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## THE TAMIL RESISTANCE MOVEMENT AND THE CONDUCT OF THE LTTE

The precarious position into which the whole Tamil resistance movement has been led into by the actions of the LTTE, even though saddening <sup>but</sup> ~~it is~~ not a surprise. Those who have known the movement for a long time and for those who have followed the LTTE as a militant group know well that the situations into which the LTTE has led themselves is not <sup>unbecoming of</sup> ~~unnatural to~~ them.

LTTE from the start worked on a strategy of hit and run and propaganda to collect funds which in turn was used to build up more military strength with which it could drive the army out. This according to their calculation would have brought the people under their control <sup>as</sup> ~~who were all to turn~~ their supporters. In contrary to this the groups like EROS worked on a strategy of careful preparations and winning the support of the people and correct alliance before launching anything substantial. The same position was taken up by EPRLF when it came into being.

It is not difficult to spot the vacuum in the LTTE'S strategy if it is brought into any close scrutiny on the basis of experience of liberation warfare and political science. However it was not for all to identify this strategy concocted out of mercenary tactics glossed in a pretentious commitment to ideology and imitations when it came to serious matters of politics.

For those from the then EROS who first identified the phenomena of LTTE in the mid seventies ( <sup>couldn't bring it to an end.</sup> bringing and end to it was out of the question ) When mass of the people could still go behind such

(5)

has politically lapsed long ago, and the two communities have drifted apart considerably and continued to drift, the methods that could have arrested the drift politically were not for J.R. even comprehend<sup>ed</sup> with.

In his continued belief that his formula will succeed, to whose political demise he himself has contributed, he called in the help of TULF. There was nothing in TULF to help J.R.. They themselves have taken to Eelam demand for their survival. They were a totally alienated lot.

These lapses and failures to arrest the drift, the unpatriotic path along which J.R. opted to take the country into the hands of imperialism, his socio economic programmes that created such tensions and convolutions in the society, the feeling of insecurity and mutual suspicion his path created both within and in the surrounding area, all this brought around July 83 a situation, a spark falling on the face of a Sinhalese from a struck match of a Tamil in a Colombo bus stand could have brought the disaster, ~~of 23 July 83.~~

In being adamant <sup>ly</sup> ~~in~~ not wanting to see the writing on the wall and come to grips with his lapses, J.R. chose to advance a criminal and communal path on the Tamils. He set the army on the innocent civilians of the north and East in the name of fighting 'terrorism'. The acts of army without any accountability to the people are acts of terror. The death and destruction to the civility and peaceful living of the north and east has been

(9)

the archiological evidence, demographic history, and history of sovereign powers and principalities that existed in Sri Lanka, the positions to which Sinhalese have often resorted to, the traditional homeland of the Tamils would be much larger than the present North and East. Settling for the areas of the North and East as the traditional areas of the Tamils where their national aspirations can be more freely excercised without hindering the Sinhalese aspiration being freely exercised in the area of rest of seven provinces itself is done in sprit of accommodation and a desire for settlement and peace.

The Tamils have never opposed the Sinhalese coming and living in the North and East. But they opposed the settlements in the contention that it will eventually destroy their national rights and reduce them and place them along with the few Malays, Chinese, Sindhis and Burgers and other similar minorities. The present position of J.R that East has to be devided into three only reinforces the fear and proves the apreheensions of Tamil leaders in the past have been just.

The folly in the government position can be best exposed by asking whether JR is prepared to create similar areas for the Tamils in the Up-Country, Colombo and Puttalam areas.

The problem today is not the need for evasive contentions, exercises of pomp but a positive approach to understand the national problem, as a crisis of ethnic ownership, and resolve

(7)

If LTTE is on a parth of suicide, it is of their own making. Every effort was made to instill in LTTE both from inside and outside a genuine plitical content and spirit of political responsibility. It is saddening to note that these efforts have been in vain leaving us with an experience of proving the theory which we opted to disprove.

LTTE said its going to directly hit at the army in the North and East and drive them out and establish a sovereign state. Lot of resources were spent on this strategy. The human material losses ~~way~~ were heavy. Has the LTTE succeeded in driving out the army from the North and East?

To the question whether this movement ever needed a phenominen and a strategy of the type advanced by the LTTE , the answer is No. The movement had to go through such circumstances that the growth of the phenomenon of this nature was unavoidable.

LTTE exploited the emotional upheaval and lack of comprehension from such quarters as the party in power in Tamil Nadu and the counterfit inhibition of some section of the Tamil expatriate community. It also exploited the lapse of the international media to refer to the movement as a 'tiger' movement.

There were groups who were principally opposed to exploiting these sentiments and others arising from fear due to personal and selfish motivation.

The accommodation of many militant groups in the totalpity

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(3)

was no option but to see it as an expression of our people. The society itself was not on a footing where a single structure could have been evolved. It was for us to see the unity of the movement in its diversity.

