

Tigers show their stripes in Sri Lanka

by Ramtanu Maitra and Susan Maitra

After playing cat and mouse with the Kumaratunga government for weeks on resuming peace talks to end the 13-year ethnic civil war between the Tamil minority and the Sinhala majority in Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked Trincomalee harbor, killing 12 sailors and wounding dozens more. The Tigers resumed hostilities on the same day that a federal building in Oklahoma City was bombed, in the worst terrorist incident in U.S. history.

There are reasons why the distant events must be viewed as two heads of one hydra-headed international terrorist organization. One giveaway of such a linkage is the message of condolence sent to the U.S. ambassador in Sri Lanka by Tiger supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran, who is wanted in India, along with his intelligence chiefs, in connection with the 1991 assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The message said in part: "It is when people are downtrodden and have no hope of redress that they are forced to resort to such violent means through remorse, frustration, and despair." There is no ostensible reason for Prabhakaran to make common cause in his "struggle" for a separate Tamil state with the Oklahoma City massacre, except to advertise that the Tigers are one of the most well-organized terrorist outfits in this part of the world and also the firmness of their ties to the international drug- and gun-running apparatus that is involved in creating chaos and fear from Karachi to Oklahoma.

The Tigers, eager to force President Chandrika Kumaratunga's hand and activate the right-wing Sinhala assassins into another wave of gang-counter-gang violence (and money-making), have raised the stakes. On April 28, they shot dead Vinodhan Kumarasamy, the economic and foreign policy adviser and a personal friend of the President, at his office-residence near Colombo. The next day, using a surface-to-air missile for the first time, the Tigers killed 52 Air Force personnel.

At the same time, the powers behind the Tigers are still claiming that they are open to a peaceful solution. This claim is aimed at keeping the Sri Lankan Tamils under the Tigers' influence at a time when the Tamil population has begun to identify the Tigers for what they are. The Tigers are accusing the Sri Lankan government of failing to honor its pledges to the Tamils. Speaking to a sympathetic BBC correspondent, Tiger head Prabhakaran laid the onus on the Sri Lankan government for the fresh spate of warfare. He said the peace

process can be renewed if Colombo agrees to the preconditions set by the Tigers.

Among the preconditions is the dismantling of a strategic Army base camp in the overland route to the north, and permission for the Tigers to carry arms in the government-controlled areas in the east. Needless to say, both demands have been rejected by Colombo. The "game" of the Tigers is, on the one hand, to lie that they are willing to pursue a peaceful path to end the civil strife, and on the other, to lay down impossible demands as preconditions for peace talks. It is widely acknowledged in Colombo that these two demands cannot be met without provoking the Sinhala right-wing.

Direct threats

On the ground, there were two reasons why the Tigers attacked. First, the success of the recently elected People's Alliance government and President Kumaratunga in convincing the Tamils of northern Sri Lanka, the bastion of the Eelam movement, that continuing hostilities would bring in fresh money and guns for the Tigers and the wheeler-dealers within the Sri Lankan Army, and lead to further destruction of the Tamil community. With their grip on the Tamil community steadily loosening, the Tigers were blinded with anger over the prospect of an outright rebellion. Prabhakaran is aware that the success of Kumaratunga will bare him and his boys as nothing but hired assassins, carrying out contract killings for cash and guns on behalf of international terrorist organizations.

Second, is the proven ability of President Kumaratunga to rebuild her country's bridge with India, separated by the 21-mile Palk Strait. One of the major objectives of the Tigers has always been to keep New Delhi and Colombo at odds with each other over the ethnic issue.

From the Indian side, a series of mistakes was made in the early 1980s during the Indira Gandhi regime, when the Tigers were allowed to set up bases in Tamil Nadu, the Indian state across the Palk Strait, and were reportedly aided by Indian intelligence. This allowed the Tigers to shift their base of operations from northern Sri Lanka to Tamil Nadu, which, in the Tamil fanatics' scheme of things, is to be part of a greater Tamil Eelam.

In the late 1980s, when Rajiv Gandhi began to dismantle the Tigers' dens in Tamil Nadu, Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa (since assassinated) unleashed a virulent anti-India campaign. Further, the Indian Peace Keeping Force, stationed in Sri Lanka to disarm the rebel Tamils under the India-Sri Lanka accord signed by Gandhi and Sri Lankan President Jayewardene on July 31, 1987, failed, and in the process drew the wrath of the LTTE, as the Tigers were in no mood to give up the lucrative business associated with guns-for-drug terrorism. Premadasa's ill-timed anti-India campaign, under the rubric of protecting Sri Lankan sovereignty (ostensibly jeopardized by the Indian Peace Keeping Forces based in Sri Lanka), pushed India out of the scene,

and the Tigers, with links to gun-runners from Israel and North Africa via Singapore, intelligence officials of Mossad and MI-5, and drug-runners in Karachi and Myanmar, made hay against a poorly trained and corrupt Sri Lankan Army.

