri Lanka, it does not seem prudent for the armed forces to take symbolic Kilinochchi even if it was capable of doing so by overcoming LTTE resistance quickly.

The fall of Kilinochchi at this juncture could set off an emotional backlash in Tamil Nadu. New Delhi has been straining itself to contain Tamil Nadu passions but the capture of the "Tamil" capital Kilinochchi by "Sinhala" armed forces could trigger off much heat.

Even if the armed forces were to renew the drive towards Kilinochchi there is every chance that the LTTE would fight and resist. The tigers may even force some civilians to return to Kilinochchi.

If there were constraints on Colombo then use of Air power or artillery power would be severely curtailed. Without aerial bombardment and artillery shelling the armed forces would be at a disadvantage vis a vis the LTTE. In that event, the fight for symbolic Kilinochchi amidst adverse weather conditions would take a long, long time.

Thus a combination of four factors namely weather, tiger resistance, Indian concern and the Governments professed commitment for civilian safety has served to circumscribe Colombo's intention of waging an all - out war to take Kilinochchi.

There was a moment when it could have done so. Colombo failed to seize the moment. That moment has now seemingly passed.

At the moment the long awaited mother of all battles for Kilinochchi taking place seems a remote possibility. Even the anticipated fall of Kilinochchi seems unlikely to occur.

But all is not lost for the Government as far as Kilinochchi is concerned. Defence secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa made a revealing comment while briefing Editors at a meeting convened by President Rajapaksa.

The secretary compared military manoeuvres to the progress of water. Just as water moves rapidly at suitable levels to move forward the armed forces also do so, he said, according to media reports.

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This in a nutshell has been the guiding military philosophy. The LTTE has been frequently outsmarted by the military strategy of circumventing tiger defences, going around and then encircling by coming up from behind.

From Vidathaltheevu to Pallavarayankattu this strategy has been the key to military success. The tigers are compelled to withdraw after being encircled to avoid being trapped.

It does appear that the armed forces could repeat the same strategy regarding Kilinochchi also. Instead of getting tied down to the Akkarayankulam - Old Murugandy - new Kokkavil front or walking into a politico - military minefield by attempting to take Kilinochchi town the armed forces can duplicate their previous strategy with appropriate innovation.

If the armed forces can take the Mannar - Pooneryn road and then the Pooneryn - Paranthan road they can reach Paranthan four miles to the north of Kilinochchi and nine miles to the south of Elephant pass. The forces could then gradually expand an arc of encirclement around Kilinochchi forcing the tigers to withdraw. But then this requires an extended time - frame that may not be feasible.

Before I conclude let me refer to the furore caused by Indian analyst. B. Raman when he compared the siege of Stalingrad to the siege of Kilinochchi. Some newspaper reports say that Gotabhaya Rajapakse has called for a comparative study of both sieges.

The siege of Stalingrad during Second World War was a historic event when the Soviet defenders and winter combined to defeat Hitler's forces. Raman sees a parallel in Kilinochchi with monsoon rains replacing harsh Russian winter.

Interestingly the first to refer to Stalingrad was not Raman but former LTTE political commissar Yogi who is now in charge of LTTE military research unit. Yogi in an article written for LTTE journal "Eela Naatham" on July 21, compares Wannu resistance to Stalin Grad.

Then on August 15, there is a comparison with Stalin grad siege in another article written by Anbarasu. Incidentally Anbarasu is the pseudonym of an Oxonian contemporary of Canadian Liberal MP Bob Rae. Anbarasu is now in the Wannu committed to the LTTE struggle.

Both Yogi and Anbarasu did not specifically refer to Kilinochchi as the equivalent of Stalingrad. The resistance on the lines of Stalingrad could be in other places east of the A - 9.

However a systematic study of the siege of Stalingrad and the besieging of Kilinochchi shows there is no parallel at all. There is only a superficial similarity.

For one thing Mahinda Rajapaksa is not Adolph Hitler and Velupillai Prabhakaran is not Josef Stalin. More serious comparison reveals that trying to equate Stalingrad and Kilinochchi (though it may warm the cockles of LTTE hearts) is like comparing apples and oranges.

Comparing both on an equal basis and trying to draw a parallel between Stalingrad and Kilinochchi amounts to in logical terms as the fallacy of false analogy.

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WILL THERE BE A 'MOTHER OF ALL BATTLES' FOR KILINCHCHI ?

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6th Ld Explosion kills 10, injures 20 including minister in southern Sri Lanka

Xinhua General News Service

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Body

Ten people were killed while 20 others including a government minister were injured Tuesday morning in a suicide explosion blamed on Tamil Tiger rebels in southern Sri Lanka, defense officials said.

Officials from the Defense Ministry said an **LTTE** (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eealm) suicide bomber attacked the Jumma mosque at Godapitiya, in Akurassa, in the Matara district around 11 a.m. local time (0530 GMT).

Military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said 10 civilians were killed while 20 others including Post and Telecommunication Minister Mahinda Wijesekara were injured in the explosion in Matara, about 160 km south of the capital Colombo.

Nanayakkara said Wijesekara suffered head injuries and was initially treated in a hospital in Matara. The local newspaper Daily Mirror reported on its website that the injured minister will be airlifted to capital Colombo for further treatment shortly.

The newspaper reported that former Southern Province Chief Minister H. G. Sirisena was also among the injured.

Defense sources said another 15 people with injuries have been admitted to the government hospital in Matara.

A special team of doctors have been airlifted to Matara at the request of Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse, the spokesman said.

He said the **LTTE** suicide bomber was also killed in the explosion, but it is not clear whether the bomber was a male or **female**.

The suicide bomber targeted the Islam devotees attending the national Milad-Un-Nabi celebration, held at the mosque which was attended by several ministers and a large number of civilians, the military said.

The Milad-un-Nabi, the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed is celebrated as a national festival in Sri Lanka.

The explosion came as the government says its military offensive against the **LTTE** is at final stage as the rebel organization has been cornered in a small area of just about 40 sq km in the northern Mullaitivu district.

The troops recaptured most of the **LTTE**'s 15,000 sq km territories in successive military victories since 2006.

6th Ld Explosion kills 10, injures 20 including minister in southern Sri Lanka

Claiming discrimination at the hands of Sinhalese majority governments, the **LTTE** began its armed struggle in the 1980s to set up an independent Tamil homeland in the north and east, resulting in the killing of more than 70,000 people.

Load-Date: March 11, 2009

End of Document

Tamil families fleeing Pooneryn seek Government safety

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

October 17, 2008 Friday 2:36 PM EST

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Length: 203 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 17 -- Navy Inshore Patrol Craft (IPCs) on patrol in the North-Western seas rescued 18 Tamil civilians fleeing **LTTE** clutches, three nautical miles north of Talaimannar on Wednesday.

The group consisted of five families and three individuals comprising 12 males and six **females**. They had fled Pallikuda, an area abundant with **LTTE** hideouts, located South of Pooneryn, on board a fibre glass dinghy fitted with a 15 Horse Power outboard motor. During preliminary investigations, they revealed that they had fled from the **LTTE** clutches due to the fear of abduction, harassment and the lack of basic needs.

The whole area they said is in a state of instability due to the disarray of the **LTTE** and its cadre losses in the face of their continuous defeat at the hands of the advancing Security Forces. The terror outfit's grip on innocent civilians who have been held captive by its terror dictates as human shields, is being increasingly smashed by the Security Forces' victories reported in the battlefronts, they further claimed. The fortunate escapees consisted of five children, eleven youth (eight males and three **females**) and two adults.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: October 17, 2008

20 killed in horrific Sri Lanka bus blast

Indo-Asian News Service

February 2, 2008 Saturday 9:55 AM EST

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Length: 405 words

Byline: Report from Indo-Asian News Service brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 2 -- A powerful bomb ripped through a passenger bus in central Sri Lanka killing at least 20 people and injuring 50 Saturday, two days before the country marks its 60 year of independence.

The blast took place in a bus parked at the main bus stand at Dambulla, nearly 150 km northeast of Colombo, Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara told IANS.

The bus was on its way from tea-growing Kandy in the central hills to the Buddhist pilgrimage town of Anuradhapura in the north.

Sri Lankan officials blamed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) for the blast.

"Unable to face military pressure in the north, the **LTTE** is targeting civilians in other areas," one official said.

Dambulla is a major tourist, religious and agricultural centre. It is strategically located on the main road between Colombo and Trincomalee, a major naval base and oil storage centre on the eastern coast.

Dambulla is known for its large and well-maintained painted caves, going back to ancient Buddhist times. It also boasts of a state-of-art international cricket stadium. The town supplies vegetables to Colombo and other towns in southern Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka, where a Tamil separatist campaign raging since 1983 has left around 70,000 dead, has been rocked by a series of bus bombs since December.

There have been blasts near Madu in the northwest, at Kebetigollewa in the north-centre and at Buttala in the south, killings scores of innocent men, **women** and children.

The **LTTE** has been blamed for these killings. The Tigers have not responded to the allegations but in the case of the explosion in Madu area in Mannar district they blamed the government. The dead there included 18 school children.

Attacks on civilians have been taking place as the Sri Lankan armed forces mount pressure on the **LTTE** in the rebel strongholds in the north.

The military operations in Mannar, Jaffna and Vavuniya have made incremental progress in terms of territory gained.

20 killed in horrific Sri Lanka bus blast

Army chief Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka has said that the goal of the military was not to grab territory but to draw the Tigers out and kill the guerrillas in an unending war of attrition.

He has claimed notable successes, saying the LTTE's manpower was being seriously eroded.

Clashes between the LTTE and government troops have particularly escalated since Colombo scrapped a six-year truce Jan 16.

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Load-Date: February 2, 2008

5th LD Explosion kills 10, injures 20 including minister in southern Sri Lanka

Xinhua General News Service

March 10, 2009 Tuesday 11:11 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 345 words

Dateline: COLOMBO March 10

Body

Ten people were killed while 20 others including a government minister were injured Tuesday morning in a suicide explosion blamed on Tamil Tiger rebels in southern Sri Lanka, defense officials said.

Officials from the Defense Ministry said an **LTTE** (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eealm) suicide bomber attacked the Jumma mosque at Godapitiya, in Akurassa, in the Matara district around 11 a.m. local time (0530 GMT).

Military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said 10 civilians were killed while 20 others including Post and Telecommunication Minister Mahinda Wijesekara were injured in the explosion in Matara, about 160 km south of the capital Colombo.

Nanayakkara said Wijesekara suffered head injuries and was being treated in a hospital in Matara.

Defense sources said another 15 people with injuries have been admitted to the government hospital in Matara.

A special team of doctors have been airlifted to Matara at the request of Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse, the spokesman said.

He said the **LTTE** suicide bomber was also killed in the explosion, but it is not clear whether the bomber was a male or **female**.

The suicide bomber targeted the Islam devotees attending the national Milad-Un-Nabi celebration, held at the mosque which was attended by several ministers and a large number of civilians, the military said.

The Milad-un-Nabi, the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed, is celebrated as a national festival in Sri Lanka.

The explosion came as the government says its military offensive against the **LTTE** is at final stage as the rebel organization has been cornered in a small area of just about 40 sq km in the northern Mullaitivu district.

The troops recaptured most of the **LTTE**'s 15,000 sq km territories in successive military victories since 2006.

Claiming discrimination at the hands of Sinhalese majority governments, the **LTTE** began its armed struggle in the 1980s to set up an independent Tamil homeland in the north and east, resulting in the killing of more than 70,000 people.

5th LD Explosion kills 10, injures 20 including minister in southern Sri Lanka

Load-Date: March 11, 2009

End of Document

Brighter future for children

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 28, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 782 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 28 -- One of the most heartbreaking scenes that emerged from the battlefronts in the North and the East for the last several decades is the child soldier, carrying a heavy weapon that he or she can hardly hold. This is perhaps the greatest disservice that the LTTE has done to the Tamil community, which it ironically claims to 'liberate'.

The LTTE is among the several terrorist groups worldwide that conscript children, both male and female, for combat duties. Some of them are as young as eight years old. The Tigers simply rob them of their childhood, their innocence and their education to turn them into merciless killing machines. The Tigers' modus operandi is simple - they force families to give at least one child to the organisation or else they all face death. In desperation, they have been recruiting more than one child from each family in recent weeks. These children are mostly used as cannon fodder at the battlefield, with older, better trained cadres hiding behind them. Evidence has also recently emerged that Tigers had trained children for the most abhorrent mission of them all - suicide bombings. From time to time, the Tigers had assured the international community including the UN that it was giving up this repulsive practice, only to go back on their word. International human rights groups have accused the LTTE of keeping thousands of children as combatants. These children are subjected to cruel and degrading treatment, hardly fed properly and brainwashed endlessly. It has even released a few child cadres on several occasions mainly to hoodwink the local and international community, but child conscription has gone on unabated in the Wanni. The LTTE child combatants now being rehabilitated by the Government tell harrowing tales of how they were treated by the LTTE. Other groups which had child combatants had released them and they too are being rehabilitated. With the LTTE gasping for breath in a far corner of the Wanni, there is every possibility that the twin scourges of terrorism and child conscription would end soon. They are not two distinct trends - child conscription is terrorism. There is hope once again for parents in the Wanni that their children could see a brighter future, without being holed up in a bunker, facing certain death. There is hope that Wanni students would once again be having pens in their hands, instead of guns. The Government has worked closely with the UN, particularly UNICEF, to contain this menace. In this context, Thursday's launch of the Sri Lanka National Campaign against the Recruitment of Children for Use in Armed Conflict, a combined effort of the Government and the UNICEF, is a major milestone in the fight against child recruitment. The national campaign targeted at armed groups, vulnerable communities and the children affected, to prevent any future child recruitment and promote the release of children recruited already, is a brainchild of President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who has vigorously campaigned against this practice. The UNICEF has also been in the forefront of campaigning against the use of child soldiers worldwide. The President's call to the public to be part of this initiative is very timely. "I call upon all Sri Lankans to join in this cause, to be part of this campaign, to make your voices heard and your peaceful and determined actions seen the world over, as we seek to liberate the future of our land, and to free our children from having to carry arms for anyone, in any conflict, anywhere," the President said. The total liberation of the North and the East by Government Forces has augmented this campaign, as the

Brighter future for children

LTTE will no longer be in a position to recruit children. Apart from holding all civilians virtually hostage, the **LTTE** is reported to be using child soldiers in the very limited area it is now confined to. Most of them are likely to accept the Government's call to surrender. That will give them an opportunity to be re-united with their parents and families, continue their education and make a valuable contribution to society. The newly-launched Campaign faces a huge challenge, even as **LTTE** terrorism is being eradicated. The rehabilitation of former child combatants should be given priority. The society needs an assurance that these former combatants would not re-embrace violence in any form. Education, the love and care of their families and training for various vocations will help them become peaceful citizens. Peace for the whole country is now a reality, after several decades. The end of terrorism and child recruitment is thus a victory for the whole country. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

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East like phoenix rises from ashes

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

July 13, 2008 Sunday 12:44 PM EST

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Length: 2242 words

Byline: Report from the Sri Lanka Sunday Observer brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 13 -- Snarling through the newly built bund, the dust and heat greet us showing the signs of the rustic life of an area always burdened with hardships. With no mercy, the sun bakes the (EURO)-soil as well as the skin (EURO)(TM).

The embankment built with fresh red soil to prevent flooding which inundates the entire area with more than 15 feet under water. The sluice gates was the landmark of a humanitarian mission to liberate the fertile Eastern province, where thousands of Tamils were held as human shields, from the paws of the LTTE.

Mavil Aru

Despite the scorching sun the tractor drivers and labourers were busy levelling new bund, a stretch of over three kilometres, happy with the Ministry of Nation Building for giving them job opportunities.

(EURO)oeThis is the first time that we have cultivated large acreage of paddy lands after liberation of the East. The LTTE terrorists while holding the Mavil Aru anicut, some farmers were chased away and some were killed. We abandoned these lands until the military captured and restored peace (EURO), says H.M. Tikiri Banda, a paddy farmer in Mavil Aru since 1978.

With the closure of the Mavil Aru anicut by the LTTE depriving them of water for over 30,000 people on July 22 in 2006, the security forces launched the (EURO)-Operation Watershed (EURO)(TM) to gain control of the Mavil Aru, which supplies water for all three communities. The military mission successfully came to an end on last August 11.

Expecting a bumper harvest this time he says that there is no other better fertile soil than Mavil Aru where there is no need of chemical fertilizers to boost the yield.

The security is fully strengthened by the security forces in Mavil Aru and over 300 families in Medagama, Kalara ran to Kantale for life as the LTTE closed the Mavil Aru anicut denying their rights for water. Living in welfare centres in Kanthale for months they have now returned to their homes.

The young and the old have now started life afresh. According to statistics there were over 17,410 hectares of paddy lands in Mavil Aru in 1990s, but now after liberation it has increased to over 30,000 hectares.

A sense of freedom and happiness has been written on their faces. The agony and the painful memories of an era under the LTTE control, where the innocent farmers were abducted and killed, is fading off.

East like phoenix rises from ashes

“(EURO)oeWith the closure of Mavil Aru we did not have water to drink. We were forced to abandon our main livelihood, the agriculture and as the terrorist threats increased, we fled to Kantale with our children and old parents. (EURO)oeWe were totally helpless without water?(EURO), recalls G. Kanthi (42), a mother of three children.

Thanking the security forces for liberating them while sacrificing their own lives, the villagers in Medagama say that they are happy as they can now freely move around in Tamil villages. Seventy five-year-old D.M. Tennekoon and T.D. Wijeratne (62) from Sirimangalapura say that they lack job opportunities and meet their daily expenses by doing odd jobs. (EURO)oeBut they are happy, because today we live without fear?(EURO), they claimed.

After several years the temple bell now rings bringing peace of mind to many Buddhist villagers, whose lives were always under threat. The daily religious rituals in temples as well as in kovils bears testimony to the fact that life in Mavil Aru has returned to normal. People of Mavil Aru now are counting their days to collect a bumper harvest in coming September.

Vakarai

We are crossing the infamous Panichchankerni Bridge, which was the final push to capture Vakarai. In its long march to free the people of the East, the security forces from Mavil Aru stepped into the LTTE stronghold Vakarai, destroying LTTE Leader Prabhakaran?(EURO)(TM)s dream of making Trincomalee, the capital of Eelam.

Today Panichchankerni bridge stands tall after reconstruction with more strong iron bars around. The security forces in its five months long battle captured Vakarai on January 19, 2007 freeing over 30,000 civilians from starvation.

Over 10,000 people who were denied basic needs and used as human shields, fled the Tiger controlled areas as the military entered the Vakarai.

The town, which already shelters IDPs from Sampur, gave refugee to those civilians who fled in thousands. With the Vakarai Rural Hospital, which was used to treat the LTTE cadres with bunkers and artillery positions around it the landscape tuned into a tent-city overnight.

In the year of its liberation, Vakarai is now breathing fresh air of freedom with maximum security provided by the security forces.

New buildings are coming up and the hospital has been upgraded into a Base Hospital. With no refugees, the displaced people in Vakarai have been resettled.

G. Kaneshan with his family and an another family with a van load of their belongings are waiting to cross the Verugal through the ferry to go to Killiwetti IDP camp.

The Verugal, the entrance to Trincomalee is a hive of activity with hundreds of another batch of refugees from Valachchenai crossing the river using the ferry. No luxury items, but the most valuable assets of the majority of them, are their sawing machines.

Undergoing tough security check-ups, which unload each and every gunny bag full of aluminum pots, pillows, mats, and even clothes and other accessories, these people carrying new born babies, born in their refugee camps, are brimming with hopes of a better future. Entertaining hopes for a better future, most of them are going back to their original lands.

As the fighting was escalating and troops were advancing, Kaneshan ran with his children to Vakarai and from there to an IDP camp in Valachchenai.

“(EURO)oe The LTTE charged them for using the ferry to cross the Verugal river. The LTTE conscripted underage children and my children were small at that time. They taxed us?(EURO)(TM)?(EURO)(TM), says Kaneshan who earned a small living as a labourer.

East like phoenix rises from ashes

The two children, Thayanandani and Anisha who attended the Koralamadu School in the IDP camp will find a new school in Killiweddi.

Sixty five-year-old Ratnasingham, a former Principal is at Verugal waiting to return to his village in Thangapuram. Being a refugee at the Batticaloa IDP camp, he is returning to his old house after a lapse of three years. Hoping to start a new life, he says, that people are happy as they are going back to their original lands.

“(EURO)oeWe do not want the war. We suffered and experienced the war badly. We want to start our lives and live in a peaceful manner. Lots of children and elders including women were taken away by the LTTE forcefully. They used us as a shield“(EURO), Ratnasingham says that he feels a sense of security as the military is present in the area.

It is an arduous job to check all the bags and baggages of the IDPs. But the young soldiers and their female counterparts keeping their very watchful eyes check every thing that carried across. “(EURO)oeWe do not take a chance. It is a tiring job. But there is no chance for any one to carry “(EURO)~unwanted things“(EURO)(TM) with them“(EURO)(TM)“(EURO)(TM), the young Captain in charge of checking said.

Not only here but in every check point manned by the army and the STF together with the Police the civilians are closely screened leaving no room for LTTE infiltration into the villages.

In all these areas, people have started their day to day lives. New shops have come up at every corner. Schools and government offices are now functioning. Most of these buildings and houses have been color-washed. Road construction have begun and the people have found new jobs in those new sites.

J. Moosin is a three-wheeler driver who had his vehicle at Thiyawattawan junction with 10 other three-wheelers. Complaining about poor daily earnings, he said he is happy that the military is controlling the security in this once LTTE controlled area.

He says under the LTTE control they suffered for four years. The people were abducted by the LTTE and imposed taxes which were unbearable to the civilians.

The sight of new resettlements are evidences itself that the life in the East has began afresh after so many years of violence and war. Still undergoing immense hardships like water, finding jobs and other social agonies, the people say that they have hopes for a better future for their children! They are trying to rise up from the ashes of war and misery.

Thoppigala

In these villages, the youth did not move around at night earlier in fear of conscription. Now they are seen playing volley ball in barren lands cleared of mines. Schoolchildren walk alone back from school.

Pulakadu in Thoppigala, is another village where over 300 families have been resettled. They lost their houses made out of bricks and also temporary structure due to war. Living in temporary shelters where there are no cement floors, the villagers are happy that the government and the security forces have taken steps to speed up resettlement process.

“(EURO)oeOtherwise, we have to stay many years in IDP camps. This time the government has taken steps to clear all landmines with the help of the security forces and NGOs in these areas. They are now free of land mines,“(EURO) says Nagamuththu Pillaiyan (54) whose livelihood is agriculture.

He said that during the LTTE control they were forced to pay taxes for cultivation, fishing and even making fire wood. “(EURO)oeThey forced the villagers to give their children over to the LTTE. We tried our best to protect our children from the LTTE. Some young girls and boys got married to survive but in some instances they took the married couples as well“(EURO), he complains.

Water is no major problem for these villagers but sanitation needs attention.

East like phoenix rises from ashes

The villagers flock to the Pulakadu Kovil for the pooja for the God Mariya praying for rain. The women were busy preparing kiribath (milk rice), sweets and rotti while men and children were engaged in decorating the small kovil with yellow polythene sheets.

Kanaka Pullai is a grandfather who looks after his grandchildren as his son, Thangaraja, was abducted by the LTTE. (EURO)oeThe LTTE abducted lots of young people like my son and when we went to inquire about their whereabouts we were assaulted. Still we do not know whether they are living or dead! It is a great relief that the security forces have liberated us.

We, especially our small children can enjoy peace now?(EURO), the old grand father still grieves for his son as his three young daughters have become a burden to the old man.

Punidhavani (30), a mother of two small children pawned her jewellery and started a small boutique in the village. As her husband does not have a job, the couple depends on the small profit they earn from the sales. She says it is not possible to run the business as most of people come to buy things on credit. (EURO)oeIt is difficult to pay the money back as they do not have jobs.

Ultimately I do not get money to fill the stocks?(EURO), she complained, saying the soda, betel and cigarettes have the highest demand.

Sandiveli ferry, which was renovated and guarded by a small Army detachment, is the gateway for these villagers to Batticaloa and Vakarai to obtain medicine and to necessary food items.

The ferry operated under LTTE control and taxed people for each trip. Over 480 people travel daily, to and from Thiladedi.

At Illuppadichena, where Sergeant Pathira was brutally killed during the operation to capture Thoppigala, the people are moving around freely and engaged fully and confidently in their day to day activities.

The festivities the Sivamuthumari Ambal Temple, where they have started the annual festival can be heard all over the junction. People living in the surrounding areas will visit the temple which is the biggest kovil in Thoppigala, for the annual festival.

The STF which took over the control of the area from army is giving their fullest support to the villagers who returned to their lands.

After many months, the drizzling have started just after few days of the festival where the devotees are paraded around the Illuppu duchena daily. With no major festivals as such when these 360 families were under the control of the LTTE, they just worshipped the Gods.

The fear that these villagers had for our security forces is gradually fading away as most of the young soldiers communicate with them in their own Language, Tamil. These young soldiers who are very friendly with the villagers living around their camps in some days sacrifice their lunch and distribute the food among villagers who still depend on the rations.

(EURO)oeWe have seen, death, destruction and war everywhere and this is the first time we have witnessed how people try to rise up from destruction and their struggle for survival. Earlier we captured land and just moved forward but this time we are there helping them to develop their lives.

We, the soldiers are happy to see this change?(EURO), says Major Thushan Silva who accompanied us to Vakarai.

The security forces have helped to address the hardships faced by villagers in the resettlement areas.

In Pullipanchgal a new milk collecting centre has come up to facilitate the livestock farmers. Earlier they had to travel more than 20 kilo meters to Kiran and Sithandi to sell their milk.

East like phoenix rises from ashes

The **LTTE** had taken half of their collection on the way and they had once abducted a vehicle belong to the Highlands Milk Company.

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End of Document

Female suicide bomber kills dozens in Sri Lanka; Suspected Tamil Tiger targets packed northern refugee camp

Ottawa Citizen

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 716 words

Byline: Emily Wax, The Washington Post

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

A suspected **female** Tamil Tiger suicide bomber blew herself up yesterday while being frisked by soldiers processing civilians fleeing from Sri Lanka's northern war zone, killing at least 28 people and wounding 60, the military said.

The blast took place at a crowded refugee camp in Vishvamadu, a town in the north of the Indian Ocean island that was recently captured by the military in its ongoing offensive to corner the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and end a 25-year war, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said.

An estimated 20 soldiers were killed along with at least eight **women** and children.

"A large number of civilians are coming in seeking protection from the army," Brig. Nanayakkara said. "When we were checking this **female**, she exploded herself. It shows their desperation at this stage in the war."

The suicide attack also showed the complicated nature of the conflict along with increased concerns about the ever-shrinking space for civilians during the war's final battles.

The International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that 250,000 people are trapped amid the fighting, although the government says that number is far lower.

The rebels could not be reached for comment; communication to the north is severed and journalists are not permitted to the front lines of the war, so reports are difficult to verify.

"What we do know is that this northern population has been displaced several times and they are now cornered in a very small area. This now means these people have no space to go to," said Sophie Romanens, a Red Cross spokeswoman in Colombo. Four hundred sick and wounded civilians who were moved from a shelled hospital last week still need to be moved to a functioning hospital, she said. They are huddled in a community centre in Puttumatalan, about five kilometres from the hospital.

"Many patients are outside," Ms. Romanens said. "They've had to hang IV drips from the trees. We are repeatedly asking both sides to grant safe passage so medical assistance can take place."

Female suicide bomber kills dozens in Sri Lanka ; Suspected Tamil Tiger targets packed northern refugee camp

Civilians have fled the war zone in recent days, with 4,700 leaving Sunday, bringing the total number to have escaped to 20,000 this year, Brig. Nanayakkara said.

President Mahinda Rajapakse has refused U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's calls for a "temporary no-fire period" to allow more civilians to escape the combat zone. Mr. Rajapakse warned rebels at a festive rally this weekend to surrender or face death. He called his effort "a humanitarian one," saying the government will protect civilians and that more lives will be saved if the war ends quickly.

"I must warn them we will not halt our operations against terrorism until we reach our final objective."

The **Tamil Tigers** have waged war since 1983 for a separate state for the country's ethnic Tamil Hindu and Christian minorities, who claim decades of economic and racial discrimination at the hands of the governments controlled by the Buddhist Sinhalese majority.

More than 70,000 people have been killed in the fighting, which has left the palm-fringed island a maze of checkpoints in the south, and a north and eastern countryside of charred huts and refugee camps.

The **Tamil Tigers** have a squad of elite forces known as the Black Tigers, who are used for suicide missions. The Tigers are credited with pioneering the suicide jacket, a bomb-laden vest.

In recent months, the Sri Lankan military has boxed the **Tamil Tigers** into an increasingly tight corner on the island's northeast coast, where rebels operated a de-facto state-within-a-state. The government appears closer to winning the war than at almost any time since the insurgency began, according to some analysts.

Still, a military win will be only the first step in what will likely be an arduous process of healing a deeply split country, where Tamils have felt like they were treated as second-class citizens and with increasing suspicion, said Kumar Rupasinghe, chairman of the foundation for Co-Existence in Colombo.

"The problem is very tough since the traumatized northern population has had their fortunes tied to the Tigers for so long," Mr. Rupasinghe said. "We are pushing for a collective rehabilitation, with the government reaching out with economic and psycho-social programs. Otherwise, the camps can be converted into the next insurgency."

Load-Date: February 10, 2009

EC reiterates support for Lanka's sovereignty

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 12, 2008 Thursday 4:50 PM EST

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Length: 621 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 12 -- The European Commission (EC) has in a media release reiterated its unconditional support for Sri Lanka's sovereignty and its firm opposition to secession. It has also strongly condemned **LTTE** terrorism in the island.

This European Union (EU) policy on Sri Lanka was articulated by the leader of the EC delegation Jo?o Aguiar Machado, Deputy Director General for Relations with Asia and Latin America at the European Commission in Brussels at the 17th session of the Sri Lanka - EC Joint Commission which concluded in Colombo yesterday

Foreign Secretary Dr. Palitha Kohona who led the Sri Lankan delegation, while welcoming the EC side, underscored the importance that Sri Lanka attaches to its relations with the EU, not least due to the fact that the EU is Sri Lanka's largest economic partner, accounting for 37.5 % of exports. He noted that the Joint Commission is meeting after a lapse of almost four years, since the last session in Brussels in October 2004.

He emphasised the need to maintain the spirit of mutual goodwill that had been generated during the EU Troika meeting in Colombo in March 2008, in a sustained engagement between both parties. The Head of the EC delegation Mr. Machado endorsed Dr. Kohona's suggestion that the Joint Commission meets more regularly and hoped that this could take place annually. He emphasised that any perception that the EU was critical of Sri Lanka and supportive of the **LTTE** was absolutely incorrect. Mr. Machado stressed that the EU had always been a good friend of Sri Lanka and had unreservedly condemned **LTTE** terrorism, particularly the recent spate of bomb attacks targeting innocent civilians using public transport.

He mentioned the EU - wide ban on the **LTTE** and disclosed that the EC had encouraged member states to pursue vigorous action against **LTTE** activities in their territories. In this context, he noted that the EU would be having a separate discussion dedicated to the fight against terrorism with the Foreign Ministry on the following day (11 June 2008).

In response to a query from the EC delegation regarding the current status of the Peace Process, Dr. Kohona stated that Sri Lanka had kept the door open for the **LTTE** to return to the negotiating table, after it made a firm commitment to peace. Norway remains the facilitator and Sri Lanka appreciates the continued engagement of the EU as one of the Co-Chairs.

While elaborating on the benefits that Sri Lanka had gained from the GSP + scheme, which had provided preferential access for Sri Lanka's exports to the EU market, the Foreign Secretary highlighted the fact that the

EC reiterates support for Lanka's sovereignty

principal beneficiaries of this facility were 350,000 women who were employed mainly in garment factories in the rural hinterland.

Mr. Machado welcomed the recent political developments in the Eastern Province and expressed EU support for the "relative pacification of the Eastern Province", while noting that the EU was still concerned about the continued presence of armed groups. Dr. Kohona responded by stating that it was the government policy that only the Sri Lankan government security forces and the police had the legitimate right to bear arms. He reiterated that all armed groups, including the LTTE must be disarmed.

The Foreign Secretary briefed the EC delegation on the forthcoming SAARC Summit to be held in Colombo and expressed the hope that the EU, which was one of the seven Observers, would be represented at the highest level. He noted that SAARC had moved away from the traditional mode of merely issuing declarations of intent to positive measures of implementation, which would be of direct benefit to the peoples of the region.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

End of Document

2 plead guilty to charges of trying to supply arms to Tamil rebels

The Canadian Press(CP)

January 26, 2009 Monday

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Section: FOREIGN GENERAL NEWS

Length: 732 words

Byline: TOM HAYS, AP

Body

NEW YORK _ When customs agents questioned a carload of Sri Lankan immigrants entering the United States at the Canadian border in the summer of 2006, the men claimed they were headed to a bachelor party in Buffalo.

In reality, there was no party or even a groom.

U.S. authorities say the men instead were part of a secret mission to help rebels locked in a bloody civil war in Sri Lanka by buying hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of surface-to-air missiles and smuggling them into their homeland. According to court papers, the men also wanted guns _ but not just any guns.

"We need AK-47s, but only if you have Russian-made or American-made," prosecutors allege one defendant said during a meeting with an undercover agent posing as a crooked arms dealer. "Not the Chinese."

The videotaped sting has become central to an unusual case against four alleged agents of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or **Tamil Tigers** _ a Sri Lankan rebel group the U.S. State Department calls a terrorist organization.

Two of the men, Nadarasa Yogarasa and Sathajhan Sarachandran, pleaded guilty Monday to providing material support to terrorists just as jury selection was to begin in federal court in Brooklyn.

The case against the remaining defendants, Sahilal Sabaratnam and Thiruthanikan Thanigasalam, was expected to go forward.

Though several of the group's sympathizers have come under investigation in the United States, Canada, Europe and elsewhere, authorities say Sabaratnam and Thanigasalam would be the first to ever go to trial in a U.S. court on charges of supporting terrorists. Their lawyers have declined to discuss the case.

Sarachandran has been described as a well-liked Toronto university student who was part of a delegation that travelled to Sri Lanka to aid victims of the 2004 Asian tsunami. Canadian authorities have provided U.S. prosecutors computer files, DVDs, photos, video and other items seized from his home.

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting for an independent homeland since 1983. The three million mainly Hindu Tamils have long claimed persecution by the predominantly Buddhist Sinhalese majority in the country of 19 million people.

The conflict has killed tens of thousands on the island, which lies off India's southern tip. A 2002 truce has collapsed because of renewed fighting that's left thousands dead.

2 plead guilty to charges of trying to supply arms to Tamil rebels

Rebels, while waging conventional military operations against government troops, have also attacked civilian targets in government-held areas and carried out scores of suicide bombings, sometimes by women.

The Brooklyn arms case is part of a broader campaign by U.S. authorities to cut off support for the Tamil Tigers. Prosecutors have also brought charges against several men they allege tried to bribe U.S. officials to remove the group from the terrorism list.

Raids on offices and homes of organizers of phoney Tamil charities unearthed evidence that the defendants raised millions of dollars for the rebels, authorities said.

The evidence includes photos of supporters meeting with the Tamil Tiger's leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, in Sri Lanka. Defence lawyers have said the aide was strictly humanitarian.

The FBI began investigating the arms plot in 2006 after the defendants contacted a government informant, believing the man had contacts in the black arms market, court papers said. They told the informant they specifically needed Russian-made missiles that could bring down Kfirs _ the type of fighter jet used by the Sri Lankan military _ and set up a meeting in New York on Aug. 19, 2006.

After the men, who were living in Ontario, crossed the border, undercover agents posing as arms dealers lured them to a warehouse on Long Island that was wired. During the meeting, the men said that on orders from Tamil Tiger leadership in Sri Lanka, they were seeking a "large quantity" of guns along with other weapons that could destroy planes, tanks and boats.

They agreed on an initial shipment of 10 surface-to-air missiles and 500 AK-47s. Training also would be thrown in, all for about \$900,000.

"The money's not a problem," one defendant said, according to prosecutors.

At one point, a large wooden crate was brought out. Inside were an SA-18 missile, the missile's firing tube and trigger mechanism, and two AK-47 assault weapons.

Shortly after the men examined the weapons, they were arrested. They each face up to 30 years in prison if convicted.

Load-Date: January 27, 2009

TAMIL MAN RECOUNTS TALES OF HORROR IN SRI LANKA WAR

Indo-Asian News Service

February 5, 2009 Thursday 6:02 PM EST

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Length: 704 words

Byline: M.R. Narayan Swamy Report from Indo-Asian News Service brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: New Delhi

Body

New Delhi, Feb. 05 -- (IANS) Tamil civilians trying to flee Sri Lanka's war were blown up and some bled to death on the streets due to shelling by the military, an elderly Tamil man said, recalling the horrifying scenes he saw before escaping from the Tamil Tiger zone in the country's north.

Thousands of panic stricken men, women and children were also desperate to quit the badly shrunk Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) territory but were not sure how they would be received by the government, the man said in a telephonic interview from a town near Colombo.

The man spoke in English and Tamil to IANS on the condition that he should not be identified either by his name or profession because it could cause him "serious problems". He declared that he was not an LTTE supporter but believed "in the justness of the original Tamil cause".

In his early 50s, the man said that the incident he witnessed took place in Udayarkattu, an area designated a "safe zone" by the government. It is located in Mullaitivu district, where the last of the Tamil Tiger guerrillas are holding out against the steadily advancing Sri Lankan troops.

Backing the versions given out by international aid agencies and rights groups, the man said that it was on the morning of Jan 26 that large numbers of Tamils moved to the "safe zone" - only to die.

"Around noon shells began to suddenly rain on the people who had thought they were in a safe area," he said. "Men, women and children ran here and there. I saw even a disabled man run for his life. But no one was sure which place was really safe. Panic took over.

"People screamed in pain and terror. I saw badly mauled bodies on the street. One woman of 40 had lost both her legs. One man had a hand blown off. There was blood everywhere. Body parts were everywhere.

"Many had been wounded and cried in agony. They were sprawled on the road. But we could not do anything. There was no vehicle to transport them. People bled in the open. Believe it or not, it remained like that for hours.

"There was a church in the vicinity. Many ran there. The priests there gave out tea and biscuits.

"It was only in the evening that some of the wounded were moved to a hospital using bullock carts, tractors and even bicycles. Some people simply carried the wounded in their arms.

TAMIL MAN RECOUNTS TALES OF HORROR IN SRI LANKA WAR

"The hospital was no good. First, there was hardly any vacant place. The wounded lay on the floor. There were hardly any medicines. Even doctors and nurses were scarce. People kept crying in pain. We could do nothing, absolutely nothing."

The man said that at least 20 people died Jan 26 and that similar shelling took place for three days. "There were LTTE offices in the area but they did not get hit. It is the ordinary people who got hit."

The man said there was anger and resentment against the government among the civilians over the shelling and bombing of "safe zones".

"The people trusted the government and went to the safe zone. But the government betrayed their trust," he said. "It is not that people want to be in LTTE area. But they hear that people crossing over to government territory are being kept in virtual prisons. They do not want that.

"If some neutral body were to promise them safety and freedom, thousands would leave the Wanni," he added, describing that part of Sri Lanka's north the LTTE still controls.

Sri Lanka says the Tigers are holding back as "human shield" the civilian population that Colombo and aids group say could total between 100,00 and 250,000. The LTTE denies this.

Sri Lankan troops have made dramatic advances into LTTE territory in recent months. The Tigers now control only a small part of Mullaitivu. Sri Lankan leaders say the war will not end until the LTTE is crushed.

The man said that most people now in Mullaitivu had retreated with the Tigers from others areas and led a terrible life.

"Most live in tents made of old bags and clothes. Many are in school buildings, others in the open, under trees. They cook in open spaces. For toilets, they go to the forests.

"They are sick and tired of the war. They want it to end. As for the LTTE, it is too busy taking care of itself to take care of the people."

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Load-Date: February 5, 2009

Civilians seek Forces' protection in Jaffna, Pulmodai

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

November 7, 2008 Friday 3:09 PM EST

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Length: 255 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Nov. 7 -- Civilians fleeing the **LTTE** in uncleared areas sought Security Forces' protection in Jaffna and Pulmodai on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Military Spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said 28 civilians including six children who had escaped Tiger clutches had arrived in Jaffna.

"A Naval patrol observed two boats in the northern sea and towed the boats and rescue the civilians," he added.

The civilians included 13 males, nine **females** and six children from Mullaian, Kaddaikadu, Paranthan, Kilinochchi and Champianpattu.

Brigadier Nanayakkara said the civilians had told the Security Forces that they were compelled to leave their homes due to ill treatment by the **LTTE**.

"The Tigers force youth to join them," the civilians said.

"The majority of civilians want to flee Tiger clutches because otherwise they will be detained by the **LTTE**. After being imprisoned, the civilians are forced to construct bunkers," he said.

Meanwhile, the Navy rescued three families on Wednesday in the Eastern seas off Pulmodai on Wednesday.

According to Navy Spokesman Commander D.P.K. Dassanayake 13 civilians comprising eight males and five **females** including five children had arrived in Pulmodai fleeing the **LTTE** grip in Mullaitivu.

He said the Navy observed a fibreglass dinghy with a white flag in the Eastern seas and rescued three families.

The civilians were provided with essentials and shelter by the Security Forces with the assistance of the Government officials.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Civilians seek Forces' protection in Jaffna , Pulmodai

Load-Date: November 7, 2008

End of Document

Bus Bombing Mars Sri Lanka Anniversary

Associated Press Online

February 4, 2008 Monday 6:36 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 765 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka celebrated its 60th independence anniversary Monday with a display of military might, but suspected rebels marred the holiday with their own show of power, killing 13 passengers in a bus bombing.

Tanks, jets, attack boats and thousands of troops paraded through the capital, Colombo, to mark the holiday as the quarter-century-old civil war raged on in this Indian Ocean island nation.

