



ground as the only option.

The third case was that of Dr. Shirani Bandaranaike, our 43rd Chief Justice. CJ had turned down the Rajapakse sibling- Minister Basil's Bill on the Divineguma. Down came the sword of the High King on CJ and she was impeached violating due procedure. Rajapakse government did not stop at that point. It went further by framing a controversial case for bribery against Shirani. Here was a helpless woman being seemingly harassed.

Fourthly, multiple cases are reflected in former President Mahinda Rajapakse' "files" story. During the elections Rajapakse brazenly claimed that he had the files of those who jumped or would jump and suggested that he can do damage to them. This claim implied that Rajapakse had the practice of keeping files of corrupt and wrong-doing Ministers/MPs and that he would use them (revenge) against anyone trying to leave him.

These examples are adequate to reveal serious symptoms of political Alzheimer on the part of our previous Head of State. Something especially dangerous about those afflicted with political Alzheimer's disease is that the affliction seems to be rooted in an individual psyche that is essentially amoral. Persons who forget at this scale do not entertain a counter guilt about having done something unethical. The emotions don't touch their nerve. Ethical considerations don't prick such persons for the simple reason that they are amoral or are insensitive to moral considerations.

Particularly for the last-mentioned reason the question arises as to whether personalities that are prone to grave political Alzheimer's are suitable to hold a serious leadership position in a country. Those who lament and cry for Rajapakse' return should question whether the former President's psychological construction does make him a safe leader to be endowed with the Public Trust. Public trust entails qualities that include integrity, fairness, accountability and responsibility. The office of the President is a Public Trust of the highest magnitude.

POLITICAL ALZHEIMER'S

Mahinda Rajapakse has got Alzheimer's. Most polities do; but this statement by MR wins the prize for political Alzheimer's.



Shyamon Jayasinghe

The Ada Derana of February 27th this year reports a speech made by former President Mahinda Rajapakse where he stated that, "not only politicians but their wives and children have to be safeguarded from the government now, as they are being harassed one by one by one." Rajapakse was referring to the recent arrest of former Minister Wimal Weerawansa's wife, Shashi Weerawansa, on charges of falsifying documents to obtain a Diplomatic Passport. He was speaking at the Colombo National Hospital after having visited Mrs. Weerawansa who was warded in the hospital.

Rajapakse condemned this act as being "hateful politics," or the politics of revenge. "I believe it's wrong to do such things to extract revenge from politicians," Rajapakse added. Capping it all the former President reportedly said, "I didn't do that. No one can point the finger at me."

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The disease known as Alzheimer's is defined as a progressive degeneration of brain cells that causes memory loss, thinking skills, emotions, behavior and mood. In the political version of the disease there is no physical damage to brain cells. The memory loss and the stultification of emotions is virtually unconsciously generated to overcome guilt for heinous misdeeds. The misdeeds can include lying, cheating, bribery, theft of public property or of the spouses of others. Most politicians live on promises they know they cannot fulfill. They lie. Members of Parliament are entrusted with power over us and many do abuse that power or utilize that power to gain advantages for themselves or their families or

parties. They lie to conceal the abuse and thereby pretend innocence. In all instances they conveniently forget the specific offence and the lie and get along without batting an eyelid. Quite cool, they are.

Even exercising great caution to be fair I don't think Sri Lanka has seen any leader

who has taken revenge on his competitors and opponents as Percival Mahinda Rajapakse had done during his ten years of rule. I say "rule," and not stewardship deliberately as Mahinda exercised the considerable power he received from the Constitution and added still more powers just in order to rule lie a monarch. He thought he was entitled to ownership of the country and his whole style of management was based on such an implicit assumption. By extension, other key men and women of the executive shared the sense of entitlement.

Take the start of his rule after the war had been won. Soon after the war President Mahinda Rajapakse praised General Sarath Fonseka as 'the greatest army commander in the world,' thereby acknowledging the decisive role that the General had played in winning the 27-year-old war. General Fonseka decided to contest Rajapakse at the following Presidential elections. Rajapakse won. It is particularly easy for a victor to show generosity toward an opposing competitor. Evidently, Rajapakse had no reserve of generosity in his breast. He got the Fonseka jailed on a framed up charge. The normal procedure is to have the civil courts hear the charges because such a court has a high standard of rigour with regard to evidence and the accused gets a fair chance. But Rajapakse wasn't interested in that. He placed the case before a Military Court. Fonseka complained that some of the members of that Court were his former subordinates in the army whom he had punished. That preliminary objection was overruled and the Military Court proceeded to convict Fonseka. Rajapakse did not stop at that: He took away Fonseka's hard-won medals of honour and even his citizenship. The records at military headquarters where Sarath Fonseka was army

commander were deleted, leaving a ludicrous situation where the war had been won without an army commander.

While SF was in this state of incarceration Rajapakse went after his son-in-law over some trifling issue. The son-in-law now states that he was pressurized to give some damning 'evidence' against his father-in-law. The young man, Danushka, fled under-

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