Rebuilding bridges

Kumaratunga's visit to India in late March, during the lull in negotiations between the government and the LTTE, resolved a number of important political and trade issues and alarmed the terrorist controllers. The Indian demand to extradite Prabhakaran in connection with the 1991 assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, was reportedly agreed upon. In reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament, on April 26, Minister of State for External Affairs R.L. Bhatia said the deportation of the LTTE leader involves not just "legal measures, but emotions of the Indian people."

In addition, as President Kumaratunga noted in a recent interview, international opinion is also pushing the LTTE to the negotiating table. Following the Tigers' attack on Trincomalee, many nations condemned the Tigers' renewal of terrorism. Kumaratunga also pointed out that international support to the LTTE has declined sharply. This was partly because of the improvement in the human rights record in Sri Lanka, which has been acknowledged by the European Union, the U.S. Congress, and the British government, among others, she said.

Kumaratunga, daughter of President S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (assassinated) and Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, and wife of Vijaya Kumaratunga (assassinated by right-wing Sinhala fanatics), a potential Presidential candidate of the left parties in the late 1980s, has outmaneuvered and checkmated the Tigers and Prabhakaran. Disassociating herself from the right-wing Buddhist Sangha-led Sinhala chauvinism, and expressing genuine concern for the northern Sri Lankan Tamils, the real victims of the Tigers-led war, she took powerful weapons away from the so-called Tamil cause. In addition, her success in reestablishing contacts with India and her fearless campaign against money-grubbing individuals within the Sri Lankan military, have consolidated her politically and weakened the terrorists significantly. This has also helped to reestablish the mainstream politicians who were ruthlessly annihilated by both the Tigers and their partners-in-crime, the right-wing Sinhala fanatics, led by the Buddhist Sangha.

Under the circumstances, Prabhakaran and his controllers acted in the only way they know how. They pounded military positions in the north using rockets and mortar bombs. The Sri Lankan government has rounded up a large number of suspected Tigers for questioning, and has given the green light to the Sri Lankan Air Force to bomb suspected Tiger strongholds. In a three-page statement, the government called on the Tamil community to join hands with it and other communities in its endeavor for peace.

Fujimori's reelection irks the British

by Manuel Hidalgo

The landslide reelection of Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori last April 9, and the defeat of his rival, former U.N. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuellar, has already begun to have its first positive effects. And the Anglophile networks of Project Democracy and the Inter-American Dialogue which stand behind the plot to destroy the Armed Forces and the nations of Ibero-America, cannot hide their hysteria over those election results. The reason is clear: The *Fujimori model* of how it is possible to defeat narco-terrorism while maintaining popular support, poses a formidable obstacle to their plans to ignite the continent through secessionist, ethnic, and border wars.

Fujimori has also proclaimed the end of rule by political parties, or "party-ocracy" as it is known in Peru and elsewhere in Ibero-America. Fujimori told the *Houston Chronicle* on April 16 that "this system is going to fall like the Berlin Wall. . . . The political parties no longer function. . . . they brought the country to ruin. They failed." His statements triggered a flood of responses. Especially striking was the London *Economist's* violent denunciation of the reelection of Fujimori and of his "military circle," and warning that a continuation of the International Monetary Fund's "structural reforms" does not agree "at all . . . with Fujimori's style."

His reelection now gives Fujimori the chance to change the most vulnerable flank of his administration, namely, the economic program imposed by the IMF during his first term in office. Several statements by Fujimori tend to point in that direction. Referring to Fujimori's post-election postponement of the privatizations of Peru's oil and electricity monopolies (Petroperú and Electroperú), opposition journalist Mirko Lauer wrote in the leftist daily *La República* April 25: "It would seem that Fujimori wants to begin to free himself of some of the pressures of the IMF and World Bank. . . . The idea of the IMF and World Bank is to keep Fujimori as an asset stripper and collector of debts . . . without too much control over the economic program. Fujimori is no longer so committed to that role, and neither are a section of the armed institutions."

Immediately following Fujimori's victory at the polls, the IMF warned that there is a risk that the Peruvian economy is "overheating"! The IMF is insisting on another ratchet increase in its brutal "austerity" policies for Peru, and the