In a defiant speech, President Mahinda Rajapaksa railed against the **Tamil Tigers** and reiterated his vow to force the rebel group out of its northern stronghold and destroy it.

"Our defense forces have achieved victories that were never before seen. Terrorism is facing a defeat that it has never before faced," he said.

Senior government officials have said they hoped to rout the rebels and end the war this year. But fighting between government forces and the separatist guerrillas has exploded across the jungles of the north in recent months, with suspected rebels launching a wave of attacks against civilian and military targets deep inside government-controlled territory.

In an attempt to prevent violence from marring the nationally televised independence day celebrations in Colombo, troops sealed off roads across the capital and a major cell phone operator shut off its text-messaging service for six hours.

The festivities along Colombo's coastal road began with a 21-gun salute and a parade by hundreds of army, navy, air force and police officials, along with tanks, artillery guns and multi-barrel rocket launchers. Twelve naval gunships and fast-attack craft sailed off the coast, while 26 fighter jets and attack helicopters flew overhead.

Hours after the parade, a roadside bomb tore through a bus in the Welioya region, about 150 miles northeast of Colombo. The attack killed 13 people and wounded 16 others, said military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara, blaming the rebels.

Rebel spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthirayan did not answer calls seeking comment. The **Tamil Tigers**, listed as a terror group by the United States and European Union, routinely deny responsibility for such attacks.

Bus Bombing Mars Sri Lanka Anniversary

Another roadside bombing in the southeastern town of Buttala killed one soldier and injured two others, the military said.

The bus attack came after a weekend of violence.

Fighting along the front lines in the north killed 36 rebels and one soldier Sunday, the military said Monday. The rebels were not available for comment, but the two sides routinely give widely differing death tolls.

Also over the weekend, a **female** suicide bomber killed 11 people at Colombo's main railway station and a bus bombing killed 18 people, mostly Buddhist pilgrims, in the central town of Dambulla.

European Union External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner condemned the attacks and called for an immediate end to the fighting and the quick resumption of peace talks.

"The common objective should be to devise a lasting political solution that responds to the aspirations of Sri Lanka's communities and can relieve the Sri Lankan people from the ordeal of decades of persistent conflict," she said.

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting since 1983 for an independent homeland for ethnic minority Tamils after decades of marginalization by Sinhalese-dominated governments. More than 70,000 people have died in the fighting.

A 2002 cease-fire fostered hopes for a lasting peace, but the truce broke down as new fighting over the past two years killed 5,000 people. The government officially pulled out of the agreement last month.

Many had high hopes for the nation, formerly known as Ceylon, when it achieved independence from Britain in 1948, months after South Asian neighbors India and Pakistan became independent.

But tensions between the mainly Buddhist Sinhalese majority, who comprise about 74 percent of the nation's 20 million people, and the mainly Hindu Tamil community, who make up about 18 percent, quickly surfaced after independence.

Sinhalese-dominated governments, fearing local Tamils would work with Tamils in neighboring India to take over the nation, tried to marginalize the Tamil language and culture. At least two efforts to broker a compromise were retracted by the government amid protests by Sinhalese nationalists.

The ensuing civil war undermined the country's potential to become a regional economic power, said Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, executive director of the Center for Policy Alternatives, a Colombo-based think tank.

"The development potential was huge, and it has been totally stymied by this war," he said.

Associated Press writer Bharatha Mallawarachi contributed to this report.

Load-Date: February 5, 2008

2 plead guilty in NY terrorism case

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

January 26, 2009 Monday 8:07 PM GMT

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Section: STATE AND REGIONAL

Length: 759 words

Byline: By TOM HAYS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

When customs agents questioned a carload of Sri Lankan immigrants entering the United States at the Canadian border in the summer of 2006, the men claimed they were headed to a bachelor party in Buffalo.

In reality, there was no party or even a groom.

U.S. authorities say the men instead were part of a secret mission to help militants locked in a bloody civil war in their homeland by buying hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of surface-to-air missiles and smuggling them into their homeland. According to court papers, the men also wanted guns but not just any guns.

"We need AK-47s, but only if you have Russian-made or American-made," prosecutors allege one defendant said during a meeting with an undercover agent posing as a crooked arms dealer. "Not the Chinese."

The videotaped sting has become central to an unusual case against four alleged agents of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or "**Tamil Tigers**" a Sri Lankan rebel force the State Department calls a terrorist organization.

Two of the men, Nadarasa Yogarasa (NAH'-duh-rah-suh YOH'-guh-rah-suh) and Sathajhan Sarachandran (SAH'-thuh-jahn Sah-ruh-CHAN'-drahn), pleaded guilty on Monday to providing material support to terrorists just as jury selection was to begin in federal court in Brooklyn.

The case against the remaining defendants, Sahilal Sabaratnam (SAH'-hee-lahl Sah-bah-RAHT'-nahm) and Thiruthanikan Thanigasalam (THEE'-roo-thah-nee-kahn THAH'-nee-gah-suh-lahm), was expected to go forward.

Though several of the group's sympathizers have come under investigation in the United States, Canada, Europe and elsewhere, authorities say Sabaratnam and Thanigasalam would be the first to ever go to trial in a U.S. court on charges of supporting terrorists. Their lawyers have declined to discuss the case.

Press accounts in Canada had described Sarachandran as a well-liked Toronto university student who was part of a delegation that traveled to Sri Lanka to aid victims of the 2004 Asian tsunami. Canadian authorities have provided U.S. prosecutors computer files, DVDs, photos, video and other items seized from his home.

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2 plead guilty in NY terrorism case

The conflict has killed tens of thousands on the island, which lies off India's southern tip. A 2002 truce has collapsed because of renewed fighting that's left thousands dead.

Rebels, while waging conventional military operations against government troops, have also attacked civilian targets in government-held areas and carried out scores of suicide bombings, sometimes by women.

The Brooklyn arms case is part of a broader campaign by U.S. authorities to cut off support for the Tamil Tigers. Prosecutors have also brought charges against several men they allege tried to bribe U.S. officials to remove the group from the terrorism list.

Raids on offices and homes of organizers of phony Tamil charities unearthed evidence that the defendants raised millions of dollars for the rebels, authorities said.

The evidence includes photos of supporters meeting with the Tamil Tiger's notorious leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, in Sri Lanka. Defense attorneys have said the aide was strictly humanitarian.

The FBI began investigating the arms plot in 2006 after the defendants contacted a government informant, believing the man had contacts in the arms black market, court papers said. They told the informant they specifically needed Russian-made missiles that could bring down Kfirs the type of fighter jet used by the Sri Lankan military and set up a meeting in New York on Aug. 19, 2006.

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They agreed on an initial shipment of 10 surface-to-air missiles and 500 AK-47s. Training also would be thrown in, all for about \$900,000.

"The money's not a problem," one defendant said, according to prosecutors.

At one point, a large wooden crate was brought out. Inside were an SA-18 missile, the missile's firing tube and trigger mechanism, and two AK-47 assault weapons.

Shortly after the men examined the weapons, they were arrested. They each face up to 30 years in prison if convicted.

Load-Date: January 27, 2009

Military: Gunmen kill 4 on Sri Lanka bus

Associated Press Online

July 11, 2008 Friday 6:00 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 431 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Suspected rebel gunmen ambushed a crowded passenger bus Friday as it traveled down a small rural road in southern Sri Lanka, killing a 9-year-old boy and three women, the military said.

The attack came amid a sharp spike in fighting in the war between government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels in the northern jungles, and underscored the rebels' continued ability to strike deep inside government-controlled territory.

The military said, meanwhile, it seized two rebel-held villages Naddankandal and Navvi in northern Vavuniya district Friday. It did not give casualty details.

A group of gunmen hiding by the side of the road near the southern village of Buttala raked the passing civilian bus with gunfire, said military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara. The bus driver sped through the ambush, only stopping when he reached safety, Nanayakkara said.

He blamed the rebels for the attack, which he said killed a boy and three women and wounded 25 others.

Troops were sent to the remote site to try to find the assailants, he said.

Rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan could not be reached for comment. The Tamil Tigers have been blamed for scores of suicide bombings and other attacks on civilians and are listed as a terror group by the United States, European Union and India.

The rebels were blamed for a strike in Buttala on Jan. 16 in which assailants bombed a bus, gunned down the fleeing passengers and attacked nearby farmers as they retreated into the forest, killing 32 people.

The Tamil Tigers have been fighting since 1983 to create an independent state for ethnic minority Tamils, who have been marginalized by successive governments controlled by ethnic Sinhalese. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

The government has stepped up fighting around the rebels' de facto state in the north in an effort to deliver on its promise to crush the group by the end of this year.

Fighting along the northern front lines Thursday killed 19 rebels and two soldiers, the military reported Friday.

Military: Gunmen kill 4 on Sri Lanka bus

Both sides routinely exaggerate enemy casualties and underreport their own, and it was not possible to verify the accounts because reporters are barred from the war zone.

The attack came as the government tightened security around the capital, Colombo, ahead of a major cricket tournament with rival India and a high-profile South Asia summit that begins at the end of this month.

Nanayakkara said beefed-up security for those events would not leave other parts of Sri Lanka vulnerable to further rebel attacks.

"In all parts of the country, we have security arrangements," he said.

Load-Date: July 12, 2008

End of Document

Relatives bury Sri Lankan high school baseball players killed in suicide bombing

Associated Press International

February 6, 2008 Wednesday 4:07 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 718 words

Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Parents, students and teachers mourned Wednesday for seven high school baseball players and their coach, whose killing in a suicide attack at a Colombo train station devastated their school and left many questioning the cost of Sri Lanka's civil war.

With government forces launching daily attacks against the Tamil separatists' heartland in the jungles of the north, the rebels have been accused of retaliating with a string of bombings against buses and other targets deep inside government-controlled territory.

On Sunday, a **female** suicide bomber blew herself up amid a crowd of passengers at Colombo's main railway station, as many players from the D.S. Knights baseball team returned from a weekend tournament in the city of Kandy, officials said. A total of 15 people were killed in the attack, including more than half the team and its coach.

"These killings must end by some means. We should not see others children suffering the same fate," said Nihal Peiris, whose 17-year-old nephew Thiwanka Thisera was among those killed.

The students attended Colombo's prestigious D.S. Senanayake school, which held a viewing Tuesday for the slain teenagers before many of them were buried in separate funerals Wednesday.

Classmates carried Rajaratnam Ratheeswaran's coffin, draped in his school's black and gold flag, to a Colombo cemetery, where Hindu rituals were performed before he was buried. He was dressed in his black school blazer, and a certificate he received for playing baseball was placed in the coffin.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa sent an aide to read a personal message vowing revenge against the Tamil Tiger rebels, but Ratheeswaran's mother, Wasantha, refused to accept the letter when the emissary tried to hand it to her.

"Publish this in the papers, but give me my son back," she wailed.

The rebels have been fighting since 1983 for an independent homeland for ethnic minority Tamils after decades of being marginalized by Sinhalese-dominated governments. More than 70,000 people have died in the violence.

Relatives bury Sri Lankan high school baseball players killed in suicide bombing

A 2002 cease-fire broke down over the past two years amid renewed fighting that has killed more than 5,000 people. Rajapaksa's government officially pulled out of the truce last month and promised to crush the rebel group by the end of the year.

The **Tamil Tigers**, listed as a terror organization in the United States and the European Union, have not responded to accusations they orchestrated the railway bombing as well as two recent bus bombings that killed at least 32 other people.

The deaths of the baseball players plunged their classmates and teachers into deep mourning.

"I feel like I lost my own child," said Y. Sivapalan, who taught commerce to Ratheeswaran.

"It's a sorrowful moment for the school," said principal Asoka Hewage. "Child rights and human rights groups must raise this with the fighting sides and ask them not to kill innocent children."

The seven slain students had decided to remain an extra day in Kandy for sightseeing, while six of their teammates left Saturday and escaped the attack, Hewage said.

The school came in third in last year's national baseball tournament, and many had high hopes that this year's team would win it all, captain Kirana Jayawardana told The Associated Press.

"I can only say that we have lost the cream of our school's baseball. It is unbelievable, I can't find words to describe my sorrow," he said.

Fighting persisted in the north Wednesday, with government troops backed by artillery, mortar fire and tanks crossing over the front lines south of rebel-held territory, destroying 30 Tamil Tiger bunkers and killing 12 rebels, said military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara.

"We don't want (the **Tamil Tigers**) to get organized in the first line of defense so they would start troubling us," he said. "We wanted to give them maximum damage and maximum destruction."

Two hours later, air force jets bombed a meeting of rebel leaders northwest of Kilinochchi, the main town controlled by the **Tamil Tigers**, Nanayakkara said.

The military also announced the deaths of 21 rebels and eight soldiers in a wave of battles Tuesday along the frontier of the rebels' de facto state.

Rebel spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthirayan did not answer repeated calls seeking comment, however the rebels and the military routinely give vastly different accounts of battles.

Load-Date: February 7, 2008

ASSEMBLY TN LANKA TWO LAST CHENNAI

UNI (United News of India)

January 30, 2009 Friday 2:52 PM EST

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Length: 248 words

Byline: Report from UNI brought to you by HT Syndication.

Body

The attacks are taking place where the LTTE is holed up and the Tamils are with them in the hope they will be safer. "But some leaders in Tamil Nadu feel the LTTE is using the Tamils as shield in the attacks on the military.

"Nobody knows the full picture of what's happening there. We are coming to know only through reports in the media. During his visit to Sri Lanka, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said a solution under the accord would be found. "Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse also said the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord should be implemented and solution found on the principle of equality. "If (LTTE Chief) Prabhakaran does not come forward to intervene, some other Tamil representative should intervene, use the opportunity and find a solution. "To strengthen the good that had already happened, we, who are taking part (in finding a solution) should take all efforts," he said. Earlier, soon after the House assembled, Mr Alphonse described the the ceasefire announced by the Sri Lankan Government as significant development and said it was possible due to efforts by State and Central Governments. "Using the 48 hour ceasefire deadline, all the Tamils should be moved out (of the conflict area)," he said seeking LTTE's cooperation for their safe movement. In his remarks, PMK President G K Mani said Tamils should be protected as women and children were suffering from want of medical treatment.

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Load-Date: February 11, 2009

We can now give others a lesson or two - Air Force chief

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

March 1, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 1442 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 1 -- Sri Lanka Air Force Commander Air Marshal Roshan Goonetilleke joined the Sri Lanka Air Force as an Officer Cadet in the General Duties Pilot Branch on January 13, 1978. On successful completion of flying training, he was commissioned in the rank of Pilot Officer on August 24, 1979.

Air Marshal Goonetilleke graduated from the Air Command and Staff College, Air University, Alabama, USA in 1994 and also attended the prestigious National Defence College in Pakistan in 2001. He was also the Director of Operations/Deputy Chief of Staff Operations of the Air Force before being appointed the Chief of Staff. During his illustrious career of 28 years, he has held a number of command, operational and administrative positions. He also served as an Operational Pilot, Commanding Officer of No. 03 Maritime Squadron and the Commanding Officer of No. 04 Helicopter Wing. In recognition of his distinguished career he has been awarded the Uttama Seva Padakkama. For the bravery displayed in conducting operations he has been awarded the Gallantry Medal 'Rana Wickrama Padakkama' twice. Q: How do you explain the growth of the Sri Lanka Air Force since the ethnic war started in the country? A: We have come a long way. Especially, since 2006 we have been able to force the LTTE to a standstill, I would say. Mostly we operate in support of the advancing troops of the Sri Lanka Army and the Navy. We were able to weaken LTTE's fire-power drastically in the recent past. Considering the past two to three years, we have largely improved especially in the areas of attacking power, weapons even in the internal management of the force. The Air Force which was relatively a small outfit has developed into a full-fledged fighting force during the last 58 years. As we are developing country we have our own limitations to expand. Yet, we have used our resources effectively and judiciously causing maximum damage to the enemy. Q: Seven airstrips constructed by the LTTE were found in Vanni during the recent military operations. How do you assess the air-power of the Outfit? A: Out of the total number we can identify only two as standard air strips. Others are either to mislead the Air Force or temporary points used for training. Like the one that was found in Paranthan, the LTTE had done up the road to make us believe that it was an air strip. Since the LTTE aircraft are small they don't need a long air strip to take off. Q: How do you explain LTTE's air capabilities? A: Definitely the LTTE can't win the war with the type of air attacks they have launched and those small air craft they possess. Yet we have to admit they can become a sort of menace. With the recent two aircraft, we have destroyed three of the LTTE aircraft so far. The other one was destroyed over Iranamadu jungles during a previous attack. The LTTE airwing cannot pose any serious threat to the country but it can cause damage and that's what they are doing! Even the highly advanced versions of aircraft in the world will find it difficult to destroy such small aircraft. Compared to the damage we have inflicted to the LTTE the chaos created by them are not that big. Q: Why did the Air Force fail to destroy the LTTE aircraft until the recent suicide mission? A: We can't consider it a failure. Throughout we were making every effort to destroy these aircraft. Though they undertook daring missions earlier the LTTE couldn't reach any of their actual targets. We managed to minimize the damage to the lowest possible level. Now we are capable of withstanding any such terrorist attacks in future. If someone claims that the LTTE owns a highly advanced airpower, I would say the

We can now give others a lesson or two - Air Force chief

Colombo Flying Club could be more advanced! Q: What is the present strength of the Air Force in both men and machine? A: An Air Force depends very much on its technology. When it comes to strategies, skills of the people becomes an important factor. And at present, we are capable of independently manoeuvring our surveillance according to our security requirements. Our beach-craft and the UAVs are on surveillance for 6-7 hours at a stretch. Round the clock we are alert on the enemy movements. Whenever there is an emergency call from the Army or the Navy we are ever ready to provide assistance without any delay at all. The MI24 aircraft squadron gives a lot of support for the advancing troops to break the enemy line. The MiG, Kfir, F7 squadrons have caused severe damages to the **LTTE's** Sea Tiger bases and other buildups. This has definitely weakened their fire power to a great extent. Q: How do you compare the present day pilots with those who were there when you joined the Air Force? A: The characteristics of our pilots are same as ever. Their prowess is of course second to none. With the progressive development of aircraft technology our pilots became sharper. Operating in a ruthless anti-terrorist war, our pilots have acquired a superb experience which enable them to be classed with the veterans in the field. Q: If fighting is the core area of Air Force how do you explain your services in the periphery? A: Our defensive and offensive roles are the main priorities. But welfare of our airmen and their **female** counterparts as well as our duty to the citizens are also our prime responsibilities. Evacuation of Army casualties from the battle ground is one of the prime duties entrusted to us. In any weather conditions, or any adverse circumstances our pilots and airmen are ready to accept challenges and perform their mission bravely. To the welfare of airmen and **women**, the Seva Vanitha Unit is dedicated in contributing its lot. It's actually a great assistance since our routine duties do not give us space to look into those matters. Caring for the wounded and the disabled and supporting needy families of SLAF personnel provide considerable mental relief for those in the battlefield. Apart from involving in combats we have taken the responsibility of transporting essential goods when the necessity arises - especially to the Northern Peninsula where the road access was cut off for a long period. Transporting troops on holiday and providing food and medicine for them is another main area. A major portion of our troop carrier aircraft and man-power is dedicated to this duty. Especially troops deployed in the Jaffna Peninsula were facing great difficulties in transport before the A9 was cleared. It was a main concern of ours. Our Ground Regiment plays a vital role in consolidating power in the cleared areas. Supporting IDPs who are being resettled in those areas is another duty we have undertaken. Our men are helping these people in their agriculture work and many other livelihood activities including providing them with medical care. Q: What is the future of the Air Force, in your perspective? A: At present, we have a strong base to grow up as a vibrant security arm. We are fortified with a highly talented, skilled crew with a great personality and morale. This is something which we can't buy overnight like the hi-tech equipment. The brains behind the operators matters a lot. The experience we gained during this war against terrorism is more valuable than anything else. This is a unique situation we are facing. So far we were learning from foreign war experts but now we are in a position to give the world, lessons on curbing terrorism. Even if the conventional war ends, our duties won't fade away. We have to keep surveillance over our skies if we are to safeguard our territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. Related facts: Former Air Force Commanders since inception... * Air Commodore GC Bladon - from May 05, 1950 - October 24, 1958 * Air Vice Marshal J. L Barker - from October 24, 1958 - November 12, 1962 * Air Vice Marshal Rohan Amarasekara - from November 12, 1962 - December 31, 1970 * Air Chief Marshal Pathman (Paddy) Mendis - From January 01, 1971 - November 01, 1976 (Became the Commander of the Air Force at the age of 38 years and the youngest Commander of an Armed Forces in Ceylon) * Air Chief Marshal Harry Goonetilleke - from November 01, 1976 - April 30, 1981 * Air Vice Marshal Dick Cuthbert Perera - From May 01, 1981 - April 30, 1985 * Air Chief Marshal Walter Fernando - From May 01, 1985 - July 31, 1990 * Air Chief Marshal M.J.T. de Gunawardena - From February 16, 1990 - February 16, 1994 * Air Chief Marshal Oliver Ranasinghe - From February 17, 1994 - March 05, 1998 * Air Chief Marshal J Weerakkody - From March 06, 1998 - July 15, 2002 * Air Chief Marshal Donald Perera - From July 16, 2002 - June 11, 2006 Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka).

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We can now give others a lesson or two - Air Force chief

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Bomb blast in Sri Lanka capital wounds nearly 50: official

Agence France Presse -- English

August 30, 2008 Saturday 12:03 PM GMT

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Length: 566 words

Byline: Amal Jayasinghe

Dateline: COLOMBO, Aug 30 2008

Body

Suspected Tamil Tiger guerrillas detonated a bomb in Colombo's commercial hub on Saturday wounding nearly 50 people, officials said, as government forces kept up a major drive against the rebels.

The bomb was concealed under a red satin-covered roadside stall displaying fake designer watches in the busy Pettah area of the capital, a short distance from the main bus station and the railway terminal.

"We received 48 people injured in the blast," said Anil Jasinghe, a director of the Colombo National Hospital.

"There are seven women and two children among the wounded," Jasinghe said, describing most of the injuries as "light to moderate." Most were leg wounds.

"There were fewer people today because of the rains from the morning," a shopkeeper said. "We heard the sound of a blast, but we thought it was a firecracker. It didn't sound like a huge bomb."

The explosion was minor compared to a bomb explosion also blamed on the rebels that occurred in April 1987 in the same area, killing 111 people and wounding over 750 wounded.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack but President Mahinda Rajapakse's office said the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas were believed to have carried out the bombing.

"Several recent plots by the LTTE to carry out bomb attacks targeting government installations, public transport and civilians have been foiled following information of such terrorist plots being revealed by LTTE cadres who were arrested by the police," the president's office said in a statement.

The defence ministry said security was further stepped up in the area following the blast.

Police cordoned off the bustling Pettah commercial area after the attack, which came as government forces continued to pound Tamil Tiger targets in the north of the island.

The Tigers have also been blamed for a string of bomb attacks against public transport and other blasts in recent months as the military intensified pressure on the rebels' defacto mini-state in the north.

Bomb blast in Sri Lanka capital wounds nearly 50: official

The attack came as the defence ministry said another 18 guerrillas and a government soldier were killed in fresh fighting on Friday.

The latest fighting brought the number of rebels killed by troops since January to 6,185, according to government figures. The government says 582 of its soldiers have died in the same period.

Saturday's attack came a day after the rebels accused government forces of setting off a roadside bomb and killing two civilians inside guerrilla-held territory.

A man and a child died when their motorcycle was caught up in the bomb attack at Nedunkerni in the vast Wanni region on Thursday evening, the **LTTE** said in a statement.

The military routinely denies it carries out attacks against civilians inside Tamil Tiger-controlled areas.

It is impossible to verify independently casualty figures as the government bars access to the front-lines by journalists and rights groups.

UN aid agencies say nearly 135,000 people have been driven from their homes due to fierce fighting in the past two months.

Sri Lankan troops have been pushing deeper into rebel-held territory as they try to dismantle the **LTTE**'s northern stronghold. They ejected the guerrillas from the east of the island in July 2007.

Tens of thousands of people have died on both sides since the **LTTE** launched a separatist campaign in 1972 for a homeland for minority Tamils in the island's north and east.

Load-Date: August 31, 2008

SRI LANKA: GROWING UN CONCERN AS CIVILIANS IN 'SAFE ZONE' COME UNDER FIRE

States News Service

February 17, 2009 Tuesday

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Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

The following information was released by the United Nations:

The United Nations has called on Sri Lankan Government forces and rebels to refrain from fighting in areas of civilian concentration, following reports that weekend clashes in a so-called safe zone in the northern Vanni region has led to more deaths and injuries.

"The UN calls on both sides to find an orderly and humane solution so that civilians - and children in particular - can be spared further bloodshed and loss of life due to both disease and the fighting," the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a statement issued yesterday in Colombo.

Ongoing fighting in the north of the South Asian island nation between Government forces and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) has trapped some 250,000 civilians.

A new "safe zone" was set up recently along the western boundary of the Mullaitivu Lagoon, which includes areas where UN staff and their dependents are staying.

"The designation of the new safe zone has provided some respite for the tens of thousands of civilians trapped for weeks by heavy fighting which has killed and injured many people," the statement noted.

However, reports from Sunday indicated that there was some fighting inside the zone, which "led to the deaths and injury to yet more civilians."

The **LTTE** continues to actively prevent people leaving, and reports indicate that a growing number of people trying to leave have been shot and sometimes killed, the statement said, adding that there are indications that children as young as 14 are being recruited into the ranks of the **LTTE**.

In addition, 15 UN staff and 75 of their dependents, 75 of whom are **women** and children, remain in the same area, having also been prevented from leaving by the **LTTE**. OCHA noted that 15 of the 40 children in that group have contracted respiratory diseases, a serious indicator for a population which is now in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

"We are acutely aware that the suffering of our own UN staff and dependents is just one part of a much larger picture. However, their release would be a good gesture and would strengthen the capacity of the UN to assist the

SRI LANKA : GROWING UN CONCERN AS CIVILIANS IN 'SAFE ZONE' COME UNDER FIRE

tens of thousands of people both inside the Vanni pocket, and the approximately 30,000 IDPs [internally displaced persons] who have left for Government-held areas."

OCHA said that many of these staff played an important role in helping with the distribution of 8,400 tons of food to the civilians of the Vanni over the past four months. Tens of thousands of civilians in the area are facing serious shortages of food, medicine, and clean water, and as a result increasing numbers are becoming ill.

The statement also voiced concern that one staff member was reported forcibly recruited into the LTTE on Sunday. "The UN calls on the LTTE to immediately release him, to desist from further recruitment of civilians, and to permit passage for people who wish to leave, especially the women and children."

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A wake up call for democracy

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 17, 2008 Saturday 3:05 PM EST

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Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 17 -- The ambivalence of the international community on the subject of terrorism is best seen in the response to the situation in Sri Lanka. Countries that are part of the "War on Terror" launched with the US attacks on Afghanistan and followed by the US-UK led invasion of Iraq, and still being continued in both countries, have a much different attitude about dealing with the terror of the LTTE.

It took many years of Sri Lanka's lone fight against terror for most of the western countries that are, conveniently and misleadingly, lumped as the international community, to ban the LTTE in their countries. Having done so, many of them, demonstrate a sense of trepidation about confronting the terror of the LTTE with the armed response that is called for.

Sri Lanka has been at the receiving end of this ambivalence in the face of this terror for a long time. Diplomats from countries that have a policy of having no discussions with those named by them as terrorists are quite at ease in urging the Sri Lankan Government to negotiate with the LTTE.

This attitude is seen in many foreign organisations too, many of which have today arrogated to them the right of being the arbiters of what is right and wrong, the conduct of affairs by Third World countries.

They come with many a name and mandate, but converge on the issue of soft-pedaling the terror of the LTTE, projecting Sri Lanka to the world, and no doubt to those who fund them, as being an uncaring state that has the least respect for Human Rights.

Sri Lanka has been carrying a long and hard battle on the diplomatic front against this ambivalence of the "international community". It has not been an easy task given the influence, especially the economic clout, of those that are ranged against the country on this issue. This was the task that President Mahinda Rajapaksa took head on when he addressed the Oxford Union last Tuesday.

He minced no words in stating the exact situation in the country; in its own fight against terror, and how any setbacks in that battle will affect the cherished value of the countries that make a great show of their commitment to democracy, even to the extent of considering it an export commodity.

What the President did as to give a wake up call to the world, especially to those who make much noise about their commitment to democracy and human rights, but are willing to be in a slumber regarding the terror that has engulfed Sri Lanka for so long, and continues to be fight single handed by Sri Lanka.

A wake up call for democracy

In what was reportedly an eloquent and impassioned statement he showed that Sri Lanka was denied global support in its war against the LTTE, the world have failed in its fight against terrorism.

The President showed both the fallacy and the dangers of on the one hand naming the LTTE as the most dangerous terrorist organisation in the world, and on the other not taking the concerted action necessary to defeat this threat peace and democracy and all human values, in Sri Lanka, the South Asian Region and the world at large.

Background

The key aspects in the battle against terror emphasised by the President were: the need for global support for Sri Lanka's fight against terror; the need for the world to act to make suicide killing unacceptable in the civilized world as a form of political expression; the recognition of Sri Lanka as a caring society that has the highest regard for Human Rights and democracy; and that democracy would be the victim if Sri Lanka fails in its fight against terror, and the recognition of Sri Lanka's readiness to talk with the LTTE provided it shows genuine interest in a negotiated solution and a willingness to lay down arms.

President Rajapaksa's call to the world to seriously join in Sri Lanka's battle against terror was made with a careful statement of the background in which the country carries on its fight against the terror of the LTTE.

In an address that was to deal with the Government's development strategy towards empowering the rural economy of the country, he explained how the development process was being pursued, despite the many obstacles caused by the LTTE's terror.

He also explained an interesting detail how Sri Lanka has been and remains a caring society, that has not veered away from the traditions of caring that are built into society through the millennia.

Speaking as the first Sri Lankan Head of State to address the Oxford Union, the President explained to the keen audience the advances that Sri Lanka had made in universal education and healthcare, the important position that Sri Lanka held in Asia on gender equality, that Sri Lanka has achieved a very high standard in the United Nations Human Development Index, and have already, to a large extent, achieved the Millennium Development Goals.

Only last month a UN Report commended Sri Lanka for being well on its way to eliminating malaria, and the country has a very low rate of HIV / AIDS infection.

President Rajapaksa said: "I point these things out to you only because of the intense campaign that is being conducted internationally, to describe my country as one that does not care about our fellow human beings and human needs. Facts demonstrate that this is far from the truth.

"There are no signs of obvious starvation in any part of the country. In fact for over 25 years, since the beginning of the LTTE's violent challenge to our very existence, to our sovereignty, the government has been sending food, medicine and educational material to the two districts dominated by the LTTE.

Every single teacher, nurse, doctor, hospital and government official in the LTTE controlled areas is appointed and paid by the Government in Colombo. Very few countries grappling with terrorism have been so accommodating. This itself illustrates the caring nature of our society."

Laying down the policies that governed the programme of rural empowerment, the President said: "The essence of our rural empowerment programme is to ensure that rural infrastructure development takes place at a rapid rate.

So far neglected rural roads are being paved today with concrete to make them last the monsoon rains that are common in our part of the world. Rural electricity programmes, community water supply schemes, minor irrigation projects, housing and market facilities are included in our rural infrastructure development drive.

In essence our strategy is to level the playing field between the 'urban, organised minority' and the 'rural, unorganised majority', in the national development process.

A wake up call for democracy

I am encouraged that our development strategy - Mahinda Chinthana - Vision Towards a New Sri Lanka, sustained a near 7 per cent economic growth during the last three years, and reached US dollars 1,600 per capita income in 2007. Except in one district, people below the poverty line have declined drastically in 2007."

Strategies

Thus explaining the development strategies of the government, with particular attention to the rural sector, President Rajapaksa moved on to describing the extent and brutality of the LTTE's terror: "Unfortunately we are being challenged by 'the most brutal terrorist group in the world' as the LTTE has been described by the FBI.

Suicide killings using even women and children have become their hallmark. It is this terror group that invented the deadly suicide vest for the suicide killer. Having pioneered the suicide vest, they have freely given this technology to other terror groups in the world. This has now become a global menace.

"There have been hundreds of innocents, civilians returning home after work, children going to school and young mothers going to their weekly clinics, being maimed or killed by indiscriminately exploded bombs in crowded centres or being targeted by brain-washed suicide bombers.

You need to see the carnage caused by shattered limbs and burning human flesh, to understand the sheer brutality that motivates this group of terrorists.

They killed Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India, and Ranasinghe Premadasa, the former President of Sri Lanka. Most recently, a senior Minister of my government, a Tamil speaking Catholic, was brutally murdered by a suicide killer, along with a former Olympic athlete among many others participating in a sporting event.

"They also killed our former Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, a scholar of distinction, and legal luminary, who once occupied this seat as the President of the Oxford Union with distinction.

Having this prefaced his call for international action to defeat the LTTE, the President said: "it has become incumbent upon us to confront this group to the extent of our ability, deploying all the resources of the State, to protect the people of Sri Lanka and their democratic way of life. I must add that what I am doing is in no way different to what other democracies have done before, and continue to do, in the face of terrorism.

However, I must state that the LTTE is the most brutal terror outfit the world has ever seen, and defeating them requires global support. What Sri Lanka is doing, in my opinion, is fighting this terror outfit single handed to ensure that democracy and respect for human life prevail in the world. If we fail in our war against the LTTE, the world will fail in its fight against terrorism, and democracy will be the victim. This is the plain truth.

Suicide killers

He then emphasised on the need for concerted action by all nations against suicide killings, the hallmark of the LTTE that has been copied by every other terrorist organization in the world.

He said: "It is time that the world, raising its united voice, expressed its utter revulsion of the barbaric practice of suicide bombings. It must be made absolutely clear that this form of political expression, if it could be described as such, is utterly unacceptable in the civilised world."

Aware of the efforts that are being made to discredit the Security Forces of Sri Lanka, by those who claim to be against terror, but in practice seem to be more aligned with the same forces when found under the label of the LTTE, President Rajapaksa said: "There is a considerable challenge to the Security Forces of my country, whose goal is simply to protect the innocents and their simple way of life. We need to understand that our Security Forces do not go out of their way to harass innocents, or to discriminate against a minority. They take great personal risks constantly.

The fear psychosis created by the LTTE terror, may cause some lapses in judgment, but by and large, independent observers have always commended the efficiency, politeness and courtesy of the men in uniform." It was both an

A wake up call for democracy

important defence, as well as a much needed encomium to our Security Forces that was conveyed to the entire world.

Making a case of a proper understanding of Sri Lanka's case in the fight against terror, as well as Human Rights and the defence of democracy, the President stressed Government's obligation to safeguard the lives and limbs of the people, which role is considered paramount in any democracy, but seems to be questioned when it comes to Sri Lanka.

He said: "We must remember that there are no methods or solutions which are universally applicable to situations of this nature. It is the principal duty of a government to assure the public of security of life and limb. It is the terrorist group that decides when to strike: They decide the time, the place and the opportunity. They are in no way constrained by the values and procedures which rightly control the responses of democratic governments. These realities must be taken into account as the basis of a fair and objective assessment of Sri Lanka's situation."

He then explained the success that Sri Lanka had achieved against the LTTE, particularly in the liberation of the East, and the progress made towards the re-establishment of democracy with the successful elections in the Eastern Province. "Although many have said that the LTTE is invincible, we have freed our Eastern Province of their terror. Within one year we have restored democracy there after nearly two decades. Only last week we conducted free and fair elections to the first ever Eastern Provincial Council, contested by several political parties.

As our forces seek to defeat and disarm the LTTE, we are firm in our resolve to have a negotiated solution to the crisis in Sri Lanka. I do not believe in a military solution. We have attempted talks with the LTTE on several occasions - thrice since my election as the President - but they have not reciprocated. They have always left the talks with lame excuses. We are still ready to talk, once we are certain of their genuine intent for a political solution... and their readiness to give up arms."

Unity key to EPC's success - President

Colombo, May 17 -- President Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday urged the newly-formed Eastern Provincial Council (EPC) to function as a closely knit, single family unit and be the guiding star of democracy to the entire nation.

Addressing the swearing-in ceremony of the new Chief Minister for the Eastern Provincial Council Sivanesathurai Chandrakanthan (Pillayan), at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo, President Rajapaksa re-iterated that all stakeholders to the Eastern Provincial Council (EPC) should refrain from cultivating any type of animosity, jealousy and discord.

They should work unitedly, in harmony with each other, to realise the true value and potential of the franchise of the people whom they represent, irrespective of their race and creed.

"They should set the standards and benchmarks to the entire nation. They should work in unison for the betterment and prosperity of their motherland. If they fail to achieve these objectives, the whole country would suffer the consequences and head for chaos and destruction."

"This land belongs to all of us, to the Sinhalese, Muslims and the Tamils, sans any discrimination, to live in harmony. " the President stressed.

He pointed out that although the Provincial Council Administrative System was initially devised for the benefit of the Tamil speaking people of the North and the East, ironically to date, it had failed miserably in its implementation within that region.

"Political solutions need not be confined solely to racks and tables or to Constitutions, but they should evolve from the people, the man on the street, and be implemented for their benefit.

We are a Government which understands when and where we should legitimately adopt a gun or the political solution policy, as appropriate, to suit the conditions and situations demanded".

A wake up call for democracy

"However, today for the first time ever, we have accomplished that arduous task of establishing the Provincial Council, as a remedy and solution to the problems faced by the Tamil-speaking community and also succeeded in electing their own representatives to fulfil their aspirations", he noted.

President Rajapaksa said that this day, a ray of hope dawns on the democracy of the country, as it is the day the Eastern polity came under a democratic administration, after several decades of conflict. It was also the day for those that believed in the bullet, to abandon their weapons and become true representatives of the oppressed and downtrodden masses whom they represent.

He said that many valiant soldiers and others made the supreme sacrifice of their lives in defence of the Motherland.

"Do not think in terms of a Sinhalese, Tamil or Muslim leader, and lead the country to chaos. Let us think as Sri Lankans," President Rajapaksa added.

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UN worker injured in Tiger shooting

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

March 16, 2009 Monday

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Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 16 -- UN worker, Sutharshani Tharmila and 13 others were injured when the **LTTE** shot at them when they arrived in the cleared areas of Puthukudiyirippu on Saturday evening.

More than 1,200 displaced people had braved Tiger attacks during the past few days seeking refuge with Government authorities in cleared areas. The injured had been admitted to the Vavuniya Hospital, military sources said. Amidst reports of indiscriminate shooting by the **LTTE** to prevent an exodus, more civilians kept arriving at various locations in the cleared areas of Vanni by yesterday. Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services Minister Risath Bathuideen said that 250 IDPs had been brought to Mannar by noon yesterday, with another 350 waiting near Omanthai to gain entry into Vavuniya. In addition, more than 400 civilians had arrived in Kilinochchi, the Minister added. The Minister said out of them, more than 600 would be settled in Vavuniya Welfare Centres. A large number of children and **women** are among those who sought refuge with authorities, he added. A young boy was also reported killed in an **LTTE** fire directed at a group of civilians numbering 58 fleeing the Tigers in the Puthukudiyirippu area on Friday. Meanwhile, the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) with the assistance of the Navy transported 423 displaced civilians from Puttumattalan to Trincomalee on board the vessel 'Green Ocean' on Saturday. Military sources said 592 IDPs had reached cleared areas of Puthukudiyirippu on foot, the same day. They had been referred to welfare centres after being provided with refreshments and medical care. Minister Bathuideen while admitting that the conditions in the safe zone was deteriorating due to bad weather and **LTTE** atrocities, said all relevant sectors including the international community should pressurize the **LTTE** into allowing the free movement of IDPs kept hostage by the Tigers. He added that the Government had all arrangements in place to receive these IDPs and house them in temporary welfare centres, until they are provided with permanent facilities. According to authorities more than 34,000 displaced civilians had arrived in Vavuniya from uncleared areas since January this year. In addition, a lesser number of IDPs had also been brought to Jaffna and Trincomalee during the course of this time. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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At least 23 killed in Sri Lanka bus bombing: officials

Agence France Presse -- English

January 16, 2008 Wednesday 4:37 AM GMT

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Dateline: COLOMBO, Jan 16 2008

Body

At least 23 people were killed and 67 injured Wednesday in a suspected Tamil Tiger bomb attack on a crowded bus in southwest Sri Lanka, the defence ministry said.

Officials said the bus, travelling from Buttala to Okkampitiya and also carrying schoolchildren, was hit by a powerful Claymore-type mine -- a bomb packed with explosives and ball-bearings -- apparently hidden on the bus or detonated on the roadside.

"Twenty-three civilians were killed and 67 were injured in the explosion," a statement said.

A local hospital official, Sumith Rajasuriya, said he had seen eight schoolchildren admitted for treatment. It was not clear if there were any children among the dead.

The defence ministry blamed the attack on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**).

"**LTTE** terrorists have carried out a cowardly bomb blast targeting innocent schoolchildren at Okkampitiya, Monaragala," the ministry said, describing the rebels as "a ruthless terrorist outfit notorious for crimes against **women** and children."

The attack came as a 2002 Norwegian-brokered truce, which was in practice dead anyway, is set to officially end on Wednesday.

The government pulled out of the ceasefire two weeks ago, saying there was no point attempting to negotiate with "terrorists."

Sri Lankan government defence officials are convinced they have the upper hand in the long-running conflict, and have said peace is only possible when they kill the **LTTE**'s leaders and capture their northern mini-state.

The **LTTE**, listed as a "terrorist" organisation by the United States and European Union, wants to carve out a separate homeland for Tamils in the north and east of the ethnic Sinhalese-majority tropical island.

The decades-old conflict has left tens of thousands of people dead.

At least 23 killed in Sri Lanka bus bombing: officials

The attack also came as fighting has been escalating in the north, with Colombo claiming it has killed 397 rebels since the start of the month against 20 government soldiers killed.

The island's military began the New Year with a vow to crush the Tigers by June, and set a target to kill 3,000 guerrillas in the first six months of the year.