The first major accomodation and mutual recognition of various groups came about in the latter part of 82. The six militant groups EROS, PLOT, EPRLF, TELO, NLFT, and LTTE, came together to announce the rejections of the TULF leadership and continuation of armed struggle and ~~they~~ work to accomodate each other and evolve a common programme of action.

The question of evolving a single structure was very much an issue then as it is now. The unity of the movement through mutual accomodation of different positions was not only found to be adequate but also became a strength in bringing out the wider participation of people and bring a wide spectrum of external interests in support, while providing camaflage and confusion ~~in~~ to those who approached the ~~the~~ Tamil resistance movement with an intention of liquidating it.

The realities of 83, the emergence of India as a natural and unavoidable ally, the wider awareness of the problem in an international level, the support and backing of the Tamil Community at large to the militant movement, all this could be effectively accommodated mainly because the diversity and the group unity within the movement. If not for this there would ~~not~~

(10)

own. It will not be in accordance with Mrs Gandhi's assurance that she will find a just solution to the problem acceptable to the Tamils.

It is by accommodating the Sinhalese in the North and East and extending them the hand of friendship and brotherhood, the Tamils will set such an example in mutually beneficial living it will be possible to bring a compulsion on the Sinhalese to extend the same relationship to the Tamils in the Sinhalese areas, who otherwise have been treated as hostages in the extending of evil intention on what is Tamil.

While there is no consensus and sincere effort towards accommodation of the basic issues which has to come entirely from the Sinhalese or which should have been the achievement of the Indian mediation, there is no urgency for a single leader with a capacity for putting the signature on an agreement on behalf of the Tamils. Any premature exercises to impose one can only be analysed for its conspiratorial value.

If LTTE has failed to build a trustworthy relationship with India the leadership of LTTE must take full blame for that. LTTE is not definitely in a position to know or make comments on the nature of relationship which the other groups have with India. There is no reason why other groups should not have a good relationship with India.

The best way of sorting out this problem would have been for all the groups to coordinate their relationship with India. Much

(2)

a force as the TULF during the election period, and LTTE itself being influenced by the TULF, the writing was there on the wall. The manifestation of one to the other was clearly foreseen. The transfer of the same quality and content and the alienated relationship to the people from one to the other was all predictable. It was to take place in a situation, when armed struggle has become the only course of action for the Tamils.

The foundation of the Tamil militant movement was laid by the untrustworthy and undemocratic way the Sinhalese leadership handled the ethnic connotations of the polity which affected the subsequent behaviour of the Sinhalese towards the Tamils. The Tamils were left with no option but to counter it. When the parliamentary democratic norms of resistance were frustrated the militancy was the only way out. The foundations of Tamil militancy were much broader than what was sought to be understood in a few gun-trotting youth. The relentless thrust of Sinhala Chauvinism imposed a helplessness within the traditions and political norms held in high esteem by the Tamil people. This led to the militant mood that sought a manifestation for itself in the terrorist tendencies.

Much against the theoretical positions held by EROS a concerted effort was made to bring LTTE into a revolutionary discipline in its activities and bring any permanent benefit to the sacrifices and labour that went with it.

As much as LTTE was unavoidable as a group for its own reasons, the emergence of other groups was also unavoidable. There

(10)

the crisis in <sup>an</sup> atmosphere of give and take. Evasive exercise to hide lack of will to come to grip with the realities of the problem cannot bring about an atmosphere of mutual accommodation and trust which alone can end the apprehensions of the Sinhalese with regard to certain matters.

This is not the first time India is involved as an ally in a political crisis in Sri Lanka. Virtually every Sinhalese king has sort help from India especially from the Tamils. There has never been any history without Indian influence. Even the British rule was extended from Madras by the erstwhile East India Company. The issue is not about being pro-india or anti-India.

The Sinhalese for some very interesting reasons thought Tamils are Indians and they should go to India. No wonder India has a moral responsibility to involve in the problem.

It is unfortunate that the Indian mediation has not brought any settlement. Much credit for the state of affairs should go to Romesh Bandari. When he conceded to the Sinhalese the position that Tamils have no claim for the East, he has rendered Indian mediation <sup>unfavorable</sup> ~~useless~~ to the Tamils. The very ease with which he conceded leaves one with no option but to go by the stories that he did this in return for parcel of gems from the Sinhalese.

There are no short cuts to the settlement. The electoral emergency in Tamil Nadu will not impose on the Tamil people a settlement that destroy all their gains of heroic sacrifices they have made for the sake of a dignified life in the land of their



6

closed. The wounds it has left would take a long time to heal. It ~~was~~ ~~were~~ these acts of J.R. that forced the upper hand of the terrorist tendencies in the Tamil Resistance movement. It is a question of thesis and anti thesis. In spite all the pretensions that they stand to negate each other one is responsible for the growth of the other and in some platform they are in total collusion. It is not possible to speak of the demise of one without the demise of the other.

