



What eventually won the war against Prabhakaran and the twenty five year-old LTTE insurgency was an unleash of sheer military power and might. This strategy had a close resemblance to US General Collin Powell's strategy in Vietnam. Powell believed "that the US army should become a machine that delivered a massive, technologically awe-inspiring military punch at high speed." Powell failed in Vietnam but President Rajapakse prevailed in Sri Lanka.

Years of unproductive handling of this insurgency by successive governments in Sri Lanka (including the present regime during the initial years) had compelled the application of the Powell doctrine. Those botched years had much to do with the personality and mission of Velupillai Prabhakaran. Here was an implacable and unrelenting enemy out for blood until he grabbed Eelam. Having captured and killed him and destroyed the LTTE the time is now ripe for a different approach that alone can prevent the resurrection of Tamil insurgency in the future and help build lasting peace in the island

hatred for the Sinhalese and a belief in the outright attack of the enemy. This was revealed in his famous interview with N Ram of *The Hindu* newspaper of India. He firmly believed that the Sinhalese and Tamils cannot get on together in one state. In 1972 young Prabhakaran formed the Tamil New Tigers (TNT) terrorist group. This violent young man recorded immediate and spectacular success by killing the Jaffna Mayor Alfred Duraipappa in broad daylight. Duraipappa represented the typical moderate Tamil leadership that was mainstream at the time. Prabhakaran congratulated himself and first began to be noticed as a heroic figure by the younger Tamils after that gruesome murder. The adulation that he gained strengthened his resolve to turn the tide of Tamil leadership from the supine toward an uncompromising military mode. He went into hiding in South India after that murder because the defence forces were after him. There, he gathered a coterie of similar minded young men and women around him and received formal training under the Indian RAW agency.

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empire included a good part of Sri Lanka which fact therefore evinced Prabhakaran's imperialistic mission to bring the whole of the island under Tamil domination.

The hardcore LTTE became a murderous gang that went around killing firstly the remnants of Tamil moderates of the like of Amirthalingam who had been only demanding a federal state, and moderate intellectual Neelan Tirichuvelan who commanded an enormous influence. Secondly, one by one they demolished promising leaders of Sri Lanka like Premadasa, Lalith Athulathmudali, Gamini Dissanayake and GM Premachandra on the understanding that when heads like these go the LTTE can manage to gobble up the rest. Prabhakaran killed defence personnel

and comprehensive such attempt was mooted by Ranil Wickremasinghe in the year 2002 when he was Prime Minister. That agreement instituted a foreign third party (the Norwegians) as mediator and Wickremasinghe went in for the long haul of building trust and coaxing the enemy with the assistance of global powers. The LTTE violated that ceasefire at will and instead used it to remobilise and gather resources to fight again. At the end of that period the LTTE engineered the defeat of Wickremasinghe at the Presidential elections fearing that that man had potential to rout him in a different style. When the current President was elected the latter also initially continued the ceasefire and the talk mode of Wickremasinghe but the roaring Tigers

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bluffed again.

If there were any doubt about Prabhakaran's desire for a peaceful negotiation that was effectively nailed by the LTTE sabotage of the Wickremasinghe ceasefire. In this sense the failure of that ceasefire itself played an important historical role in the evolution of the conflict. With Mavilmaru, it was evident that enough was enough. On came the Powell application. A good part of the army middle order which executes commands had already received training in America under previous Sri Lankan governments. All that was left was for the President to let the army do its job without interference. If President Rajapakse allowed a similar free hand to the Police, the judiciary, and the Public Service how wonderful would it be!

The job of decimating the Tigers

Contd. on page 8



Shyamon Jayasinghe

MILITARY CONQUEST OF THE LTTE IS ONLY THE BEGINNING

nation. It has been wrongly assumed that Prabhakaran was the malady whereas the real position is that he is the symptom of a general malady which is a failure of our relationship with the Tamil people.

Prabhakaran developed a psyche of

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in large numbers and the Tigers got so smug with their success that they indiscriminately wiped out civilian populations of the south. Prabhakaran's will to destroy anyone he deemed an enemy extended to the killing of India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

That last act was an act of blind speed-the kind that gets leaders of his type into trouble. When the killing spree becomes a success the tendency is for the killer to blindly increase its intensity showing no regard to consequences.

In this way, Prabhakaran and his hardcore LTTE stuck to the violent path. This also satisfied his ego. He was unquestioned dictator. Had he adopted a more democratic style of leadership he would have had his mind open to feedback from his followers which would have changed him. But Prabhakaran's authoritarian style gave him satisfaction and charged his batteries. Nothing would halt him in his killing spree and no settlement would satisfy him other than a separate state.

The employment of the Powell doctrine was also influenced by the failure of successive Sri Lanka governments in their attempts at ceasefire and talks. Every such attempt was stymied by the LTTE under various pretexts. The most formal

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