But casualty claims are almost impossible to verify, as Sri Lankan authorities routinely prevent journalists and diplomats from travelling to frontlines or the northern jungles controlled by the **LTTE**.

A week ago, Sri Lanka's nation building minister D. M. Dassanayake was also killed in a roadside bombing near Colombo that was blamed on the rebels.

Load-Date: January 16, 2008

End of Document

LTTE fighters kill 17 citizens, army says

UPI

February 10, 2009 Tuesday 10:53 AM EST

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Length: 120 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Feb. 10

Body

Tamil Tigers killed 17 civilians and wounded 69 others Tuesday, apparently to prevent them from fleeing Sri Lanka's war zone, a government official said.

Sri Lankan army spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said survivors of the attack said the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam militants opened fire as the civilians tried to flee the Wanni region to seek shelter with government security forces, the Press Trust of India reported.

Nanayakkara said the incident happened in the Udayarkattu area in Pudukudiyyrippu in the northern Wanni region. He said the victims were carried by the group of about 1,000 civilians.

On Monday, a **female** suicide bomber killed 29 people and injured 64 others when she detonated a device at a refugee center.

Load-Date: February 11, 2009

NEWSDIGEST 1500

Canwest News Service

September 22, 2008 Monday

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Length: 1136 words

Body

Grits outline \$55-billion campaign platform - (CNS-ELX-WRAP-1400-22)

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion kicked off the third week of Campaign '08 today by unveiling his party's election platform as his Conservative opponent, Stephen Harper, pledged to get tough on youth crime.

Dion released a four-year, \$55-billion election campaign platform and promised to balance the books with new revenues and savings that would generate an annual surplus.

The platform includes \$16.3 billion in new program spending and more than \$40 billion in tax cuts over four years.

Speaking in Ottawa, Dion presented the Liberals as a party with a proven track record of fiscal management.

An hour earlier and a few kilometres away, Harper was announcing that a re-elected Conservative government would scrap Canada's young offenders law and replace it with a tougher version under which youth who commit serious violent crimes would no longer be able to keep their names out of the news.

The new law would impose automatic, stiffer sentences for people 14 years of age or over who are convicted of serious violent crimes, such as murder or manslaughter. Upon conviction, the names of these individuals would be made public, Harper said.

Tamil Tiger defector admits humanitarian relief used for weapons - (CNS- TAMIL-TIGER)

A former commander of Sri Lanka's **Tamil Tigers** has admitted the guerrillas used money meant for humanitarian aid to buy weapons.

Col. Karuna Amman said in an interview the rebels routinely bought arms with donations from abroad that were meant to help civilians in guerrilla-held areas.

He called Canada the No. 1 one source of external income for the guerrillas, who are fighting for independence for Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority.

Karuna spent 22 years in the **Tamil Tigers** and was a top commander until he defected to the government side in 2004 and took his 6,000 cadres with him.

The National Post interviewed him at a secretive location in Colombo for a series about Sri Lanka's long-running civil war.

The RCMP and CSIS have long claimed the **Tamil Tigers** raise money in Canada but this is believed to be the first time a former senior guerrilla has publicly confirmed the allegations.

NEWSDIGEST 1500

Police say they have documented at least \$3 million in money transfers from Tamil Tigers supporters in Canada to overseas accounts linked to the guerrillas.

Man charged in stabbing on Greyhound bus - (CNS-BUS-STABBING-22)

Ontario Provincial Police have charged a 28-year-old Manitouwadge, Ont., man in connection with a stabbing on board a Greyhound bus in rural Ontario Sunday, a chilling reminder of the murder of a Winnipeg man on another Greyhound two months ago.

David Wayne Roberts has been charged with one count of aggravated assault and two counts of breaching probation, the OPP said in a news release today.

Police say a 20-year-old man was stabbed in the chest around 4:15 p.m. ET on Sunday while the bus was travelling from Toronto to Winnipeg.

The incident occurred five kilometres south of White River, on Highway 17 near Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.

The victim, identified by witnesses as an Asian male in his mid-20s, is recovering from non-life threatening injuries.

Roberts was arrested soon after the incident when he got off the bus several kilometres from the scheduled stop in White River.

He is scheduled to appear for a bail hearing today.

Greyhound driver regularly finds weapons in carry-on bags - (CNS-BUS-SAFETY)

A large-sheath Bowie knife, a nine-millimetre handgun, brass knuckles and a buck knife are among the weapons that have been seized from Greyhound Canada bus passengers in the last six months.

That grew longer yesterday when a man allegedly used a knife he brought on board one of the line's buses to stab a fellow passenger in the chest on a northern Ontario route.

Also included in that makeshift arsenal was a wood-handled 15-centimetre blade taken from a passenger by Edmonton driver Tyler Tong.

Three months prior to the grisly killing of 22-year-old Tim McLean travelling from Edmonton to Winnipeg this summer, Tong sent a photo of the blade to company officials with a letter stating that he was finding ``stuff like this on a regular basis."

In the May 2 letter, sent by inter-office mail to two members of senior management at Greyhound's Edmonton depot, the driver expresses concern about ``potential hazard(s)" on board.

He describes how, in another incident, an intoxicated teenage traveller was trying to bring a buck knife and brass knuckles on board.

N.L. government, cancer specialists reach deal - (CNS-BRF-NL-DOCTORS-DEAL)

The Newfoundland government said today it has reached a deal with its women's cancer specialists that will keep them from leaving the province.

The three doctors - the province's only gynecological oncologists - had said they were leaving Eastern Health Corp. in December over their concerns about patient-care issues, including the need for more support staff.

They were also seeking better pay.

On Friday, the provincial government offered the doctors more office space and staff, additional operating room time, nursing support and the hiring of a new pharmacist.

It said the issue of pay would be addressed ``ultimately."

If the doctors had left, hundreds of women would have faced having to travel outside the province for treatment.

Plane missing north of Toronto - (CNS-BRF-MISSING-PLANE)

Ontario Provincial Police and military personnel from CFB Trenton are searching for a missing pilot and ultralight plane north of Barrie Ont.

Rescue officials said 47-year-old Lachlan MacLean of Springwater, Ont., left the Edenvale airport near Barrie on Sunday morning.

He was heading toward an island in Georgian Bay, about 83 kilometres north of Barrie.

Police said he never arrived and members of the Edenvale Flying Club reported him missing at 3:30 p.m. Sunday.

A coast guard vessel was also brought in Monday to aid in the search effort for the red and white Highland Buccaneer ultralight aircraft.

53,000 babies treated as China milk scandal grows - (CNS-UPDATE-CHINA-MILK and CNS-BRF-DESSERT-RECALL)

The number of babies sickened by tainted milk in China has leaped to nearly 53,000, officials admitted today, as the scandal continued to escalate.

That tally is up astronomically from the 6,200 reported ill last week.

Four babies have died with some 12,892 of the babies are in hospital, with 104 in serious condition.

The Chinese Health Ministry says the rest have been treated and ``basically recovered."

The country's quality chief, Li Changjiang, has stepped down in light of the case.

Meanwhile, in Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency warned consumers yesterday not to eat a dessert product imported from China because it is laced with melamine.

Nissin Cha Cha Dessert, which is sold in packages of two, 220 gram containers, has been distributed in Ontario, B.C. and Alberta.

Load-Date: September 22, 2008

Bomb blast in Sri Lanka capital wounds 45: hospital

Agence France Presse -- English

August 30, 2008 Saturday 9:28 AM GMT

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Length: 491 words

Byline: Amal Jayasinghe

Dateline: COLOMBO, Aug 30 2008

Body

Suspected Tamil Tiger guerrillas set off a powerful blast in Sri Lanka's main commercial hub on Saturday, wounding 45 people, officials said, as government forces kept up a major offensive against the rebels.

A package left near a fruit vendor exploded in Pettah, the commercial centre of the capital, police said, adding that the blast was also a short distance from the main bus station and the railway terminal.

"We received 45 people injured in the blast," a director of the Colombo National Hospital, Anil Jasinghe, said.

"There are four women and two children among the wounded. Only two or three need surgery, others have light to moderate injuries," he said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

But President Mahinda Rajapakse's office said the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas were believed to have carried out the bombing.

"Several recent plots by the LTTE to carry out bomb attacks targeting government installations, public transport and civilians have been foiled following information of such terrorist plots being revealed by LTTE cadres who were arrested by the police," the president's office said in a statement.

Police cordoned off the bustling Pettah commercial area following the bombing, which came as government forces continued to pound Tamil Tiger targets in the north of the island.

The Tigers have also been blamed for a string of bomb attacks against public transport and other blasts in recent months as the military intensified pressure on the rebels' defacto mini-state in the north.

The attack came as the defence ministry said another 18 guerrillas and a government soldier were killed in fresh fighting on Friday.

The latest fighting brought the number of rebels killed by troops since January to 6,185, according to government figures. The government says 582 of its soldiers have died in the same period.

Bomb blast in Sri Lanka capital wounds 45: hospital

Saturday's attack came a day after the rebels accused government forces of setting off a roadside bomb and killing two civilians inside guerrilla-held territory.

A man and a child died when their motorcycle was caught up in the bomb attack at Nedunkerni in the vast Wanni region on Thursday evening, the **LTTE** said in a statement.

The military routinely denies that it carries out attacks against civilians inside Tamil Tiger-controlled areas.

It is impossible to verify independently casualty figures as the government bars access to the front-lines by journalists and rights groups.

UN aid agencies say nearly 135,000 people have been driven from their homes due to fierce fighting in the past two months.

Sri Lankan troops have been pushing deeper into rebel-held territory as they try to dismantle the **LTTE**'s northern stronghold. They ejected the guerrillas from the east of the island in July 2007.

Tens of thousands have died on both sides since the **LTTE** launched a separatist campaign in 1972 for a homeland for minority Tamils in the island's north and east.

Load-Date: August 31, 2008

Troops move into Kilinochchi

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

August 2, 2008 Saturday 1:36 PM EST

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Length: 304 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug. 2 -- Government security forces moved into the Kilinochchi district on Thursday for the first time in several years after fierce fighting, while a top **LTTE women's** wing leader was killed in a Mullaitivu clash, the military said.

Troops of the 57 and 58 Divisions from the Mannar front engaged in the Wanni liberation mission crossed the district borders between Mannar and Kilinochchi at an undisclosed location on the Mannar- Vavuniya combined warfront, the defence ministry said. It also said the fall of Vellankulam, the next town after Iluppaikkadavai when travelling northwards on the Mannar- Pooneryn (A-32) road was imminent."

The ministry also said so far at least 20 **LTTE** cadres were killed and 29 injured in Thursday's clashes in the Mannar - Vavuniya and Welioya battlefronts. Two soldiers were killed in the clashes.

Meanwhile, the ministry said the army killed Kumaveri Thangeamma, a self styled 'Lieutenant Colonel' of the **LTTE** who is the head of the **women's** wing in Mullaitivu, during two hours of fierce fighting on Thursday. It also said clashes in the north of Janakapura had killed three others of her armed escort, Kanthimani, Pushparani and Magolechchami in the confrontations.

One of the **LTTE's** group leaders, 'Madavani ' was also among those who killed in the confrontation.

Meanwhile troops of the 57 Division operating at the centre of the Mannar - Vavuniya front pushed their hold further northwards into the strategically important Tunukkai area. Tunukkai town lies halfway on the Mankulam - Vellankulam road, one of the main supply routes between Wanni and north-western coast of the country. The town has been used by the terrorists as their main administrative centre for the non liberated areas in the West of A-9 road.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

Troops move into Kilinochchi

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The Tamil Nadu dilemma

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 21, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 971 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 21 -- Excerpts of an Appeal to the leaders of Political Parties and the People of Tamil Nadu, by the President of Tamil Untied Liberation Front V. Anandasangaree

Of all the countries in this world India more particularly Tamil Nadu one of its 28 States and Union Territories, should be more concerned about Sri Lanka than any other State in India, being its immediate neighbour, separated by the Palk-Strait a distance of only about 30 Kilometers. Our languages Tamil and Sinhala and our culture have their routes in India. Both the Sinhala Buddhists and Hindu Tamils worship the common Deities such as Ganapathy, Murugan, Eeswaran, Vishnu, Paththini, Sarasvathy, Luxmi and such others except that Ganapathy and Murugan are their Gana-Deviyo and Kathirgama-Deviyo. We the Sinhalese and Tamils have many more things in common such as New Year and family names.

Names such as Seeta, Luxman, Arujuna, Indirajith, Luxmi and many others are very common among the Sinhalese. Dr. Kalaingar M. Karunanithy and some other politicians in both Tamil Nadu and in Sri Lanka boast of "umbilical cord relationship" the Tamils of Tamil Nadu have with the Tamils of Sri Lanka, to rouse the feelings on both sides. I am sure even many senior politicians of Tamil Nadu are not aware of the similar relationship the Tamils of Madurai have with the Sinhalese of Sri Lanka. I don't think even 0.1% of the Tamils of Tamil Nadu are aware of this fact. Vijaya The name Vijaya itself is also the name of the founder of the Sinhalese race. There had been several interactions between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. Lot of inter-marriages had taken place with very rare separations. An Amman Kovil or a Kali Kovil has more Buddhist *female* devotees than Hindu devotees at Poojas. These facts explain as to why there are no Tamil Buddhist and Hindu Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese and the Tamils are real cousins speaking different languages. The day Sinhalese and Tamils become fluent with each other's Language the ethnic problem will vanish automatically. It is very unfortunate that the Tamils of Tamil Nadu without knowing much about Sri Lanka and with hardly any knowledge of the ground situation, rouse the feelings of the people of Tamil Nadu, without realizing the grave damage they had done for the Tamil cause already and continuing to do so still. Misled by a handful of Tamil Nadu Politicians, almost all Political Parties except two or three are playing cricket with our problem and trying to score one over the other. It is the ball that is hit over and over again and the ball, in this case is the innocent Tamil people, cannot bear the pain any more. Human chains, hartals, hunger strikes, demonstrations, stopping the train service and many such other activities of various organizations did not bear fruit but had only become counter productive. The conduct of some Lawyers is least expected from Members of that profession. Involving the students, undergraduates and insulting the Buddhist clergy did not achieve the desired goal but only proved detrimental. I myself invited the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu long ago to visit Sri Lanka and make an effort to find a solution. Powers I canvassed for powers for our regions equivalent to that of the powers enjoyed by the Chief Ministers of the various Indian States including Tamil Nadu. Even recently I made a request to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to pay a visit. Soon after, the President of Sri Lanka too had extended his invitation to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Very many people in Tamil Nadu, without

The Tamil Nadu dilemma

realizing the agony the Tamils underwent during a quarter of a century of the LTTE's atrocious rule, still want to save Prabhakaran and his ruthless group. The Tamil people who had undergone all these hardships wanted liberation only from the LTTE. The people liberated by the Government Forces are now in refugee camps. Why can't some leaders from Tamil Nadu, at least now come and find out for themselves from the refugees as to how they suffered, how hard life was under the LTTE, how their children were sacrificed at the battle front by the LTTE. When the war is about to end with only a small area yet to be liberated and especially when people themselves wanted liberation from the LTTE, which Government will agree to stop the war? Fresh demand Tamil Nadu should know what is happening in Sri Lanka. There is now a fresh demand made by some leaders that Sri Lanka should close down its Diplomatic Mission in Chennai. One day, very soon the LTTE is going to be defeated. It is the duty of the Tamil Nadu leaders to see that whatever number left alive in the LTTE cadre are saved along with the civilians detained by them. The most valuable help the people of Tamil Nadu can do to the poor Sri Lankan Tamils is to help them to save their properties which is possible only by stopping the war. If the war stops and the LTTE surrender their arms these poor people leading their lives like nomads can get back to their houses safely soon and save whatever property is still left, although whatever life lost cannot be regained. The time has come for Tamil Nadu to wake up and tell the LTTE enough is enough and also to do its best to rebuild the good relationship that prevailed between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka until recently, when the TNA Members of Parliament of Sri Lanka misinformed them and roused the feelings of the people of Tamil Nadu. I strongly urge Tamil Nadu to persuade the LTTE to give up their demand for separation and to agree for a solution based on the Indian constitution and also to lay down their arms. I wish to remind Tamil Nadu what Mahathma Gandhi said many years before he was assassinated that, "India and Ceylon cannot afford to quarrel each others". Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

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Terrorism and the challenge to diplomacy in Sri Lanka

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 9, 2008 Monday 3:57 PM EST

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Length: 2741 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 9 -- Excerpts of Foreign Secretary, Dr. Palitha T. B. Kohona's address at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore last week focusing "on one of the gravest challenges to Sri Lanka in her post-colonial history - the challenge of brutal LTTE terrorism".

One of the gravest challenges to Sri Lanka in her post-colonial history is the challenge of brutal terrorism - LTTE terrorism. It is a challenge to Sri Lanka's very existence as country, its democratic way of life and its social fabric. In the last 30 years our people have paid a heavy price.

Suicide bombers have mercilessly unleashed their lethal cargo on innocent civilians irrespective of their ethnicity or creed. Trains, buses and shopping centres have been drenched with the blood of women, children and other non-combatants.

Our country's political leadership has been targeted and moderates eliminated. Vast sums of money which could have been invested on development work for the benefit of all our people have had to be spent on defending our sovereignty, territorial integrity and our people. Our most important task today is convincing the international community to stay engaged as we strive to eradicate this scourge from our soil.

Sophisticated

Unfortunately we have also been confronted by a very sophisticated propaganda machine which has succeeded many times in distracting attention from the terrorist nature of the LTTE, its fascist structure, its uncompromising goals and its absolute control over the Tamil people of the Vanni. This has been a continuing challenge to our diplomacy.

Sri Lanka's real and perceived shortcomings get highlighted regularly and its many achievements remain marginalised. Respected NGOs have made it their cause to tar and feather Sri Lanka in public and eminent international personalities have grabbed the headlines with their rasping criticisms.

Our economy is threatened with sanctions, trade concessions are placed on the line and political support is withdrawn - to the utter disbelief of a population regularly subjected to the thunder of suicide bombers and death and injury by showers of steel pellets.

Our challenge is to address the causes of these attitudes, correct misconceptions, provide accurate information and rectify our shortcomings while continuously confronting the sophisticated propaganda machine of the LTTE and its sympathisers.

Terrorism and the challenge to diplomacy in Sri Lanka

Time and time again we have come across those who demonstrate sympathy to the causes that groups, such as the LTTE, claim to espouse and they conveniently overlook the most serious element in the modus operandum used to achieve their goals i.e. the indiscriminate deployment of terror.

It is almost always the case that some of the so called grievances behind the terror do not represent contemporary reality. Sympathy associated with these alleged grievances very often results in virtually condoning or at least turning a blind eye to the brutality of terrorism.

While the Sri Lankan State's ability to act abroad is constrained for obvious reasons, it must deploy its diplomacy to contain the efforts of the LTTE. The lack of effective comprehensive action by other governments has, in many instances, strengthened the support base of the LTTE abroad and inspired them.

Faced with the impact of anti-terror legislation, in some instances, they raise funds on the pretext of advancing charitable goals such as rehabilitating the victims of violence, violence that they themselves have perpetrated.

While committing the most grievous violations of human rights, they then manage to garner support overseas pretending to be human rights activists and campaigners for justice by portraying themselves as champions of a minority being besieged by a draconian majority government.

Meaningless

These terrorists exploit ceasefires to re-arm and re-group but when the ceasefire is rendered meaningless through their own actions and is abrogated they would call for a cessation of hostilities and elements of the international community, join the bandwagon supporting the demand for a ceasefire.

When we as a government sat down to negotiate with the LTTE, as indeed we have done on many occasions, they have refused to discuss core political issues relating to their perceived grievances, made unreasonable demands for concessions which were impossible for a democratically elected government to deliver and which were favourable to their terrorist designs and when these demands were not met they walked out. Soon afterwards they stepped up violence and when the military undertook measures to counter this violence they claimed that the government was pursuing a military solution rather than a political one.

What I have summed up in outline is the duplicitous diplomacy of terrorists and their front organisations from Sri Lanka's experience.

Therefore as a state confronted with the challenge of terrorism in the contemporary world we have to contend not only with the terrorism on our streets but also with their skill and tact in deceiving the outside world that they are the champions of a besieged people.

Sri Lanka, as many of you are aware is one of Asia's oldest functioning democracies. From 1931 we have enjoyed universal adult suffrage and since the time we gained independence from British rule in 1948, a system of Parliamentary democracy has firmly taken root. Currently elections are held, based on a system of proportional representation that is accommodative of our minorities. Our electoral tradition is sustained by a vibrant multi-party system.

Policies

Largely free and fair elections have been held without interruption since independence and different political parties that have come to power in this period have striven to introduce political and economic policies that have demonstrated sensitivity to the aspirations of all our people. Reflecting the heterogeneous composition of our society endash Sri Lanka has two official languages; Sinhala & Tamil with English serving as the link language.

Chapter III of our Constitution guarantees the freedom to practice a religion of one's choice among other constitutionally guaranteed rights. Fundamental rights are guaranteed under the constitution and have been widened considerably through the courts.

Terrorism and the challenge to diplomacy in Sri Lanka

We have also evolved from a largely centralised system of administration to one that has gradually devolved power to the provinces with a view to involving people in different parts of the country in governing their local areas.

In 1987 a Provincial Council system was introduced through the 13th amendment to the constitution.

Today on the recommendations of the All Party Representative Committee (APRC) set up by the Government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa, the powers devolved to provincial councils are being strengthened and the APRC is continuing to deliberate on the further devolution of power.

The government held local and provincial elections in the Eastern Province in March & May this year thus enabling the people of this province to elect their leaders. We are encouraging foreign investors and the international non-governmental organisations to support the Government's reconstruction and rehabilitation programme in the east.

Unfortunately civilians in a small part of the northern province continue to live in terrible conditions under the clutches of the LTTE, but the Government to its credit has continued fulfilling its obligation to its citizens by providing food, healthcare and education facilities to these people under the control of terrorists and is determined to liberate them and to open up these areas of the country too to democracy and development.

Solution

There are those blind critics of the Government who continue to argue that the Government is pursuing a military solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka. This is far from the truth. As I said at the beginning of this address some in the international community have been gullible to this duplicitous diplomacy of the LTTE and continue to misread the government's intentions in conducting military operations.

They fail to realise that these military operations seek to create the space for political pluralism and democracy to flourish in areas now controlled by a fascist dictatorship. The Government remains firmly committed to a political solution to address the grievances of all communities and the APRC process I have referred to earlier is evidence of this. But this commitment does not imply appeasement of terror.

Those in the international community who are advocating a cessation of hostilities, a ceasefire, have conveniently blinded themselves to our experience with ceasefires and previous rounds of negotiations. Let us be reminded of the reality.

Ceasefire

A ceasefire or a cessation of hostilities is by its very nature fragile if it stands by itself in a vacuum, if it is not linked to a process which enables substantive issues to be addressed.

The Government had several rounds of talks with the LTTE. Then the physical talks between the two sides broke down. But the ceasefire agreement in theory continued.

What is a ceasefire agreement? It is an agreement that the parties will refrain from violence in order to give themselves the opportunity of addressing the substantive issues in an atmosphere that is relatively free. So it is an opportunity to discuss the substantive issues and to come to a reasonable understanding.

But if you have a ceasefire agreement and no prospect of the revival of any dialogue with regard to the substantive issues, then it is inevitable, as the Sri Lankan experience clearly demonstrates, that the ceasefire itself will breakdown sooner rather than later and that is precisely what happened.

So if you are talking about a ceasefire or a cessation of hostilities in any meaningful or substantial sense then it is essential that there should be some agreement with regard to these substantive political issues or at least agreement between the sides with regard to a framework within which the substantive issues can be addressed within a reasonable time.

Otherwise the ceasefire becomes a mirage and a myth that exists simply in a vacuum.

Terrorism and the challenge to diplomacy in Sri Lanka

Devolution

With regard to the political process itself successive governments have proposed several models for the devolution of power as a means of addressing the grievances, in particular of the Tamil and Muslim people in the north and the east. Many parliamentary select committees examined this issue in the past and extensive proposals for the devolution of power, involving the drafting of a new Constitution, were tabled.

At present the All Party Representative Committee set up by the All Party Conference that was established only a month after President Mahinda Rajapaksa was elected to office has reached an advanced stage in its deliberations on constitutional proposals for the devolution of power.

The majority of Tamil and Muslim political parties have favoured the proposals and agreed to discuss them with the Government but the LTTE has continued its campaign of violence and terror. Further, it has annihilated any alternative Tamil leadership which ventured to work with these proposals, the most recent victim being a senior Tamil minister in the Government.

The LTTE itself has never presented any proposals except its demand for a separate state. They have continued to ignore that the demand for a separate state is not viable given the position of a majority of the peoples of Sri Lanka, thereby our government, the stated position of the Indian government as well as that of the international community.

Duplicitous

In spite of the LTTE being banned in the USA, UK, EU, Canada, India and other countries seeking to take the same action, the LTTE's duplicitous diplomacy has been to portray itself as a liberation movement.

Many in the international community have failed to recognise the LTTE as being almost an entirely militant organization with no political wing like the Sinn Fein of the IRA. They also forget that whenever the LTTE did enter into negotiations they did so due to pressure from either the international community or the need to regroup following military reversals.

A careful study of peace negotiations in the past with the LTTE establishes that two issues have dominated the agenda. One, the demand for concessions on the ground such as the withdrawal of armed forces, and access to strategic locations which though disguised as confidence building measures were really aimed at giving them an advantage for more aggressive armed strikes against the security forces.

The other has been their demand for an interim administration to achieve what they have so far failed to achieve militarily namely establishing their absolute hegemony both politically and militarily over the entire north and the east.

Many political analysts have viewed this demand for an interim administration without a peoples mandate as a step towards their goal of achieving a separate state and an option that totally ignores the will of the people. It may also be noted that though the LTTE has participated in negotiations with the government from Thimpu right down to Geneva in October 2006, they have clearly demonstrated a reluctance to engage in a meaningful discussion on core political issues.

This brings me to the point that we have oft repeated to the international community - you can't clap with one hand.

The Government may remain committed to the hilt but if the LTTE does not demonstrate a serious commitment to political dialogue and continues to unleash violence, raise funds overseas for arms procurement, engage in arms smuggling, conscript children and engage in suicide bombing of civilian targets and the Government's political leadership endash we are faced with a situation that requires serious reflection.

The struggle with terrorism is not and can not be limited to one country. It is a challenge to which the entire international community has committed itself through thirteen multilateral conventions, Security Council decisions, General Assembly resolutions and actions of regional bodies.

Terrorism and the challenge to diplomacy in Sri Lanka

If terrorism succeeds in one place, it will lend heart to terrorist groups everywhere. Sri Lanka is faced with a terrorist group which engages in the random slaughter of innocents and is not interested in the subtleties of diplomacy or in compromise solutions to political questions.

As Hannah Arendt argued in her book "terrorist have taken leave of politics". They have embraced what she calls the "instrumentalities of violence rather than the complexities of generating political power, to struggle for doable social and political change". In our contemporary world, diplomacy is not only conducted between states.

At various levels non-state actors including diaspora communities exercise various pressures on governments. Today with well over one and a half million Sri Lankans living abroad, there are attempts by sections of the diaspora to misrepresent the situation in Sri Lanka.

This case is true of other diaspora communities as well and we have to be cognisant of this.

Friendly governments must have no illusions that LTTE front organisations very often portray themselves as representatives of the Tamil community when in fact they are speaking from a very narrow perspective.

The front organisations are well organised and funded and most visible so much so that they are thought to be 'the representatives' when in fact they are not. Following the proscription of the LTTE these front organisations have proliferated and are conducting a form of diplomacy in their own right.

We are reassured however that sections of the international community's perception of the LTTE has changed in spite of the LTTE's duplicitous diplomacy abroad. Ladies and Gentlemen, the challenge for us as a government, for the many Sri Lankan diaspora organisations abroad, is to engage with the international community with patience and to reason with them on the many misconceptions they harbour about Sri Lanka.

Our diaspora communities have an enormously responsible role to play in this regard and they should not leave this task solely to the government.

The many misconceptions cannot be corrected through megaphone diplomacy or outbursts of aggressive venom. After all Sri Lanka is a fully transparent and functioning democracy. Our diplomacy should be based on honesty, moderation and openness while being fully cognisant of national imperatives.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: September 16, 2008

Sri Lankan Navy rescues 71 Tamil civilians: military

Xinhua General News Service

March 26, 2009 Thursday 11:40 AM EST

Copyright 2009 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 308 words

Dateline: COLOMBO March 26

Body

The military in Sri Lanka said on Thursday that the Navy rescued 71 Tamil civilians fleeing Tamil Tiger rebels' territory in separate occasions in the north and east on Wednesday.

Officials from the Defense Ministry said the first group of 26 civilians were found by the Navy at Point Pedro in the northern Jaffna peninsula around 6 a.m. local time (2430 GMT).

The civilians consisting of six males, nine **females** and 11 children had fled the **LTTE** (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) rebels' territory on four small boats, the military said.

The second group of 45 civilians reached Pulmoddai area in the Eastern Province at about 11 a.m. (0530 GMT), the military said, adding that the group was composed of 15 males, 17 **females** and 13 children of 14 families.

The government has charged that the **LTTE** are holding Tamil civilians as human shields in the current fighting.

Although humanitarian agencies estimated some 230,000 civilians were originally trapped in the northern Kilinochchi and Mullaittivu districts, the government said the figure was less than 120,000.

The government says more than 50,000 civilians have escaped to government controlled areas and it maintains a regular supply of essentials to the civilians still trapped in the battle.

The government says the **LTTE** have been limited to a small patch in Mullaittivu after the military recorded unprecedented success in the current military campaign started in 2006.

The **LTTE** began to rebel against the government to set up a separate homeland for the minority Tamils in the north and east in the mid-1980s, based on claims that the Tamils were being discriminated by the majority Sinhalese dominated governments.

More than 70,000 people have died in the conflict since the mid- 1980s in one of the world's longest civil wars.

Load-Date: March 27, 2009

Abide by int'l law:AI

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

July 12, 2008 Saturday 2:39 PM EST

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Length: 284 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 12 -- Amnesty International (AI) yesterday called on the government and the **LTTE** to abide by international law and put human rights at the heart of their policies.

Condemning the latest attack targeting a civilian bus, Amnesty International said the total disregard for the safety of civilians is completely indefensible.

At least two **women** and a 12-year-old child died when unidentified gunmen fired at a bus. Another person also died in the ambush. Around 26 others were injured in the attack, which took place in Buttala.

The defence ministry has said Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) gunmen were responsible. The **LTTE** has not commented on the attack. In January, 26 people died in another bus attack in the same area.

"These indiscriminate attacks are brutal. The victims are overwhelmingly people who are trying to go about their everyday lives, living in fear of attacks at any time, with the added untold suffering this brings to their relatives.

The total disregard for the safety of civilians is completely indefensible," said Amnesty International.

The organisation called upon all parties to the conflict the **LTTE**, the government security forces and other armed groups to abide by international law.

All combatants in Sri Lanka are bound by the provisions of Article 3 Common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which applies to non-international armed conflicts.

"It is time that all parties put human rights at the heart of their policies and end the terrible uncertainty for civilians in conflict-affected areas, and for those who are targeted in reprisal attacks in the south," said Amnesty International.

Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror.

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For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: August 11, 2008

Abide by int'l law: AI

End of Document

Terrorism Guilty Pleas by 2 in Sri Lankan Separatist Group

The New York Times

January 28, 2009 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 22

Length: 458 words

Byline: By WILLIAM K. RASHBAUM

Body

Two men from Sri Lanka who were about to go on trial in federal court in Brooklyn on terrorism charges pleaded guilty on Tuesday to plotting to buy shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles for a separatist group in their country.

The men, Thiruthanikan Thanigasalam and Sahilal Sabaratnam, who prosecutors said were acting at the direction of senior members of the group, the **Tamil Tigers**, in Sri Lanka, also pleaded guilty to attempting and conspiring to provide material support for the group, which the State Department has designated as a terrorist organization.

Mr. Thanigasalam, 40, and Mr. Sabaratnam, 29, entered their pleas before Raymond J. Dearie, the chief judge of United States District Court in Brooklyn, where opening statements were expected to begin on Wednesday.

The guilty pleas stem from a videotaped F.B.I. sting operation in 2006 in which the men sought to buy 10 Russian-made SA-18 heat-seeking surface-to-air missiles and 500 AK-47 assault rifles, prosecutors said. On Monday, two of their co-defendants pleaded guilty to similar charges. Jury selection had been under way in the case.

In recent months in Sri Lanka, fighting has intensified and the government has continued to hem in ethnic Tamil fighters connected with the group.

The **Tamil Tigers**, which have ground troops, a navy and even fighter planes, had ruled a swath of Sri Lanka's northeast, running their own police force, courts and tax-collection system.

The group, which was founded in 1976 and began armed conflict with the Sri Lankan government in 1983, has pursued a guerrilla strategy that has included acts of terrorism, United States officials have said. Indeed, prosecutors said, over the last 17 years, the Tigers -- formally, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam -- have been responsible for some 200 suicide bombings, many by **women**, killing hundreds of people, and numerous political assassinations, including those of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India in 1991, and President Ranasinghe Premadasa of Sri Lanka in 1993.

The United States attorney in Brooklyn, Benton J. Campbell, said in a statement, "With these convictions we have sent a clear message that the L.T.T.E. and its supporters cannot use the United States as a source of supply for deadly weapons and technology, and that all terrorists who attempt to do so will be met with the full resources of law enforcement."

Mr. Thanigasalam and Mr. Sabaratnam could be sentenced to life in prison, said Marshall L. Miller, a prosecutor.

Terrorism Guilty Pleas by 2 in Sri Lankan Separatist Group

Mr. Thanigasalam's lawyer, Lee Ginsberg, said, "It was a disappointing result for a number of reasons, but we're not at liberty to comment on that now." Mr. Sabaratnam's lawyer, Bobbi Sternheim, could not be reached for comment.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: January 28, 2009

End of Document

Men accused of aiding Sri Lankan rebels

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

January 26, 2009 Monday 2:34 PM GMT

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Section: STATE AND REGIONAL

Length: 777 words

Byline: By TOM HAYS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

When customs agents questioned a carload of Sri Lankan immigrants entering the United States at the Canadian border in the summer of 2006, the men claimed they were headed to a bachelor party in Buffalo.

In reality, there was no party or even a groom.

U.S. authorities say the three men instead were on a secret mission to help militants locked in a bloody civil war in their homeland by buying hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of surface-to-air missiles and smuggling them into their homeland. According to court papers, the men also wanted guns but not just any guns.

"We need AK-47s, but only if you have Russian-made or American-made," prosecutors allege one defendant said during a meeting with an undercover agent posing as a crooked arms dealer. "Not the Chinese."

The videotaped sting has become central to an unusual case against four alleged agents of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or "***Tamil Tigers***" a Sri Lankan rebel force the State Department calls a terrorist organization.

Though several of the group's sympathizers have come under investigation in the United States, Canada, Europe and elsewhere, the defendants are believed to be the first to ever go to trial in a U.S. court on charges of supporting terrorists. Jury selection was scheduled for Monday and Tuesday in federal court in Brooklyn, with opening arguments set for Wednesday.

A lawyer for defendant Nadarasa Yograrasa a fourth defendant who was living in Queens at the time of the arrests said he hopes to clear his client.

"We believe that if all of the evidence is placed before the jury, Mr. Yograrasa will be found not guilty," said the attorney, Steve Zissou.

Lawyers for Sathajhan Sarachandran, Sahilal Sabaratnam and Thiruthanikan Thanigasalam, who had been living in Ontario, either declined to discuss the case or did not respond to messages seeking comment. All four were jailed without bail after pleading not guilty.

Press accounts in Canada have described Sarachandran as a well-liked Toronto university student who was part of a delegation that traveled to Sri Lanka to aid victims of the 2004 Asian tsunami. Canadian authorities have provided U.S. prosecutors computer files, DVDs, photos, video and other items seized from his home.

Men accused of aiding Sri Lankan rebels

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting for an independent homeland since 1983. The three million mainly Hindu Tamils have long claimed persecution by the predominantly Buddhist Sinhalese majority in the nation of 19 million people.

The conflict has killed tens of thousands on the island, which lies off India's southern tip. A 2002 truce has collapsed because of renewed fighting that's left thousands dead.

Rebels, while waging conventional military operations against government troops, have also attacked civilian targets in government-held areas and carried out scores of suicide bombings, sometimes by **women**.

The Brooklyn arms case is part of a broader campaign by U.S. authorities to cut off support for the **Tamil Tigers**. Prosecutors have also brought charges against several men they allege tried to bribe U.S. officials to remove the group from the terrorism list.

Raids on offices and homes of organizers of phony Tamil charities unearthed evidence that the defendants raised millions of dollars for the rebels, authorities said.

The evidence includes photos of supporters meeting with the Tamil Tiger's notorious leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, in Sri Lanka. Defense attorneys have said the aide was strictly humanitarian.

The FBI began investigating the arms plot in 2006 after the defendants contacted a government informant, believing the man had contacts in the arms black market, court papers said. They told the informant they specifically needed Russian-made missiles that could bring down Kfirs the type of fighter jet used by the Sri Lankan military and set up a meeting in New York on Aug. 19, 2006.

After the men crossed the border, undercover agents posing arms dealers lured them to a warehouse on Long Island that was wired. During the meeting, the men said that on orders from Tamil Tiger leadership in Sri Lanka, they were seeking a "large quantity" of guns along with other weapons that could destroy planes, tanks and boats.

They agreed on an initial shipment of 10 surface-to-air missiles and 500 AK-47s. Training also would be thrown in, all for about \$900,000.

"The money's not a problem," one defendant said, according to prosecutors.

At one point, a large wooden crate was brought out. Inside were an SA-18 missile, the missile's firing tube and trigger mechanism, and two AK-47 assault weapons.

Shortly after the men examined the weapons, they were arrested. They each face up to 30 years in prison if convicted.

Load-Date: January 27, 2009

Parties unhappy over EU comments

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

July 27, 2008 Sunday 3:41 PM EST

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Length: 742 words

Byline: Report from the Sri Lanka Sunday Observer brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 27 -- Several political parties are dissatisfied with the adhoc comments made by the visiting delegation of the European Parliament without going to the Eastern province, where a significant transformation is now taking place.

The planned visit by the EU Parliamentary delegation to Trincomalee was cancelled at the last minute and they turned back from the Ratmalana Airport while the government had made all arrangements for them to meet the newly formed Provincial Administration.

The Leader of the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) Ven. Ellawala Medhanada thera said that the irresponsible manner of the EU delegation showed their vested interests and the government should not dance according to the tune of these Western delegations. He claimed that though Sri Lanka had international friends no country could interfere with the internal issues of Sri Lanka.

"We should resolve our own problems ", he said adding that the so-called international agencies should first warn the LTTE and its friendly political parties to respect human rights rather than pin pointing the government.

"These delegations without seeing the reality try to create a negative image internationally by putting forward the human rights issues.

But they should first highlight the human rights violations by the LTTE. Isn't killing innocent civilians including babies, women and schoolchildren not human rights violations?" he asked.

Ven. Ellawela Thera said that these LTTE friendly agencies were trying to put the blame on the government which had the responsibility of acting against terrorism. "Why can't they warn Prabhakaran", he queried.

The Leader of the JHU said that the claim by the EU that the APRC document was incomplete as the Tamil National Alliance was not included was baseless as the TNA was not the voices of the Tamils but the voice of the LTTE.

He said that TNA is the Parliamentary group of the LTTE and there was no need to include the TNA which voices for a separate State.

However, he urged the government to restrict certain areas of the country for these foreign delegates who had vested interests. Ven. Ellawela Thera said that these delegations were not allowed to visit some areas in countries such as USA and Japan.

Parties unhappy over EU comments

The Leader of the PLOTE Dharmalingam Sitharthan who expressed similar views said that the irresponsible manner of the EU Parliamentary delegation reflected as they were issuing comments without seeing the changes in the Eastern region with their own eyes.

He said that Sri Lanka needed international support to develop the country as no country could stand up in isolation but there was no need for international intervention to solve the national problem.

"I personally visited the East and a great deal of development is taking place. The Council is just one month old and they need time do more", he said.

Sitharthan said that it was unfair for these international agencies to come here on fact-finding missions and issue such negative statements after having brief meetings without seeing the reality. "They should come here with open minds leaving all pre-conceptions.

They should not issue such misleading statements while in Colombo. I think that the people who directly suffer due to terrorism were not included in their statements", he said regretting for refusing the opportunity given by the government to get a clear picture of the East.

Leader of the newly formed National Freedom Front Wimal Weerawansa said the EU delegation had arrived the country to pursue a hidden purpose and now they had misled the world by issuing their own observations while in Colombo.

He said the ulterior motive behind the visit of the EU delegation was clear by their baseless comments and their sudden decision to refuse to visit Trincomalee while everything was arranged to take them there.

"The EU or any other country cannot interfere with the internal problems of Sri Lanka. They try to bring up the human rights issues to achieve their motives", he said.

Weerawansa said that the comments of the EU were part of an international conspiracy by the pro- LTTEers to weaken the military moving ahead Kilinochchi, the last stronghold of the LTTE.

He said that everyone knows that the TNA was the LTTE's Parliamentary group and there was no need to include the TNA in the APRC as they solely voice only for the terrorists and not for the rights of the Tamils.

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Load-Date: October 1, 2008

11 dead, over 90 injured in suicide attack in Sri Lanka capital

Japan Economic Newswire

February 3, 2008 Sunday 1:01 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 292 words

Dateline: COLOMBO Feb. 3

Body

At least 11 people were killed and more than 90 others injured Sunday in a suicide bomb attack at a main railway station in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo, police and hospital officials said.

The explosion occurred at around 2:10 p.m. on platform No. 3 of the Colombo Fort railway station, one of the two busiest in the city, which was relatively empty Sunday afternoon.

Police said a **female** suicide bomber, believed to have been deployed by the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, blew herself up in the attack which is a trademark of the **LTTE**.

