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Tamil militants hope for Indian help

Representatives of almost all the five militant Tamil groups from Sri Lanka are in New Delhi to appeal to Mrs Gandhi and sympathetic foreign embassies for "assistance" in their struggle for an independent Eelam state. The time for negotiations is now a thing of the past, they say. It was on the strength of Mrs Gandhi's initiative that the militants and even the TULF had agreed to yet another round of negotiations, despite their own negative assessment of the sincerity of the Jayewardene government. The initiative has clearly failed with President Jayewardene resorting to a military solution of the ethnic problem, Mr Uma Maheshwaran, leader of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamileelam, a militant group said.

The PLOT is considered to be the most numerous of the five groups. Mr Maheshwaran was unwilling to divulge the strength of his followers but said it was about half the approximately 7,000 total number of militants.

What had earlier been the domestic ethnic problem of Sri Lanka, he felt, had now acquired a definite international dimension with the induction of former SAS commandos, Israeli agents and the covert role of the Americans. Besides, it was merely a question of time before the Americans started asking for the stationing of their military personnel to protect the facilities in Trincomalee and the VOA station, he said. The scale of the problem was now completely different from that of 1983. Mr Maheshwaran was confident that some socialist countries with which PLOT had been in close contact over the last six years would now give support. He, showed an album of photographs of PLOT militants being trained in the use of arms by East Europeans.

Mr Maheshwaran emphasised that the training camps were all in Sri Lanka's northern, eastern and central provinces.

The Tamil issue has become an international problem with the induction of British, Israeli and US experts by the Sri Lanka government. **Uma Maheshwaran**, a militant leader, speaks to Rita Manchanda

He had himself been trained in Lebanon in 1977 and fought in West Asia. As for Indian help, so far there were only discussions with the Indian government and the hope of "assistance." He implied that Mrs Gandhi had already made a commitment to help them as without her personal initiative in 1983 another round table conference would never have taken place. He denied that there were any parallels between the Bangladesh situation and Sri Lanka. He maintained: "I have not said that there were training camps in India."

The growing possibility of coordination among all the five militant groups made him confident about the future. The Tamil Tigers and the PLOT had been locked in a savage internecine war but it appeared that pressure from several foreign countries had

been helpful in persuading the feuding groups to come to an understanding.

The Tamil Tigers and the PLOT met for the first time, two weeks ago, to discuss a coordinated political and tactical strategy. The other groups like the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), and Tamil Eelam Liberation Army (TELA) were always on talking terms, Mr Maheshwaran said. While discussions on some kind of overall organisational structure were still continuing in Delhi, it was clear that the groups would continue to retain their independent identities.

Their major difference with the Tamil Tigers, the best armed of the militant groups, was over the latter's belief in individual assassination. The

PLOT believed in mass mobilisation. The Tigers had communicated to them that the attack on navy personnel, which precipitated the recent wave of reprisals, had been an accident. Nonetheless, Mr Maheshwaran emphasised that the Tigers by their actions were playing into the hands of the Sri Lankan forces by provoking them into attacking and terrorising the Tamil masses before they were in a position to effectively resist them.

He was confident that the groups were now reaching the "final stage of preparedness" for a concerted onslaught. Their more immediate strategy was to concentrate on the training of the one million plantation workers of Indian origin who were isolated in the central provinces. Mrs Gandhi, in her recent statement in Parliament, had spoken of the specific vulnerability of this group. Several hundreds, Mr Maheshwaran said, had already been trained.

The recent wave of violence clearly bore the imprint of the Israelis, according to Mr Maheshwaran. During the 1983 incidents, violence broke out all over the island but this time it was confined to attacks on the strongholds of the underground organisations. Moreover, for the first time, Muslim shops were also ransacked. The Muslims in Jaffna and Trincomalee had always been sympathetic to the Tamil cause. It was in Batticaloa that they had sided with the Sinhalese, Mr Maheshwaran said.

He continued to maintain that the Madras airport explosion was caused by the Israelis despite evidence that the new group, Tamil Eelam Army (TEA) was involved. He said he had spoken to their leaders and had been assured that they were not responsible.

