



# RAJAPAKSA GOVERNMENT DOES NOT NEED CONSPIRACIES TO BRING IT DOWN

Ever since the Rajapaksa government crushed the LTTE the rhetoric of government supporters both back home and in the diaspora has been dominated by a myriad of conspiracy theories. These accusations are just picked from the air and placed before audiences. The Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebles' theory is that when something is repeated over and over again it becomes truth before the public perception. I suppose most social and religious myths are created this way. We inhabit a world where reality is socially constructed. Most of the so-called common man's world is built for him by such a myth-forming social constructions.

Traditionally religions have been regarded as profound myth-generators. Your head can be decapitated by a Muslim fatwa if you challenge their sanctified myths. Globally reputed archeologist Senarat Paranawithana once challenged the story that the Buddha had visited Lanka thrice. Paranawithana had been spared of surgery to his head in the bad old days when Sri Lanka had fewer patriots. But were someone to utter that story

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today he may require orthopedic attention in the Accident Ward. The patriots have grown so much in number in Lanka today. The Diaspora has even more of these heroic individuals who fancy going about trying to blow up meetings of dissenting opponents. It is paradoxical that Buddhism –the religion that extols free thinking (Kalama Sutta)- has followers who are ready to let detractors get the works. On the other hand Westerners have grown over the years since the Reformation to tolerate a lot of heresy. The virgin birth of the Virgin Mary has been challenged. The resurrection of Christ has been challenged and powerful intellectuals like Richard Dawkins can relax sans security

after showing the emptiness of the creation theory.

The violence emanates from the sanctification of myth and this process usually needs many years of fierce repetition. Our friend Jackson Anthony promoted the theory that Mahinda Rajapakse possesses lineage coming down from the Buddha. He said it a few times. In today's dominant ideology of looking after oneself and filling one's pocket it is not easy to point a finger at the inventive actor. However, for sanctification to take place Jackson has not only to have many more years of repetition and much more churning; few joined him. I reckon Mahinda Rajapakse has been too open and non-sensitive about his daring unholy acts to attract such widespread chorus backing from the island as a moral leader. MR's forte is in crushing an enemy; he winks at moral issues.

Some governments like conspiracy theories as that is how they try to survive. In the case of political non-facts, however, they need no sanctification and hence the period of repetition can be relatively small. This is the assumption behind conspiracy theories. Say it a few times and flood the media with such stories and Sri Lankan peasants will buy them. Acceptance is also possible among educated classes depending on whether the latter like to believe such stories. If they like to, then media has a simple job of reinforcing the desired myth.

The problem with the current spate of conspiracy stories in Lanka is that they are evoked too often to acquire credibility of any sort. Any significant opposition or dissent to government's deeds and policies are met with an appropriate conspiracy theory. The

theory at the very apex is of course that Western powers are jealous of GOSL's successful trouncing of the LTTE that they are plotting the destruction of the government of Rajapakse. Those who promote such views forget the contradicting evidence that without the backing of Western countries Sri Lanka could not have won the war on terror. The US and UK engaged in training our soldiers in intelligence and strategy. The Western nations dried Prabhakaran's treasury by blocking funds-flow to the LTTE. All these are conveniently omitted.

Down the hierarchy there many other conspiracy charges emerging daily. For instance our two Ministers of education, unable to cope with the central issues of their respective ministries, laid the blame on the FUTA strike on foreign conspirators. Before that incident we had the action of UN officials Ban Kee Moon who investigated alleged war crimes. Poor Ban Kee was dubbed a prawn in the hands of Western

conspirators. Good old Wimal went on the ' famous 'marantha upawasaya' (Fast-unto Death). For our fortune this talented minister had been saved just in time by a compassionate President who visited him with a glass of water. Recently the Supreme Court rejected the Divineguma Bill on the well-argued reason that the Bill required the consent of each and every Provincial Council before parliamentary approval. The President took the unprecedented step of summoning the judges for a chat. The judges rightly refused to attend the meeting as it would have jeopardized the public perception of its manifest independence. At a special parliamentary meeting Comrade Vasu( formerly of the Revolution) and a few others suggested that there may be a Western conspiracy behind all this 'judicial misdeeds.' At the time of writing we have the strike of doctors for being constantly assaulted by government politicians and the threatened strike of health workers and teachers for being poorly paid. "It is a conspiracy," shout some government backers who have no problem with their own personal remuneration-official and unofficial.

Our patriots in the diaspora also keep crying about conspiracy. It would be really patriotic on their part if they make every effort to persuade the government to pay heed to proper governance. Government should be asked to restore law and order and the rule of law. It should be advised not to interfere with the judiciary as the latter institution is the last resort of the citizen to save his or her skin.

Government should be encouraged to rectify the economy as the country is drowning in debt.

As the Island editorial of 29/10 stated, "The



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real enemies of the government and this country are those who provoke workers, rob the public purse, get kickbacks from crooked deals and burden the masses with price hikes and higher taxes necessitated mainly by unbridled waste and rampant corruption. It was only recently that a top bureaucrat unwittingly revealed a proposal to impose a tax on well water!" With the kind of ills that plague government and the kind of ministers like those in charge of education, conspiracies are not required to bring down this regime.