More than 90 people are receiving treatment at the Colombo National Hospital, said hospital spokeswoman Pushpa Soysa.

"There was panic and mayhem as ambulances took the injured to hospital," an eyewitness said.

The explosion occurred as troops have been deployed in the capital ahead of an Independence Day parade on Monday.

In the morning, there was an explosion at the National Zoological Gardens in a southern suburb of Colombo. A bomb hidden in a flower bed went off near the aviary, injuring seven people.

A government spokesman said the **LTTE** was determined to sabotage the 60th Independence anniversary celebrations but that the authorities will not be deterred.

The **LTTE** said over its TamilNet website that the explosion "comes a day before (as) Colombo was preparing to celebrate Sri Lanka's 60th Independence Day amid speculation of embarking on a full-fledged war on the (rebel-held) Vanni (districts), stepping up aerial bombardment and artillery barrage."

The TamilNet report also noted that the Fort railway station was within a kilometer of Colombo's seafront Galle Face green where the Independence parade will be held.

Last month, the government withdrew from a six-year-old cease-fire with the **LTTE**.

Load-Date: February 4, 2008

11 dead, over 90 injured in suicide attack in Sri Lanka capital

End of Document

Female bomber kills 28 in Lanka

Hindustan Times

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 203 words

Dateline: New Delhi

Body

New Delhi, Feb. 10 -- At least 28 people including 20 army personnel were killed and more than 64 injured when a suspected **LTTE** suicide cadre blew herself up outside a military check-point in the north-eastern district of Mullaitivu on Monday.

Among the dead were eight displaced Tamil civilians who were apparently attempting to crossover to government-controlled area from rebel-held territory. Initial reports said that an officer and two civilians were among the dead. Many **women** and children were among the injured, the defence ministry claimed. Sources told HT that suicide bomber specifically targeted military personnel manning the check-point set up recently to facilitate displaced civilians to cross over to areas under government control. "The check-point was set up to act as an access point for displaced civilians to move out of **LTTE** area," sources said. The displaced would then be taken to a refugee camp for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the neighbouring area of Dharamapuram. The check-point is manned by the personnel from the 58 Division, which took part in wresting **LTTE**'s political capital, Kilinochchi in early January. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Hindustan Times.

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Sri Lanka arrests suspect on bus explosion

Xinhua General News Service

February 8, 2008 Friday 1:15 AM EST

Copyright 2008 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 224 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

The Sri Lankan police said Friday a woman has been arrested for her involvement in the bus bomb blast in the central town of Dambulla on last Saturday.

According to Kingsley Ekanayake, the Deputy Inspector General of Police in the Central Province, the woman was arrested while receiving treatment for blast injuries in the Dambulla hospital.

The blast ripped apart a passenger bus traveling from the central town of Kandy to the north central town of Anuradhapura, killing 20 civilians and injuring over 50.

The police said the woman, a Sinhalese, had lived in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) held Kilinochchi district for a long period of time and was married to a Tamil living there.

Her mother was also traveling with her in the ill-fated bus and they are suspected of having placed the bomb in the front part of the bus, intending to explode it when the bus reached Anuradhapura.

However, the bomb prematurely exploded at Dambulla, about 150 km northeast of Colombo.

The mother of the suspect who is warded at the hospital at Kurunegala will also be arrested, Ekanayake said.

LTTE rebels have been accused of carrying out another bomb the following day in the busy Fort railway station in Colombo.

Fourteen civilians along with the **LTTE**'s **female** suicide bomber were killed in the bombing.

Load-Date: February 10, 2008

Tens of Thousands at Risk in Sri Lanka as Fighting Escalates

Targeted News Service

August 19, 2008 Tuesday 7:29 AM EST

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Length: 655 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

Amnesty International issued the following news release:

The Sri Lankan military and the opposing Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) are putting tens of thousands of displaced civilians at risk as fighting continues in the Wanni area of northern Sri Lanka.

A major concern, as the situation worsens, is that there is little reliable information available from the ground, as journalists are restricted from reporting in the area. Both sides consistently contradict each other. This is why international independent monitors are urgently needed on the ground to assess the situation.

There is no safe haven for the thousands of families trying to escape the aerial bombardment and shelling of Sri Lankan forces as they push towards the town of Kilinochchi. Since May, government aerial bombardment and artillery shelling has forced more than 70,000 people to flee their homes, primarily in the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts.

In the **LTTE**-controlled areas of the Wanni, the Tigers have hindered thousands of families from moving to safer places by imposing a strict pass system. Some individuals have been forced to stay behind as guarantors, to ensure the return of other family members.

"These people are running out of places to go and basic necessities," said Yolanda Foster, Amnesty International's Sri Lanka researcher. "The Tigers are keeping them in harm's way and the government is not doing enough to ensure they receive essential assistance."

Amnesty International has received reports that the government is keeping those who have been able to leave **LTTE**-controlled areas in temporary shelters that often operate as de facto detention centres.

Witnesses from Kalimodдай camp in Mannar district told the organization that more than 200 families who are held there cannot exit the camp for any reason (except to go to school) without obtaining a pass from the government's security forces.

Despite calls for the displaced to be allowed to move via humanitarian corridors to safer areas where they can receive essential aid and assistance, they are in fact being used as a buffer between the two opposing forces.

Sri Lankan media reported Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka, Commander of the Army, ordering his troops in the Wanni area to seal any routes out of the area in order to stop **LTTE** infiltration. Sealing the border will also prevent civilians from fleeing the conflict zones.

Tens of Thousands at Risk in Sri Lanka as Fighting Escalates

"Both sides to this long conflict have again shown that they will jeopardize the lives of thousands of ordinary people in the pursuit of military objectives," said Yolanda Foster, Amnesty's Sri Lanka researcher. "In the absence of independent international monitors, Sri Lankan civilians lack protection and remain at the mercy of two forces with long records of abuse."

The government has given reassurances at the weekend that they will open three safe corridors and that, for the moment, the government is facilitating humanitarian assistance through Olanthai checkpoint -- the crossing point between government-controlled territory and the area held by the LTTE. This aid is desperately needed but humanitarian agencies operating in the area have voiced serious concerns that if the conflict continues displaced civilians will face greater hardship.

Amnesty International has established that around a third of the displaced families were forced to live in the open air with no shelter. Many could not receive food, tarpaulin for temporary shelters and fuel because of a lack of access to LTTE-controlled areas and restrictions on goods going through Olanthai. The lack of adequate privacy for women and girls has led to an increase in reports of sexual and gender-based violence.

The displacement of civilians increased dramatically in July, with 14,000 new families made homeless. As of 7 August, government figures indicate that the overall number of displaced people is between 150,000 and 160,000.

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Load-Date: August 20, 2008

End of Document

Tigers accused of rights abuses

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

February 18, 2009 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 11

Length: 315 words

Byline: MATT WADE, SOUTH ASIA CORRESPONDENT

Body

THE United Nations has accused Tamil rebels of using force to prevent thousands of civilians leaving Sri Lanka's northern war zone.

Some of those trying to flee have been shot dead and children are being made to fight for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, according to the UN.

"It's a sign of their desperation," UN spokesman Gordon Weiss told The Age.

Tiger guerillas have waged a 25-year war for a Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka but have recently been pushed back to a small strip of land in the north-east of the country known as the Vanni Pocket.

About 35,000 civilians have fled the area since the beginning of January, but an estimated 200,000 remain in the war zone. They are experiencing serious shortages of food, medicine and clean water.

The UN said: "The LTTE continues to actively prevent people leaving, and reports indicate that a growing number of people trying to leave have been shot and sometimes killed.

"There are indications that children as young as 14 are being recruited into the ranks of the LTTE."

The UN said one of its staff members had been forcibly recruited into the LTTE.

"The UN calls on the LTTE to immediately release him, to desist from further recruitment of civilians, and to permit passage for people who wish to leave, especially the women and children."

The Tigers have denied charges that they are attacking civilians and say Tamils are staying in the area of their own accord. The president of the Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation, Velupillai Sivanadiyar, accused the UN of attempting to hide its own failures.

Meanwhile, expatriate Tamils have circulated reports that young men in the refugee columns leaving the war zone are being separated and taken away by the Sri Lankan army.

Mr Weiss said the Government had a legitimate security purpose in screening refugees but that process needed to be balanced with the need to "treat civilians as civilians".

Tigers accused of rights abuses

Load-Date: February 17, 2009

End of Document

Sri Lankan celebrates 60th anniversary, as bus attack blamed on rebels kills 12 civilians

Associated Press International

February 4, 2008 Monday 4:39 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 861 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka celebrated its 60th independence anniversary Monday with a display of military might but suspected rebels marred the holiday with their own show of power, killing 13 passengers in a bus bombing.

Tanks, jets, attack boats and thousands of troops paraded through the capital, Colombo, to mark the holiday as the quarter-century-old civil war raged on in this Indian Ocean island nation.

In a defiant speech, President Mahinda Rajapaksa railed against the Tamil Tiger separatist rebels and reiterated his vow to force them out of their northern stronghold and destroy it.

"Our defense forces have achieved victories that were never before seen. Terrorism is facing a defeat that it has never before faced," he said. Senior government officials have said they hoped to rout the rebels and end the war this year.

With fighting between government forces and the guerrillas exploding across the northern jungles in recent months, suspected rebels launched a wave of attacks against civilian and military targets deep inside government-controlled territory.

In an attempt to prevent such violence from blemishing the nationally televised independence day celebrations in Colombo, troops sealed off roads across the capital and a major cell phone operator shut off its text messaging service for six hours.

The festivities along Colombo's coastal road began with a 21-gun salute and a parade by hundreds of army, navy, air force and police officials, along with tanks, artillery guns and multi-barrel rocket launchers. Twelve naval gunships and fast-attack craft sailed off the coast, while 26 fighter jets and attack helicopters flew overhead.

Hours after the parade, a roadside bomb tore through a bus in the Welioya region, about 240 kilometers (150 miles) northeast of Colombo, said military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara. The attack killed 13 people and injured 16 others, he said, blaming the **Tamil Tigers**.

Rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan did not answer calls seeking comment. The **Tamil Tigers**, listed as a terror group by the United States and European Union, routinely deny responsibility for such attacks.

Sri Lankan celebrates 60th anniversary, as bus attack blamed on rebels kills 12 civilians

Another roadside bombing in the southeastern town of Buttala killed one soldier and injured two others, the military said.

Fighting along the front lines in the north killed 36 rebels and one soldier Sunday, the military said. The rebels were not available for comment, but the two sides routinely give widely differing death tolls.

The bus attack came after a weekend of violence. A **female** suicide bomber killed 11 people at Colombo's main railway station, and a bus bombing killed 18 people, mostly Buddhist pilgrims, in the central town of Dambulla.

EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner condemned the attacks, called for an immediate end to the fighting and the quick resumption of peace talks.

"The common objective should be to devise a lasting political solution that responds to the aspirations of Sri Lanka's communities and can relieve the Sri Lankan people from the ordeal of decades of persistent conflict," she said.

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting since 1983 for an independent homeland for ethnic minority Tamils after decades of being marginalized by Sinhalese-dominated governments. More than 70,000 people have died in the fighting.

A 2002 cease-fire fostered hopes for a lasting peace, but the truce broke down as new fighting over the past two years killed 5,000 people. The government officially pulled out of the agreement last month.

Many had high hopes for the nation, formerly known as Ceylon, when it achieved independence from Britain in 1948, months after South Asian neighbors India and Pakistan became independent.

But the civil war undermined the country's potential to become a regional economic power, said Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, executive director of the Center for Policy Alternatives, a Colombo-based think tank.

"The development potential was huge, and it has been totally stymied by this war," he said.

Post-independence governments lacked the foresight to create a national identity that would include all ethnic groups, Saravanamuttu said.

Tensions between the mainly Buddhist Sinhalese majority, who comprise about 74 percent of the nation's 20 million people, and the mainly Hindu Tamil community, who make up about 18 percent, quickly surfaced after independence.

Sinhalese-dominated governments, fearing local Tamils would work with Tamils in neighboring India to take over the nation, tried to marginalize the Tamil language and culture. At least two efforts to broker a compromise were retracted by the government amid protests by Sinhalese nationalists.

The tensions eventually erupted into violence, with Sinhalese mobs targeting Tamils, and Tamil guerrilla groups launching attacks on government targets.

Suresh Premachandran, a Tamil parliamentarian, said that given the nation's history, the independence celebrations meant little to the country's Tamils.

"We never felt we were Sri Lankans, because that's how every Sri Lankan government behaved. They never treat the Tamils as part of this country," he said.

Associated Press writer Bharatha Mallawarachi contributed to this report.

Load-Date: February 5, 2008

SRI LANKA: WOMEN PRAY FOR SONS, HUSBANDS CAUGHT IN CIVIL WAR

IPS - Inter Press Service

December 19, 2008 Friday

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Length: 950 words

Byline: Feizal Samath

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Dec 19 2008

Body

As the Sri Lankan army pushes deeper into Tamil rebel-held territory, hundreds of women can only pray their sons and husbands, believed held captive by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, are spared.

"We cannot tell the army to stop the march forward. They have to do their duty. But we suffer much mental agony," said a young woman whose soldier-husband went missing 10 years ago. She thinks he is still being held in captivity by the rebels.

About 4,000 soldiers and police officers have been reported missing in fighting with the rebels since the mid-1980s.

Visaka Dharmadasa, president of the Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action -- set up in late 1998 to represent women relatives of those missing -- said the biggest fear now is that the detainees could get caught in the crossfire or die inside rebel jails during air raids.

Dharmadasa, whose second son, an army lieutenant, went missing in September 1988 during a gun battle, said that as the army closes in on the rebel base in northern Kilinochchi district there is apprehension that the detainees could get trapped in the intense shelling and bombing.

"We are appealing to the government to make sure that they are not harmed and to the LTTE to release them now or whenever civilians are allowed to leave the region," she said.

"We are praying and hoping that since the LTTE has kept them locked for so long, in the name of humanity, they won't be harmed and allowed to leave," Dharmadasa added.

According to Dharmadasa the figure of 4,000 missing dates back to 2002 when a ceasefire and peace process was in force in Sri Lanka, and fighting had stopped between the government and the rebels. Many more have been added to that list since then, but there are no reliable statistics.

"There has been very little engagement [on missing persons] between the government and the militants after the ceasefire ended and fighting resumed," she said.

The rebels have denied charges that they were holding a large number of prisoners and have, in the past, said all prisoners have been released. But Dharmadasa and other women, who have been waiting patiently for years for their sons and husbands to return, do not believe them.

SRI LANKA : WOMEN PRAY FOR SONS, HUSBANDS CAUGHT IN CIVIL WAR

"In fact, some young LTTE cadres [while visiting the rebel-controlled town of Kilinochchi during the ceasefire] told us there were many soldiers detained, although the LTTE leaders denied the existence of any prisoners," said Dharmadasa, who has been knocking on the doors of government and rebel leaders for years to discover missing persons.

The strong-willed human rights activist, who spends most of her time at her association, said she is aware there are two large bunkers in rebel territory where she thinks the prisoners are being kept.

"These are two concealed bunkers built on either side of the road at Paranthan in Kilinochchi district. I have seen these bunkers during a peacetime visit with 200 other women to the region," she said.

Thousands of government troops have poured into the Kilinochchi district and are on the edge of the town for what is expected to be a decisive battle. Though bogged down by rain and heavily mined areas, troops are advancing in a pincer-like movement on Kilinochchi town, where most of the hardcore rebels are holed up.

President Mahinda Rajapakse's nationalist government has pledged to capture Kilinochchi by the end of this year, crush the LTTE and end the 25-year-old civil war. Hundreds of combatants on either side have been killed in the intensified warfare over the past two years.

Many thousands have died since 1983, when the rebels began a violent campaign for an independent homeland or autonomous powers in the north and east for the minority Tamil community that complains of discrimination at the hands of the majority Sinhalese.

In July 2007, the Sri Lankan army succeeded in wresting the eastern province from the LTTE and have since been concentrating on the north with almost daily aerial bombing raids.

The defense ministry claims to have pinpoint accuracy in taking on rebel targets, but that information cannot be independently verified as communication links to the LTTE have been cut. The government controls all information from the battlefield and restricts journalists to handouts.

Women like Indrani Aladeniya say they pray at small shrines maintained in their homes every morning seeking the safety of their husbands and sons.

Aladeniya's son is a 27- year-old army captain who went missing in 1990 during heavy fighting in the north. "I expect that he will walk in through the door any time," she said.

Victims from both sides of the war have been having regular meetings together, she said. "We have met the mothers and wives of LTTE cadres who had also disappeared. It was the same kind of sorrow."

The PSMA has organized three large gatherings of between 600 to 1,000 women from the Sinhala dominated south and from the north and the east --where rebel recruits come from and where young people are routinely detained by the army on suspicion of having links with the rebels -- so they can console each other.

At a protest gathering in Colombo some years ago, women from both sides of the ethnic divide joined together to demand from the government and the LTTE the right to life of their lost men and boys.

"We want women from both sides to meet and comfort each other. The bottom line is that the women understand the issues better than the politicians," Dharmadasa said. "While the politicians and the elite want war they never send their own children to the battlefield."

The majority of Sri Lanka's armed forces is made up of young men recruited from poor villages across the island with most joining the army and other security services for economic reasons.

SRI LANKA : WOMEN PRAY FOR SONS, HUSBANDS CAUGHT IN CIVIL WAR

End of Document

Bomb blasts: Six suspects arrested

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 16, 2008 Monday 4:04 PM EST

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Length: 304 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 16 -- Six **LTTE** suspects, allegedly responsible for the recent bomb blasts in Colombo and suburbs were taken into custody, by a special police team at Wattala on Saturday along with 2.7 kgs of C 4 explosives, police said.

Police investigations revealed these suspects, five males and one **female** from Welikanda and Vavuniya had been living in Wattala in a rented house for a long period.

It was also revealed this group had planned to explode a bomb in Colombo on Saturday, but the police investigators were able to arrest the suspect before the attack, a senior police official said.

Accordingly, these suspects had been given directions to carry out attacks from Malaysia over the phone. "They were awaiting orders from Malaysia to carry out the attack on Saturday," the official claimed.

He also said on information given by civilians the following suspicious activities of these suspects, the police made the arrest. "They were handed over to the Terrorists Investigation Department for further inquiries," he said.

He also revealed one of the arrested suspects had been working in an office belonging to a Tamil politician in Colombo.

Police said with the latest arrest, they would be able to track down one of the major networks of the **LTTE** in the Colombo city.

Meanwhile, a top **LTTE** operative, who masterminded the international **LTTE** credit card scam was arrested on the same day by the Police in Wellawatte.

At the time of arrest the suspect had in his possession a large number of Personal Identification Numbers (PIN) and bank receipts issued by both local and Malaysian banks, amounting to hundreds of million rupees.

He had manufactured credit cards in Sri Lanka.

It is learnt that several top Police officers are also among his monthly pay list.

Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror.

Bomb blasts: Six suspects arrested

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: August 11, 2008

End of Document

Wanni patients transferred to Trinco hospital

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 12, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 375 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 12 -- Some 369 patients transported from Puthukkudiyiruppu were admitted to the Trincomalee general hospital yesterday while two of them succumbed to their injuries on admission.

The hospital had also been readied to admit more than 350 patients expected by last evening. After an observation visit to the hospital, Eastern Provincial Council Health Minister M.L.A.M. Hizbullah said that there were more than 100 critically injured persons who needed emergency treatment. He said that the Provincial Health Ministry, with the help of the Line Ministry, took measures to bring surgeons and special doctors from Colombo and Batticaloa to attend on them.

The Health Ministry had also delivered a truck load of essential medical supplies to the hospital, and another one was to be sent yesterday, he said. "Among the injured are children, women and old men. The LTTE has issued passes releasing them to the cleared areas for treatment only. I spoke to some women who cried asking for help to get their young sons and daughters released from LTTE clutches. Only those with injuries have been allowed to leave the areas," he said. Mr. Hizbullah quoted some patients as having told him that the mothers with injured babies were also allowed into the Government-held areas. "There are around 15-20 injured children who have come with their mothers," he said. Asked whether there are any Tiger casualties among the patients, he said that several young boys and girls could be seen, but it could not be ascertained whether they were LTTE fighters or not. The hospital authorities have discharged normal patients and reserved four wards for those patients from the LTTE-held areas. Besides, St. Methodist College, Trincomalee has also been converted to a makeshift hospital to house patients with minor injuries. The Government Agent has arranged facilities for the provision of breakfast to these patients yesterday, and the Provincial Health Ministry was to provide lunch and dinner to these patients on a continuing basis. Meanwhile, President Mahinda Rajapaksa has also contacted Mr. Hizbullah yesterday morning and instructed him to look into the needs of these patients. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Headlines in major Indian newspapers

IRNA

January 29, 2008 Tuesday 3:26 AM EST

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ARABIA 2000

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Length: 248 words

Body

New Delhi, Jan 29, IRNA

India-Press-Headlines

The following headlines appeared in major Indian newspapers on Tuesday:

***THE ASIAN AGE

- BJP attacks centre, says define term 'minorities'
- Ahmadinejad to pay historic visit to Iraq
- Shock after 12 Indians massacred in Guyana
- \$2.3 billion oil bonds for PSUs on the anvil
- Lanka bombs LTTE base, 40 die in clashes

***THE HINDU

- BJP to give 33 per cent quota for women in party posts
- Stump mike evidence to figure in Harbhajan case re-hearing - Hostage crisis ends at school in Pakistan village
- India and US allies in East Asia
- Prudent to complete nuclear deal during Bush's tenure, says Mulford

***THE TIMES OF INDIA

- Chilled? It's going to get even colder - Prediction of 0 degree celsius on Friday

Headlines in major Indian newspapers

- After Hercules, India eyes \$2 billion Boeing deal
- In 2006-2007, India invested \$2.2 billion in US
- Govt seeks sops for coal India mines
- China plans rail link to Central Asia for oil

***THE INDIAN EXPRESS

- 3 Mumbai schoolkids die as van's LPG ablaze, vehicle had no permit - US ready to help fight Bengal bird flu, state says tell us your plan
- Eurocopter off radar, India to float \$ 1-billion global tender - NREGS: President asks project directors to redress grievances - Cong raises alarm over 'pro-LTTE' wave in Tamil Nadu

***THE STATESMAN

- Serious consequences if UN adopts sanctions: Iran
- 63 killed in clashes, LTTE shells air base
- Avian Flu is under control, says Bengal
- Centre working on relief package for poultry industry

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Load-Date: January 30, 2008

Response to Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

October 1, 2008 Wednesday 1:24 PM EST

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Length: 1390 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 1 -- Julian Wilson remains silent no doubt because he knows that he has let his emotions get the better of his judgment, so we have first the American Ambassador seeking to defend his friend and now we have the Commissioner of External Relations attempting to whitewash the Rep of the EU.

In the first instance I must state that I am indeed pleased to note that the Commissioner and her staff are sensitive to public opinion for I am a private citizen as perhaps is another citizen, Mr. Lankatilleke.

The Commissioner's response, it appears to me been more directed at the government, I must inform her that I am NOT a spokesman of the government, the views expressed by me are entirely mine and from the responses I have received from a large number of distinguished citizens of this country I am pleased to inform you that they entirely agree with me. Please take note of this.

Benita Waldner has been misdirected by some persons in her establishment. She states that "The EU has been accused of having an anti-Sri Lanka agenda", sorry Madam I referred to the activities of your representative here - do you wish to take responsibility for ALL his actions?

With my knowledge of the institutions of the EU I would draw a distinction between the Institution and a few misguided individuals who get carried away by emotion. I do not visit their sins on the institution they work for.

You have not addressed the issues I have raised, what were they? First, how Wilson prevented the so-called representatives of the EU's high level 'Troika' who had insisted on visiting the Vanni, (being put-up to making the request up by Wilson no doubt) from visiting the Eastern Province claiming that they did not approve of Chief Minister Pillayan's group being armed, but were wanting to meet the LTTE which was also similarly carrying arms in violation of the law of this country.

The delegation had also dropped hints about the GSP plus concession.

Second, how he successfully prevented the EU Parliamentary delegation from also visiting the east. This effort of his was absolutely transparent.

When the government offered air transport this was refused on ground of wishing to show "impartiality".

You have used the word "nonsense" in your opening paragraph it is more appropriate in this context. 'Impartial', between whom I ask? The LTTE and the government? Was it that he did not wish to displease the LTTE? No wonder Wilson was seen as a lackey of the LTTE. Wilson not wishing to use the offer of the legitimate government

Response to Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner

of this country to which the man forgot he is accredited, has had his office make a provisional booking on Deccan Air and changed that to some other unheard of carrier which had sent an aircraft all the way from South Africa to fly the delegation to the eastern province -- the flight time to the EP would have been about one hour!

The plane itself had no clearance from the Sri Lankan authorities and the crew were 'clueless' about the route! - The EU should surcharge Wilson or should I write to the Court of Auditors of the EU about it?

Whom was Wilson seeking to fool? Please ask the members of the South Asia Delegation who have issued statements of their views on this matter.

The third issue you raise in your letter, namely the matter of reaching a peaceful settlement of our dispute; this has been on our agenda long before it became a part of your agenda.

Let me inform you madam that I visited the EU twice to explore the possibility of having the EU join the peace support group or the 'safety net' or the Co-chairs as they subsequently came to be known, which was set up by the Ranil Wickremesinghe government as a part of the peace process which he initiated.

There was absolute reluctance of the part of the EU at the time, I was asked "what is in it for the EU," only when they were reminded of the EU's record of inaction during the Bosnian conflict (when they allowed Muslims to be slaughtered by the Serbians; we should not forget Srebrenica and how the EU's peace keepers looked aside when hundreds of men women and children to be slaughtered by Milosovich's goons, the butchers Mladich and Karadich.

The officials whom I met were told that unlike their experience in the Balkans this was an opportunity to "ride a winning horse".

It took a visit by Minister Moragoda to Brussels where he met with the then Commissioner External Relations Chris Patten, to convince the reluctant EU into supporting the peace process, and after they came in, to our horror, they sought to equate the LTTE with the government of Sri Lanka at the behest no doubt of Norway.

So please don't preach to me about your agenda and the EUs "wishes" for Sri Lanka.

You claim that "the EU has urged "all parties to put an end to violence and return to the negotiating table". Do you realize the meaning or implications of what you are stating?

Here is an illegal group which has taken up arms against the legitimate government of the country seeking to dismember the country, which is their stated goal, and you are not asking them to stop their war against the state but asking the state to stop its legitimate duty to put down the insurgency, what gibberish.

When you ask us to get back to the negotiating table do you not know the number of times we have negotiated with the LTTE and of how they deceived us.

We negotiated with them through the Indians till 1987. The Indian involvement ended after the LTTE killed 1272 of their troops and maimed over 2000; after that effort failed, President Premadasa sent away the IPKF and indulged in direct negotiations (also reunited Prabhakaran with his wife and children whom he had flown down from Norway); Prabhakaran showed his gratitude by having President Premadasa assassinated and they also killed 640 policemen who had surrendered to them on the orders of Premadasa.

The next to fall a victim to their deception was President Kumaratunga and finally we had them taking Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe for a ride.

They used the Ceasefire Agreement to obtain sophisticated weapon systems, communication equipment and also to travel extensively to mobilize their Diaspora and pulled out of Talks on the 23rd of April 2003 when they were ready to recommence their journey to achieve Eelam.

So, tell us what is there to talk about? Do you at least now understand that it is a futile exercise to engage them any more in talks unless the LTTE is prepared to call off their struggle for the establishment of a separate state.

Response to Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner

Instead of mouthing nay parroting an inane, trite mantra "stop the war, engage in talks" tell the LTTE to stop their war against the legally constituted state, which, like your countries remains a democracy even if there are shortcomings; give the LTTE a guarantee that you would ensure justice and fairplay for the minorities in this country and ask them to end the violence against the state.

You have in your letter sought to take credit for the EU having proscribed the LTTE but I am reliably informed by friends in the Commission that you yourself was opposed to the listing of the LTTE till quite recently, can you deny this?

The Government of Sri Lanka should perhaps not be dealing with you but with Javier Solana the High Rep for the Common Foreign and Security Policy who works with the all important European Council.

You have drawn our attention to clause one of the Cooperation Agreement between the EU and SL, no it was not signed in 1995 it was signed in 1994 when I was Ambassador, at a time when Vietnam and certain other countries were refusing to sign the 'Third generation Agreement' as it was referred to at the time, because of the first article, the Human Rights clause.

Please check your files and also ask M/s Fossati, Erich Muller and Albert Te Pas how Sri Lanka fully supported the inclusion of the clause, for we as a people and a country are totally committed to safeguarding Human rights which is more a part of our culture and history.

We are most unfortunately trapped in a situation not entirely of our creation, believe me this conflict and the price being paid in human life has indeed traumatized us.

The Tamil people are also our people so we do not need you, Julian Wilson or anyone else to preach to us on values or on the importance of a sustainable peaceful solution.

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Load-Date: October 1, 2008

No let up in air strikes: Defence Spokesman

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

November 14, 2008 Friday 2:39 PM EST

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Length: 356 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Nov. 14 -- The Government yesterday vehemently denied allegations made by certain parties that the Air Force had restricted air attacks in the North and the Wanni fearing civilian casualties, Government Defence Affairs Spokesman Minister Keheliya Rambukwella said.

"Civilians are our prime concern in the ground battles and the ongoing humanitarian operation in the North and the Wanni," the minister said.

Addressing at the MCNS yesterday, Minister Rambukwella said there were allegations against the Air Force that the air raids were curtailed due to the civilian casualties during air sorties in the North and the Wanni.

"It is baseless, when we are taking a target in an aerial attack the welfare of civilians are always taken into consideration. There are instances that even when the target was confirmed the Air Force refrains from the air attacks due to the civilian presence in the vicinity", he added.

Minister Rambukwella noted that safeguarding civilians and providing the needs of the war affected people are always considered by the Government and the Security Forces.

"The A-32 route extending 80km from Mannar to Pooneryn will be opened within a couple of days as the Security Forces are control 77km of the A-32 route. This will open a passage for the movement of civilians and help the Security Forces operation to reach the North", Minister Rambukwella said.

Meanwhile, Minister Rambukwella called the **LTTE** as a ruthless terrorist out-fit for recruiting school teachers who were paid by the Government as their cadres.

"It was interesting to observe the reactions of the local and International community on the **LTTE** atrocities regarding the three **LTTE female** cadres including a school teacher who surrendered to the Forces and disclosed their horrifying stories in the uncleared areas", he added.

Minister Rambukwella pointed out that the **LTTE** are using school teachers and clerks attached to several Government departments and institutions as well as NGO's and INGO aid workers living in the uncleared areas to fight against the Security Forces.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

No let up in air strikes: Defence Spokesman

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: November 14, 2008

End of Document

Hundreds women can only pray in Sri Lanka; SRI LANKA: Women Pray for Sons, Husbands Caught in Civil War

IPS (Latin America)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 937 words

Byline: Feizal Samath

Body

"We cannot tell the army to stop the march forward. They have to do their duty. But we suffer much mental agony," said a young woman whose soldier-husband went missing 10 years ago. She believes that he is still being held in captivity by the rebels.

Some 4,000 soldiers and policemen have been reported missing in fighting with the rebels since the mid-1980s.

Visaka Dharmadasa, president of the Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action (PSMA) -- set up in late 1998 to represent women relatives of those missing -- said the biggest fear now is that the detainees could get caught in the crossfire or die inside rebel jails during air raids.

Dharmadasa, whose second son, an army lieutenant, went missing in September 1988 during a gun battle, said that as the army closes in on the rebel base in northern Kilinochchi district there is apprehension that the detainees could get trapped in the intense shelling and bombing.

"We are appealing to the government to make sure that they are not harmed and to the LTTE to release them now or whenever civilians are allowed to leave the region," she told IPS.

"We are praying and hoping that since the LTTE has kept them locked for so long, in the name of humanity, they won't be harmed and allowed to leave," Dharmadasa added.

According to Dharmadasa the figure of 4,000 missing dates back to 2002 when a ceasefire and peace process was in force in Sri Lanka and fighting had stopped between the government and the rebels. Many more have been added to that list since then, but there are no reliable statistics.

"There has been very little engagement [on missing persons] between the government and the militants after the ceasefire ended and fighting resumed," she said.

The rebels have denied charges that they were holding a large number of prisoners and have, in the past, said that all prisoners have been released. But Dharmadasa and other women, who have been waiting patiently for years for their sons and husbands to return do not believe them.

"In fact, some young LTTE cadres [while visiting the rebel-controlled town of Kilinochchi during the ceasefire] told us there were many soldiers detained, although the LTTE leaders denied the existence of any prisoners," Dharmadasa, who has been knocking on the doors of government and rebel leaders for years to discover missing persons, said.

Hundreds women can only pray in Sri Lanka SRI LANKA : Women Pray for Sons, Husbands Caught in Civil War</h2>

The strong-willed human rights activist, who spends most of her time at her association, says she is aware that there are two large bunkers in rebel territory where she believes the prisoners are being kept.

"These are two concealed bunkers built on either side of the road at Paranthan in Kilinochchi district. I have seen these bunkers during a peacetime visit with 200 other women to the region," she said.

Thousands of government troops have poured into the Kilinochchi district and are on the edge of the town for what is expected to be a decisive battle. Though bogged down by rain and heavily-mined areas, troops are advancing in a pincer-like movement on Kilinochchi town where most of the hardcore rebels are holed up.

President Mahinda Rajapakse's nationalist government has pledged to capture Kilinochchi by the end of this year, crush the LTTE and end the 25-year-old civil war. Hundreds of combatants on either side have been killed in the intensified warfare over the past two years.

Many thousands have died since 1983 when the rebels began a violent campaign for an independent homeland or autonomous powers in the north and east for the minority Tamil community that complains of discrimination at the hands of the majority Sinhalese.

In July 2007, the Sri Lankan army succeeded in wresting the eastern province from the LTTE and have since been concentrating on the north with almost daily aerial bombing raids.

The defence ministry claims to have pinpoint accuracy in taking on rebel targets, but this information cannot be independently verified as communication links to the LTTE have been cut. The government controls all information from the battlefield and restricts journalists to handouts.

Women like Indrani Aladeniya say they pray at small shrines maintained in their homes every morning seeking the safety of their husbands and sons.

Aladeniya's son is a 27- year-old army captain who went missing in 1990 during heavy fighting in the north. "I expect that he will walk in through the door any time," she said.

Victims from both sides of the war have been having regular meetings together, she said. "We have met the mothers and wives of LTTE cadres who had also disappeared. It was the same kind of sorrow."

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At a protest gathering in Colombo some years ago, women from both sides of the ethnic divide joined together to demand from the government and the LTTE the right to life of their lost men and boys.

"We want women from both sides to meet and comfort each other. The bottom line is that the women understand the issues better than the politicians," Dharmadasa said. "While the politicians and the elite want war they never send their own children to the battlefield."

The majority of Sri Lanka's armed forces is made up of young men recruited from poor villages across the island with most joining the army and other security services for economic reasons.< © 2009 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

HR situation deteriorating - UTHR(J)

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

October 29, 2008 Wednesday 3:34 PM EST

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Length: 343 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 29 -- The human rights situation in Sri Lanka is deteriorating, the University Teachers for Human Rights (UTHR) Jaffna said in its latest report released yesterday.

The award winning human rights organization, whose writers are in hiding overseas owing to threats, also said that the President's pledge of a political solution once the war was won was disingenuous if one looked at the East where he claims he has restored democracy by instituting a "toothless provincial council."

"A responsible government must think and do the political work it is there to do, in winning over the Tamils and to persuade the world that it has a viable plan to minimize the damage and loss of life, before sending in the armed forces. To conduct a war with the present chauvinistic outlook is utterly irresponsible by the Sinhalese youth being sacrificed, even if the State has no empathy for the Tamil victims," UTHR said in its report.

The general mood among the people of the Wanni was strongly anti-LTTE four months ago, and resistance continues, UTHR said.

UTHR said, however, that resistance to the LTTE was either passive or tragically fatalistic. With increased aerial bombing and shelling and stories of increasingly repressive treatment of minorities coming from other parts of the country, the mood was changing, it said. Despite this, the LTTE, by October 2008, had once again become very aggressive in conscription.

It further adds that the current political and human rights situation in East Lanka portends a dismal future for democracy and security in Lanka as a whole.

The LTTE has regrouped and is carrying out regular attacks. And there is a reported upsurge in incidents of abduction, searches and abuse of women by government security forces and allied paramilitaries.

In the East, where the Government's public relations men boast of development and the restoration of democracy, there is greater fear, uncertainty and a deliberate cultivation of communal tensions, UTHR said.

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HR situation deteriorating - UTHR(J)

Load-Date: October 29, 2008

End of Document

Clashes kill 35 in northern Sri Lanka

Xinhua General News Service

March 11, 2008 Tuesday 8:40 AM EST

Copyright 2008 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Science & Technology

Length: 222 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

The military in Sri Lanka said Tuesday around 30 rebels and 5 soldiers were killed in the confrontations between government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels in the north in the last two days.

Officials from the Media Centre for National Security said four Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) rebels were killed and three others injured in an attack launched by the troops at Cinnaodaippadu in the Mannar district around 2 a.m local time (2030 GMT) on Tuesday.

On Monday, twenty-six rebels were killed in a clash between the two sides when the rebels tried to recapture a position which was occupied by the troops earlier at Pultyankulam in the Mannar district, officials said, adding that most of the rebels being killed were **female**.

One soldier was killed and 13 others injured in the battle.

Also in Mannar, four soldiers were killed and two others injured in another battle at Karakkuaulam around 2 p.m. (0830 GMT) on Monday.

Sri Lanka's troops are currently engaging the rebels in the Northern Province after they claimed in July last year that the entire Eastern Province had been free of **LTTE** rebels.

The **LTTE** has been fighting the troops since the mid-1980s to carve out a separate homeland for the Tamil minority in the north and east, resulting in the death of more than 70,000 people.

Load-Date: March 12, 2008

More civilians reach safe area

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 26, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 340 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 26 -- Nearly 442 trapped civilians reached the safer area crossing the **LTTE** held area with the assistance of the Navy and International Committee of the Red Cross. A total of 36,318 civilians have sought shelter with Security Forces from January upto now.

Navy spokesman Commander D.P.K. Dassanayake said 45 civilians had been rescued by the naval patrols in the seas of Mullaitivu while they were sailing in a fiberglass dinghy fitted with Outer Board Motor on Sunday around 10.30am. "They included two children, four **females** and six males. Following prompt medical and food requirement, they were handed over to the respective authorities to be sent to IDP centres. The Navy has deployed extra vessels along with stand-by rescue and medical teams along the northeastern seas to assist the civilians fleeing from the **LTTE** clutches", he added. Meanwhile, the ICRC chartered vessel ferried 398 wounded and sick trapped civilians accompanied by their close relatives from Puthumattalan to Trincomalee on Tuesday evening. ICRC spokesperson Sophie Romanenn said around 398 wounded and sick civilians with their close relatives had been ferried from Puthumattalan to Trincomalee for immediate medical treatment by Green Ocean vessel on Tuesday evening. This was the fifth instance the ICRC had ferried wounded and sick civilians from Mullaitivu within a week", Romanenn told the Daily News. She said the sick and wounded civilians who embarked into the ship in the morning from Puthumattalan had arrived to the Trincomalee harbour in the evening. "We have so far dispatched around 1,980 civilians from Mullaitivu via the sea route", she said. Military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said some 36,318 civilians crossing the **LTTE** dominant areas in Mullaitivu reached the cleared area from January 2009 upto now. "We are expecting more in the coming days, as troops are on the verge of gaining the last battle areas against the **LTTE** in Mullaitivu", he added. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Where is the SAARC Convention on terrorism?

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

October 4, 2008 Saturday 1:59 PM EST

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Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Oct. 4 -- The policy of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is to eliminate terrorism from the region. All leaders of SAARC, during the past 15 Summits, have repeatedly stressed the need towards that purpose. Almost at all Summits, terrorism featured prominently with SAARC leaders, mainly from Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan projecting a deep commitment on the need to eliminate the menace.

Suffered badly

These three nations have suffered badly as a result of terrorism. All three nations have lost two Presidents and two Prime Ministers as a result of terrorism. As we have stated on several occasions, the SAARC Convention to suppress Terrorism looks to hang on a Life Support Machine. Only during the Summits, this Convention is given oxygen as a respiratory measure. Then again, it is put on the Life Support Machine.

In the SAARC region, Sri Lanka has been suffering at the hands of **LTTE** terrorism over the past three decades. Thousands have been killed, and many more thousands wounded or maimed, with extensive damage caused to property. **LTTE** terrorism has also cost India much, as India lost a Prime Minister from the Gandhi dynasty, over one thousand IPKF troops killed and over four thousand maimed for life.

India experiences many kinds of terrorism in that nation populated over a billion. In Pakistan, terrorism is rooted as in Sri Lanka and India. Therefore, these three nations should work towards one direction to fight terrorism in a united manner.

Their wonderful words of wisdom spelt out at Summits should be turned into reality, if all SAARC nations are genuinely keen to combat the menace of terrorism in the region.

The recently concluded Colombo SAARC Summit focused much on the need to combat terrorism. All SAARC leaders spoke in one voice towards that need. And, the majority of the Sri Lankan population are of the view that hosting of the Summit in Colombo was timely and beneficial to Sri Lanka, as a nation on a journey to crush **LTTE** terrorism.

The public opinion quite in favour of hosting that Summit in Colombo was reflected in a poll commissioned by the leading business magazine LMD. The survey stated, "The Government was right to step in when the Maldivians pulled out, pointing out that the Summit helped focus international attention on Sri Lanka and improve its image abroad". That was the opinion of over 70 per cent of respondents.

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Well, the leaders of SAARC ritually meet in good faith. It was in such faith that they directed their Foreign Ministers in 1987 to draft the Convention on Suppression of Terrorism which was adopted in November 1987 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Thereafter, at all Summits, the need was stressed to implement it early. Two decades have passed, what is the fate of that Convention which has vibrant features to combat terrorism? After two decades it looks a patient on a Life Support Machine, occasionally given a little oxygen for respiratory survival.

