

# LTTE cooling towards India?

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Much has been written in the Tamil Nadu press, about Jeyalitha's wrath over a deal of mutual convenience allegedly struck between the RAW and the LTTE. A well informed political columnist of a popular weekly to Tamil Nadu wrote that details of the alleged 'negotiations' between the RAW and the Tigers were leaked deliberately by a section of the India's external intelligence agency which was not happy at all with the 'whole thing' as it were.

Although names, places and plausible reasons have imbued the story with a large measure of provocative verisimilitude, it appeared that the secretive nature of both organizations involved in the deal was going to, as it happens so often in such cases, preclude the possibility of drawing any useful and substantial conclusions from this curious turn of events.

Anyone who studies the relationship between the RAW and the LTTE before the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi would be left wondering who took whom for a ride.

It has been my contention that the LTTE succeeded to a large extent in promoting its interests by fully exploiting the weaknesses in

India's Foreign intelligence establishment. The aforementioned story about the renewed RAW-LTTE nexus claims that some Indian intelligence operatives met and discussed matters with Lawrence Thilagar - the LTTE's spokesman in the west - in Paris.

We may not know whether this is true. Nevertheless one cannot but help notice a marked change in the LTTE's attitude towards India in recent months. One can only surmise as to the real reason.

This month's issue of the 'Erimalai' which is published by the LTTE's Paris branch has this to say about India in its editorial - "The West might try to support the imposition of a solution based on the provincial council system under the unitary constitution aimed at establishing Sinhala supremacy over the Tamils. The West might also give its blessings to the effort to divide the Tamil homeland into North and East. ... In these circumstances some changes have begun to appear in India's approach to our problem.... We can expect that India will continue to stand by such issues as not accepting Sri Lanka's Sinhala extremist line, the minority rights of Tamils and the historical habitations of

the Tamils within a unified North East. Changes taking place in the Indian ocean region which threaten India's interests may compel it to devise a fundamental change in its position on our national question. When India accuses the U.S. of trying to gain a foothold in Kashmir and Sri Lanka the question arises whether contrary to its internal security policy India would recognise the right of the people of Thamil-eelam to self determination and (thereby) make Thamil-eelam a permanent friend. This depends on

its part to cope with the unsavoury reality that the west is seriously interested in supporting the Sri Lankan government to stabilise itself. They reflect a certain trend in LTTE's officially made known views on India in recent times.

The editorial of the March issue of LTTE's official organ 'Viduthalai Pulihal' published in Jaffna is a case in point. The Tigers who gave a lot of publicity to the patently sensationalist views (what else can one expect from a once powerful diplomat determined to

signing of the Indo-Lanka agreement in July 1987 between the Sinhala and Indian governments, the arrival of the Indian troops on the Eelam soil without the permission of the Eelam people and the subsequent war between the Indian government and the Tigers had disrupted political and diplomatic relations between the Tigers and the Indian government.

Everyone knows that Mr. Dixit who was a primary instrument towards the signing of the Indo-Lanka Agreement was responsible for the rift in the relations. Mr. Dixit's 'threat diplomacy', his shortsightedness and his absolute focus on Indian interests resulted in a big war. More than 8000 Tamil Eelam people were killed in the war. Tamil Eelam lost valuable properties that can never be restored. The Indian troops lost about 1000 of its soldiers and returned after giving away its glory to the Tigers.

The reasons for India's political and military failures in Tamil Eelam were its failure to take into account the political realities on the Tamil Eelam soil and its disregard of the Tigers. Mr. Dixit contributed to India's blunders, seems

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## Taraki

those Indian policy makers who take decisions considering various balances in strength".

Though the editorial winds up by asserting that it is however indispensable that the Tamils should stand on their own feet in order to ultimately change international opinion in their favour, it is quite clear that the Paris LTTE has been unable, for reasons best known to it, to resist a strong temptation to re-entertain the utterly puerile hope that India will support the Eriam cause.

The editorial thoughts of the Parisian Tiger are not the consequence of a bewildered effort on

take on the anonymity of retirement) expressed by Mr. Dixit recently, appear to have seen something more than mere propaganda value in them.

I give below a translation of the text in full. The geopolitical naivete which reeks between the lines is truly astonishing (unless it is aimed at a long term tactical approach).

## India's stand

Four years have lapsed since the Indian troops left the Tamil Eelam soil. The last Indian soldier left from the Trincomalee harbour on March 24, 1990. The

have realised after seven long years the political realities of Tamil Eelam. His new perspectives on the Eelam Tamils are demonstrated in his article to the 'Hindu'. In his article Mr. Dixit has accepted the fact that the LTTE remains the political nerve centre of the Eelam people and Prabhakaran remains the leader of the Eelam people. Although Mr. Dixit has retired from the diplomatic service and his views cannot be considered as the official views of the Indian Government, his views expressed by him deserve to be looked into deeply. The fact that his views have appeared in the 'Hindu' that played a significant role towards the evolving of the Indo-Lanka Agreement has given more meaning to the views. If these 'new-views, on the Eelam Tamils' struggle for self-rule would be discussed among the diplomatic circles that would help greatly towards restoring the strained Indian-Tiger relations. Mr. Dixit, however, constrained his new views within narrow borders by concluding that the political problems of the Eelam

Tamil should be resolved within unitary Sri Lanka and that alone would be good for India's national interests.

The policy makers of India are being guided by fears that the Eelam Tamils' struggle for self-rule and its ultimate victory would pose a threat to India's interests and India's unity.

Certain Indian leaders had expressed similar views when Bangladesh wanted to break away from Pakistan. They argued that Bangladesh's secession would induce secession struggles in West Bengal which is an Indian state. But at last Bangladesh became a separate country through the assistance of India. The emergence of that new nation never affected West Bengal in any manner and that remains the history.

The Indian policy makers should take into account that the Eelam Tamils, like the Bangladesh people, are fighting for self-rule in order to protect themselves from a communal genocide and not to induce or encourage secessions in the S. Asian region.

India's fears that the

Tamils' struggle for self-rule poses a threat to India's national interests are not only exaggerated but ridiculous as well. India should shed aside these unwanted and unnecessary fears and should recognise the Tamils' right for self-rule. This is the great desire of the Eelam Tamils."

The views expressed by the LTTE here gives rise to the following questions:

(a) Has the LTTE fallen prey to an effort by Delhi to drive a wedge between Tamil nationalist groups and individuals in Tamil Nadu who draw their inspiration from the LTTE's war for a sovereign independent Tamil country and who seem to prosper under Jeyalalitha's corrupt rule? What we have to note here is that the LTTE which need not have committed itself on the Tamil Nadu situation in striking a note of conciliation towards, has, instead, made it quite clear at the very great long term risk of alienating or even antagonising its staunch sympathisers in Tamil Nadu who are also openly or secretly Tamil seces-

sionists, that in return for Delhi's friendship it would drop the cause of its friends across the Palk Strait like a hot brick. This is what it means when it says quite categorically that the 'Eelam Tamils' are struggling for their own sake and "not to induce or encourage secession in the South Asian region".

This goes against the view of those who identify with the LTTE's ideology in Tamil Nadu that the Sri Lankan Tamil question can ultimately be resolved only when the Tamil national question is resolved in south India in favour of secession or at least confederation.

(b) Is Delhi wittingly or unwittingly in making the Tiger say such things, driving a wedge, at a crucial juncture, between the LTTE and the West? India as we know has always evinced a desire to keep the Tamil question in Sri Lanka within its limits — a desire inscribed permanently and legally in the Accord.

There is a saying in Tamil of the woman who trusting the king gave up her husband...