"As regards the TULF, they have lost whatever popularity they had earlier enjoyed. The survival of the Tamil people is now in the hands of the militant groups," claimed the guerrilla leader.



Uma Maheshwaran

Lanka bid to placate Arabs

Colombo, Aug. 27 (AP, PTI): A senior Sri Lankan minister said yesterday that he would visit Saudi Arabia next week to explain his country's renewed ties with Israel that have strained its relations with Arab states.

"Every thing we did to convince the Arab countries that our links with Israel were for a limited purpose have been undone and we have to start from scratch again," the Muslim affairs and transport minister, M. H. Mohamed said.

He was referring to statements made in Jerusalem last week by another senior Sri Lankan official, the state ministry secretary, Mr Douglas Liyanage, who was quoted as saying there was no reason why the island nation should not have full diplomatic ties with Israel, as it does with most Arab states and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Mr Liyanage's remarks had "thoroughly upset" Sri Lanka's relations with the Arabs, Mr Mohamed said, adding that he would carry a special message assuring them that Colombo's foreign policy was not going to

change.

"I hope to meet Arab leaders and foreign ministers going on a pilgrimage, like myself, to Mecca and convince them that Sri Lanka remains fiercely pro-Arab," he said.

The controversy first arose from Sri Lanka's decision to restore low-level diplomatic relations with Israel in the form of an interest section at the US embassy here, and to invite Israeli experts to train Sri Lankan personnel in security and anti-terrorist methods.

Mr Mohamed said there was concern in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Egypt, Iraq, Iran and in the PLO over the Israeli presence and "we had to go to great trouble to explain the exceptional circumstances that led to the decision to get Israeli assistance."

But this had been undermined, he said, by Mr Liyanage's remarks which the government earlier declared were private views and did not reflect Sri Lankan official policy.

The Colombo government had previously acknowledged that a handful of Israelis were involved

in the security training and said they were from Israel's internal security organisation, known as Shin Bet. The President, Mr Junius R. Jayewardene, and other officials have denied that the advisers were supplied by Mossad, Israel's espionage agency.

Lanka threat: Colombo has taken up with Indian authorities the new boycott of Sri Lankan ships by Indian dock workers saying the move could boomerang, government sources here said yesterday.

The boycott over the Tamils' issue—originally confined to Madras but now extended to other Indian ports as well—was prominently reported by Sri Lanka's controlled media, coupled with a warning by trade and shipping ministry officials here that they "will not just sit back and take things lying down."

The officials implied a "retaliation" threat by Lankan workers, adding India in the process would be harder hit as more Indian ships call at Colombo than Lankan vessels at Indian ports.

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CIA-Mossad plot to cut out Tamil Nadu

— BLITZ, AUGUST 25, 1984

'Trojan horses' of alien agencies

It must also be borne in mind, that Mossad apart, the CIA itself, long ago, penetrated the Eelam groups through its Trojan Horses like Chandrahassan (his close associates include Lankan Minister Gamini Dissenayake, an avowed Tamil hater and instigator of the genocide), Dr. Wilson, Adviser to Colombo on Tamil affairs, and Neelam Thiruchelvan, a pro-CIA plant within the TULF. Another such suspected Trojan horse is Sivanayagam, the man who supplied most of the material for the controversial piece published in *India Today* early this year,

directed against India and the Tamil activists.

CIA activity in Tamil Nadu has been on the increase ever since July 1983, when thousands of Tamils were butchered in Sri Lanka by Sinhalese chauvinists operating under the protection of the Colombo regime. Following the massacres, sympathy in Tamil Nadu for the Sri Lankan Tamils was obviously high, and this had to be undermined by creating diversions that would turn that sympathy to hatred.

NEW LIFE Friday, August 31, 1984

Pitch invaded

The cricket pitch at Lord's was invaded on Thursday August 23 by demonstrating members of the People's Liberation Organisation of

Tamil Eelam (PLOT).

This was to show solidarity with the Tamil Eelam freedom fighters, and also to demonstrate to the people in Britain the extent and intensity of state terrorism and genocide perpetrated by the Sri Lankan Sinhala regime on innocent Tamil people.