While the threat of terrorism looms large in the region, the entity of SAARC looks to be sleepy after every Summit. On the contrary, terrorism seems to be alert and alive, striking at regular intervals in the terror stricken three nations, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan.

Big brothers

Sri Lanka is an island nation in the component of SAARC. It has to rely for logistical support from the two big brothers, India and Pakistan to curb the menace of terrorism. If those wonderful words of wisdom stressing the need for unity to combat terrorism, that comes from all SAARC leaders at Summits are true in its form, when one big brother helps Sri Lanka, the other must not feel jealous.

Come what may, India is identified as the 'Big Brother' in the region, and India has a big responsibility on its shoulders to clear the region of the terrorist menace. Hence, when India's smaller siblings are facing threat, the mighty big brother should extend support and cooperation all the time, if the sentiments of SAARC on Unity, Understanding, Respect and Cooperation are to be turned into a reality.

The SAARC forum is now enlarged to eight nations with Afghanistan brought into the fold. At the last Summit in Colombo, we witnessed a wide spectrum of Observers from around the globe. That meant SAARC has grown into adulthood in a respectable manner. The eyes of the international community are now focused on SAARC than ever before, when we reminiscence the humble beginnings of SAARC in 1985 as an infant.

Sadly, today South Asia stands the most affected region by terrorism. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all SAARC leaders to devote more time towards the need to wipe out terrorism from this region and, to speed up the implementation of the SAARC Convention to Suppress Terrorism.

Let us go back to six years with regard to the commitment of SAARC leaders towards measures to combat terrorism. In 2002, former Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee told the Summit"- India has been a victim of international terrorism for two decades. Other countries in the region have also been similarly affected. Terrorism used different religions, territorial, economic and ethnic justifications in different countries. We in South Asia have to recognise that our cooperative future will be significantly influenced by the way in which we can tackle terrorism together".

If India knows best that regional terrorism could only be wiped out, if it was tackled together, the time is quite opportune for India to extend its support and cooperation to Colombo in the latter's current effort to wipe out LTTE terrorism that has effects on India too.

Convention

Vajpayee added that updating and strengthening the SAARC Convention to suppress Terrorism would provide a contemporary framework for cooperation in the region and, would also be a powerful confidence building measure, that could create positive ripples in virtually every area of interaction within SAARC. India, being the biggest nation in the SAARC forum, is aware that the Convention to Suppress Terrorism would be helpful to work together to combat terrorism in the region. If so, New Delhi must push for the early implementation of that Convention that lay like a skeleton inside the cupboards at the Kathmandu Secretariat for over two decades.

Starting from the Colombo SAARC Summit in 1991, all Heads of State and Governments have been calling for the early implementation of the Convention.

At all Summits the lyrics of the so called 'SAARC Hymn on Terrorism' are as follows in all Declarations - 'Heads of State or Governments expressed serious concern on the spread of terrorism in the region affecting the security and

Where is the SAARC Convention on terrorism?

stability of all Member States and unequivocally condemned all such acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal'. And, when it came to the Convention to Suppress Terrorism, the lyrics of that hymn say - ' They recognised that cooperation among SAARC nations was vital if terrorism was to be prevented and eliminated from the region.

Member States

In this regard, they urged Member States to take all necessary measures to give full effect to their obligations under the SAARC Regional Convention to Suppress Terrorism'. This has been the standard form of the wordings of many and all Declarations, issued from SAARC Capitals, at the conclusion of every Summit.

The SAARC is 23 years old. Terrorism is much older than SAARC. The SAARC has held 15 Summits. Terrorism has been discussed at every Summit. The Convention to Suppress Terrorism idle in the cupboards at Kathmandu. At every Summit, it was urged to implement that Convention early. The question before the SAARC leaders is to query, as to what follow up action had been taken, with regard to the implementation of the Convention.

Sri Lanka's late President, Ranasinghe Premadasa who addressed the Seventh Summit, urged leaders to have it ready before the Eight Summit.

Even that request from Colombo fell on deaf ears. What we witness is that, the SAARC talks about that Convention only at Summit times. Let that not happen in the future, as SAARC nations gripped by terrorism, await an end to the menace.

The Convention to Suppress Terrorism is a fully fledged document designed for the protection of the South Asian Region. It has the most important Hague and Montreal Agreements included in it, to provide Member States to combat illegal aircraft movement, harmful to their interests. SAARC must adopt a practical system to address this urgent need to combat terrorism. Legislation should not be allowed to be confined to paper and lie dormant in cupboards.

The sovereignty of not only Sri Lanka, but also of India and Pakistan are threatened by terrorism. SAARC cannot go on vacation when terrorists threaten the region. Could Member States turn a blind eye, when the sovereignty of another is being threatened? If all SAARC nations stand united to fight terrorism in a practical manner, the region could be transformed into a Zone of Peace.

If SAARC was established to promote good neighbourliness, the need is a more viable and a practical approach towards urgent needs of the region by all Member States.

Crush terrorism

The immediate victims of terrorism are not only the tiny nation Sri Lanka, but also giants like India and Pakistan. Colombo, has already gone into action against terrorism. It had cleared the Eastern theatre of terrorism to restore democracy.

The troops are now engaged in clearing the Tiger stronghold of Kilinochchi in the North. SAARC nations that meet at Summits, repeat and repeat like a chorus the need to crush terrorism, must now support Colombo to wipe out LTTE terrorism that affects our neighbour India too. Terrorism and the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka are two different issues.

SAARC must concentrate on the interests of the region. As Atal Bihari Vajpayee correctly pointed out, terrorists use different issues claim legitimacy and justice to their acts of terror. They use issues like religion, ethnicity, economy and territory to justify terrorism.

The former Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee had seen terrorism in its true perspective. In Sri Lanka, the LTTE is trying to demonstrate to the world that, it is an ethnic conflict that persists here and not terrorism.

Where is the SAARC Convention on terrorism?

Truly, there is an ethnic problem that needs a resolution in Sri Lanka. The Government and the majority population concedes to that fact. But, the biggest conflict in the country today is LTTE terrorism, and that has no ethnicity involved, as the LTTE itself annihilates the Tamils. Therefore, our neighbours and the international community at large, must view the Sri Lankan crisis in the correct perspective, without being partisan and, carried away by propaganda of the LTTE or its sympathisers worldwide.

US and Britain

When we talk about global terrorism, the West too cannot be happy on the menace of terrorism. The powerful United States and Britain have experienced the ruthlessness of terrorism. With regard to the terrorism in the South Asian Region, the West must be conscious of the fact, that terrorism is terrorism, be it the North, South, West or East. There are LTTE organisations in the West operating under various human faces.

There is an organisation in Britain called, the British Tamil Forum.

The British must probe the activities of that Forum before it is too late. According to reliable sources, the LTTE's so called Theoretician, the late Anton Balasingham, was an unofficial Patron of that Forum. The Members of that Forum are a set of 'LTTE Sympathisers', who shed crocodile tears, to help the LTTE posing off as genuine sympathisers of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka.

The British Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, William Hague was quoted by this Tamil Forum in a statement that Hague said, Britain was very conscious of the strong feelings and concerns of the British Tamil Community with regard to the conflict in Sri Lanka. For the information of William Hague, Sri Lanka only faces a terrorist conflict with the LTTE threatening to divide the country. As for the ethnic problem, the Colombo Government is ready to find a just solution and, LTTE terrorism is the only obstacle standing in between the Government and a lasting solution of the Tamil people.

Hague, the Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs must move away from the 'shadow' of the Tamil Forum that is misleading him. He is free to come to Sri Lanka to view the truth through the clear retina of his eyes.

To the SAARC, our urgent call is to speed up the implementation of the Convention to Suppress Terrorism. Sri Lanka has embarked on a mission most successful to crush LTTE terrorism in the region.

The beneficiaries of that victory will not only be Sri Lanka but, also our immediate neighbour India. Why? Both nations have lost Heads of State or Government, Troops, Men, Women and Children at the hands of brutal LTTE terrorism. And thousands have been maimed for life.

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Issue names of IDPs, Sangaree tells authorities

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

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Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 10 -- TULF Leader V. Anandasangaree making an urgent plea, requested the authorities to issue a list of names of IDPs who had successfully crossed over to the cleared areas from the Vanni braving **LTTE** threats, so that their relatives could be assured of their safety.

Anandasangaree in a letter addressed to President Mahinda Rajapaksa has explained that he was receiving phone calls daily from Tamils living abroad, anxious to know about their relatives, as there were no facilities for communication between them. He also requested to allow for the sick, elderly and the children to be looked after by their relatives who would volunteer, away from the stiff environs of IDP camps. The letter: "Several calls had come to me today and yesterday from Tamils living abroad frantically making inquiries about their kith and kin, trapped in Vanni and escaping to Vavuniya taking grave risk to their lives. They want to know, first of all whether their people are alive and if so where? The **LTTE** had not responded to the plea of various organization like the UN, EU and the Co-Chairs, apart from countries like UK, USA, Canada and India, for their release from Vanni It is unfortunate that Tamil Nadu and surprisingly the TNA had not appealed to the **LTTE** to release the innocent ones but shockingly issuing silly statements still to please the **LTTE**. I make three urgent appeals to you. One to release a list of names of persons who had come from Vanni and where they are now accommodated. That will ease the excitement and tension of the relatives living abroad and also will enable them to offer any assistance, the displaced persons may need. The second one is a request to allow the elders, the sick and the children to join their relative who are prepared to accommodate them at their homes in Vavuniya. Others can be handed over to the parents after proper inquiry later. I wish to mention two incidents in support of this request. A person know to me from Kilinochchi has lost both his legs and is in a state of coma at the Mannar Hospital. The whereabouts of the rest of the family is not known. They want me to trace them. In another incident the wife who has fractured her leg is being looked after by her mother at the Mannar Hospital. The husband who brought his injured child the next day is looking after him at the Vavuniya Hospital. Their relations who are in Vavuniya are prepared to accommodate them, at their home. The third request is to allow the local NGOs, Political Parties and Social Organization such as Rural Developments Societies, Community Centers etc. to visit the refugees. This will counter the false propaganda of the **LTTE** that youth are taken to unknown destinations, **women** missing, inmates treated like prisoners, low quality of food etc. Since the inmates are increasing in number day by day, the assistance of volunteer organizations will prove very beneficial."Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Issue names of IDPs, Sangaree tells authorities

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Opportunity to make terrorism history

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 16, 2009 Monday

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Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 16 -- Authors Scilla Elworthy and Gabrielle Rifkind write in "Making Terrorism History" some areas of concern if violence has to be erased off from an environment of conflict. We may discuss below these and other relevant issues in the Sri Lankan context.

n First, avoid more violence both by the government forces and remaining LTTE cadres. Is it easily achievable? Perhaps, other means of satisfying the aspirations of the Tamil people will distance the LTTE from the Tamil public and build the required restraint. The need to be vigilant by all Armed Forces / Police will be a clear necessity and this has been already mentioned by Secretary Defense too. n Lack of showing respect (e.g. for language, opportunities for health/ education, areas of habitation, demographic changes, employment etc) has been one of the main causes for North / East destabilization and hence how these could be equitably sorted will be important.

This will require constitutional amendments, legal changes and systems development. n Whether the (b) above could be achieved by the All Party Representatives Committee (APRC) sans the major political groups' participation is difficult to assess. The genuine and whole hearted participation of such non-participating political/ ethnic groups either in the APRC or another alternate forum to achieve peace, and, exhibition of genuine magnanimity by the Government to convince and motivate the distracted parties are essential follow up. n Improvement of physical conditions in facilitating early return to the areas of origin of the displaced, regular employment, larger freedom of movement, reduction of militarized curfews, road blocks etc have to be considered positively. Further, providing compensatory financial insurance mooted by the State in the event of recurrence of violence will give confidence to the affected public and make the State's intervention more attractive. n All peace efforts in Sri Lanka had a common weakness of non-inclusivity because the LTTE appeared as the sole representative of Tamils. From the statements made publicly now it appears that all other groups and parties other than LTTE will be involved in solving the national crisis. I wonder whether I have understood the approach correctly. If correct, it will be repetition of the past! The LTTE could be "dead" in the North and East after the war victory, but yet alive elsewhere. Its thinking will not be erased so soon. It is the Diaspora and its funding, lobbying and motivating that pumped life to LTTE. These will fade after a lapse of time. Nevertheless, hearing its thinking may be useful to slowly squeeze its effect on its supporters and the Diaspora. One could argue back that such space given will revitalize the LTTE, which is a defeated enemy. It could be. Hence, it is important to decide on an appropriate strategy not to revive LTTE, but to hear their point of view, though the Government need not agree with them in totality. To expect the participating Tamil groups to accept just a handout of the Government's choice -crumbs falling from the table- may be preposterous and unfair too. n The indigenous civil society structures in the north and east had been mostly extremist and influenced by the LTTE. With inclusivity being achieved this has to change to wider participation of civil groups and hence respect for human rights and constitutional freedoms. n The human suffering has been vast during the period of conflict irrespective of ethnicity. Whether the Government could establish Centers for Listening and Documentation of past events will be worthwhile considering because any humanitarian compensatory inputs

Opportunity to make terrorism history

could be based on such documented evidence, especially in the absence of official records due to the conflict. Non governmental organizations (NGOs), clergy and civil society involvements in such efforts will be extraordinarily useful. It will also give an opportunity to the incumbent Government to tear off the mantle of suspicion on the NGOs and civil society organizations. n Along with the outputs of such Centers it will be possible to engage personnel for trauma counseling, women and child rehabilitation, rehabilitation of the maimed, conscripted, trained suicide bombers etc. The engagement of specialized foreign institutions is recommended for this act since Sri Lanka lacks in such expertise. n Due to excessive killing of Tamil male youth there ought to be a vacuum in youth participation created in the political and social spheres in the future. Hence, the need to fill in that void with possible increased female participation becomes important. However, the void has to be filled with less educated women and even male youth and hence training them to face such situations will be important. The Rwandan experience after the genocide with 53% of women parliamentarians could be a good lesson to emulate. n This will even be applicable to enhance training in vocations, change of recruitment procedures if the youth giving up terrorism and joining the mainstream are to be accommodated. We should not forget that already Chief Minister Pillaiyan has stated that his men are reluctant to join the military. Then what is in store if change of attitudes, systems does not take place? n There will be another psychological vacuum created by the self-imposed non-negotiable systems that have been used by the LTTE and the military. That will be related also to negotiations in economic, social, security and other aspects of civil life. This also should be overcome through training of all these groups and introduction of appropriate negotiation processes. For example, integration of LTTE cadres and military cadres to civilian environments cannot be achieved without proper negotiations. n The LTTE and military have been managed on a 'conflict mode' all the while and unfortunately religious groups were pleading with both parties for concessions. Sometimes the military suspected them as stooges or proxies of the LTTE. If societal normalcy is to be achieved the traditional respect and roles of the clergy have to be restored. n The above actions if implemented will be the bridge building paths too. The accepted roles of institutions and personalities will automatically undertake bridge building. The southern media has a great role in bridge building to condition the minds of the southern public regarding the absolute demand for equal treatment to the North / East people. The media conditioned the South with war euphoria for the Government to gain a large slice of confidence from the public. Now it will have to repeat perform in another context. n Truth and reconciliation is another way of finding solace to many of the sufferings in the hands of the other party. Some believe that our religious, cultural and social behaviors are not appropriate to such action though this has worked well elsewhere (e.g. South Africa). Adjusted action may be preferred. One will find these as looking at issues from a psychological angle. The priority that is differently given by donors, politicians, economists etc is for infrastructure development such as housing, roads, bridges, rail lines, factories etc. While these have to be most certainly developed the above mentioned areas have to be considered seriously if the memories of violence and terror are to be erased permanently, thus bringing stable peace. In addition there will be great pressure on the Government and the military to return the displaced to their original habitats. With peace if this does not happen there will be heartburn, especially in Jaffna Peninsula. However, holding on to a limited high security zone will be a necessity for the military, at least until terrorism has been made history and non-recurring. Sometimes it may be a long trek. In this matter there could be other road blocks for the State to engage speedily. For instance, demining in the Jaffna Peninsula is only 58% completed and completion is a serious job. In addition, there could be missing owners, no-boundary markings as the area had not been inhabited for long. Proof of ownership by deeds and other official documentation will be another problem. Absentee landlords create another issue. However, indecisiveness and long stay in displaced camps should be always avoided. Hence, the government will have to look at these issues before returning the affected to original places of habitation. In this case the Government has to arrange for extraordinary attractive compensation where lands cannot be returned to the original owners and the owners too should have the understanding to agree to governmental requests. The inputs from the clergy, civil society, NGOs, women participants and trained negotiators etc may be of help in tackling this problem. In summary, what the Government should attempt is to ensure that peace dividends are shared with the people of the North and East, but not as a war dividend. The three aspects of dividends are the constitutional / legal dividend, physical development dividend through economic and social development interventions and lastly the psychological dividends as stated earlier in detail. Participatory action in sharing the three dividends cannot be overlooked. Non-integrated and segregated ad hoc approaches will register another controversial movement, financed by the same financiers, perhaps under a different leadership and name. Negative behavior will attract international criticisms and even the non commitment of Tokyo Declaration pledges, which may be available for "sober and humanist" approaches. Hence, the country must be surely wishing that the authorities

Opportunity to make terrorism history

decide on correct approaches to address the unfulfilled aspirations of the people to create an undivided and stable country. It is the way to make terrorism history in Sri Lanka and make way "for a shared future in our shared island."Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Sri Lankan president urges calm after bomb kills 20

Agence France Presse -- English

February 2, 2008 Saturday 8:44 AM GMT

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Length: 364 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Feb 2 2008

Body

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse blamed Tamil Tiger guerrillas for a bomb Saturday on a bus that killed at least 20 people, urging citizens not to be provoked by the rebels "brutality."

The parcel bomb went off as the crowded bus, carrying many Buddhist pilgrims belonging to the ethnic Sinhalese majority, stopped in Dambulla, 150 kilometres (93 miles) north of Colombo, to collect more passengers.

The attack "shows the reality of the struggle we have to face to eliminate terrorism from our country," Rajapakse said in a statement, urging people to remain calm and avoid being "provoked by the brutality" of the Tigers.

There has been no comment from the Tamils yet on the attack, the latest in a string of deadly bomb blasts this year, and comes two days ahead of Sri Lanka's 60th independence day celebrations.

The Tamil rebels are "eager to create a backlash (by the Sinhalese majority) to obtain the sympathy of the international community" for their long fight for an independent homeland, Rajapakse said.

In 1983, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) rebels blew up 13 Sinhalese troops, triggering savage anti-Tamil riots. An estimated 400 to 600 Tamils were massacred in the aftermath, drawing international condemnation of Sri Lanka.

"Among those killed and injured were many **women** pilgrims on their way to (the town of) Anuradhapura to participate in a Buddhist ceremony," Rajapakse said of Saturday's blast.

This latest "act of terror, similar to many other acts of savagery directed at innocent civilians before, underscores the continued commitment of the **LTTE** to violence to achieve their goal of separation," Rajapakse said.

In January, Sri Lanka formally pulled out of a Norwegian-brokered 2002 truce with the **LTTE** with Colombo asserting it had won the upper hand in crushing the rebels.

Since the start of January, at least 864 rebels and 34 soldiers have been killed in heavy fighting, according to defence ministry figures. At least 123 civilians have also died during the same period, according to both sides.

Sri Lankan president urges calm after bomb kills 20

Tens of thousands have died since the **LTTE** launched its armed struggle to carve out an independent state for minority Tamils from the Sinhalese in 1972.

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Independent humanitarian monitors in Sri Lanka; SRI LANKA: UN Supplies to Rebel-Held Areas Will Resume

IPS (Latin America)

October 2, 2008 Thursday

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Body

Nagalingam Vedanayagam, the government agent for the northern town of Kilinochchi, said a convoy of 60 trucks would be making the trip to the Vanni later this week.

“We have had several rounds of talks with the World Food Programme (WFP) and other U.N. officials; the plan is to send the convoy later this week,” he said.

U.N. officials said the convoy would fly the U.N. flag and international staff from the U.N. would accompany the convoy into the Vanni.

“These supplies are a vital lifeline to tens of thousands of civilians forced by fighting from their homes. Their condition will deteriorate the longer the fighting and their displacement continue,” the U.N. Resident Representative in Sri Lanka, Neil Buhne, said at a press conference last week.

The convoy would be the first after all the U.N. and international relief agencies working in the Vanni relocated out of the area following a government directive and fast deteriorating security conditions.

Fighting close to Kilinochchi has necessitated a circuitous route for the convoy. Instead of taking the A9 highway that cuts through the centre of the Vanni, the convoy will turn east about 35 km south of the town and circumvent Kilinochchi to get to displaced people in the northeast of the town, Vedanayagam said.

“The route to send these goods has changed. We will be sending the goods through the Mankulam-Oddisuddan-Puthukkudiyiruppu-Mullaithivu and then to Kilinochchi via Paranthan-Mullaithivu road,” he said.

Heavy fighting has been reported in areas south of Kilinochchi and the Sri Lankan army said, last week, that its forward units were within striking distance of the town held by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**).

Since 1982, the **LTTE** been fighting to carve out an independent state in the north and east for Sri Lanka's minority Tamils, claiming discrimination by the Sinhalese majority. Some 75,000 people are estimated to have already died in the conflict.

“The army will fire its first rounds towards Kilinochchi town by next week, as troops are some four km away from Kilinochchi... we can even see some of the buildings in the town,” army commander Lt. Gen. Fonseka said last week.

The Sri Lankan air force has also intensified aerial raids over Kilinochchi and said its jets carried out a raid on suspected Tiger **female** suicide cadre training facility, just 1.5 km east of the main road at Kilinochchi on Saturday

Independent humanitarian monitors in Sri Lanka SRI LANKA : UN Supplies to Rebel-Held Areas Will Resume

morning. Air Force commander Roshan Goonetilleke said efforts were focused on getting LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.

"We are getting intelligence and information about the whereabouts of Prabhakaran; we will continue with our raids, targeting those hideouts," he said in a statement.

The latest humanitarian reports and government officials in Kilinochchi said that most of the civilians have begun to leave the besieged town and head northeast. "People have begun moving northeast of Kilinochchi, they now remain on the main road north east of Kilinochchi," he said.

Vedanayagam said that despite the absence of the supply convoys since Sep. 16, food stocks were available in the Vanni. "If there is a delay then we will have problems, but so far, the situation is manageable,"

According to latest reports filed by the U.N. and other agencies, there are between 200, 000 to 230,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Vanni at the moment.

The government has made announcements and air-dropped leaflets asking civilians to leave the Vanni and move to government-secured areas in the south. But, so far, very few have made it to south and none by the land route, leading to accusations that the LTTE was preventing the civilians from leaving.

"The civilian population in the Vanni is effectively trapped. Over the last year at least, the LTTE has placed severe restrictions on civilian movement. Civilians wishing to leave the Vanni had to leave a guarantor who would have to take the responsibility of ensuring the return of that individual. With the on-going military operations civilians have not been allowed to move out of the Vanni and only a small number have been able to escape, mainly by sea," the Colombo-based civic group Centre for Policy Alternatives said in a report released last week.

U.N. and other international agencies that left the Vanni said that its local staff resident in the Vanni had been prevented from leaving by the LTTE.

"In the Vanni, over 500 national staff working for NGOs stayed behind as they were not provided travel passes by the LTTE. The U.N. still has 21 national staff within the Vanni who did not receive passes or are staying because of their families," the Inter Agency Standing Committee, an umbrella body of U.N. and other agencies, said last week.

International pressure, meanwhile, has risen on the LTTE to allow freedom of movement for the civilians, especially after several key international players held discussions with Sri Lankan government representatives on the sidelines of last week's U.N. General Assembly sessions.

"We urge the LTTE to take urgent action to allow free movement of civilians," said a statement issued Friday by British ministers Lord Malloch Brown and Shahid Malik.

That statement has drawn reactions from the British Tamil Forum (BTF) which circulated a response saying that it was the Sri Lanka government that was "restricting free movement of civilians within and out of Jaffna Peninsula, where the Sinhala army is an occupying force".

The BTF statement spoke of "degrading restrictions laid on the Tamil community living in and around Colombo, restrictions placed on journalists to travel around Sri Lanka to report on current security situation and human rights violations and the inhuman treatment of IDPs by restricting their mobility by placing them in 'detention centres' (e.g. in Mannar) in contravention of humanitarian practices, human rights laws, U.N. Charters and Geneva Conventions."

"Both sides need to make sure that they're not catching civilians in the crossfire, that they're letting people go to places where they can be safe, and that humanitarian deliveries can take place for these populations that are affected by the fighting," US assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher said in New York, last week, after a meeting of the Tokyo Donor Co-chairs, a collective of international donors made up of the U.S., the European Union, Japan and Norway.

Independent humanitarian monitors in Sri Lanka SRI LANKA : UN Supplies to Rebel-Held Areas Will Resume

“Their (civilians’) safety and freedom of movement must be paramount. It is crucial that full access for relief supplies is ensured and that the safe transit of these supplies be supervised by independent humanitarian monitors,” European Union commissioner for external relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who was also part of the meeting, was quoted as saying. </p> © 2008 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: October 2, 2008

End of Document

Call for 'genocide' stories from Tamil residents

Harrow Times

March 2, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS (NEWS)

Length: 500 words

Byline: Tristan Kirk

Body

A FORMER high ranking US official has called on Harrow Tamils to document their experiences in their home country as he seeks to have Sri Lankan leaders charged with genocide.

Bruce Fein, who served in the administration of Ronald Reagan as deputy attorney general, addressed a meeting of the Tamil community this weekend in Harrow.

He explained how he and fellow members of action group Tamils Against Genocide are building a case against Sri Lanka's Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapakse, and the country's army commander Sarath Fonseka.

He told the packed Sree Ayyappan Temple, in Masons Avenue: "We want these guys to be serving time in prison. In fact under our law there is the sentence of death.

"It is a privilege to fight such a difficult but honourable battle. We want to cast light on the horrors going on in Sri Lanka, and to deter the current government from continuing the atrocities."

Mr Fein likened the current situation in Sri Lanka to past genocides in Rwanda, Bosnia, Serbia, and Sudan, and explained that a 1,000 page indictment has been handed to the US Justice Department about the alleged alleged atrocities in the war-torn country.

He said the tactics of the Sri Lankan government, which has been embroiled in a 25-year civil war with separatist group the **Tamil Tigers**, is to group civilian Tamils in a safe zone and then bomb that area, killing innocent people.

He said: "They will bomb indiscriminately in the Tamil area, and drive the refugees into a safe zone.

"That's exactly where they intend to bomb and kill people."

Mr Fein asked the 200-strong audience to write an affidavit detailing their experiences in their home country, to be used as evidence to support the indictment which is currently being looked at by the US Justice Department.

He said: "Something has to be done to the government of Sri Lanka.

"You as Tamils know victims, you know what the government is doing, and the US needs to take the lead."

Call for 'genocide' stories from Tamil residents

The situation in Sri Lanka was brought to the world's attention a couple of weeks ago when Murukathasan Vanakulasingam, a Harrow resident, burned himself to death outside the gates of the United Nations headquarters in Geneva.

The 26-year-old committed suicide to highlight the situation in his home country, and left a ten-page letter calling on governments of the world to take notice and act against the Sri Lankan government.

Thousands are expected to attend a memorial service for Mr Vanakulasingam, but Tamil leaders are struggling to find a suitable place for it to be held.

His father is due to bring his body back home this week after the conclusion of investigations in Switzerland.

The Sri Lankan High Commission contacted the Harrow Times after we broke the story of Mr Vanakulasingam's death, and it denied a genocide is taking place in the country.

A representative said **Tamil Tigers** have brain washed many Tamils into following their cause, and the militants use civilians as shields which is why innocent **women** and children are killing during the conflict.

Load-Date: March 3, 2009

End of Document

Vigilance and more Vigilance

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

February 23, 2009 Monday

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Length: 545 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 23 -- At the time of writing this column the victims of the Inginiyagala massacre had risen to fifteen with several of those injured lying in a critical condition. This massacre is reminiscent of the early days of the LTTE as guerilla outfit when it raided far flung villages in the North Central Province and butchered innocent civilians.

That was a time it resorted to hit and run tactics and even laid landmines on the path of security forces whom it could not confront in direct combat. Entire villages on the fringes of the battle zone were wiped out with men, women, children and pregnant mothers done to death in their sleep. The newspapers at the time were full of the gory pictures of those massacres carried out by the blood thirsty LTTE. It also made forays far outside its domain to carry out killing sprees. One recalls the gruesome massacres of worshipers at the sacred Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi and also the machine gunning of a bus load of passengers at Kithuluotuwa. This was typical of the LTTE at the time intending to incite a backlash in the south which failed to materialize. With its eventual graduation to conventional warfare this chapter of its bloody past eventually gave way to fighting the security forces in direct combat. Not that it shied away from civilian targets even then as seen from the sporadic bus bombs and claymore attacks targeting civilians. But these were chiefly as a second string to its bow. Now with the near annihilation of outfit the LTTE is bound to revert back to its guerilla days and start attacking innocent civilians in the rural outposts as witnessed in Saturday's attack. The Government should take cognizance of this new threat and gear its security apparatus to confront this reality because there is no knowing danger a cornered Tiger could inflict on unarmed helpless civilians. No room should be allowed for a return of that gruesome past. Special security should be deployed to protect far flung villages that are the most vulnerable. These innocent civilians have to be protected at all cost since it is they who bore the brunt of this separatist war virtually serving as a buffer all these years preventing Tiger rampages into other areas with impunity. They deserve all the care and protection for standing as a first line of defense and perishing in the process. Victories of the forces would be of no avail if these villagers continue to live under terrorist threat. The Government therefore should extend its humanitarian mission to cover all these villages which were at one time described as border villages. The retreating Tiger may also pose a real threat in the rest of country as seen from Friday night's failed air attack in Colombo. Other main cities and installations could well be targets in the coming days as the security forces begin to throttle out the last ounce of life off the LTTE. The need for vigilance therefore cannot be overemphasized. The general public should be re-appraised of this enhanced threat and the need for cooperation with the security apparatus. The public may have to endure inconvenience and hardship. But this is a small price to pay in the larger interest of national security. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Vigilance and more Vigilance

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

End of Document

NEWS DIGEST 1700

Canwest News Service

September 22, 2008 Monday

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Length: 1160 words

Body

War deserter gets stay of deportation - (CNS-UPDATE-DESERTER)

The Federal Court of Canada has granted a stay of deportation to U.S. war deserter Jeremy Hinzman so the court can decide whether to hear his appeal.

Hinzman will be able to stay in Canada until he can appeal the deportation order, which may take anywhere from several weeks to several months.

He joined the U.S. army in early 2001 but soon after, he sought status as a conscientious objector, which was denied.

He then fled to Canada with wife and son in 2004.

In August, Canada Border Services ordered Hinzman, his wife, son and daughter to leave the country by Sept. 23.

The order came after Citizenship and Immigration denied two of his applications to stay, one made under the pre-removal risk program and the other on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

Grits unveil platform as Tories get tough on youth crime - (CNS-ELXN-WRAP- 1600-22)

Stephen Harper would get tough on youth offenders, the NDP would push to reopen the North American Free Trade Agreement and Stephane Dion unveiled the Liberal party's election platform as the campaign rolled into Week 3 today.

The prime minister said a re-elected Conservative government would toss out Canada's young offenders law and replace it with legislation that would no longer allow youths who commit violent crimes to keep their names out of the news, through publication bans.

Harper said, in Ottawa, the new law would balance the rights of victims against the need to rehabilitate young people.

Both the Liberals and NDP and Bloc Quebecois were quick to dismiss Harper's plan.

NDP Leader Jack Layton said the way to fix violent youth crime is adding more police officers, better handgun control, more spending on youth programs and ``a witness protection program that actually works." Dion said Harper was putting forward ``an ideological approach that failed in the United States."

Tamil Tiger defector admits humanitarian relief used for weapons - (CNS- TAMIL-TIGER)

NEWS DIGEST 1700

A former commander of Sri Lanka's **Tamil Tigers** has admitted the guerrillas used money meant for humanitarian aid to buy weapons.

Col. Karuna Amman said in an interview the rebels routinely bought arms with donations from abroad that were meant to help civilians in guerrilla-held areas.

He called Canada the No. 1 one source of external income for the guerrillas, who are fighting for independence for Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority.

Karuna spent 22 years in the **Tamil Tigers** and was a top commander until he defected to the government side in 2004 and took his 6,000 cadres with him.

The National Post interviewed him at a secretive location in Colombo for a series about Sri Lanka's long-running civil war.

The RCMP and CSIS have long claimed the **Tamil Tigers** raise money in Canada but this is believed to be the first time a former senior guerrilla has publicly confirmed the allegations.

Police say they have documented at least \$3 million in money transfers from **Tamil Tigers** supporters in Canada to overseas accounts linked to the guerrillas.

Man charged in stabbing on Greyhound bus - (CNS-UPDATE3-BUS-STABBING-22)

A 28-year-old man has been charged in connection with a reported stabbing on board a Greyhound bus in rural Ontario Sunday, a chilling reminder of the murder of a Winnipeg man on another bus two months ago.

David Wayne Roberts has been charged with one count of aggravated assault and two counts of breaching probation.

The Manitowadge, Ont., man is scheduled to appear for a bail hearing tomorrow in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.

Ontario Provincial Police say a 20-year-old man was assaulted around 4:15 p. m. ET on Sunday on board a Greyhound bus travelling from Toronto to Winnipeg.

The victim, identified by witnesses as an Asian male in his mid-20s, is recovering from non-life threatening injuries.

Meanwhile, the Wawa News, a local media outlet is reporting that Roberts was put on the bus by police officers as a part of a policy where police assist hitchhikers, vagrants and mentally ill patients who have financial issues.

This is the second violent altercation to occur on a Greyhound bus in Canada in recent months.

In July, near Portage la Prairie, Man., Winnipeg resident Tim McLean was stabbed and beheaded on board a Greyhound.

12 arrested in massive Nova Scotia drug bust - (CNS-UPDATE-DRUG-BOATS)

Police have seized three boats and hundreds of kilograms of cannabis resin in a drug bust with suspected links to an Ontario organized crime group.

RCMP Insp. Brian Brennan says 12 people were arrested in the bust, the largest of its kind for cannabis resin - or hash oil - for Nova Scotia.

Brennan said the drugs are believed to have originated in the Caribbean and were likely destined for Central Canada.

The raid took place yesterday near Spanish Ship Bay on the east coast of Nova Scotia.

NEWS DIGEST 1700

Brennan said the suspects were part of ``long-standing'' criminal organization, which Ontario police had been interested in for a long time.

All suspects appeared in court in Dartmouth, N.S., on Monday and remain in custody in Halifax.

Greyhound driver regularly finds weapons in carry-on bags - (CNS-BUS-SAFETY)

A large-sheath Bowie knife, a nine-millimetre handgun, brass knuckles and a buck knife are among the weapons that have been seized from Greyhound Canada bus passengers in the last six months.

That grew longer yesterday when a man allegedly used a knife he brought on board one of the line's buses to stab a fellow passenger in the chest on a northern Ontario route.

Also included in that makeshift arsenal was a wood-handled 15-centimetre blade taken from a passenger by Edmonton driver Tyler Tong.

Three months prior to the grisly killing of 22-year-old Tim McLean travelling from Edmonton to Winnipeg this summer, Tong sent a photo of the blade to company officials with a letter stating that he was finding ``stuff like this on a regular basis."

In the May 2 letter, sent by inter-office mail to two members of senior management at Greyhound's Edmonton depot, the driver expresses concern about ``potential hazard(s)" on board.

He describes how, in another incident, an intoxicated teenage traveller was trying to bring a buck knife and brass knuckles on board.

N.L. government, cancer specialists reach deal - (CNS-BRF-NL-DOCTORS-DEAL)

The Newfoundland government said today it has reached a deal with its women's cancer specialists that will keep them from leaving the province.

The three doctors - the province's only gynecological oncologists - had said they were leaving Eastern Health Corp. in December over their concerns about patient-care issues, including the need for more support staff.

They were also seeking better pay.

On Friday, the provincial government offered the doctors more office space and staff, additional operating room time, nursing support and the hiring of a new pharmacist.

It said the issue of pay would be addressed ``ultimately."

If the doctors had left, hundreds of women would have faced having to travel outside the province for treatment.

Load-Date: September 22, 2008

Suicide Tiger base bombed in Sri Lanka: defence ministry

Indo-Asian News Service

September 27, 2008 Saturday 1:06 PM EST

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Length: 363 words

Byline: Report from Indo-Asian News Service brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Sept. 27 -- The Sri Lankan Air Force Saturday carried out an air raid targeting a suspected "Black Tiger" (suicide squad) training base in the north, frequented by the rebel outfit's intelligence chief Pottu Amman, defence sources said here Saturday.

The ministry of defence said the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (**LTTE**) main **female** suicide Tiger training facility at Rathnapuram, located about 1.5 km east of the Jaffna-Kandy main highway in the rebels' "political capital" of Kilinochchi, was bombed based on "real-time ground information".

"The site is known to be the main **female** black Tiger training and coordinating facility and a most frequented location by **LTTE**'s intelligence wing chief Pottu Amman," the ministry said, adding serious damages were caused to the facility.

It was not immediately known whether rebels' intelligence chief was present there at the time of the attack.

Pottu Amman is a wanted man in India in connection with the assassination of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991.

The military said the advancing troops are just four kilometres away from Kilinochchi town, located 350 km north of here, and expected to attack it next week.

The military is determined to capture Kilinochchi and the defence experts say it would deal a major blow to the **LTTE** militarily and psychologically, as it would corner the rebels to operate only in the north-eastern Mullaitivu district.

The UN and other aid workers moved out of the rebel-held areas to the nearby areas last week on the request of the government citing security reasons. Thousands of civilians have already moved from Kilinochchi deeper into the rebel-held areas in the north.

Meanwhile, military authorities here said Saturday at least 60 **LTTE** guerrillas and three government soldiers were killed and over 65 wounded on both sides during sporadic clashes throughout Friday across the restive north.

There was no immediate reaction from the rebels regarding the latest military claims.

Over 5,000 people have been killed and several thousands faced displacement due to fresh escalation of violence since December 2005.

Suicide Tiger base bombed in Sri Lanka : defence ministry

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Load-Date: September 27, 2008

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Sri Lanka's Wild East Plans First Vote in Over 10 Years

The New York Times

March 10, 2008 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 6

Length: 1082 words

Byline: By SOMINI SENGUPTA

Dateline: VAVUNATHIVU, Sri Lanka

Body

Lawless, contested, notorious for a string of abductions and unsolved killings, this region has long been known as the Wild East of Sri Lanka.

For years, the guerrilla army known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had the run of the place, only to be driven out last summer by the military, with help from a breakaway Tamil rebel faction. The houses here are still battered from the fighting. Its people are still rattled from having to run.

On Monday, voters here and across the region will go to the polls in the first local elections in a dozen years. Beyond deciding who will serve in local posts, the vote stands to demonstrate whether, after 25 years of civil war, the government can restore a semblance of normality for the area's ethnic Tamil majority.

Questions remain as to whether the election will be free and fair, or simply a means for the government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa to consolidate its hold on the region through its ally, the breakaway faction that helped push the ***Tamil Tigers*** out. That faction has now reinvented itself as a political party, the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal Party, or T.M.V.P., and has been endorsed by the government.

Until recently, T.M.V.P. gunmen openly patrolled the East. The group is accused by human rights organizations, as well as United Nations officials, of recruiting child soldiers. Many people are fearful, and critics worry that the party will browbeat or ballot-stuff its way to an election victory.

Some opposition politicians have refused to run, fearing retribution. Amnesty International reported last week that a man had been abducted after having refused to run on a T.M.V.P. ticket.

Today, the T.M.V.P.'s heavily barricaded political offices are festooned with their party symbol, a boat, along with garish murals dedicated to their slain fighters. "Vote for the Boat," goes one slogan. "It will ferry the wounded Tamils to the shore."

Oddly enough, the faction's leader, the former Tamil Tiger commander known as Karuna, is not on these shores. He was detained in Britain last year on charges of traveling with a forged passport.

Sri Lanka 's Wild East Plans First Vote in Over 10 Years

The T.M.V.P. itself is hardly safe from violence. On a Sunday morning in February, a suicide bomber attacked a village not far from here, killing two T.M.V.P. workers who had tried to frisk him for weapons near the site of an election meeting. The government swiftly blamed the Tamil Tigers.

Neither the T.M.V.P. nor other Tamil parties that oppose the Tigers have laid down their arms. The pro-Tiger party is not fielding candidates in these elections, saying they would not be not safe.

Paffrel, an independent monitoring group, has called on all political parties to disarm. In February, it issued a report saying that while law and order had improved in the weeks leading up to the elections, several political parties and community leaders had told its observers that the presence of armed men was "an obstacle to free and fair elections." Its observers found little enthusiasm for voting for particular candidates.

Likewise, a pre-election assessment by the Center for Policy Alternatives, a nonpartisan research organization in the capital, Colombo, found a climate of fear and cynicism among civilians.

"Many felt that the elections will not drastically change the ground situation," said its report, released in mid-February. "The only change envisaged is that the T.M.V.P. and other armed actors will be elected into office and claim legitimacy for their role and activities in the area."

Several accusations of coercion and violence have been made in recent weeks. Last week, two men on a motorcycle told women leaving a political meeting of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front, a rival of the T.M.V.P., that their husbands would not live if they voted for the Liberation Front, according to the party's leader, Erasaiyah Thurairatnam.

Elsewhere, Mr. Thurairatnam said, armed cadres entered a party office and verbally threatened its workers. A member of another party, he said, was roughed up near a T.M.V.P. office a few days earlier.

"People are not in a mood to vote," Mr. Thurairatnam said. He said he feared that the results would be rigged.

