

New Delhi: LTTE's real threat

"...Therefore the course of action developed by the LTTE not only to remain as a power in Lanka, but also to develop its power base and influence in Tamil Nadu and in India should not come as a surprise in the months ahead."

By Our Military Analyst

The recent inconspicuous shift developments of the LTTE include planning for five and ten years from now onwards.

The LTTE has the edge over any government in Colombo. It can plan and execute its actions better than a government that is elected for a specific period or a government that is bound strictly to the wishes of its people.

Long-range planning has come into being with a recent shift in the movement to recruit (a) women cadres, who have proved to be as effective as male cadres, and (b) younger persons, often between 15 and 16.

Second, to politicize and mobilize the Tamil masses, both in Sri Lanka and India, particularly in the Tamil areas of northeastern Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu, and the expatriate Tamil community that is now in the range of 500,000 to 600,000.

By these actions the LTTE is planning not only to enhance its capability to be effective at present but also to develop its resources till the year 2000 and beyond.

Prabhakaran who was 33 when he was initiated to battle with the Indian armed forces - the world's fourth largest fighting force - believes that within the next year, he will be able to develop his fighting machinery to withstand another onslaught similar to the 1987-1989 years.

His thinking is based on the fact that at the end of the Rajiv Gandhi murder trial, Premier Narasimha Rao or any other Indian leader will be forced to if not reintroduce Indian troops to Sri Lanka to intensify assistance to the Sri Lankan security forces by way of air and naval assistance to take on the LTTE.

The LTTE supremo also believes that by enhancing his influence among the small but sig-

nificant Tamil militant and political groups and parties in Tamil Nadu as well by developing the LTTE's operational capability in Tamil Nadu, he will be able to pressurize New Delhi.

Prabhakaran also believes that by selectively demonstrating the suicide killing capability - the hallmark of the Tiger - of being able to strike anywhere at any moment and any person will give him the advantage of not only preventing any single Indian political or military leader speaking publicly against the LTTE or calling for action against the LTTE.

By strengthening LTTE's relations with 33 Tamil groupings in Tamil Nadu and by developing closer ties with elements of the DMK and AIADMK, the LTTE will not only make it hard for New Delhi to politically but also militarily interfere or intervene in Sri Lanka against the LTTE.

It is not a secret that today the biggest threat to the LTTE is not from the Government of Sri Lanka or from its armed forces, but it is from New Delhi. Therefore the course of action developed by the LTTE not only to remain as a power in Lanka but also to develop its power base and influence in Tamil Nadu and in India should not come as a surprise in the months ahead.

To remove the pressure from New Delhi, the LTTE could selectively assassinate pro-Rajiv Gandhi political leaders, is the current thinking of the Indian security and intelligence community. They have not only warned many Indian leaders who are seen as pushing for the extradition of Prabhakaran or pushing for another phase of Indian covert or overt intervention, but also explicitly warned Rajiv Gandhi's widow Sonia Gandhi of her security.



Col. Anuruddha Ratwatte: bent on fighting the LTTE

Meanwhile in Sri Lanka, the LTTE has come to the conclusion that it has to eliminate the Chandrika Kumaratunga-Anuruddha Ratwatte threat that is bent on destroying the LTTE. There can be no more peace talks, Prabhakaran had reportedly told Pottu Amman, his chief of intelligence, who had recently returned from the mainland to the peninsula. The Black Tigers, who are assigned the top secret long range reconnaissance deep penetration operations, both in Colombo, and in the two cities of India - Madras and New Delhi - had been assigned to monitor several targets.

The death squads - both equipped for bombings and as-

sassinations - that follow the reconnaissance team or teams, have already had a fatal and abortive strike at the Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte and it is likely that the next few weeks they will try to target both the defence strongman and the President.

The average age of the LTTE cadre dropping to 15 and 16 has generated not only deep concern among the conservative Tamils but also of the international community.

Today, over 50% of the cadres that are being recruited in the peninsula are under 16 and include 12 and 13 year olds, often directly from the LTTE-run orphanages & homes that number

nearly 100. Further, nearly 40% of the recruits have become those who have either not sat their Ordinary Level examination or just completed the Ordinary Level examination. This included a daughter of a well-known Jaffna figure who secured eight distinctions.

What appears tragic but inevitable to the LTTE is the rapid increase in its female wing. During the past year the number of female cadres has doubled and today it is nearing 30% of the total strength of the LTTE cadres in the peninsula.

These shifts clearly demonstrate two phenomena unprecedented in guerrilla wars of the world. First, the most effective fighters can also be teenagers and below. In the LTTE this is marked. Second, women can fight equally well as men. In the LTTE, women have proved themselves as effective fighters from Poonaryn to Mandaitivu.

The LTTE's plans to prepare the people for the next century is clearly reflected in their concerted efforts to informally and formally educate the intellectuals to generate the necessary institutional structures to sustain Tamil Eelam.

The LTTE counterplan that was produced during the peace talks to develop the northeast was to a large extent based on this plan commonly referred to as the 'Infrastructure development of Tamil Eelam'.

This plan has been developed by Tamil dons attached to the Ministry of Jaffna, with the support of expatriate Tamil engineers, doctors, agriculture experts, animal husbandry specialists, hydrologists, climatologists, industrialists etc. Today, with the support of the Tamil Eelam Economic Development Organisation (TEDEO) - formerly known as the Research Organisation of Eelam (ROOTE) - many of these projects are underway with funding from Europe, Aus-



The real threat: Indian soldiers as PKF during the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord

tralia, Canada, and the Middle East.

War has a specific dynamic. It renders people helpless often making their lives turn towards the only option that will offer them some hope.

In the absence of an effective rehabilitation and reconstruction programme covering the war-devastated northeast, many have to turn to the LTTE either for employment or to 'progress.'

Particularly the youth are attracted to the weapon magnet, also known as the glamour of a uniform and the power of a weapon, in a society that does not

readily generate alternate employment.

If a Tamil youth comes to Colombo, particularly from Jaffna, it becomes difficult for him or her stay without getting arrested. More than that, it becomes a nightmare to secure a job or to go abroad without paying a high fee to a job agent. Life has become hard and tragic. The government has not unfortunately given much thought to the psychological dimension of the war.

Meanwhile, the LTTE overseas propaganda machinery that was reactivated in April is operating full swing, despite appeals by Sri Lankan expatriates asking

the foreign office to at least have

30% of its diplomatic staff assigned for monitoring and countering LTTE-propaganda build up for a separate state.

Interestingly, this is the first time the LTTE has decided to internationalize its struggle after the Rajiv Gandhi assassination. Prior to this the LTTE was, often with Indian covert assistance, operating the same way but after the murder of Gandhi, due to Indian pressure the LTTE propaganda cells became inactive. Today, without sufficient Sri Lankan counter-propaganda and virtually India not playing a role, the LTTE is in full swing.