It is necessary here to refer to some idiocracy in the personal qualities of LTTE leader Prabaharan which the conspiratorial forces seems to have exploited with some success. Few months after the founding of LTTE in 76, Prabaharan killed the co-founder of the group Saravanan in cold blood. The next ~~was~~ victim was Sundaram, a very efficient and capable fighter. Next he attempted to kill Uma Maheswaran, leader of PLOTE. Oberoi Thevan the leader of Tela, Michel of Batticaloa, Jegan and many other patriots on the list. He liquidated the leader of Telo Sri Sabaratnam and brought about th paralysis of that group. He killed others in the fear <sup>that</sup> they ~~are going to~~ <sup>might</sup> kill him. He also believes ~~that~~ others ~~are going to~~ <sup>might</sup> kill him if they ~~are going to~~ <sup>become</sup> be more powerful than him <sup>self.</sup> He <sup>will be</sup> is prepared to ally with anyone whose <sup>grant</sup> ~~will~~ going to keep him more powerful ~~than~~ than others. With a careful ocestration by counter forces it is not surprising <sup>that</sup> LTTE was turned into an instrument of distruction in the movement.

One only remembers of the story of the lion king in the forest.

(4)

never have been the growth of the movement that effectively checked J.R.

The movement was not without false support, while groups like EROS and EPRLF were selective and had a qualitative approach in choosing and seeking support. ~~LTTE~~ and some other groups were ~~was~~ very lavish. If today people like Hindu N.Ram K.Veeramani, M.G.Ramachandran, P.Nedumaran, N.Panchadcharam, Kovai Mahesen, Balakumaran are among the best supporters of LTTE, it is needless to mention such diverse forces can come together only on a platform of <sup>↑</sup>conspiracy. No wonder today these forces have brought about the virtual disaster of the LTTE and great crisis in the movement.

JR's despotism and his dictatorial inhibitions were very much instrumental for the growth of LTTE. For its very justification, ~~and~~ continuation and stabilisation, it called for the counter terrorism of the LTTE. In fairness to this old man, it must be said, leaving aside his dictatorial inhibitions, his anastomosis to the need of carrying the Sinhala chauvinism in the electorate, Mr J R Jayawardene did make an attempt to solve the problem. He did believe, with the support in the parliament and his economic policies, he could create a society where Sinhalese and Tamils and all others can live together as equals and in peace. Even though some Tamil leaders like G G Ponnambalam, did believe in this ~~it~~ <sup>as</sup> is a well known fact in history that ~~the~~ the Sinhalese society was not endowed with virtues to accomodate this formula. And when J.R. came to power in 77, this working out as a solution

(8)

movement still left the question of resolving the power question in a confusion, whether it is a settlement or a sovereign and independent state. It is precisely in resolving this the democratic tradition of the people was to be reasserted. The contributions of various groups towards the result would have been different. The competition was accommodated. The final judgement and reward in accordance with their contribution, it was for the people to decide. They were the witness and borne the brunt. They would have been the best judges for they would have known well as to who has done what in this.

If the LTTEE has in actuality driven out the army from the North and East and established sovereign state as it said, the people would not have chosen anyone else but LTTE to lead them and LTTE would have been free to advance the formalities and norms of establishing a one party state. If other groups are overtaking LTTE it is because they worked on a consistent programme and with dedication and advanced strategy different from that of LTTE <sup>which</sup> ~~that~~ seems to succeed.

To bring about a settlement there is no need to promote a single group. What is important is a settlement itself.

The Tamil people have clearly expressed their position. The present North and Eastern provinces be resolved into a Tamil majority province.

This is perfectly a just position. The Tamil claim for the North and East was not even disputed in the past. Even though going by

(12)

blame for such a coordination not coming into fruition should go to LTTE which always stood to seek superiority over others and frustrated all efforts at coordination. However the blame must be shared by others as well. Then there was the now defunct EROS claim that it was the unifying force in the whole scenario.

LTTE stand of seeking superiority over others through dubious claims, pretensions and not through genuine contribution to the struggle, indulging in exercise of deception and coeresion within the movement to promote themselves and resorting to armed actions against other militant groups to resolve the conflict of power struggle to the extent of annihilating them and ungrateful behavior toward India are condemnable. It is not in accordance with sprit of accomodation that prevailed in the movement. This behavior of LTTE is much against the values and traditions we have cherished as our culture. No ideology can be called in for help to cover up the blatant conduct of the LTTE within the movement.

In fairness to much sacrifices and heroism that went into LTTE the LTTE leadership must take full blame for leading all that into political wilderness. Until LTTE changes course there is no need for any support to LTTE within the movement. The present course can only lead to a capitulation or direct Indian intervention against both of which the groups have taken a common stand.