His party was hardly sitting idle. On a recent day, a large group of women bearing parasols in the midday sun marched through the narrow roads of nearby Batticaloa, stumping for their candidate. A woman with a bullhorn brought up the rear. "We think this election has been imposed on us," she announced, and went on to urge people to vote.

The candidate, Sellapillai Asirvithan, in a crisp white shirt and traditional wraparound loongi, knocked on doors and handed out leaflets. "Exercise your democratic right," a supporter bellowed through the bullhorn. "You have the right to vote for the candidate of your choice."

Atanidas Arulanatham, poring over one of the leaflets, said he and his wife planned to vote. Asked whether people would be able to choose freely, he laughed.

"Not sure," was all he would say. "We hope those who win will bring peace."

Here in Vavunathivu, a T.M.V.P. candidate named Jegannathan Jeyaraj sat under a wide-armed tree in the courtyard of a Hindu temple, making his case. Once a child soldier, he later studied computers in India and is now trying to make it as a politician.

He told his audience that his party had given up hope for an independent ethnic Tamil homeland and had renounced armed struggle (though not yet their weapons, for fear of attacks by their rivals). He pledged economic development for the area. And he branded as terrorists his former masters, the Tamil Tigers, whom he had joined at age 7.

The audience kept quiet, except for a very old woman. "I cultivated three acres and got nothing because of the war," she told him.

"The past is past," he replied. "The T.M.V.P. will pave a new way."

Sri Lanka 's Wild East Plans First Vote in Over 10 Years

Undeterred, the woman wagged a finger. "You admit you broke away from the L.T.T.E.," she said. "Why are you blaming them now?" Then, finally, she said the unspeakable: "Why don't you ask the government to give us a separate state?"

Sri Lankan soldiers stood at the edge of the meeting, machine guns at the ready. Clumps of young men wearing T.M.V.P. jerseys stood in the shade.

Asked if she planned to vote, a woman sitting in the crowd nodded.

Asked if she felt free to vote her conscience, she shook her head and quietly said, "No." She smiled and looked down at the ground, refusing to say more.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTO: In Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, village women walked past a party office of the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal Party last month. Eastern Sri Lanka is holding elections in the hope of achieving some stability after a quarter century of civil war between government forces and the rebel Tamil Tigers. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PABLO BARTHOLOMEW FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) MAP: Candidates are running in Vavunathivu and other places. Map of Vavunathivu, Sri Lanka.

Load-Date: March 10, 2008

End of Document

At least 20 killed in Sri Lanka bus bombing: police

Agence France Presse -- English

January 16, 2008 Wednesday 3:58 AM GMT

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Length: 249 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Jan 16 2008

Body

Twenty people were killed and many others injured Wednesday in a suspected Tamil Tiger bomb attack on a crowded bus in southwest Sri Lanka, officials said.

"At least 20 people have been killed and several are injured. It was a state-run bus with at least 60 civilians on it, including schoolchildren," Sri Lankan military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said.

The defence ministry said the bus, travelling from Buttala to Okkampitiya, was hit by a fragmentation bomb apparently hidden on the bus. In all 50 people were killed or injured, it said.

It blamed the attack on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**).

"**LTTE** terrorists have carried out a cowardly bomb blast targeting innocent schoolchildren at Okkampitiya, Monaragala," the ministry said, describing the rebels as "a ruthless terrorist outfit notorious for crimes against **women** and children."

The attack came as a 2002 Norwegian-brokered truce, which was in practice dead anyway, is set to officially end on Wednesday.

The government abandoned the ceasefire two weeks ago, saying there was no point attempting to negotiate with "terrorists."

Sri Lankan government defence officials are convinced they have the upper hand in the long-running conflict, and have said peace is only possible when they kill the **LTTE**'s leaders and capture the north.

Tamil Tiger rebels have been fighting since 1972 to carve out a separate state in the north and east of the ethnic Sinhalese-majority island. The conflict has left tens of thousands of people dead.

Load-Date: January 16, 2008

Blast in Colombo kills 21

Northern Territory News (Australia)

June 7, 2008 Saturday

1 - Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 17

Length: 247 words

Byline: By MEL GUNASEKERA in Colombo

Body

AT LEAST 21 commuters were killed and 47 others wounded yesterday in a Tamil Tiger mine attack on a crowded bus south of the Sri Lankan capital.

The state-run bus was peppered with shrapnel, suggesting a powerful fragmentation mine placed on the roadside had been detonated as the bus was passing, officials said.

"Twenty-one people have been killed, eight of them are women," police spokesman Ranjith Gunasekera said, with 47 others injured.

The military's spokesman, Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara, blamed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Survivors said the bus was knocked over by the force of the explosion.

"I was standing in the middle of the bus when there was a loud noise and the whole bus toppled to the side," said 21-year-old office worker Shanika Priyadharshani, while being bandaged up in hospital.

"I blacked out for a while. There was black smoke, people were dead around me.

"Some were shouting for help. I shouted for help and someone pulled me out and put me into a passing by vehicle and brought me to hospital," she said.

The bomb was the latest in a string of attacks against commuters.

Last Wednesday, 18 people were hurt when suspected Tiger rebels set off a bomb alongside a packed commuter train. On May 26, another attack on a commuter train -- also blamed on the LTTE -- killed nine people and wounded 84 others.

Each attack came after LTTE complained government commandos, have killed civilians in roadside bombings inside Sri Lanka's rebel-held north.

Load-Date: June 6, 2008

Blast in Colombo kills 21

End of Document

SRI LANKA: CIVILIANS CONTINUE TO FACE DEADLY DAILY THREAT

States News Service

July 11, 2008 Friday

Copyright 2008 States News Service

Length: 255 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK, NY

Body

The following information was released by Amnesty International USA:

Amnesty International today condemned the targeting of civilians in the ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka.

At least two **women** and a 12 year old child died today when unidentified gunmen fired at a bus. Another person also died in the ambush. Around 26 others were injured in the attack, which took place in Buttala, south east of the capital, Colombo.

The defence ministry has said that Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) gunmen were responsible. The **LTTE** has not commented on the attack. In January, 26 people died in another bus attack in the same area.

"These indiscriminate attacks are brutal. The victims are overwhelmingly people who are trying to go about their everyday lives, living in fear of attacks at any time, with the added untold suffering this brings to their relatives. The total disregard for the safety of civilians is completely indefensible," said Amnesty International.

The organization called upon all parties to the conflict - - the **LTTE**, the government security forces and other armed groups - - to abide by international law. All combatants in Sri Lanka are bound by the provisions of Article 3 Common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which applies to non-international armed conflicts.

"It is time that all parties put human rights at the heart of their policies and end the terrible uncertainty for civilians in conflict-affected areas, and for those who are targeted in reprisal attacks in the south," said Amnesty International.

Load-Date: July 22, 2008

A slaughter waiting to happen; Sri Lanka

The International Herald Tribune

March 20, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 782 words

Byline: Lakhdar Brahimi - The New York Times Media Group

Body

The already severe humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka is on the brink of catastrophe. It will take the quick arrival of humanitarian relief and high-level international political muscle to bring the nightmarish situation to an end and prevent a slaughter

.

An estimated 150,000 civilians are now trapped in a tiny pocket of land between Sri Lankan military forces, whose artillery shells regularly fall among them, and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**), who shoot at them if they try to escape. Food, clean water and medical assistance are all increasingly scarce.

According to U.N. figures, 2,300 civilians have already died and at least 6,500 have been injured since January. Some 500 children have been killed and over 1,400 injured. What happens to the rest of those caught in the middle of the government's onslaught and the Tigers' fight to the death depends not only on the two parties but on the international response as well.

The crisis is born of acts by both sides that most probably amount to serious violations of humanitarian law and perhaps to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

As it has withdrawn before the government forces, the **LTTE** has sought refuge in the civilian population. It has been holding men, **women** and children as hostages, forcibly recruiting them and using them as human shields.

The government has responded with attacks that independent observers describe as indiscriminate. Distinguishing combatants from noncombatants has become impossible with fighters and civilians packed so closely together. Alarming reports are coming in that government forces are shelling even those areas they themselves have declared "no-fire zones."

If both groups do not end the fighting immediately, the lives of tens of thousands of civilians are at risk. Both parties must understand that the continuation of their current actions is not acceptable.

The situation is even more tragic because it represents an unnecessarily devastating coda to a war that is already over.

Totally overwhelmed by government forces, the **LTTE** has lost. Holding civilian hostages and showing complete disregard for the Tamil population that it claims to want to liberate will not resurrect its ability to fight this war.

A slaughter waiting to happen Sri Lanka

Nor will the annihilation of thousands of civilians secure the government's long-cherished victory over terrorism. On the contrary, the indiscriminate killing of its own citizens will make it harder for Colombo to seal its military victory with post-conflict reconciliation and development of the Tamil-majority north.

Opinion among the millions of Tamils around the world, especially those in southern India, is being dangerously radicalized by images and stories of intense civilian suffering.

The international community should not let the already desperate situation end up an all-out humanitarian catastrophe. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon should insist on immediate access for U.N. staff to no-fire zones in order to assess the needs of the population. He should appoint a special representative to work with the government of Sri Lanka and all the relevant parties to guarantee the rights and protection of the endangered civilians.

On the political side, other international leaders - in particular, President Barack Obama, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and other leaders from Asia, the nonaligned movement and the Commonwealth -

must urgently use their leverage to convince the Sri Lankan government to stop its offensive.

They should help shift the government from a strategy of total annihilation to one of containment by addressing government fears that LTTE leaders will use a pause in the fighting to flee and regroup.

In addition to assisting the U.N. in the evacuation of civilians, all these friends of Sri Lanka should commit themselves to supervise the surrender of the LTTE, with guarantees of the physical security of those who surrender, backed up by the presence of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees wherever the military receives civilians or surrendered fighters.

The United States and India could also offer to increase naval surveillance in order to prevent remaining Tiger fighters from escaping by sea.

None of these measures will be easy to achieve. The government and the LTTE are locked in a war to the last man and seem oblivious to the civilian death toll around them.

The international community has the means to act; it must not, it cannot fail to act. Being a spectator when 150,000 thousand people are trapped in a death zone is not an option.

**

Lakhdar Brahimi, former special adviser to the U.N. secretary general, is a board member of the International Crisis Group.

Load-Date: March 25, 2009

Tiger chief honours suicide bombers who hit Sri Lanka base

Agence France Presse -- English

September 12, 2008 Friday 9:50 AM GMT

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Length: 261 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sept 12 2008

Body

Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger chief has paid tribute to the suicide bombers who killed at least 15 people in an attack on a northern military base, a pro-rebel website said Friday.

The elusive Velupillai Prabhakaran, 53, garlanded photographs of the 10 "Black Tiger" suicide bombers at an undisclosed location in the northern Wanni region on Thursday, the Tamilnet.com website reported.

Five women were among the group that struck the Vavuniya military complex, 260 kilometres (160 miles) north of Colombo on Tuesday, the rebels said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) also used light aircraft to drop bombs on the base. The rebels are believed to operate five Czech-built Zlin-143 aircraft smuggled into the island in pieces and re-assembled.

The Sri Lankan government said it had shot down a Tamil Tiger aircraft, a charge the rebels denied.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan troops killed 37 Tiger rebels during fresh fighting across the island's north on Thursday, the defence ministry said. The LTTE did not comment on the fighting.

The ministry said one government soldier was killed in the fighting.

Thursday's clashes raised the number of rebels killed by troops since January to 6,517 while 632 soldiers have lost their lives during the same period, according to a ministry toll.

The government bars reporters from travelling to the frontlines, making it impossible to verify casualty figures.

The LTTE have been fighting for a separate state for minority Tamils in the island's north and east. Tens of thousands of people have died on both sides of the conflict since 1972.

Load-Date: September 13, 2008

Majority support assured at Security Council against discussing SL

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

March 25, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 1536 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, March 25 -- In the midst of growing concern in the international arena, Foreign Secretary Dr. Palitha Kohona, reiterates that there is no threat of the civilian situation in the country being taken up for debate in the UN Security Council. He maintains that a majority of the members have objected to taking Sri Lanka's situation for discussion. 'Even if there are those that are in favour of taking it up for discussion, it doesn't matter because as long as one of the permanent members object, it won't go through. And as of last night at least three of the members have said that there was no need to discuss Sri Lanka in the Security Council,' he asserts.

Q: A second bid to get Sri Lanka on the agenda of the UN Security Council has been reported, although many of the member states have objected. But some countries in the Security Council are reported to be in favour of discussing the humanitarian crisis in the north. Is the govt. concerned about this development? A majority of the members have objected to taking Sri Lanka's situation for discussion. And we have told that there was no reason to take it up for discussion either. Even if there are those that are in favour of taking it up for discussion, it doesn't matter because as long as one of the permanent members object, it won't go through. And as of last night at least three of the members have said that there was no need to discuss Sri Lanka in the Security Council. Q: There is a view that the member countries may still use the 'procedural vote' to negate the veto power and take up the matter for discussion. Such a move was taken by certain member countries when the issue in Zimbabwe was taking place. Although one can't compare the two situations, are you concerned that some member countries would resort to such a move? We have no information that any member country is pursuing that option. There is no way you can compare our situation to what happened in Zimbabwe, and the situation would have to be so dire and every other option eliminated before one would get to that. The main mandate of the UN is of international peace and security, and the member countries have expressed confidence that the situation in Sri Lanka doesn't call for such concern. The situation in Sri Lanka is not anywhere near a threat to international peace and security. The only one posing such a threat is the LTTE. It is important that the diaspora understand that what they are clamouring for will only prolong the suffering of the civilians in the North. I'd like to call upon them to use its influence to make the LTTE which is now restricted to such a small land area, to let the people go, lay down arms and join the democratic process. Q: A few weeks ago the United States was reported to be prepared to lead a sea borne evacuation of trapped civilians from the north, and they now seem keen to take the humanitarian issue to the UN Security Council. How do you view this interest of the US? There are a lot of stories about such moves but nothing has been formally confirmed. We have not been informed of any plans for evacuation. Such a decision must only be taken after doing a thorough check of the ground situation. The need really is for the LTTE to let the civilians go free. I think the situation of the civilians is not only a concern for the US but especially so for President Rajapaksa. The President and the government is very concerned that the civilians are taken out of harm's way. The international community has echoed this concern and demanded that the LTTE release these civilians. But the LTTE persists on holding on to the civilians. Q: The LTTE last week called for an unconditional ceasefire which the government has

Majority support assured at Security Council against discussing SL

rejected. What's the gov't's rationale for refusing the ceasefire? This is the most cynical of duplicities ever. The LTTE has even outdone itself by calling for this ceasefire! Its now down on its knees and pleading with the international community for a ceasefire, when the government has asked them to lay down arms. The moment they stop firing naturally there would be a ceasefire. The LTTE's deluded dreams are in shatters now. They herded thousands of innocent civilians and barricaded them and now they are pleading for a ceasefire. The solution is very clear- the LTTE must down its weapons and quietly join the democratic process. There is nothing to negotiate. It is time to say enough is enough. Q: Why has the President invited Tamil National Alliance for talks at this juncture? It is part of the government's plan to engage all minorities to evolve a political process on matters confronting the communities. He has met other party members before and now he wishes to meet the TNA. The President has an inclusive plan in mind; one which reflects the views of all communities. The President has said a few weeks ago that he would be seeking the views of the TNA. Q: The Press Trust of India yesterday quoted Navaneethem Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights that she was going to 'press' for the presence of UN human rights monitors in Sri Lanka, a call to which she claims there has been no response from the government. Firstly, the UN has never come out with any allegations against the government on how it conducts the war. There are 193 countries in the UN and we haven't heard any one of these members say anything to that effect either. It is wrong to make these statements as those reflective of the UN. Ms. Pillay is only the High Commissioner for Human Rights. She is not the UN. The Security Council hasn't said anything and none of the 193 countries are expressing any views against Sri Lanka. Individuals may have their own ideas. We had hoped that she would not adopt this confrontational approach. Her mandate is not to confront. We had in fact hoped to work with her. I'm sure she wouldn't have taken this stand if she was dealing with a bigger country. We continue to hope that she will work in consistency with her mandate and not take this approach. We seriously challenge these claims. Our information doesn't suggest that these numbers are correct or that the troops were firing indiscriminately. In fact the troops are under direct orders not to fire in to civilians. But the fact also remains that the LTTE is using these civilians as a human shield in firing at the troops. The situation with the numbers is that the ICRC has evacuated 5000 civilians from the no-fire zone. These civilians consisted of the injured and the sick; some suffering from cancer or women who are pregnant and not at all injured from the firing. The question therefore is where she got her figures from. The fact is that there were over 5000 hangers on or family members who came over with the injured. Then on what basis did the ICRC ferry them over if there were 7000 injured as she says? Why did they leave them? These figures are extremely suspicious. They have a remarkable similarity to those in the Tamilnet. She has been misled. I'm not saying that there are no civilians who are injured; as would happen in any war. But the fact is that as a policy is looking after the civilians. When the government has the capability to use air power, it has avoided that option because of the civilians, and as a result suffered heavier casualties. Q: Guardian newspaper quotes United Nations briefing documents that 'more than 150,000 people are being shelled daily and are running short of water and medicine' in the government's declared "No Fire Zone" and that there 'was a real danger that it could result in an all-out humanitarian catastrophe'. According to this report UN figures reportedly show that there are more than 60 deaths a day due to army bombardment and more than 3,000 lives have been lost since the end of January. What is the gov't's position on this? If my information is correct this information is from the Human Rights Watch and not the UN. And I'm sure that a lot of Tamil Tiger terrorists are being killed daily. And they don't become civilians just because they get in to a sarong. And the LTTE's drawing in children as well as the adults, so they're being injured and killed. I'm confident in saying that the number 60 maybe true but many of that would be LTTE. These are the figures that are reported to Colombo and no effort is made to distinguish between. Q: Democrat John Kerry, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has intimated to President Rajapaksa on Monday that the government's failure to protect civilians in government safe zones was hurting the country's global standing. Kerry said he had "grave concern" about reports that government forces had shelled civilians and hospitals in government-designated safe zones amid a fierce push to crush the rebel force. A response to Senator Kerry is the same I have for Ms. Pillay. He needs to brief himself of the ground situation and remind himself that Sri Lanka is a democratic country struggling against a ruthless terrorist organisation and more importantly one that is banned by the United States and several other democracies. It is the LTTE that uses the civilians, traps them and uses them for their own end. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Majority support assured at Security Council against discussing SL

Load-Date: March 26, 2009

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Long-Term Potential On Hold

Business Monitor Online

February 14, 2008 Thursday

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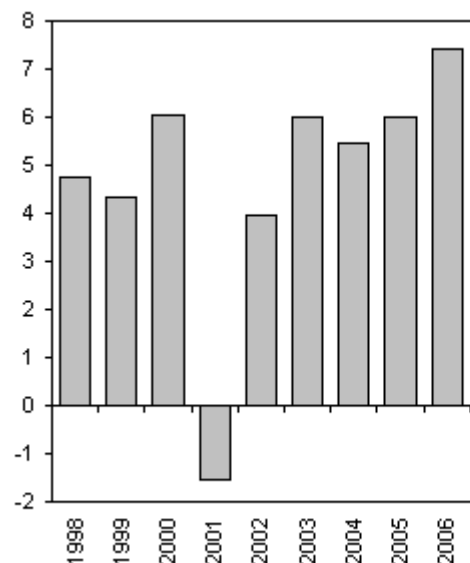
Length: 1878 words

Body

BMI View: Sri Lanka's long-term economic potential will continue to be constrained by the civil war, which looks set to intensify in 2008. While real GDP growth should remain in the region of 6.0%, Sri Lanka could be aiming for 7.0-8.0% if peace returned and massive reconstruction aid were to be disbursed. Over the long term, Sri Lanka's strategic location and its educated workforce could allow it to become a key trading hub.

Sri Lanka's economy will continue to face adversity in 2008, owing to the intensifying civil war and deteriorating global economic conditions. Although the war has thus far generally been confined to the north and east of the island, the official annulment of the 2002 ceasefire in January 2008 raises the risk of all-out war, which means that Colombo and other regions could be targeted more aggressively by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**, **Tamil Tigers**). In fact, Colombo has already seen attacks, the highest-profile of which were **LTTE** air raids near the international airport in early 2007, and at its main railway station in February 2008.

Performing Below Potential
Sri Lanka - Real GDP Growth (%)



Long-Term Potential On Hold

Source: BMI

As regards the global economic environment, the US slowdown (and possible recession), coupled with the appreciation of the rupee, will weigh on Sri Lanka's exports. The US is Sri Lanka's biggest export destination, accounting for almost 30% of the island's outbound shipments. Beyond these considerations, we feel that Sri Lanka has great potential, owing to the factors listed below, but these will only be tapped if peace is restored.

Factors That Could Boost Sri Lanka's Prospects

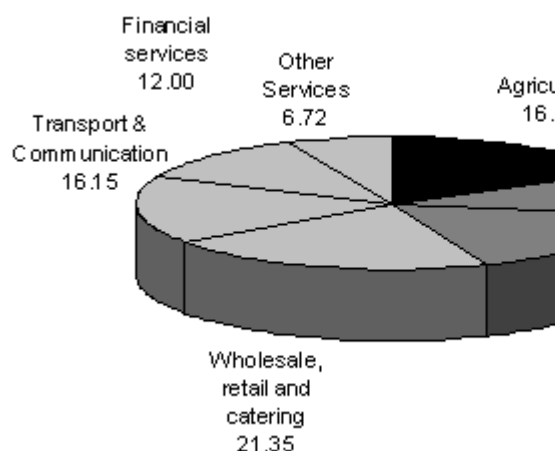
Strategic location: One of Sri Lanka's greatest assets is its strategic location, lying next to emerging giant India, and not so distant from China. In addition, Sri Lanka sits astride the main trade and shipping routes between the oil-rich Middle East and the dynamic Asia-Pacific basin. Furthermore, the importance of the Indian Ocean is rising, thanks to the growing integration of Africa into the global economy.

The fact that the Sri Lankan port of Trincomallee is one of the deepest harbours in the world could make it a major trading hub, along the lines of Hong Kong or Singapore. However, this is unlikely ever to happen so long as the civil war makes Sri Lanka physically dangerous for businesses, investors, and goods.

Educated workforce: Sri Lanka's workforce is much better educated than its Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi counterparts. Literacy rates are around 94.5% for males and 90.6% for females, according to official figures. In addition, Sri Lankans are wealthier than their South Asian counterparts, with a per capita GDP of US\$1,729 (US\$6,277 adjusted for purchasing power parity) in 2008, according to **IMF** estimates. By comparison, India's per capita GDP is US\$1,089 (US\$4,543 in PPP terms). Pakistan and Bangladesh rank below India.

Offshoring opportunities: Sri Lanka could potentially benefit from business process outsourcing (BPO) investments going forward. As mentioned above, its population is well-educated. Also positive is Sri Lanka's low cost of labour and rents, and its geographical location close to India. However, Sri Lanka's population (20 million) is far smaller than the region's main BPO players, India (1 billion) and the Philippines (85 million), thus limiting its pool of potential outsourcing-oriented workers. In addition, English is far less widely spoken than in India and the Philippines. Furthermore, the business environment is still considered sub-optimal for BPO, not least because of the civil war. Nonetheless, with the telecommunications sector being a major growth area, the prospects for BPO activities would be given a significant boost if peace were to be restored.

Services Are A Key Driver
Sri Lanka - GDP By Sector (%), 2006



Source: Central Bank of Sri Lanka

Infrastructure drive: The government is embarking on a much-needed infrastructure drive, but is being constrained by its chronically high fiscal deficit and debt burden. Rising defence expenditures to finance the escalating war against the LTTE are preventing the maximisation of funds available for infrastructure spending. Consequently, Sri Lanka has been forced to secure foreign financing, through its inaugural US\$500mn international bond sale in October 2007, and a US\$1.5bn loan secured from Iran in November 2007. Although several billion

Long-Term Potential On Hold

dollars of reconstruction aid is being offered by international donors, the war situation will prevent the disbursement of these funds.

Sri Lanka will thus have to rely on the good will of new allies such as China. In March 2007, President Mahinda Rajapaksa paid a week-long visit to the People's Republic, and signed several accords on improving bilateral co-operation. China is already assisting Sri Lanka in building the latter's first coal-fired power plant at Norocholai, which is expected to produce 300MW by 2010 and ultimately up to 900MW.

China is also assisting Sri Lanka in building the Hambantota Development Zone, at the eponymous port located 240km south of Colombo. The project will include a container port, oil refinery, and airport, with full completion due in 15 years. Chinese companies will finance 85% of the US\$360mn port construction costs.

Oil exploration: One of Sri Lanka's major weaknesses is its dearth of indigenous oil supplies, which means that it has to import all its fuel requirements. With global oil prices so high, and the rupee generally weak, Sri Lanka has been and will remain saddled with a tremendous oil import bill, thus keeping its trade and current accounts firmly in deficit. Costly fuel imports are also a factor behind Sri Lanka's runaway inflation.

Thus, Sri Lanka stands to benefit from tapping recently discovered oil deposits in its northwestern offshore Mannar basin. Preliminary estimates suggest that there are one billion barrels of oil there. The government's bidding process for three exploration tenders closed on January 31 2008. Of the total eight blocks on offer, two have already been assigned to China and India (one each) without a bidding process. Bidders are expected to be selected in April 2008, based on the technological and economic benefits they offer Sri Lanka, with actual exploration due to begin in August. If all goes well, the government hopes to begin production in 2010.

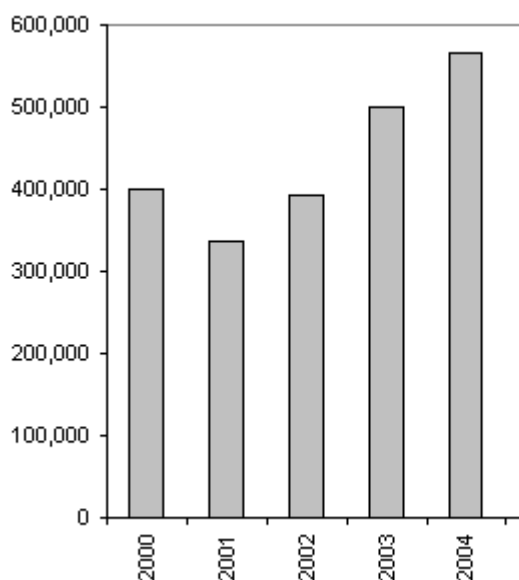
Opportunities for privatisation: The election of Mahinda Rajapaksa as president in November 2005 essentially derailed Sri Lanka's privatisation process, in line with his pledge to halt the sales of publicly owned assets. Although the private sector accounts for 85% of GDP, the government still owns institutions that manage about 60% of financial assets, as well as utility companies and some small firms. Rajapaksa's first term does not expire until November 2011. However, if the more market-friendly opposition United National Party were to win a majority in parliamentary elections (which may take place well before they are due in early 2010), then they could revive the stalled privatisation process.

Agriculture reform: Although agriculture accounts for around 17% of GDP, it still employs 32% of the labour force, and is still the biggest single-sector employer. This mismatch suggests that the agriculture sector could benefit from a significant increase in productivity. One explanation for this discrepancy is that the vast majority of the population still lives in the countryside. Sri Lanka is one of the least urbanised countries in Asia, with only 15.1% living in cities, according to UN statistics. This proportion is forecast to rise only to 21.4% by 2030, which is still very low.

Tourists Scared Away

Sri Lanka - Total Tourist Arrivals

Long-Term Potential On Hold

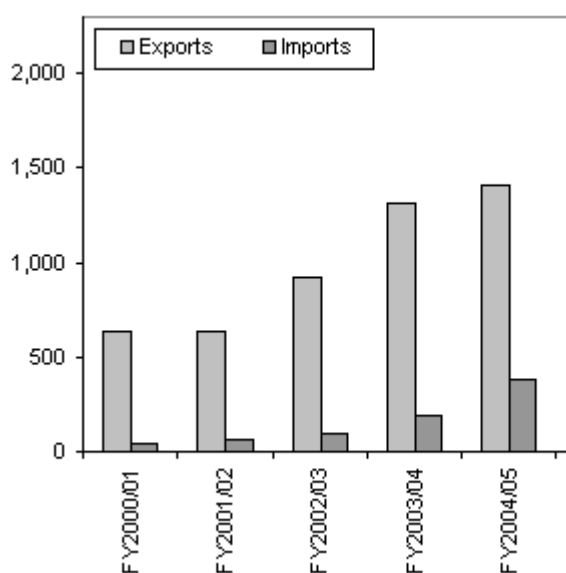


Source: Sri Lanka Tourist Board

Tourism potential: Sri Lanka's tourism industry offers considerable potential. Before the island returned to *de facto* civil war in 2006, visitor arrivals had been surging, providing a major boost to the services sector. Although the fighting has largely been confined to the north and east, the mere fact that it is taking place sours Sri Lanka's image. So too did aerial attacks by the **LTTE** near Colombo's international airport in early 2007.

Diaspora support: Sri Lanka has a sizeable diaspora which provides significant remittances (thereby helping to finance the current account deficit). They have also helped support government finances by purchasing Sri Lanka Development Bonds (SLDBs), which are specifically aimed at foreigners or Sri Lankans living abroad. There is a significant Tamil diaspora whose remittances could be channelled towards reconstruction in the event of peace. Furthermore, tapping the diaspora more effectively could help improve links between Sri Lanka and the rest of the world.

Lanka Keen To Narrow The Gap
India - Trade With Sri Lanka (US\$mn)



Source: Department of Commerce, India

Tapping the Indian market: At present, neighbouring India is only Sri Lanka's third-biggest export destination, having purchased US\$700mn (9.3%) of its goods in 2006, according the IMF's *Direction of Trade Statistics*. This is

Long-Term Potential On Hold

far behind the US (US\$2.075bn, 27.6%) and UK (US\$850mn, 11.3%) - although India has risen from 16th place in 2000. In fact, India is in many ways Sri Lanka's natural market, given its proximity and cultural links.

Although Sri Lanka and India signed a free trade agreement (FTA) in December 1999, the full benefits of the pact have yet to take effect, because of lingering disagreements over access to agricultural products and service-sector activities. The FTA mainly benefits Sri Lankan exports to southern India, and will need to be expanded to cover the rest of India. At present, India is by far the biggest source of Sri Lanka's imports, resulting in a US\$1.57bn trade deficit in India's favour - something which Colombo is keen to reduce. However, one disadvantage facing Sri Lanka is that its main exports to India - tea, rubber and garments - are already produced in large quantities in India itself.

Conclusion: No Quick Solutions

Overall, even if the civil war were to end immediately, it would probably take some time for Sri Lanka to maximise its economic potential, as businesses and foreign investors assessed the durability of any putative peace structure. However, we believe that a sustained peace would allow real GDP growth to accelerate towards 8.0%. On the other hand, failure to achieve peace would likely confine economic expansion to the 5.0-6.0% range seen in recent years, and leave Sri Lanka marginalised in the minds of foreign investors.

SRI LANKA - ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2
	1	2	2	2	3	4	5	6	6	8
	8	0	4	9	6	4	2	0	9	0
	2	9	5	4	4	0	3	8	6	0
	2	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	1	6

Nominal GDP, LKRbn 3	5	8	8	2	0 e	4 f	2 f	2 f	8 f	0 f
	1	2	2	2	3	4	4	5	6	7
	8	0	4	7	3	0	7	4	2	1

	8	0	0	4	5	8	5	8	2	5
Nominal GDP, US\$bn 4	0	0	0	0	0 e	0 f	0 f	0 f	0 f	0 f
	6	5	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	7
Real GDP growth, % change y-o-y 1,3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	0	4	0	4	3 e	0 f	3 f	3 f	5 f	0 f
		1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3
	9	0	2	3	6	9	2	5	8	1
	7	2	2	6	4	6	5	4	2	8
GDP per capita, US\$ 4	8	7	0	8	7 e	8 f	1 f	1 f	8 f	9 f
	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	9	9	9	0	0	0	1	1	2	2

	3	5	7	0	3	7	1	6	0	4
Population, mn 3	0	0	0	0	0 e	0 f	0 f	0 f	0 f	0 f
	8	8	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Unemployment, % of labour force, eop 2,5	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	4	3	2	5	3 e	3 f	3 f	3 f	2 f	1 f

Notes: e BMI estimates. f BMI forecasts. 1 Constant 1996 prices; 2 End of period; Sources: 3 Central Bank of Sri Lanka. 4 BMI calculation; 5 Department of Census and Statistics.

Long-Term Potential On Hold

Load-Date: September 1, 2013

End of Document

Shattering of a pipe dream

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

January 26, 2009 Monday

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Length: 1519 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Jan. 26 -- It is clear that the LTTE, once pretenders to a de facto State in certain parts of the North & East of Sri Lanka, are now in their death throes fighting an overwhelmingly stronger army in a fast shrinking corner around the small township of Mullaitive.

With their inevitable destruction will end, perhaps spasmodically, one of the saddest as well as bloodiest chapters of the post colonial history of this island nation.

Much has been written about the origins and the aggravations that led to the hugely destructive conflict between a section of Sri Lankan Tamils, a vital minority mainly residing in the North/Eastern parts of the country, and the State of Sri Lanka.

Unfamiliar

Its tragedy is that the conflict could have been easily avoided. When the departing colonial power left, entrusting our then leaders with the unfamiliar powers accumulated at the helm of a modern State they by and large seem to have been seduced mainly by the aspect of power exercised purely as a self-serving mechanism. Cohesion and the integrity of a strong State cannot be built on mere dilettantism. Enduring institutions are built by personal attributes very different.

If the two communities had a leadership which could see a larger world the contemporary history of Sri Lanka would have been very different in deed. The death and destruction caused by the conflict as well as its direct impact on the general progress of the country is very large.

Challenge

A study of our national politics spanning from the era immediately prior to independence to about mid-1970s (and even later) when the conflict emerged as a violent challenge to the State will amply demonstrate the parochial approach adopted by several of the community leaders on both sides.

Those who paid the bitter price for their follies were the subsequent generations. Naturally, the hardest hit has been the Tamil community who had to face the brunt of the fighting.

This is a community that one time was reputed for their learning and the devotion to its ancient culture. In academic fields such as the sciences, particularly in mathematics, they proved to be good students.

Shattering of a pipe dream

Until quite recently in this country many learned professions were dominated by them. In the legislature, public administration, judiciary and commercial activity the Tamils have contributed immensely.

The lunacy of divisive politics has changed all that. With hindsight the post-independence Tamil leadership appears bigoted if not selfish. Rather than work towards finding commonalities they seem to have often opted to demand a special status based on historical and regional particularities. Perhaps the intransigence of some of the Sinhala leaders pushed them to extreme positions.

It is pointed out by some academics that the Tamil community enjoyed a somewhat advantageous position vis-a vis the majority Sinhalese during the colonial period, a situation which was bound to change with representative form of government and wide spread free education.

Democratic systems we inherited from the departing British naturally increased the expectations of the voter.

To meet the high expectations of the electorate the economy needed to perform at a qualitatively different level. This we could not achieve. The leadership of the two communities reacted to the stresses caused by this difficult situation in a manner which set in motion the train of events that culminated in the bloody conflict.

Enormous

In the light of the enormous changes that have occurred since the Second World War era, it appears that our entire leadership since, whether it is the so called landed gentry, nationalists, socialists or even the red hot revolutionaries were ludicrously out of step with the fast evolving world outside.

When some of our leaders were talking about socialism, unbeknown to them that system had begun its irreversible implosion. Some other leaders spoke about language rights only to have their own children obtaining Visas to settle permanently in countries with completely alien cultures.

They spoke of inviting robber Barons to invest here at the time when the rest of the world had begun demanding high ethics and transparency in such matters.

Fundamental

The incredible revolution created by the growth of the inter-net, seems to have gone over their heads completely. This fundamental failure of the national leadership surely led to the havoc of the past three decades.

When in the early days Tamil grievances were articulated, their leadership in the form of the Chelvanayagams, Ponnambalams, Amirthalingams and the Tiruchelvams, despite their obvious failings, were educated men of breeding.

But when in the 1970s the nascent terrorist groups in the fringes of Tamil political organizations began killing unarmed Tamil civilians accused of collaborating with the State these leaders made absurd excuses for the killers, referring to them euphemistically as the "boys".

It did not take long for them to realize they could not ride the tiger. Eventually many of the former Tamil leaders met bloody ends in the streets of Colombo where they had fled for safety at the hands of the "boys".

The Tamil political expression had grown into the grotesque form that is the LTTE today.

Now the leadership of the Tamil community was in the hands of coarse men, armed and dangerous. The "Tigers" as they called themselves took great pride in their skill in murdering unarmed opponents, most times lulled into complacency by the pretended friendship of the killers.

The female suicide bomber who assassinated Rajiv Gandhi worshipped him in the traditional manner before detonating the bomb which killed them both. Tamils who had dissented in any manner with the LTTE could expect no mercy.

Shattering of a pipe dream

There was a time when Tamil leaders openly discussed and argued matters concerning their people. The LTTE leadership which is strictly mono-lingual with only a handful, who has studied beyond the advance level, has no such inclinations.

All decisions are made by Prabhakaran, their undisputed leader, which are then carried out by the toadies and flatterers who surround him. Sure he had a few victories against the army, which really were due to its weaknesses than the prowess of the rag-tag LTTE. As it happens often in Sri Lanka accidental successes against enemies not up to scratch, gets interpreted as acts of genius.

But then the spurning of all peace offers and accommodations of the Sri Lankan Government, fighting the IPKF, Killing of Rajiv Gandhi, cancellation of the ceasefire, numerous mass scale killings and thousands of other atrocities also originated in the untutored mind of the LTTE leader who according to legend spends his leisure watching Clint Eastwood movies.

Community

For the community directly affected the consequences of such a situation are not hard to imagine. In the second half of the 20th Century we had the examples of Pol-Pot and Idi Amin who both spoke in terms of liberation.

Like Cambodia and Uganda, Sri Lanka is a poor country. Most of the poor Tamil youth recruited to the killing machine of the LTTE probably do not even understand the purpose of their sacrifices save for the indoctrination they have been subject to.

Today the poverty of that community is such that the rubber slippers on their calloused feet maybe one of the few prized possessions of the teenage LTTE recruits. Modern conveniences like mobiles, air-conditioners, refrigerators or even pipe-borne water do not generally come into the daily lives of the foot soldiers.

But deadly technology in the form of weapons, originally designed in the West, such as automatic rifles, land mines, hand grenades and rockets have been put in their young hands with exhortations' to kill and be killed.

In the event they meet their death, the recruits are given an incongruous military rank, again of Western origin and are called martyrs. Studies, sports, music, travel, socializing, standard activities of the youth in a progressive wholesome culture, are taboo to the young recruits of the LTTE.

Indictment

It is an indictment on the past governments of Sri Lanka that it had allowed a brigand group like the LTTE to establish a base in a part of the country. The Tamil people confined both physically and psychologically by them, are citizens of this country and should have been liberated quickly and resolutely.

Our faint-hearted leadership, fearful and tiresomely subservient to every influence from foreign sources have allowed a relatively small terrorist threat become a chimera whose mere name sends shivers up their back. It is even more sinister that some bureaucrats and businessmen made the 'war' an opportunity to make money.

When we finally took on the LTTE seriously, it was proved that the emperor was really naked. The terrorist organization's power was built on bluff and a cunning appreciation of the divisive politics of the South.

Eventually the reach and the strength of a legitimate State will triumph. Prabhakaran's pipe-dream of a large estate which he was going to vaingloriously call a State is about to shatter.

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Shattering of a pipe dream

Load-Date: May 6, 2009

End of Document

14th batch of patients and civilians trapped in Mullaithivu evacuated with the Naval assistance

Colombo Times

March 27, 2009 Friday

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Length: 284 words

Body

Colombo, March 27 -- The fourteenth batch of 488 patients and civilians was evacuated on board "MV Green Ocean" on the 26th March 2009. The evacuation of patients and civilians trapped in **LTTE** Clutches in the un-cleared areas in Mullaithivu is being carried out under the ICRC flag. Sri Lanka Navy is providing safe passage for evacuees on humanitarian grounds.

The patients among the evacuees, upon disembarkation at Pulmuadai , were provided with emergency medical treatment by Naval doctors and were rushed to the Field hospital in Pulmudai and the General hospital in Padaviya by the naval personnel for further treatment. Elaborate arrangements have been made to treat the sick and the wounded evacuees once they reach cleared areas. Hospitals have been equipped with adequate stocks of essential drugs and specialist medical personnel are assigned to treat the sick and the wounded as they are transferred to hospitals.

The fourteenth batch consisted of 157 adult males, 216 adult **females** and 115 children in total. Among them were 100 male and 63 **female** patients needing medical treatment. The evacuees had been languishing in pain and fear due to the **LTTE**'s adamant stance to hold all civilians captive in the un-cleared areas as human shields despite the repeated appeals by the International Community to free all civilians to arrive in safe areas immediately.

The Navy, as part of its humanitarian operations, has put in place a number of comprehensive evacuation measures to facilitate the evacuation process. Naval personnel and vessels along with stand-by rescue and medical teams are on special deployment in the North-eastern seas for assisting Tamil civilians fleeing from **LTTE** clutches.

Load-Date: May 5, 2009

INDIAN HYPOCRISY and Sri Lanka

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

November 17, 2008 Monday 2:09 PM EST

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Length: 850 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Nov. 17 -- Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has advised President Mahinda Rajapaksa to look after the safety and welfare of the Tamils. The State Assembly of Tamil Nadu [the rough equivalent of one of our 8 White Elephants called Provincial Councils] has passed, unanimously, an imbecilic resolution calling for a 'cease-fire' between the armed forces of the sovereign state of Sri Lanka and a gang of criminals [**LTTE**] whom our armed forces are fighting to reclaim a part of our territory over which they have usurped control.

Similarly, some 'Television Artistes' in Tamil Nadu - [i.e. those who make their living by pretending to be someone else] have decided to skip a few meals, thereby doing their health much good, and call such 'diet', a 'hunger strike' (!) to secure such cease-fire. The impertinent presumption of these professional 'pretenders' in acting on the unspoken premise that a temporary change by them in their dietary regime would tend to cause a sovereign state to cease its lawful endeavours to reclaim a part of its territory from a gang of criminal usurpers is truly mind-boggling.

Would any of the various actors in this farcical drama in India have acted as such if those citizens of India who are Tamils, had been not Tamils, but Sinhalese or Muslims ? The answer is obviously "No".

Thus, all these 'antics' of various Indians are nothing but an opportunistic exercise based on nothing more 'noble' than a desire to curry favour with the 80 odd million Tamils of India in the run up to an election in that Country.

To even imagine that these antics were founded on any humanitarian concerns would be downright stupid - for none of them indulged in these or similar antics when those criminals [**LTTE**] murdered multitudes of Sinhalese and Muslim civilians willy nilly, even while at prayer and sleeping on their beds or mats, and even murdered over 600 Sinhalese and Muslim Police Officers in captivity while a purported 'ceasefire' was in force. Similarly, when these criminals, murdered hundreds of unarmed soldiers and sailors while going on and returning from leave by exploding claymore mines, during the 'ceasefire' these Indian posers looked the other way. Evidently, Sinhalese and Muslims are, to them, the 'children of a lesser God'.

The total absence of concern for the basic human rights of Sinhalese and Muslim displayed by these Indian hypocrites apart, is there even an infinitesimal trace of genuine concern on their part, for the rights and welfare of the Tamils ?

The answer is a resounding "NO" - for, none of them expressed any concerns for the Tamils or indulged in such or any similar antics when the Indian Army of Occupation in Sri Lanka [IPKF] went on the rampage wilfully murdering multitudes of Tamil civilians including patients, doctors, nurses and attendants in the General Hospital, Jaffna; when the **LTTE** murdered and kept murdering Tamils in other terrorist groups such as TELO, EPRLF and PLOTE, and

INDIAN HYPOCRISY and Sri Lanka

even some purported 'democrats' of the TULF; when the **LTTE** murdered Tamil civilians who did not lick their boots ; when the **LTTE** deprived Tamil mothers of their little children, and those children of parental love, care and attention, by kidnapping them for slave labour in their terrorist cadres and use as 'cannon fodder'; when the **LTTE** extorted money and robbed food meant for Tamil civilians; and when the **LTTE** engaged in committing genocide of the Tamil race in Sri Lanka by using more and more Tamil **women** of child bearing age as cannon fodder thereby endangering the continued existence of the Tamil race in Sri Lanka. Frauds they were: frauds they are; and frauds they will be.

Thus, we can safely conclude that their current frantic antics are entirely insincere and designed purely to win the support of the massive Tamil population in India so as to retain or gain political power and/or influence together with the official and 'unofficial' rewards and privileges that go with them.

However absolutely malodorous this conduct of the Indians is, we cannot blind ourselves to the fact that had the roles been reversed, the President of Sri Lanka etc. would, in all probability, have acted in the same manner as these Indians - for such is the way of the politician.

However, the roles have not been, and will probably never be reversed. Thus it is that Mahinda Rajapaksa has the utterly unenviable and equally necessary but demeaning task of 'appeasing' the Indian hypocrites . For who is the small man who can ignore the pressures imposed by the big bully ?

However, this should not preclude 'civil society' from exposing the despicable hypocrisy of India.

What of Sri Lankan society in this scenario ? There are, most regrettably, in all walks of life, including the fourth estate, who, with undisguised or barely concealed glee, welcome all foreign interference critical of our government, including the antics of the hypocritical Indians. This ugly phenomenon is, however useful for the limited purpose of identifying and thereafter ostracizing/boycotting them.

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Load-Date: November 17, 2008

Truce not a ceasefire

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

January 31, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 303 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Jan. 31 -- Disaster Management Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe yesterday said the 48-hour truce period granted by President Mahinda Rajapaksa to free civilians out of LTTE bondage was in no way a ceasefire.

Addressing a press conference, following a meeting and a presentation by the Army Commander Sarath Fonseka to the Diplomatic community in Sri Lanka, at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo Minister Samarasinghe told journalists that bilateral and multilateral discussions had been held with the diplomatic community pertaining to the current situation in the conflict region in the north. "The talks centred on the performance of our war heroes in the north, were open, frank and transparent. They were also very comprehensive, informative and positive," Minister Samarasinghe said. Responding to queries from journalists, Minister Samarasinghe categorically stated that the Government is determined not to have a Ceasefire. This special measure had been taken to ensure the welfare and the security of the civilians in the north, he said. The Government in this context, was urging the LTTE to let go innocent civilians, men, women and children within the next 48-hour, to the declared 'Safe Zone', the Minister said. Armed Forces have detected that the LTTE were keeping heavy weaponry near to the 'Ceasefire Zone'. However, the Armed Forces would make sure that they strictly refrain from targeting the civilians, he said. In relation to the ambiguity of civilian figures in Mullaitivu, the Minister said that according to statistics received from the Mullaitivu Government Agent, there seems to be around 20,000 families. Nevertheless, the Nation Building Ministry figures reveal that there has been a duplication in the said lists. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: May 5, 2009

ETHIOPIAN TROOPS LEAVING SOMALIA

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

January 3, 2009 Saturday

SOONER EDITION

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Section: WORLD; WORLD BRIEFS; Pg. A-4

Length: 560 words

Body

MOGADISHU, Somalia -- Hundreds of Ethiopian soldiers were pulling out of the Somali capital yesterday, witnesses said -- amid fears the troops' departure will allow Islamic insurgents to take even more control of the lawless country.

Ethiopia has been propping up Somalia's weak government for two years, but vowed to leave by the end of 2008. Officials declined to give an exact date because of fears of a power vacuum, saying only that the thousands of troops would be pulled out in stages.

The Ethiopians were called on in 2006 to prop up the U.N.-backed government and rout Islamic militants who had taken over most of the country. Initially, the superior firepower worked -- the Islamists were driven from power. But they quickly regrouped and launched an Iraq-style insurgency that continues today.

Nobel winner under fire

TEHRAN, Iran -- Scores of young men gathered around the Tehran home-office of Iranian Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi, shouted slogans against her and vandalized her home in the latest episode by hard-line political groups close to the government to intimidate the human rights lawyer.

Ms. Ebadi, 61, said in an interview yesterday that the two police officers finally dispatched after her frantic phone calls to the authorities "just watched" on Thursday as the vandals ripped the sign bearing her name off the front of her house, screamed that she was a supporter of Israel's Gaza offensive and spray-painted slogans on the front of her building.

Ms. Ebadi won the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize for her years of legal work advocating on behalf of Iranian political activists, religious and ethnic minorities, and women and children.

Russia-Ukraine dispute

MOSCOW -- Ukraine has siphoned some of Russia's natural gas shipments to the Balkans, the Russian gas monopoly Gazprom said late yesterday -- a day after it cut supplies to Ukraine in a contract dispute.

But Ukraine's Naftogaz company said it was only using some of the gas Russia pumps through the country to keep its pipeline system operating, and that it should not be blamed for the supply reductions to the Balkans. Naftogaz said it was Gazprom's duty to ship this so-called "technical" gas.

ETHIOPIAN TROOPS LEAVING SOMALIA

Naftogaz uses the same pipeline system to serve both domestic and transit gas customers.

Saudi Arabia beheadings

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia -- Authorities in Saudi Arabia have beheaded two Sri Lankans convicted of robbing and killing a Sudanese man.

An Interior Ministry statement says the two approached an accountant as he left his office in Riyadh, walked him to his car where they shot him and stole his money.

The beheading yesterday is Saudi Arabia's first in the new year. The kingdom follows a strict interpretation of Islam under which people convicted of murder, drug trafficking, rape and armed robbery can be executed with a sword.

Setback for **Tamil Tigers**

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka -- Sri Lanka's military captured Kilinochchi, the **Tamil Tigers**' de facto capital, winning a major victory in their decades-long battle to crush the ethnic separatists' dream.

The seizure was celebrated by dancing in the streets of Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital, as people wondered whether Asia's longest-running civil war finally would end.

Less than an hour after the town's capture was announced, a rebel suicide bomber struck near an air force headquarters in Colombo, killing three airmen and injuring 37 others.

Load-Date: January 6, 2009

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, Jan. 7

Xinhua General News Service

January 7, 2009 Wednesday 4:24 PM EST

Copyright 2009 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 477 words

Body

MANILA -- Invited by Philippine President Gloria Macapagal- Arroyo, a group of 100 children who survived a devastating earthquake in China last May will arrive in the Philippines this weekend for rehabilitation, with visits to the archipelagic state's stunning beaches, museums, schools and the Presidential Palace, officials said Wednesday.

The 100 middle school students were from Beichuan, Mianzhu, Shifang, the worst-hit towns in southwestern Chinese province of Sichuan, with many losing close relatives in the 8.0-magnitude earthquake on May 12, 2008, according to officials with the Chinese Embassy to the Philippines. (Philippines-China-Students)

BANGKOK -- Amid rising worries that the 14th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit will be affected by anti- government protests, Thailand's military top brass on Wednesday called on Thais to stop obstructing the country from hosting the ASEAN summit.

The 14th ASEAN Summit is now scheduled on Feb. 27 to March 1, 2009. Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said on Wednesday that the government decided to move the submit to be hosted in Hua Hin in Prachuap Khiri Khan province from the earlier planned capital Bangkok owing to security reasons. (Thailand-ASEAN Summit)

DHAKA -- Bangladesh is keen to play a pivotal role in combating terrorism and militancy in South Asia to help establish peace and stability in the region, Bangladesh's new Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said Wednesday.

Dipu Moni, first ***female*** foreign minister of Bangladesh, in her maiden remarks to reporters after taking oath Tuesday evening said, "Terrorism and militancy are not limited to geographical boundaries and for that we will take effective steps in consultations with our neighboring countries." (Bangladesh- Terrorism)

COLOMBO -- The Sri Lankan government spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella told reporters on Wednesday that the cabinet has decided to ban the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (***LTTE***).

This was the second occasion on which the Tigers came to be banned in the island. The ***LTTE*** was proscribed in January 1998 after the rebels carried out a bomb attack on the Buddhist holy shrine of Tooth Temple in the central town of Kandy.

Xinhua Asia-Pacific news summary at 1600 GMT, Jan. 7

The ban came to be lifted in September 2002 after the Norwegian backed peace process came into force opening the room for a cease- fire and direct negotiations between the government and the **LTTE**. (Sri Lanka-**LTTE**-Ban)

ISLAMABAD -- Pakistan on Wednesday confirmed that the only surviving gunman of Mumbai terror attacks is a Pakistani national.

The Mumbai attacker Ajmal Kasab, now in Indian custody, is a Pakistani national and further investigations are being carried out, said Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman Muhammad Sadiq. (Pakistan-Mumbai Attacker)

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

End of Document

Army captures Chalai

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 6, 2009 Friday

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Length: 434 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 6 -- The Army yesterday captured the **LTTE**'s last and main Sea Tiger base in- Chalai killing at least five second level Sea Tiger leaders in the process and paralyzing the entire sea Tiger wing.

A Defence Ministry official confirmed that troops of the 55 Division reached the sea Tiger base after days of fighting and capturing at least four earth bunds within a span of less than five kilometers. The strategically important base in Chalai was one of the main locations where Sea Tigers carried out several devastating attacks on the Sri Lanka Navy, which lost several boats off this coast. With the capture of the Chalai base, the troops were able to confine the **LTTE** to the land, denying them access to the sea. The 55 Division led by Brigadier Prasanna Silva is now heading towards the south in Mullaitivu. Backed by Multi Barrel Rocket Launchers, artillery guns and mortars, government troops killed at least five second level leaders holding self styled 'Lt.Col' ranks on Wednesday alone, the military claimed.. The **LTTE** radio communication had confirmed the deaths of five top level leaders of the sea Tiger wing during the battle, the military said. Among them was third in-command of the Sea Tiger Wing Vinayagam alias 'Mike Four'. Vinayagam toured Norway in 2004 for fundraising. He functioned as the intelligence head of the Sea Tiger wing as well and hails from Marudankerni in Elephant pass. The other leaders were Sinnakannan, Annavelan, Pahalawan and Kadar. All of them were responsible for the Sea Tiger attack against the Sri Lanka Navy including the failed attempt to attack the Passenger ship -Jet Liner off the Mullaitivu high seas. At one point a young **female** suicide cadre had jumped in front of the Commando Regiment and exploded herself. However, only one Commando soldier was injured due to the blast. With troops closing in on the Chalai base, the **LTTE** used at least eight separate teams and launched several waves of attacks on the military. But these attacks were repulsed by the troops inflicting heavy damages to the Tigers. Meanwhile, the military yesterday completed the capture of the Vishvamadu area after days of fierce fighting there. The military said: "the Army's complete liberation of the entire Vishvamadu area, about 100 square km in extent, in the former Tiger stronghold, after a string of military offensives in the past few days, resulted in the fall of all terrorist fortresses into Army hands, while boxing the remaining terrorists into an area less than some 200 square km."Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: May 5, 2009

Tamils stage protest outside UK Parliament for ceasefire in Lanka

Hindustan Times

March 8, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 416 words

Dateline: London

Body

London, Apr. 08 -- Several hundred Sri Lankan Tamil protesters are staging an ongoing protest outside the Houses of Parliament urging the UK Government to act to end the conflict in Sri Lanka. Police have made four arrests as Tamil protesters disrupted the heart of London city for a second day.

There have been some clashes between the police and Tamils as protestors shouted slogans at the British Parliament. Some 500 demonstrators occupied Parliament Square, sparking fears that they could try to storm the entrance to the House of Commons. They shouted and carried banners condemning the Sri Lankan Government's offensive against the **LTTE** and alleged human rights abuses. Around 100 police officers boxed in hundreds of demonstrators to move them off the roads, sparking minor scuffles. Britain's Foreign Secretary David Miliband insisted the Government was 'very concerned' about civilians caught up in fighting in Sri Lanka and the need for a humanitarian ceasefire was now 'even more urgent.' Miliband said, 'Nothing excuses the reported use of civilians by the **LTTE** as a human shield.' He added, 'But nor does the **LTTE**'s behaviour excuse any failings by the Sri Lankan Government to meet the high standards expected of democratic Governments in conflict.' Most of about 3000 protesters including **women** and babies, slept overnight on the streets around Parliament Square after beginning their illegal protest Monday afternoon. At one point, the protesters blocked the street leading to Westminster Bridge over the River Thames, police said. That led to road closures around Parliament and solid rings of police officers were brought in to hem away the protestors to clear the roads. Participants failed to give notice of the demonstration and have been waving flags showing the emblem of the **LTTE**, which is banned in the UK as a terrorist organisation. They plan to demonstrate outside Downing Street later Tuesday to push Tamil people's issues on the agenda of British Government. Suren Surendiran, of the British Tamils Forum, said the protest had been led by students, but that people of all ages from across the UK had joined in. 'As British citizens, they want the UK Government to act. Rather than just calling for a ceasefire, they should go to the UN security council to demand one,' he said. London is home to community of Tamils, some of whom are refugees from the war zone and many who have direct family ties to the area. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Pioneer.

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Load-Date: May 5, 2009

A slaughter waiting to happen; Sri Lanka

The International Herald Tribune

March 20, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 782 words

Byline: Lakhdar Brahimi - The New York Times Media Group

Body

The already severe humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka is on the brink of catastrophe. It will take the quick arrival of humanitarian relief and high-level international political muscle to bring the nightmarish situation to an end and prevent a slaughter

.

An estimated 150,000 civilians are now trapped in a tiny pocket of land between Sri Lankan military forces, whose artillery shells regularly fall among them, and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**), who shoot at them if they try to escape. Food, clean water and medical assistance are all increasingly scarce.

According to U.N. figures, 2,300 civilians have already died and at least 6,500 have been injured since January. Some 500 children have been killed and over 1,400 injured. What happens to the rest of those caught in the middle of the government's onslaught and the Tigers' fight to the death depends not only on the two parties but on the international response as well.

The crisis is born of acts by both sides that most probably amount to serious violations of humanitarian law and perhaps to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

As it has withdrawn before the government forces, the **LTTE** has sought refuge in the civilian population. It has been holding men, **women** and children as hostages, forcibly recruiting them and using them as human shields.

The government has responded with attacks that independent observers describe as indiscriminate. Distinguishing combatants from noncombatants has become impossible with fighters and civilians packed so closely together. Alarming reports are coming in that government forces are shelling even those areas they themselves have declared "no-fire zones."

If both groups do not end the fighting immediately, the lives of tens of thousands of civilians are at risk. Both parties must understand that the continuation of their current actions is not acceptable.

The situation is even more tragic because it represents an unnecessarily devastating coda to a war that is already over.

Totally overwhelmed by government forces, the **LTTE** has lost. Holding civilian hostages and showing complete disregard for the Tamil population that it claims to want to liberate will not resurrect its ability to fight this war.

A slaughter waiting to happen Sri Lanka

Nor will the annihilation of thousands of civilians secure the government's long-cherished victory over terrorism. On the contrary, the indiscriminate killing of its own citizens will make it harder for Colombo to seal its military victory with post-conflict reconciliation and development of the Tamil-majority north.

Opinion among the millions of Tamils around the world, especially those in southern India, is being dangerously radicalized by images and stories of intense civilian suffering.

The international community should not let the already desperate situation end up an all-out humanitarian catastrophe. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon should insist on immediate access for U.N. staff to no-fire zones in order to assess the needs of the population. He should appoint a special representative to work with the government of Sri Lanka and all the relevant parties to guarantee the rights and protection of the endangered civilians.

On the political side, other international leaders - in particular, President Barack Obama, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and other leaders from Asia, the nonaligned movement and the Commonwealth -

must urgently use their leverage to convince the Sri Lankan government to stop its offensive.

They should help shift the government from a strategy of total annihilation to one of containment by addressing government fears that LTTE leaders will use a pause in the fighting to flee and regroup.

In addition to assisting the U.N. in the evacuation of civilians, all these friends of Sri Lanka should commit themselves to supervise the surrender of the LTTE, with guarantees of the physical security of those who surrender, backed up by the presence of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees wherever the military receives civilians or surrendered fighters.

The United States and India could also offer to increase naval surveillance in order to prevent remaining Tiger fighters from escaping by sea.

None of these measures will be easy to achieve. The government and the LTTE are locked in a war to the last man and seem oblivious to the civilian death toll around them.

The international community has the means to act; it must not, it cannot fail to act. Being a spectator when 150,000 thousand people are trapped in a death zone is not an option.

*

Lakhdar Brahimi, former special adviser to the U.N. secretary general, is a board member of the International Crisis Group.

Load-Date: March 25, 2009

Govt. ready for impartial probe

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

June 7, 2008 Saturday 2:20 PM EST

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Length: 290 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 7 -- Leader of the House, Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva told Parliament yesterday that the Government was ready to conduct an impartial investigation into the assassination of Chief Government Whip, Minister Jeyaraj Fernandopulle following a request by JVP Parliamentarian Vijitha Herath.

However, the Government regrets the statement made by the MP who attempted to put the blame on the Government regarding the assassination, he said.

"The Government is ready to conduct an investigation into this incident. But we request the MP to provide the information he received on this assassination to conduct this investigation. It will help the Government to conduct an impartial investigation", de Silva said.

"We regret the JVP MP's statement by attempting to put the blame on the Government regarding the assassination. This statement will tarnish the Government's image. In a situation where the **LTTE** had justified Minister Fernandopulle's assassination on several websites MP Vijitha Herath's statement will lead to encourage the **LTTE**.

The **LTTE** wanted to assassinate Minister Fernandopulle, the Minister de Silva said.

Herath said, Minister Fernandopulle was a resource to the country. Minister Fernandopulle spoke about the JVP in a friendly manner at the last party Leader's meeting he participated.

I only requested to conduct an investigation into the Minister's assassination", he said. According to the MP, a question has arisen as to how the main **female** suspect arrested in connection with this assassination committed suicide by consuming cyanide several days after her arrest. Therefore an impartial investigation should be conducted, Herath said.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: September 16, 2008

Govt. ready for impartial probe

End of Document

VOA NEWS: 12 POLICE OFFICERS KILLED IN SUICIDE BOMB ATTACK IN SRI LANKA

US Fed News

June 16, 2008 Monday 2:07 AM EST

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Length: 420 words

Byline: US Fed News

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

The Voice of America issued the following story:

By Anjana Pasricha

In Sri Lanka, 12 police officers have been killed and at least 23 wounded in a suicide bombing by suspected Tamil Tiger rebels. As Anjana Pasricha reports from New Delhi, the latest attack comes amid an escalation in fighting in the island nation, where Tamil Tiger rebels are waging a violent struggle for a Tamil homeland.

Officials say a suspected Tamil Tiger rebel riding on a motorcycle detonated explosives Monday morning during the morning rush hour outside a police station in the northern town of Vavuniya. The town lies about 250 kilometers north of the capital Colombo.

The police constables killed in the blast included women. Many others were wounded. Several school children also sustained injuries in the bombing.

The attack came after two days of heavy fighting between the military and the rebels. The military says they destroyed a rebel base, and killed several rebels in ground

battles.

Military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara says the rebels, also known as the LTTE, are resorting to suicide attacks, because the military is beating them back from their northern strongholds.

"LTTE terrorists, they were getting severely beaten in the battlefield, therefore they are targeting innocent civilians in the other areas," he said. "Large areas have been captured up to now, and important townships have been taken in control of military."

The claims cannot be independently verified, but it is widely believed that the military has an upper hand in the fighting, which escalated earlier this year.

At the same time, rebels have also been accused of staging a series of suicide attacks across the country in recent months. Some of them have targeted trains and buses around

Colombo.

VOA NEWS: 12 POLICE OFFICERS KILLED IN SUICIDE BOMB ATTACK IN SRI LANKA

Political observers say the suicide attacks are meant to divert the government's attention and resources. They say the **LTTE** also wants to create an atmosphere of "instability" in the country ahead of a high profile South Asian regional summit which Colombo is hosting next month.

"If the **LTTE** can create an impression internationally that there is a lot of instability and widespread violence in the country, it could have an impact on the government's efforts to project an impression that it is in charge of affairs in the country," said Jehan Perera, head of the National Peace Council in Colombo.

The government has vowed to inflict a military defeat by the end of the year on the rebels, who have been fighting for a quarter century for an independent Tamil homeland.

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Load-Date: July 28, 2008

End of Document

Eight killed, 95 injured in explosion in Sri Lankan capital

Xinhua General News Service

February 3, 2008 Sunday 1:16 AM EST

Copyright 2008 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Science & Technology

Length: 281 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

At least eight people were killed and 95 were injured when a Tamil Tiger suicide bomber blew herself at a major railway station in Sri Lankan capital Colombo Sunday afternoon, said the military.

Military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said a female suicide bomber from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) exploded herself at No. 3 platform of the Fort Railway Station around 2:05 p.m. (0835 GMT), killing eight civilians and injuring 95 others.

Out of the injured, 10 are in critical conditions, officials of the Colombo National Hospital said.

Witnesses say the suicide bomber exploded herself shortly after getting down from a train which had reached the railway station.

The explosion came hours after a small explosion inside a zoo in Colombo Sunday morning with four civilians being injured.

The government is beefing up the security in Colombo as the country prepares to celebrate its 60th Independence Day on Monday.

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse is expected to preside the Independence Day celebrations which will include military parades.

Intensive military conflicts are underway in the north, with the government determining to defeat the LTTE before the end of this year.

The military said more than 600 people have been killed in the escalating conflict since the beginning of this year.

The LTTE has been fighting for a separate homeland for minority Tamils in the north and east for more than two decades, resulting in the death of more than 70,000 people.

Analysts say more explosions are expected in the island with the abrogation of a six-year-old cease-fire agreement by the government last month.

Load-Date: February 5, 2008

Eight killed, 95 injured in explosion in Sri Lankan capital

End of Document

Grasp of political reality in the East

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 24, 2008 Saturday 2:59 PM EST

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Length: 1764 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 24 -- The swearing in of M. L. A. M. Hisbullah as a minister of the Eastern Provincial Council on Thursday brought to an end a great deal of Opposition and media-inspired speculation about a major crisis in the Government.

Sections of the media that had backed the UNP-SLMC alliance in the elections to the EPC saw in the dispute over the post of Chief Minister the opportunity to once again mislead the public about the imminent collapse of the Government.

Taking journalism to the level of cheap soothsaying, they were busy attempting to keep the umpteenth defeat of the UNP at an election out of the public eye and mind, and instead feed the public on a diet of a major crisis in the Government, with so many Muslim ministers waiting to abandon their portfolios, posing a major problem for president Mahinda Rajapaksa and the UPFA.

Once again these sections showed how much they had misread the actual political situation in their tendentious reports that showed a combination of efforts to hide the UNP's defeat, exaggerate the situation over the contest for the post of Chief Minister, and also whip up communalism in the country, with the least concern for the overall public interest.

In the event, the confident approach that President Rajapaksa had to the situation, as reported in "The Island" that had spoken to him about the issue when in the UK, proved to be the more correct assessment.

The President's comment was to ask why others were worried about who the new Chief Minister would be, when it was his job to appoint him. That is exactly what he did, with the confidence that he would be able to soothe any feathers that may be ruffled by his choice for the first Chief Minister of the EPC.

In being firm in his decision to appoint Sivanesanathurai Chandrakanthan or Pillaiyan, leader of the Thamil Makkal Viduthala Puligal - TMVP - (Tamil People's Liberation Tigers) as Chief Minister, the President has once again shown that he has a much better grasp of political issues in the country than those who are ranged against him, and that he is ready to go ahead with a decision that he believes to be correct, even in the face of considerable opposition, from known opponents or others.

The failure of some media strategists and their political manipulators to engineer the collapse of the Government on the issue of the ethnicity or community of the Chief Minister of the EPC, was a repeat of their failed strategy at the Third Reading of the Budget last December, when the public was made to believe that the Government was facing

Grasp of political reality in the East

imminent defeat, only to find that through the working of political reality the Third Reading was passed with a huge majority. Hisbullah must be glad at not allowing himself to be used as the pawn in the machinations of the UNP-SLMC to hide their shame over the failure in the eastern polls.

National interest

In making his choice for the new office of Chief Minister, President Rajapaksa has demonstrated considerable sagacity that has taken into consideration many factors other than the immediate repercussions in the limited area of party politics.

The choice of the Chief Minister of the East could at no stage be considered a matter that had to be decided only with the east in mind.

The historical background of events that led to the holding of the elections to the EPC, and the varied expectations from it put the matter into the larger national arena of national politics, making anyone who thinks it as a matter confined to eastern politics well out of their depth in broader national politics.

Those who opposed Pillaiyan's appointment, and even sought to whip up communal feelings against it, going on the wrong arithmetic of community strength in the East, were trying to ignore for narrow political purposes the objective condition that brought about the elections for the EPC and what it all means in the fight against the terrorism of the LTTE, as well as the tasks of national development.

The role played by Karuna's breakaway faction from the LTTE in fashioning the present developments in the east is something that no one who understands the politics of the east can ignore.

It is also a reality that in a situation where the Government seeks to attract the people of the North to look at alternatives to the LTTE, it would have been wholly damaging to any strategy of persuasion to have refused the office of CM to Pillaiyan who had obtained the largest preferential votes in the province, and therefore the most votes within the UPFA with its betel leaf symbol. These are the realities that President Rajapaksa had to consider, when he took the firm decision to name Pillaiyan to this important office.

The dispute over the Pillaiyan selection saw the dangerous rise of communalism, which was gleefully fanned by sections of the media that saw an opportunity to serve the interests of their political patrons by helping to embarrass, if not overthrow the Government, through what they hoped would be the emerging developments.

On the one hand there were those who were trying to use this situation to fan Muslim communalism against the Tamils, and one also saw considerable signs of those who were trying to raise feelings of Sinhala communalism against both Muslims and Tamils in the period of temporary confusion.

The manner in which the matter was resolved by the President, while bringing encomiums for his unshaken commitment to principle and necessary strategy, has also disproved many who had called him a racist, a communalist or one who is committed to majoritarian politics.

The present developments have taken him above many a politician of greater experience than him who pandered to communal or majoritarian feelings and flinched from taking the right decision at the correct time.

In his decision on the Pillaiyan appointment, the President of Sri Lanka rose high above the communalism that has ruled our politics for far too long, and pointed to a wider view of politics in the days to come.

It is also important to record the useful role played by many elders of the Muslim community and leaders of the Islamic faith in helping resolve this issue, with advice to those who were encouraging confrontation, not to act hastily, which would lead to consequences that would be detrimental not only to the Muslim community, but to all of Sri Lanka.

Suicide killers

Grasp of political reality in the East

Last Friday saw the LTTE carry out another of its suicide bomb attacks in Colombo. That it had everything to do with the outcome of the EPC election was very clear. It was the day Pillaiyan was to be sworn in as Chief Minister.

The LTTE was also sending a message that although they may have been evicted from the East; they will continue to make their bloody presence felt. It will not be wrong to say that with this attack, the LTTE has indicated that it will not let its renegade former conscripted child soldier who now heads the EPC have an easy time of it.

That is but one aspect of the LTTE's latest calling card. There is much more involved in this, especially after the success of so-called Human Rights lobbyists to keep Sri Lanka out of the UN Human Rights Council. The issue is that of suicide killers.

In his immediate response to this attack that killed 11 and injured more than a hundred, President Rajapaksa said: "Repeated savagery of this order underlines and reiterates the need for concerted action by all those who cherish democracy, human rights and the values of civilised society, to eradicate the menace of terrorism of which the LTTE remains the bloodiest example today".

This also recalls the important message he gave to the world when addressing the Oxford Union just three days earlier, when he made the strongest case that any head of state had made so far on the need for joint action by those who value democracy against the suicide killer as a political weapon.

He made the very cogent argument that it is time for the world to raise its united voice to express revulsion at the barbaric practice of suicide bombings.

This is what he said: "It is time that the world, raising its united voice, expressed its utter revulsion of the barbaric practice of suicide bombings. It must be made absolutely clear that this form of political expression, if it could be described as such, is utterly unacceptable in the civilized world."

In a passage that deserves repetition, he also said: "... unfortunately we are being challenged by "the most brutal terrorist group in the world" as the LTTE has been described by the FBI.

Suicide killings using even women and children have become their hallmark. It is this terror group that invented the deadly suicide vest for the suicide killer. Having pioneered the suicide vest, they have freely given this technology to other terror groups in the world. This has now become a global menace.

"It has become incumbent upon us to confront this group to the extent of our ability, deploying all the resources of the State, to protect the people of Sri Lanka and their democratic way of life. I must add that what I am doing is in no way different to what other democracies have done before, and continue to do, in the face of terrorism.

However, I must state that the LTTE is the most brutal terror outfit the world has ever seen, and defeating them requires global support. What Sri Lanka is doing, in my opinion, is fighting this terror outfit single handed to ensure that democracy and respect for human life prevail in the world. If we fail in our war against the LTTE, the world will fail in its fight against terrorism, and democracy will be the victim. This is the plain truth".

It is nine days since he made that appeal to the world; one week since the most recent act of savagery on the streets of Colombo by a suicide killer of the LTTE.

It is also nine years since May 21, 1999, when India's ninth Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by Thenmuli Rajaratnam alias Dhanu, a suicide bomber of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam at Siriperumbudur near Chennai by a conspiracy hatched by Velupillai Prabhakaran and his intelligence Chief Pottu Amman.

The world still looks on as the LTTE continues with its barbaric policy and is often cheered on by those who have a curiously ambivalent approach when it comes to dealing with Human Rights violations in a country so battered by the savagery of those who nurture suicide killers.

For how long more will we have to look on as the rights of cocooned suicide killers are doughtily protected these champions of Human Rights in the Kingdom of the Sun God in the Vanni?

Grasp of political reality in the East

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: September 16, 2008

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Dehiwela Disaster

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 27, 2008 Tuesday 3:31 PM EST

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Length: 447 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 27 -- At least nine people were killed and more than 70 injured when a bomb exploded inside a packed Panadura-bound train at the Dehiwela railway station last evening. Among the victims returning home after work were six females, including a pregnant woman and three males.

The explosion took place minutes after the train that started from Colombo Fort had just moved a few yards from the Dehiwela railway station. According to initial investigations the explosive device, believed to be a two-kilogramme parcel bomb, had been placed on the left side luggage rack of the fifth compartment of the 12 compartment, twin engine train.

The force of the blast had ripped apart the roof of the compartment and also damaged a part of a building adjoining the railway station and a three wheeler parked nearby. "The blast took place around 4.55 pm, exactly 30 minutes after it departed from Maradana," Dehiwela Station Master Dhanapala Navaratna said.

At least five bodies were seen inside the damaged compartment while the injured were rushed to the Kalubowila hospital. The hospital's Acting Director Dr. Wilfred Kumarasiri said the condition of at least three were critical while one was transferred to the National Hospital. A pharmacist at the hospital was also among those dead.

Initial investigations revealed that the bomb was triggered using a timing device and did not contain pellets. "Such bombs may find passage undetected even through metal detectors at times," the army website said.

It was also revealed that more than forty passengers had been injured not directly by the impact of the blast, but due to injuries sustained by jumping off the moving train after the blast. Some of them fractured their arms and legs.

Train services were disrupted along the coastal line following the blast but the Railway control room later said services had resumed curtailing it to one single line.

The Defence Ministry blamed the LTTE for the incident adding that in its pursuit for a mono ethnic separate homeland for Tamils, the LTTE has killed and maimed innocent people including children, Tamil and Sinhala political leaders in indiscriminate bomb attacks.

The latest bombing came just two days after time bombs were defused on two passenger buses in Ganemulla and also after 17 people were killed in a claymore blast inside LTTE territory in the Wanni for which the Tigers blamed the military.

Dehiwela Disaster

On July 24 in 1996 the **LTTE** detonated two bombs targeting a crowded train at the same railway station killing more than seventy people and wounding some 500. Thatblast devastated two carriages of the south bound train.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

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To Win the War and Lose the Peace

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 14, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 1874 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 14 -- It looks like one of the more winnable conflicts in an age of global 'War on Terror'. Sri Lanka appears on the brink of announcing victory in its drawn out battle against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The armed separatist group, listed as one of the world's most dangerous terrorist groups has fought successive governments for over quarter century in the guise of liberating the island's Tamil community from a state that has increasingly marginalized linguistic and religious minorities. The question remains however, would victory be pyrrhic when finally manifest; consolidated on irreparable damage to the county's increasingly fragile democratic institutions, and centuries-old multicultural, multi-religious and hybrid social fabric?

Several conflicts have been assimilated to the global "war on terror" in the aftermath of 9/11 and the United States-led global War on Terror that casts a long shadow in South Asia. In 2006 the conflict in Sri Lanka was officially renamed a "war on terror" after a highly internationalized Norwegian brokered ceasefire agreement collapsed. Prior to that the past quarter century of violence punctuated by three abortive peace processes was known as an "ethnic conflict" or a "liberation struggle" -- depending on perspective. The current government has worked hard to portray its battle against the LTTE now in its final stages, as a "war on terror". Recapture of the island's northeastern territories controlled by the LTTE's quasi-state, and its leader, who is also wanted by India, for assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, a former Prime Minister, is the top priority at this time. We are familiar with the adage: "one man's terrorist is another's liberation fighter;" a phrase that was common in many parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America during the era of postcolonial struggles for self-determination and independence from European empires. The government of Sri Lanka also terms the current bid a "humanitarian war" to liberate innocent Tamil civilians from the grip of an organization that has held people as a buffer and human shield to deflect the onslaught of the military and air force. On the other hand, the LTTE claims that it is seeking to liberate Tamil-speaking people from the abuse and humiliation metered out by the post-colonial state dominated by the majority Sinhala community. There is good evidence to suggest that minority communities in Sri Lanka have had a raw deal in the form of discriminatory policies on language, education, land settlement and development, as well as, episodic riots and pogroms against minority Tamils and Muslims since independence in 1948. Clearly the conflict in the island is complex and it is necessary to look beyond the blame game between the two principle protagonists and beneath the gloss of 'war on terror' to seek sustainable solutions. After all, sustainable peace would need to be based on an analysis and address of the root causes of conflict. In the case of ethno-nationalist guerrilla movements such as the LTTE, a group once it loses territory may melt into the people and return years or decades later to fight -- if the root causes of the conflict are not addressed. Several long-term, low-intensity conflicts that predate the global war on terror in South Asia make this apparent. Democracy as collateral damage The first week of 2009 saw the fall of the capital of the LTTE's de facto State in the north of the country. A few days later troops gained control of the Elephant Pass base and the A-9, the main trunk road that links the southern capital, Colombo, with Jaffna the cultural capital of Sri Lanka Tamils. Celebrations were held throughout the country while government institutions hoisted the national

To Win the War and Lose the Peace

flag. The capture of the LTTE's capital was termed "an incomparable victory" and the President used the rhetoric of the war on terror: "What our heroic troops have achieved is not only the capture of the great fortress of the LTTE, but a major victory in the world's battle against terrorism." Within days of the celebrations following capture of the LTTE's de facto capital, one of the island's leading journalists, Lasantha Wickrematunge, Editor in Chief of the Sunday Leader newspaper, a liberal anti-establishment paper, known for exposing corruption and nepotism in the state apparatus was assassinated in broad daylight in Colombo. At his funeral where thousands gathered an effigy of the President of the country was burnt. The slain journalist's funeral was attended by political leaders, media representatives, civil society organizations, and senior foreign diplomats in Colombo. The slain journalist who was also a lawyer had penned his own obituary three days before his assassination: "And then they came for me," naming in all but words his killers. His final editorial published posthumously which has come to be known as the "letter from the grave" constitutes a powerful indictment on the regime that would be hard to shake off in a country where astrology, the symbolic, and uncanny carry significant weight in politics. Minimally, the state is accused of promoting a 'culture of impunity' that has rendered Sri Lanka 'one of the world's most dangerous for journalists' according to the organization, Reporters without Borders. In the past two years, at least eight journalists have been killed in the country according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. As the war (including an information war) has escalated, the phenomenon of extra-judicial killings has risen. Wickramatunge's assassination was in the wake of a series of killings and intimidation of journalists and lawyers and attacks on independent media institutions in the south. A few weeks earlier the largest independent television station in the capital, MTV, criticized by segments of the state of being unpatriotic was attacked by masked gunman in a city teaming with security forces. A few months earlier, the house of a leading lawyer and head of Transparency International, Sri Lanka who had appeared in several fundamental rights cases was struck by grenades. In August 2008 Sri Lanka lost its seat in the United Nations Human Rights Council and has since turned down several requests of the United Nations Human Rights Commission to set up an observer mission to monitor the situation in the country. Needed: An Exit from Violence

Implicit in renaming the conflict in Sri Lanka a 'war on terror' is the suggestion that the current war is a "just war", which has elicited considerable support from members of the international community engaged in the global war on terror. The challenge of war, be it a 'just war', 'humanitarian war', a 'war on terror' or even an oxymoronic 'war for peace' is to avoid destruction of the lives, institutions, values and ideals sought to be liberated or protected. The armed group has been for some time now, fighting a war of diminishing returns. The globally networked organization which draws support from a significant diaspora in north America, Europe and Asia, has been banned in many countries. Likewise, successive regimes in Sri Lanka have periodically used an emergent 'war economy' to benefit from violence, while extended periods of Emergency Rule has seen attenuation of the rule of law, while a growing culture of impunity has stymied investigation of grave human rights violations, corruption, and rent seeking behavior by a range of state actors, non-state actors and paramilitaries. Hence, the conflict has been also referred to as a "dirty war". Over the two and a half decades of conflict a variety of politicians, members of the defence industry and paramilitary groups had acquired illegal personal profit and political power as the economy periodically morphed into a 'war economy'. Sri Lanka seems to be in the midst of one such cycle. At the same time, the regime may be increasingly dependent on the use of majoritarian nationalism and the militarization for survival, given the soaring cost of living with one of the highest inflation rates in South Asia. Sri Lanka has the largest defence budget in South Asia in percentage terms. At the November 2008 budget the President who is also Minister of Finance and whose brother is Secretary of Defence promised to raise defence spending by seven percent to a record \$1US.6 billion in 2009, according to figures presented to parliament. Naming a complex conflict such as Sri Lanka's a "war on terror" may be counterproductive. Indeed as John Sidel, a specialist on Indonesia at the University of London noted in his book "Riots, Pogroms, Jihad," since 9/11 an industry of terrorism experts has reframed diverse types and forms of complex political conflict in South and South East Asia. To call Sri Lanka's complex conflict simply a 'terrorist war' or an "ethnic conflict" is to get history and indeed geography wrong. For it is necessary to talk of state terrorism in the same breath as the LTTE's no doubt vicious terrorism which has included violence against the very community it seeks to liberate, including assassination of those who do not agree with them, recruitment of women and child soldiers and perfecting the suicide bomb. While there is little doubt that the LTTE engages in terrorist acts and combating it requires special measures, renaming Sri Lanka's complex conflict a 'war on terror' may leave little space for the reasoned analysis required to understand and address the root causes of the conflict in order to ensure a lasting political solution that would underwrite sustainable peace. The quarter century-long conflict in the country cannot be solved by military means alone but would require a political solution that ensures power-sharing with minorities in the north and east. Otherwise the LTTE would very likely re-group and return to fight another day,

To Win the War and Lose the Peace

as in the past. However, because the current regime in Colombo has key nationalist parties as its allies it seems unlikely that it would be able to deliver a genuine power sharing package at this time. The All Party Representatives Committee (APRC) convened almost three years ago to formulate a political solution has yet to deliver a solution acceptable to all Sri Lankans, particularly the island's minority communities. Epilogue Arguably, it was in recognition of the collateral damage that the global war on terror inflicted on democratic rights, values and the rule of law that President Barak Obama who has promised to close down Guantanamo Bay which symbolizes many of the excesses committed, signalled a change in strategy and methods to deal with threats to the peace in his inauguration speech: "As for our common defence, we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals. Our founding fathers faced with perils we can scarcely imagine, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter expanded by the blood of generations. Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience's sake". The global 'war on terror' may no longer be expedient for States required to address complex domestic identity conflicts through genuine power sharing agreements. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Sri Lanka: Rebel bases bombed; clashes kill 30

Associated Press International

October 1, 2008 Wednesday 8:56 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 203 words

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Air force fighter jets bombed two Tamil Tiger rebel bases in northern Sri Lanka on Wednesday while infantry clashes across the region killed 26 rebels and four soldiers, the military said.

Fighters pounded the headquarters of the Charles Anthony Brigade, an elite rebel infantry unit and another base housing **female** fighters in the Tiger stronghold of Kilinochchi district, said Wing Commander Janaka Nanayakkara, an air force spokesman.

Early Wednesday, air force planes bombed a jungle hide-out in the Mullaitivu district believed to be used by top leaders of the Tamil rebels, he said.

Nanayakkara did not have details of damage or casualties.

Ground battles Tuesday in Kilinochchi, Vavuniya and Welioya districts killed 26 guerrillas and four soldiers, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said.

With nearly all communications to the north severed, rebel spokesmen could not be contacted for comment.

It was not possible to verify the military's reports because most journalists and other independent observers are barred from the war zone. Both sides often exaggerate their enemy's losses and underreport their own.

The **Tamil Tigers** have fought since 1983 to create an independent state for Sri Lanka's minority Tamils.

Load-Date: October 2, 2008

SLDF condemns Maheswari Velautham killing

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 20, 2008 Tuesday 1:48 PM EST

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Length: 285 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 20 -- The Sri Lanka Democracy Forum (SLDF) has condemned the brutal assassination of Maheswari Velautham on May 13 allegedly by the LTTE.

Maheswari Velautham was killed in a hail of bullets fired at point blank range by LTTE gunmen when she was caring for her bedridden ailing mother in her home village in Navundil in northern Jaffna in the presence of her family members, SLDF said in a statement.

"Writ all over this cruel episode of murder, and the manner and circumstances in which it was carried is not an iota of the self-proclaimed heroism of the LTTE, but its unrivalled depravity and cowardice."

Reputed for her long years of sustained, dedicated and exceptional work on behalf of displaced people, refugees and those languishing in long term detention without trial, Maheswari displayed enormous courage and leadership in negotiating her role in the service of her people in the whirlpool of violent Tamil politics, SLDF said.

SLDF added that at a time when many Tamils took the easy way out by going abroad seeking comfortable lives, it was her commitment to serve her people that made her to remain in the island exposing her to the ever present danger that eventually ended her life.

A pioneering woman activist from the days of the incipient Tamil national movement in the seventies, Maheswari belonged to the generation of Tamil activist women who had to tread a lonely path to carve out a space for themselves in a male dominated world of Tamil politics. No matter what her political alliances were Maheswari was single minded in her non partisan commitment to all those she served, and to the Tamil community in general.

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Load-Date: August 11, 2008

SHELLING ON LANKAN HOSPITAL KILLS 11

Hindustan Times

February 2, 2009 Monday 5:56 PM EST

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Length: 441 words

Byline: Sutirtho Patranobis Hindustan Times

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, Feb. 2 -- Eleven civilian patients including a 12-year-old boy were killed and at least 20 were injured when a hospital in the embattled north-eastern district Mullaitivu was shelled early on Monday.

The Puthukkudiyiruppu hospital, the only fully equipped one in the entire north, is under the control of the LTTE. Fighting in the area has intensified since the 48-hour deadline served to the rebels by President Mahinda Rajapaksa expired Saturday night. The victims of shelling were those already under treatment in the hospital for illness and injuries in the war.

"The hospital has been caught in the intense battle (after the deadline lapsed). Five shells have fallen inside the hospital since 10-30 last night. One fell in the morning. Two fell in the female ward and the remaining shells in the staying quarters, kitchen and mortuary," T Varadharajah, health services director, told HT over from the hospital. He added that female was badly damaged.

He did not comment whether the shells were from LTTE or SLA guns. "We only know that the shells falling in our compound are coming from the south of the area," he said. The divisional hospital is the only one in the north to have a separate ward for women.

The phone conversation on Monday morning was repeatedly interrupted by the sound of artillery gun fire. "Can you hear the sound," Varadharajah asked over phone, adding the phone line was the only one possibly working in parts of Mullaitivu still under LTTE control.

He added besides mortar and heavy artillery fire, Sri Lankan air force (SLAF) also carried out aerial bombing in the morning. At present, the hospital has four doctors and five nurses to look after 500 patients of all ages and suffering from various ailments. Several pregnant women are also admitted.

"The doctors and nurses and even patients do not want to stay in the hospital anymore. They are afraid. At least 250 patients need to be immediately transferred to the government hospital in Vavuniya," he said. But the road to the Vavuniya has been closed since Thursday, he said, appealing to the International Committee for Red Cross (ICRC) to make arrangements for transfer. The ICRC on its part appealed to both the military and the LTTE to let the civilians move to safer areas.

"We're shocked that the hospital was hit ... Wounded and sick people, medical personnel and medical facilities are all protected by international humanitarian law. Under no circumstance may they be directly attacked," Paul Castella, head of the Colombo delegation of the ICRC, said in the statement.

SHELLING ON LANKAN HOSPITAL KILLS 11

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Load-Date: February 2, 2009

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18 injured in bus blast outside Colombo

Indo-Asian News Service

February 23, 2008 Saturday 11:11 AM EST

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Length: 277 words

Byline: Report from Indo-Asian News Service brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 23 -- At least 18 people were injured when a powerful blast ripped through a passenger bus on the outskirts of the Sri Lankan capital Saturday morning, a defence spokesperson said.

The explosion occurred at Mount Lavinia, eight km south of Colombo, at about 10.55 a.m. The injured included 10 men, seven **women** and a child.

The defence ministry blamed the rebel group, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**), for the blast.

Officials said a passenger had alerted the conductor about a suspicious parcel kept at the back of the bus. The conductor immediately saw to it that all the passengers got down. The bomb squad was then informed. But the bomb went off before the squad could arrive.

The driver, the conductor and some others in the immediate vicinity of the blast were injured, albeit slightly. The injured were rushed to the nearest hospital at Kalubowila.

"There would have been a carnage if the passengers had remained in the bus. The bus was completely destroyed," an official said.

Television footage showed the bus in a shambles and burning, with the luggage of the passengers strewn over a considerable area.

The inter-city bus was on its way from Moratuwa to Colombo when the blast occurred.

Security sources said it was significant that the blast near Colombo should occur after eight civilians, including a young mother and a six-month-old baby, were killed in an air raid on Sivapuram, near Pooneryn, an area controlled by the **LTTE** in north Sri Lanka.

The **LTTE** had given wide publicity to the deaths with pictures put on websites sympathetic to it.

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18 injured in bus blast outside Colombo

Load-Date: February 23, 2008

End of Document

Adding strength to a dignified peace

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 26, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 1489 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 26 -- It is important that the government doesn't underestimate the need to remove all paths providing justification for another set of young Tamil or Muslim youth to take up arms. This is why, while the troops comb every jungle hideout of the terrorists and clear every last remaining square kilometer of the LTTE, no room is left for the frustrations that the LTTE took advantage of to take life once again.

While the treatment of the internally displaced by the government to date remain commendable, the room for such frustrations to grow, especially in youth, can not be over ruled. These are after all, men women and children brainwashed in to believing the worst of every successive government and the Sinhalese. A large majority of the people now safe in the government controlled areas in fact, have never seen a Sinhalese and have little or no knowledge of the world outside of the Wanni. Some belong to an entirely new generation of Tamils who have only known the atrocities of the LTTE, and have had little choice in believing little else. These are the reasons why the government must use every resource at its disposal to ensure that the displaced are left wanting nothing on the one hand, and providing the assurances that the minority youth deserve. Such assurances can only come from witnessing a political process able to integrate them in to national building. As the war reaches its final stage it is imperative that the government is mindful of the absolute necessity for it to open all paths to integrate the minority communities in to its fold. Were we to take the recently concluded provincial elections as an indicator, the government must appreciate the manner in which the minority vote went. The government's victory was essentially an endorsement of its war against the LTTE. There was overwhelming support for it to take the war to the end; a reality that both the government and the international community must not underestimate. While the international community irrespective of their concerns must know that any demand for a ceasefire at this juncture would undermine this voice of the people, the government must also take on the greater role it holds towards all its people. Winning over the minorities should not be seen merely as a public relations exercise. The fact remains that the government cannot hope to push any political solution, be it the 13th Amendment or otherwise, without the support of the minority communities. The government must be mindful that it remains committed to the promise made to minorities of offering a viable political solution. It is hoped that the recent call by the President for a meeting with representatives of the Tamil National Alliance, Tamil United Liberation Front , Eelam Peoples Democratic Party and the Ceylon Workers' Congress and other Tamil political parties of Sri Lanka on 'democracy' road map for the 'liberated areas', is actively followed with. The President in an interview with the Asian Tribune earlier this month noted that the meeting will take place in about a week (from February 15) and 'may coincide with the army virtually liquidating the Tigers in their very Wanni stronghold. "We needed a military solution to evict the terrorists from the country. The government took up the challenge to liberate our country from Prabhakaran menace. Our heroic soldiers have almost liberated Wanni and already 95 percent is free. In a few days our security forces will free the entire Wanni. So, it is time we address the problem politically", the President told the Asian Tribune in an exclusive interview. He stressed that leaders of all Tamil parties would be invited 'without any discrimination' and 'unmindful of

Adding strength to a dignified peace

their previous political links in the past. "There will be no discrimination. Leaders of all Tamil parties will be invited. Yes, despite their previous leaning towards LTTE. Where is LTTE now? I want to hear them on how to go about restoring the political process in Wanni. This is very urgent. We cannot delay (the process)', the President said. Accordingly the Leaders of TNA, TULF, Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP), Tamizh Democratic National Alliance (TDNA), Pathmanabha Eelam Revolutionary Liberation Front (PERLF), Up-Country People's Front (UPF), Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDF), Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization, (TELO), Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC), were noted to be invited besides Deputy Ministers Suresh Vadivel, Parliamentarian Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, Vadivel Puttirasigamani and others. It is to be noted that whatever the shortcomings on its way, the move by the President to set up an All Party Representative Committee (APRC) immediately upon his inauguration, to examine issues related to devolution of power and 13th Amendment to the Constitution, was a very positive one. The APRC was seen as a genuine commitment by the new Presidency towards obtaining a viable political solution that all communities could relate to. It especially had the hopes of the minority communities very high. The administration not only received the commendation of all political parties locally but every government outside. The APRC was seen as a guarantee of the protection of the minority communities under the new regime, and went miles in the administration obtaining the support it had for its military exercises against the terrorists. It is also in the void created by the lack of such a political process that the government creates opportunity for various elements to gather strength for political agendas threatening the country's sovereignty. The fact remains that these moves are not really about appeasing the international community or effectively meeting the global critiques. The situation of the Tamil people in the North and East also holds its consequences to the neighboring giant, and thereby the support with Indian center going to be pushed against the wall closer to its own elections. The regional politics apart, it is also about understanding the acute need in the country for integrating all communities together and understanding the strength that lies within. It is important that the government does not underestimate the need to remove all paths providing justification for another set of young Tamil or Muslim youth to take up arms. This is why, while the troops comb every jungle hideout of the terrorists and clear every last remaining square kilometer of the LTTE, there is no room left for the frustrations that the LTTE took advantage of to take life once again. While the treatment of the internally displaced by the government to date remains commendable, the room for such frustrations to grow, especially in youth, cannot be overruled. These are after all, men women and children brainwashed in to believing the worst of every successive government and the Sinhalese. A large majority of the people now safe in the government controlled areas in fact, have never seen a Sinhalese and have little or no knowledge of the world outside of the Wanni. Some belong to an entirely new generation of Tamils who have only known the atrocities of the LTTE, and have had little choice in believing little else. These are the reasons why the government must use every resource at its disposal to ensure that the displaced are left wanting nothing on the one hand, and providing the assurances that the minority youth deserve. Such assurances can only come from witnessing a genuine political process able to integrate them into national building. The situation of the internally displaced is in effect the perfect opportunity for the government to both win the minority community back to its fold and assure the international community of its commitments towards these people. It is to be appreciated that the President did emphasize that the government has to 'urgently consider ways and means of bringing the people of Wanni into the democratic mainstream' last week. 'Unless we take quickly some steps to give voice to the people and rehabilitate the displaced families, the sacrifices of the army will have no meaning. Our victories will be wasted'. He noted that the political process and rehabilitation should go hand in hand for 'stability' in the country. Certainly all funds now allocated for creating shelter and providing livelihoods for the displaced can only reap its best potential under such a programme. This would be the only means by which the government can share the dividends of the war (to end LTTE terrorism) with the people particularly in the North. A dignified peace that the Presidency has continued to be faithful to, can only be meaningful as long as it holds the same truth to the minorities. It is only if the government is able to hold a sustainable peace that it may bring real meaning to every sacrifice the Sri Lankan troops are making in the Wanni today. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

Adding strength to a dignified peace

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12 civilians killed in Lanka's fresh bus blast

UNI (United News of India)

February 4, 2008 Monday 10:52 AM EST

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Length: 270 words

Byline: Report from UNI brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 4 -- At least 12 people were killed and 17 others injured in a claymore mine explosion triggered by **LTTE** rebels in Sri Lanka's north-eastern Weli-Oya district this evening, military sources here said.

"**LTTE** terrorists have denoted a claymore mine this evening targeting a civilian bus travelling from Parakkramapura to Janakapura in the Weli Oya district. Initial reports say 12 people were killed and 17 more wounded," Brig Udaya Nanayakkara told UNI over the phone.

He said that the injured have been rushed to the nearby Padaviya hospital.

This is the third blast targeting civilians within three days.

In a separate incident at Buttala in the Southern province, one government soldier was killed and three others were wounded when a military tractor carrying food rations was hit by a claymore mine blast this afternoon.

The attacks have come as the Island nation was celebrating its Independence Day today under unprecedented security arrangements amid fears that Tamil Tiger rebels may repeat their deadly suicide bombings after weekend attacks left at least 34 dead and over 150 wounded.

It was only yesterday that a suspected **LTTE female** suicide bomber blew herself up at a crowded railway station in the heart of the capital city of Colombo killing 11 people and wounding over 100 on the eve of the 60th independence celebrations.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa in his Independence Day address to the nation vowed to flush out the Tamil Tiger rebels from their Wanni heartlands in the near future in order to wipe out terrorism from the country.

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Load-Date: May 4, 2008

12 civilians killed in Lanka's fresh bus blast

End of Document

M.I.A. accused of terrorist imagery

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

August 8, 2008 Friday 1:32 PM EST

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Length: 299 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug. 8 -- If Sri Lankan hip-hop Mavon DeLon is to be believed, M.I.A. might not have been kidding when she said "All I wanna do is (bang bang bang bang)...and take your money."

On July 29, he posted a remix video disc of the British rapper's "Paper Planes" on YouTube that claims M.I.A. used imagery from the **LTTE**.

The video consists of a graphic montage of terrorist victims, child soldiers, and the lady in question, set to a remix of "Paper Planes" that has DeLon bellowing, "Yo, here's for all you people that really think that M.I.A. is a freedom fighter, trying to dress up like her. Let me give you some facts..." It also makes the not-so-subtle insinuation that M.I.A. has traded in her bona fides for dolla dolla bills and the depiction is, to say the least, unflattering.

This probably couldn't come at a worse time for M.I.A., who is herself a Sri Lankan and whose song is being heavily promoted for the film 'Pineapple Express', which hits film theatres today. According to the video, which cites the FBI, the **LTTE** "perfected the use of suicide bombers, invented the suicide belt, pioneered the use of **women** in suicide attacks, murdered some 4,000 people in the past two years alone, and assassinated two world leaders."

DeLon has drawn attention as a rising star in the international hip-hop scene, especially for his willingness to stand up to the **LTTE**, and is the first Sri Lankan/American to ever make it to the Billboard charts. His video is no longer available on YouTube, as it was given a cease-and-desist from Interscope Records for "endangering M.I.A.'s reputation as a freedom fighter."

As a result, DeLon is now filing a lawsuit against Interscope/UMG for infringement of his First Amendment rights.

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Load-Date: August 13, 2008

Navy to the rescue

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

November 7, 2008 Friday 2:09 PM EST

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Length: 478 words

Byline: Report from Daily Mirror brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Nov. 7 -- The Navy rescued three Tamil families with their toddlers and teenage children accompanied by a male adult in the Eastern seas off Pulmudai in the wee hours of Wednesday.

The group numbering 13 which includes 8 males and 5 **females**, had been fleeing from **LTTE** captivity in Mullaitivu on board a fiber glass dinghy flying a white flag for protection, evading the hawkish eyes of the **LTTE** cadres on the prowl, when they were encountered by the naval personnel who are exclusively deployed in the Northern seas as a part of the Navy's humanitarian mission to rescue the fleeing innocent Tamil civilians, the Navy said.

The first family consisted of a father aged 47 and his two teenage children -a son aged 13 and a daughter aged 18. The second family comprised of two young parents -a father and a mother, both aged 22- and their baby son who is just 02 years of age. They were also accompanying their teenage brother aged 15 who was living with them for protection. The third family, which also consisted of young parents, a father and a mother aged 29 and 23 respectively, have two young daughters, of whom one is just five years and the other is barely one and half years of age.

The teenagers in the group, who seem to show a keen interest in pursuing their education uninterrupted for a brighter future, reticently unfolded their self-suppressed wishes with the friendly naval personnel, with whom they quickly struck a cordial relationship since many of them were akin to their elder brothers and sisters.

They revealed that many of their unfortunate friends, having been forcibly conscripted, are languishing under the **LTTE** clutches and are deprived of their rightful education which, they believe, the only way of getting out of the wide-spread chimera of illusion, which is based on unreal and false promises propagated by the terror outfit to brainwash the na?ve and the young.

Having set foot in the safe hands in the liberated areas where many more of their counterparts are savoring the freedom, which is rightfully due to youth and teenagers, they expressed great relief for the first time in their lives for they can now see for themselves what it feels like to be really liberated from terror.

The young parents, watching over their toddlers who had found company in the caring **women** in blue in the Navy, claim that they feel all their hopes to be among their relatives with happiness have been dashed by the tyrannical **LTTE** outfit.

Navy to the rescue

Therefore, they say, they undertook this risky escapade in order to give their beloved youngsters a better tomorrow, which they claim, had been denied to them for decades. They expressed their gratitude to the Navy for coming into their rescue at an hour when even the darkness engulfing the unfriendly waters was against them, the Navy said.

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Load-Date: November 7, 2008

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No reversal in Northern liberation - President

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

August 19, 2008 Tuesday 2:21 PM EST

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Length: 690 words

Byline: Daily News Sri Lanka

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Aug. 19 -- President Mahinda Rajapaksa asserted that after the lapse of a prolonged period of absolute tolerance and patience and failed negotiations with the LTTE, his Government eventually responded in the language best understood by the terrorists with the strong resolve of not turning back until the very last terrorist is captured.

President Rajapaksa made this assertion when he presided and addressed a mammoth and colourful rally at the Ruwanwella Esplanade yesterday, in support of the UPFA candidates contesting the forthcoming Sabaragamuwa Provincial Council elections on August 23.

"We liberated the Eastern Province and will liberate the North too very shortly. There is no turning back under any circumstances or influence now, until every inch of land is recaptured and each and every terrorist is killed or captured. Our Armed Forces are fighting the terrorists to protect our Motherland at the risk of their lives," the President said.

"We will fight the war until every citizen, regardless of his ethnicity, Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, Burgher or Malay, has the right to live in his Motherland, sans fear nor suspicion, in perfect harmony and unity," the President reiterated.

He pointed out that it was by no means an easy task and they would have to face daunting challenges and obstacles as they proceed. They would however end up victoriously.

Outlining briefly the sequence of events that transpired since his assumption to office on November 19 up to the closure of the Mavil Aru Anicut by the LTTE, the President pointed out that the people gave him a mandate to re-unite the entire country and make it stable and secure.

Nevertheless, a spree of continuous and heinous crimes were committed in cold blood, against innocent and unarmed men, women and children, and the Armed Forces by the LTTE, sans any breathing space to his Government.

The Government in turn relentlessly and painstakingly strove to resolve the crisis peacefully and amicably with the LTTE, by using all means at their disposal and by a process of continuous dialog and negotiation.

Government delegations were in Geneva twice for talks. Nevertheless, the LTTE rejected all these peaceful paths. It is then that he as the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, had to take decisive action in ordering the Armed Forces to attack the terrorists on all fronts.

No reversal in Northern liberation - President

From then onwards, the gallant Armed Forces have consolidated themselves and achieved victory after victory and defeated the terrorists.

President Rajapaksa opined that as envisioned in the Mahinda Chintanaya, his Government shifted development which was confined only to the Western Province, mainly Colombo and its suburbs, to the village to uplift the living standards of the village polity too.

Based on this policy, the villagers are now able to fetch enhanced prices for their produce such as Tea, Rubber and other minor crops. They now have fully concreted roads in their villages.

After completion of the main roads his Government has now embarked on a programme to construct all roads at the Provincial Council level. The Government has set aside a colossal sum of Rs 3,000 million for this.

Other Development programmes such as 'Gama Neguma' and 'Maga Neguma' are also in progress. Several employment-generating programmes in the sphere of tourism among others, are also in the pipeline.

"Place your whole-hearted faith and trust in our Government which is dedicated and duty-bound with responsibility, to protect our 'Motherland'. Ensure that our Government wins the Provincial poll of Sabaragamuwa convincingly," President Rajapaksa added.

Ministers Susil Premjayantha, Puthra Sigamany, A.H.M. Fowzie, Dinesh Gunawardena, Mahindananda Aluthgamage, Mano Wijerathna, Tissa Witharana, Athauda Senevirathna, former Chief Minister of the Sabaragamuwa Province Mahipala Herath and former UNP Minister Nandimithra Ekanayake also addressed the rally.

This was the third consecutive victorious rally from a series of rallies organised by the Government to garner votes for their respective candidates.

Report from Daily News Sri Lanka brought to you by HT Syndication.

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Load-Date: September 4, 2008

Only talking will stop the killing; MOHAMMAD KHATAMI

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

March 19, 2009 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Letters; Pg. 18

Length: 1993 words

Body

IT IS essential that the Jewish Community Council of Victoria begin to understand that lasting peace in the Middle East can only happen if all parties involved talk with one another ("Jewish fury at visit by Iran leader", The Age, 18/3). If the endless killing of innocent civilians and soldiers in Gaza and Israel is ever to stop - and I dearly wish it would - then Israel needs to be willing to sit around a negotiating table with leaders from all parts of the Middle East.

I hope that the UN, US, European Union and Australia will put more pressure on Israel to make sure this happens quickly. This is what the long-suffering Palestinian and Israeli people desperately need to see take place.

Robert Van Zetten, Highton

No kind of moderate

FORMER Iranian president Mohammad Khatami's noxious statements about Jews and Israel severely undermine his credibility to promote a "dialogue of civilisations". Nor is he the reformer he's advertised to be. Under his presidency, Iran actually accelerated its nuclear work. His former spokesman has been quoted in the Iranian press chiding the current Government for bringing unwanted scrutiny on Iran through its hardline rhetoric. He advised the Government to do what the Khatami government did: pursue an overt policy of dialogue and engagement so that the covert policy of nuclear weapons work could continue without interference.

The Jewish Community Council is right not to lend its legitimacy to this so-called moderate.

Mark Kessel, Elsternwick

Peace in our time?

WHY on earth is Mohammad Khatami visiting Melbourne and being hosted by Anglican Archbishop Philip Freier, on behalf of a La Trobe University centre? This tells us much about the naivety and appeasing nature of both institutions. Have they learnt nothing from history and Neville Chamberlain? Khatami is part of a theocratic Islamist regime that denies the Holocaust and advocates for a new nuclear Holocaust to wipe out Israel. Iran brutalises internal minorities, including Christians, Jews, Baha'is and Sunnis, as well as women, gays, and any modernising dissidents.

To suggest that Khatami is acceptable because he is somewhat more moderate than Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, when both are shades of the same tyrannical regime, is to play farcical games with moral relativism. All reasonable communities, not just the Jews, should be outraged by his visit here.

Only talking will stop the killing MOHAMMAD KHATAMI

Mary Werther, Camberwell

An opportunity lost

IN OPPOSING the invitation to former president Khatami, John Searle and the Jewish Community Council of Victoria do themselves a disservice. The La Trobe University's Centre for Dialogue has a track record in carrying out genuine dialogue. It recently succeeded in bringing together Tamil and Sinhalese Australians. We believe that we are not the only JCCV affiliate to be disappointed by the decision to cut ties with the centre. Given the perceived threat to Israel by Iran, it seems to us that any opportunity to engage with a potential leader of that country should be grasped with both hands.

Steve Brook, Helen Rosenbaum and Larry Stillman, Australian Jewish Democratic Society, Melbourne

Paving a road to hell

ARCHBISHOP Philip Freier may have good intentions in hosting a dialogue between former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami and persecuted minority faith groups in Iran, and Khatami may also be a "major intellectual" as claimed by Professor Joseph Camilleri.

But while the Victorian Jewish community's commitment to interfaith dialogue is undeniable, time and again Khatami has contemptuously refused to speak to Jews who believe they have a right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland.

Thoughtful Australians are well aware of Iran's intentions for Israel and other Western nations and can see clearly through Khatami's benign facade.

John Searle, president, Jewish Community Council of Victoria, Caulfield South

Boards must rein in avaricious CEOs

I'M AMAZED at the brouhaha over executive salaries, and the hanging out to dry of those executives who have big salaries, and even bigger bonuses. Don't get me wrong, I'm on board with the outrage, especially where an executive has had an adverse impact on a bottom line, and/or damaged the reputation and share price of an organisation. But where is the noise about how they got what they got?

Is it easier to target the individual, rather than the group that grants these rewards? I think board members, as representatives of the stakeholders, need to be held accountable here, for the failure to effectively oversee and for failing to steer the direction that a chief executive might take in managing an organisation.

If we as shareholders don't more effectively scrutinise the actions of boards on our behalf, we have no right to lambast the actions of the individual who, admittedly through an over-inflated sense of self, negotiates these fantastic packages.

Lee-anne Knight, Brunswick

Counting the debt

PETER Costello's hypocrisy over his concern at Kevin Rudd placing Australia in debt with his stimulus package really beggars belief (Comment & Debate, 18/3). Isn't this the ex-treasurer who commissioned a debt truck to drive around Australia in 1996, alerting voters to Australia's huge current account deficit not then having reached \$200 billion, which, after he left office had ballooned to more than half a trillion dollars?

Peter Barrett, Kew

Zip, zilch, nada

Only talking will stop the killing MOHAMMAD KHATAMI

IF PETER Costello had continued the Keating government's plan to extend superannuation contributions to 15per cent, we could have "generated massive financial reserves" in Australia too. No runs on the board there, Peter.

Wendy Madex, Seymour

Too young, too rich. Can you believe it?

IMAGINE my disbelief when I discovered that my 18-year-old daughter is ineligible for any payments from the stimulus package because she was not 18 in June last year.

Then I discovered that my wife is also ineligible, because she had the misfortune to retire last April and received a small superannuation payout. This, added to her salary, made her income greater than \$100,000 for that year. She is being punished for an accident of birth.

Perhaps some of the money being given to prisoners, non-residents and pets could be redirected to genuine residents and life-long, tax-paying battlers, who just happened to have retired at the wrong time?

Stuart Brearley, Box Hill North

David wins legal battle on points

YOUR editorial (18/3) on Gunns misses the facts of the case. Most of the 20 original defendants were not accused of criminal trespass, but rather of publicly criticising Gunns' logging activities.

By claiming \$6.3 million damages in Victoria, Gunns may have hoped it would cause the mostly Tasmanian defendants increased cost and inconvenience. It was instead a Magnum bullet in its own foot.

The manoeuvre took the case out of a Tasmanian jurisdiction, where laws governing forestry have been drafted and amended to tilt the legal playing field almost to the vertical. It took the action into the realm of heavyweight lawyers with environmental and public interest sympathies. The import of the outcome is not that Goliath suffered "little damage", but that David won handily on a neutral playing field.

John Hayward, Weegen, Tas

Hypocrisy. You bet

GAMBLING is a gaping, oozing wound afflicting our society. It is for this reason, and not for any Christian leanings, that Good Friday should be gambling-free.

If nothing else, John Brumby's comments re the sanctity of Good Friday are contradictory when we live in a state that endorses the spread of the poker machine disease.

Surely it is far more Christian to acknowledge the problem and do something about it, rather than criticise Tabcorp.

The Government creates budgets and makes election promises based on huge revenue raised from the suffering of hapless Victorians and their families. The government of the day opened the floodgates and now many in our community are drowning.

Pamela Young, Balwyn North

LTTE is legal here

MARK Souza (Letters, 18/3) is wrong - the LTTE (or Tamil Tigers) is not banned as a terrorist organisation in Australia. Because this could not be proved in court, criminal charges against three Australian-Tamils were dropped earlier this year. The difficulty in banning the LTTE is because it was engaged in an internationally brokered ceasefire agreement with the Sri Lankan Government from February 2002 and also administered territory in the north and east. During peace talks, the LTTE was taken to represent Tamil views.

Only talking will stop the killing MOHAMMAD KHATAMI

While skirmishes destabilised the talks for two years, the Government unilaterally withdrew from the ceasefire in January. In September 2008, it had ordered out UN agencies and international observers. The Sri Lankan military offensive has resulted in 2000 civilian deaths and the displacement of 200,000 Tamils in the north. Restrictions on international aid are still in place. Such actions cannot possibly be a platform for harmony.

Pratheepan Balasubramaniam, Australian-Tamil Rights Advocacy Council, Clarinda

Condoms save lives

AS A Melbourne Catholic AIDS-care agency, cold-shouldered by the church, we deplore the ill-advised remarks by Pope Benedict condemning the use of condoms in the global war against HIV/AIDS, especially as he makes his first papal visit to Africa, the epicentre of this terrible disease.

The Pope needs to recognise the paradigm shift in the use of condoms over the years. Initially designed as a contraceptive device, they are now a proven lifesaver in that they block the transmission of a fatal disease.

To deny their value is folly. To also condemn their use in those marriages in which a partner is infected by HIV is to abandon every tenet of Christianity. The Pope would have been better advised to have stayed home and to have donated the costs of his visit to AIDS care work.

Brian Haill, president, Australian AIDS Fund, Frankston

Much to fight for in Afghanistan

THERE might be room for debate about whether Australia should be involved in Afghanistan, but some of John Henry's criteria (Letters, 18/3) are scarcely helpful.

Considerations of a country's proximity to Australia, and the likelihood of its invading us, are irrelevant. Neither Germany's Nazis nor North Korea's communists had the remotest designs on Australia, but were worth resisting nonetheless because of their intrinsic evil.

That raises the second issue, regarding "our way of life". It might indeed be a nebulous concept in some respects, but it includes democracy, liberalism and pluralism, which in turn preclude practices such as theocracy, and the murder of schoolgirls seeking an education.

Anyone still unclear about these distinctions might consider living for a time under a way of life radically different from our own - such as, oh, I don't know, the Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan.

Bill James, Bayswater

Help the holiday businesses too

ABOUT 50per cent of the houses in Marysville were weekenders and holiday rentals accommodating families, friends and guests. All were consumers and customers and contributors to employment and the prosperity of Marysville, its retailers, restaurants, galleries, golf course, and Lake Mountain ski resort. The assistance payments to primary home owners are not questioned, and now grants to businesses have been announced. But these other casualties of the bushfires appear to be excluded.

Insurance will not cover rebuilding houses to the new standards for fire-prone areas, and owners may not rebuild, or not for some time, unless also assisted with these costs.

Without the rebuilding of weekenders, rental properties and accommodation-providers, the recovery of businesses and employment in communities such as Marysville will undoubtedly be dramatically slowed.

John Vietz, Macleod

Highway horror

Only talking will stop the killing MOHAMMAD KHATAMI

TENS of trucks with materials for the Goulburn-Melbourne pipeline have started driving through Kinglake as a shortcut.

This is really why the road was opened. Thanks for helping us to heal with your extra noise, pollution and road-kill of remaining wildlife.

Hania Lada, Kinglake

Graphic

CARTOON BY TANDBERG

Load-Date: March 18, 2009

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SRI LANKA: U.N. WILL RESUME AID CONVOYS INTO REBEL-HELD AREA

IPS - Inter Press Service

September 29, 2008 Monday

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Length: 1165 words

Byline: Ips Correspondents

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Sep 29 2008

Body

Tens of thousands of civilians, trapped by fighting in the Vanni, may soon receive their first supplies of essentials since Sep. 16 when U.N. and other humanitarian agencies quit the embattled area.

Nagalingam Vedanayagam, the government agent for the northern town of Kilinochchi, said a convoy of 60 trucks would be making the trip to the Vanni, where battles between Tamil rebels and the Sri Lankan armed forces are ongoing, later this week.

"We have had several rounds of talks with the World Food Program and other U.N. officials; the plan is to send the convoy later this week," he said.

U.N. officials said the convoy would fly the U.N. flag, and international staff from the United Nations would accompany the convoy into the Vanni.

"These supplies are a vital lifeline to tens of thousands of civilians forced by fighting from their homes. Their condition will deteriorate the longer the fighting and their displacement continue," the U.N. resident representative in Sri Lanka, Neil Buhne, said at a news conference last week.

The convoy would be the first after all the U.N. and international relief agencies working in the Vanni moved out of the area following a government directive and quickly deteriorating security conditions.

Fighting close to Kilinochchi has necessitated a circuitous route for the convoy. Instead of taking the A9 highway that cuts through the center of the Vanni, the convoy will turn east about 22 miles south of the town and circumvent Kilinochchi to get to displaced people in the northeast of the town, Vedanayagam said.

"The route to send these goods has changed. We will be sending the goods through the Mankulam-Oddisuddan-Puthukkudiyiruppu-Mullaithivu and then to Kilinochchi via Paranthan-Mullaithivu road," he said.

Heavy fighting has been reported in areas south of Kilinochchi, and the Sri Lankan army said, last week, that its forward units were within striking distance of the town held by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Since 1982, the **LTTE** has been fighting to carve out an independent state in the north and east for Sri Lanka's minority Tamils, claiming discrimination by the Sinhalese majority. About 75,000 people are estimated to have already died in the conflict.

SRI LANKA : U.N. WILL RESUME AID CONVOYS INTO REBEL-HELD AREA

"The army will fire its first rounds toward Kilinochchi town by next week, as troops are some 4 kilometers [about 2.5 miles] away from Kilinochchi we can even see some of the buildings in the town," army commander Lt. Gen. Fonseka said last week.

The Sri Lankan air force has also intensified aerial raids over Kilinochchi and said its jets carried out a raid on a suspected Tiger female suicide cadre training facility, less than a mile east of the main road at Kilinochchi on Saturday morning. Air Force commander Roshan Goonetilleke said efforts were focused on getting LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.

"We are getting intelligence and information about the whereabouts of Prabhakaran; we will continue with our raids, targeting those hideouts," he said in a statement.

The latest humanitarian reports and government officials in Kilinochchi said that most of the civilians have begun to leave the besieged town and head northeast. "People have begun moving northeast of Kilinochchi, they now remain on the main road northeast of Kilinochchi," he said.

Vedanayagam said that despite the absence of the supply convoys since Sep. 16, food was available in the Vanni. "If there is a delay then we will have problems, but so far, the situation is manageable."

According to latest reports filed by the U.N. and other agencies, there are 200,000 to 230,000 internally displaced persons in the Vanni.

The government has made announcements and air-dropped leaflets asking civilians to leave the Vanni and move to government-secured areas in the south. But, so far, very few have made it south and none by the land route, leading to accusations that the LTTE was preventing the civilians from leaving.

"The civilian population in the Vanni is effectively trapped. Over the last year at least, the LTTE has placed severe restrictions on civilian movement. Civilians wishing to leave the Vanni had to leave a guarantor who would have to take the responsibility of ensuring the return of that individual. With the ongoing military operations, civilians have not been allowed to move out of the Vanni and only a small number have been able to escape, mainly by sea," the Colombo-based civic group Center for Policy Alternatives said in a report released last week.

U.N. and other international agencies that left the Vanni said its local staff resident in the Vanni had been prevented from leaving by the LTTE.

"In the Vanni, over 500 national staff working for NGOs stayed behind as they were not provided travel passes by the LTTE. The U.N. still has 21 national staff within the Vanni who did not receive passes or are staying because of their families," the Inter Agency Standing Committee, an umbrella body of U.N. and other agencies, said last week.

International pressure, meanwhile, has risen on the LTTE to allow freedom of movement for the civilians, especially after several key international players held discussions with Sri Lankan government representatives on the sidelines of last week's U.N. General Assembly sessions.

"We urge the LTTE to take urgent action to allow free movement of civilians," said a statement issued Friday by British ministers Lord Malloch Brown and Shahid Malik.

That statement has drawn reactions from the British Tamil Forum which circulated a response saying it was the Sri Lanka government that was "restricting free movement of civilians within and out of Jaffna Peninsula, where the Sinhala army is an occupying force".

The BTF statement spoke of "degrading restrictions laid on the Tamil community living in and around Colombo, restrictions placed on journalists to travel around Sri Lanka to report on [the] current security situation and human rights violations and the inhuman treatment of IDPs by restricting their mobility by placing them in 'detention centers' [e.g. in Mannar] in contravention of humanitarian practices, human rights laws, U.N. Charters and Geneva Conventions."

SRI LANKA : U.N. WILL RESUME AID CONVOYS INTO REBEL-HELD AREA

"Both sides need to make sure that they're not catching civilians in the crossfire, that they're letting people go to places where they can be safe, and that humanitarian deliveries can take place for these populations that are affected by the fighting," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher said in New York last week, after a meeting of the Tokyo Donor Co-chairs, a collective of international donors made up of the U.S., the European Union, Japan and Norway.

"Their [civilians'] safety and freedom of movement must be paramount. It is crucial that full access for relief supplies is ensured and that the safe transit of these supplies be supervised by independent humanitarian monitors," European Union Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who was part of the meeting, was quoted as saying.

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AFP 0800 GMT News Advisory

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-- TOP STORIES --

+ Three arrested after Egypt bombing

+ **Tamil Tigers** appeal over Sri Lanka offensive

+ Slumdog Millionaire wins Oscars glory

Egypt-unrest,lead-WRAP

CAIRO

Egyptian police arrest three suspects over a bombing in a famed Cairo bazaar killed a French teenager and wounded 25 people, most of them tourists, in the first attack against Westerners in Egypt in three years.

500 words 0830 GMT by Samer al-Atrush. Picture

SriLanka-unrest,lead-WRAP

COLOMBO

The **Tamil Tigers** appeal for international action to halt a major Sri Lankan government offensive against their shrinking fiefdom, but the island's military rejects any talk of a truce.

650 words 0930 GMT by Amal Jayasinghe

Entertainment-Oscars-film,3rdlead

HOLLYWOOD

Rags-to-riches drama "Slumdog Millionaire" sweeps the board at the 81st Academy Awards, winning eight Oscars including best picture on a night of high-voltage Hollywood glamor.

800 words 0830 GMT by Rob Woollard. Picture.

We have also moved: Entertainment-Oscars-film-India

See also our separate Oscars advisory.

REGIONAL FILING PLANS

-- EUROPE --

Lifestyle-art-auction-fashion-France

PARIS

Hundreds of art treasures amassed over half a century by Yves Saint Laurent and his lifelong companion Pierre Berge, go under the hammer in a spectacular farewell to the couture giant.

700 words 0830 GMT by Emma Charlton. Picture. Video.

-- AFRICA --

Somalia-unrest-Burundi-AfricanUnion,WRAP

BUJUMBURA

Five more Burundi troops die of their injuries, bringing to 11 soldiers killed in a suicide attack on an African Union base in Somalia's restive capital Mogadishu.

500 words 0930 GMT by Esdras Ndikumana

-- MIDDLE EAST --

Iraq-culture-museum

BAGHDAD

The National Museum, once the pride of "cradle-of-civilisation" Iraq, is reopened, taking stock of returned treasures almost six years after it was looted and ransacked in the aftermath of the US-led invasion.

550 words 0900 GMT by Ines Bel Aiba. Picture

Mideast-Israel-politics,lead-WRAP

JERUSALEM

AFP 0800 GMT News Advisory

Benjamin Netanyahu fails to convince top rivals to join his government, increasing the chances of a right-wing Israeli coalition that is likely to put the brakes on sputtering Middle East peace talks.

600 words 0900 GMT Charly Wegman

-- ASIA --

China-mining-accident-industry,lead

BEIJING

Investigators probe how China's worst coal mining disaster in over a year could have occurred in what had been hailed as a showcase modern colliery, as the firm's top managers are sacked.

550 words moved by Robert J. Saiget. Picture.

Australia-weather-fires,2ndlead

MELBOURNE

Residents flee their homes in Australia's fire-devastated Victoria state as blazes that killed more than 200 people earlier this month threaten to flare again.

600 words moved by Neil Sands. Picture

US-diplomacy-Asia-China

BEIJING

Hillary Clinton's trip to Beijing has come as a relief to China after the US secretary of state steered clear of human rights to focus on cooperation between the two nations.

550 words moved by Marianne Barriaux

Finance-economy-China-US-bonds-diplomacy

SHANGHAI

China has little choice but to follow Hillary Clinton's call and continue buying US treasuries, ensuring a steady flow of funding support for the massive US stimulus package, economists say.

500 words 0800 GMT by D'Arcy Doran

-- AMERICAS --

Lifestyle-art-US-Arab-Mideast

WASHINGTON

The largest ever Arab arts festival to be hosted in the US lifts the veil this week on war, traditions and the role of women, just as President Barack Obama has vowed to reach out to the Muslim world.

700 words 0830 by Olivia Hampton. Picture.

Lifestyle-Brazil-festival-Carnival-finance

RIO DE JANEIRO

Rio de Janeiro is reveling in its famous Carnival parades, which this year are looking like a feverish, ultimate bash before the sharp teeth of the global economic crisis really bite deep.

550 words 0845 GMT by Marc Burleigh

afp

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