

THE NATIONALIST SECESSIONIST GUERILLA PHENOMENON

Adrian Wijemanne

Nationalism, both ethnic and non-ethnic, has proved to be the dominant political trend of the 20th century. Despite incurring the odium philosophicum in the groves of academe its existence and power are widely felt and it grows in intensity. It is a complex phenomenon. Its emergence from different contexts has often impeded a clear understanding of it. The manner in which nations are formed, and often invented, varies greatly. How conflict accelerates nation-formation is not clearly or widely understood. Nationalism's invariably disruptive effects often earn it condemnation as a criminal conspiracy. These complexities beset the external beholders of the nationalist urge; to those who experience that urge, however, it is one of life's greatest felt realities, one which steels the heart and nerves the arm and evokes enormous, nearly super-human, effort and self-sacrifice.

The difficulty of clearly discerning nationalism and distinguishing it from political discontent (with which it is invariably allied) has prevented frequently a rational accommodation with it before it erupts into armed conflict. Denying its existence, rejecting its legitimacy, misconstruing its purpose (or all three of these responses in sequence at different stages of its evolution) have produced all too often the most troubling and intractable political peril of the 20th century—the nationalist secessionist guerilla phenomenon. It is with that phenomenon that this paper is concerned.

Nationalism is a societal trend whereas nationalist secessionist guerillas are specific (though often shadowy) individuals. If it is easy to misunderstand and condemn nationalism it is still easier to excoriate and demonize nationalist secessionist guerillas. Denunciation, however, does not extinguish nationalism nor does it transform nationalist secessionist guerillas into penitent saints. All it does is demonstrate the fecklessness of the denouncer. There is an urgent need for a deeper, more rational, more percipient understanding of both nationalism and nationalist secessionist guerillas. Without such an effort and without success in it any modern society and state beset with these twin perils must necessarily head for war and its attendant ruin.

In every theatre of nationalist secessionist guerilla activity i.e. where the guerillas fight the state to establish a separate state for their nation, they have displayed certain common characteristics. These are:-

- i. a tenacity against massive odds which defies conventional explanation;
- ii. a refusal to compromise on their *raison detre*;
- iii. an ability to re-equip themselves over and over again from their adversary's military equipment;
- iv. an ability to suffer losses which confound conventional assessments as to survival;
- v. an ability to survive with the active support of only a relatively small proportion of their nation;
- vi. the ability to outlast the state in a long war of attrition.

Each of these factors will be dealt with in the following paragraphs. There will be illustrations from many theatres of nationalist secessionist guerilla activity.

Tenacity Beyond Conventional Explanation

When nationalist guerilla wars of secession commence on the guerillas home ground, there is an absolute conviction on the part of the state and its military establishment that the war will be of short duration. There is no theatre of such conflict where the conventional wisdom has been otherwise. When British troops were deployed in Northern Ireland for the first time in 1968 it was expected confidently that the IRA problem could be cleared up in a few months. 30 years have passed, the IRA is stronger than ever before, the state now fields 100 troops to 1 IRA guerilla and spends 3.25 billion per year on the effort. Yet it is universally acknowledged that the IRA cannot be militarily extirpated.

When US advisors first began supporting the South Vietnam governments forces in 1965 against the Viet Cong guerillas, there was complete conviction in both the Pentagon and the State Department that the mission would be of short duration. 10 years and 56,000 deaths later the US withdrew from Vietnam unilaterally and precipitately after its first (and so far only) military defeat. The guerillas of the Viet Cong and the regular troops of the northern Viet Minh together sacrificed 1.25 million of their cadres for their cause. No one in the US military establishment at any time during the conflict could conceive of any adversary surviving such a massive blood-letting. Stanley Karnow's great book Vietnam - A History should be read by everyone desirous of understanding nationalist guerilla warfare.

In 1987 when the late Lalith Athulathmudali was appointed Minister of National Security he announced confidently that there were only 300 "hard core" guerillas and they could be eliminated in short order. It is extremely unlikely that he was aware that at that very time the British army in Northern Ireland had been trying for 19 years without success to exterminate the 300 guerillas of the IRA (their total number). After 15 years of conflict with the LTTE there can be hardly anyone who believes the LTTE is weaker today than it was at the beginning in 1983.

In 1961 when the Imperial government of Ethiopia went to war against the handful of Eritrean rebels of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) the conflict was expected to last no more than a few months. 31 years later, with the Ethiopian state comprehensively wrecked, Eritrea became an independent state.

In Myanmar (Burma) an identical conflict is now in its 50th year.

By these standards the conflict with the LTTE in Sri Lanka has barely begun. At frequent intervals during the last 15 years there were (and there still are) confident predictions that the LTTE can hold out no longer. It is a confidence based on profound ignorance of the nature and history of nationalist, secessionist guerilla warfare. Even if, and when, the Sri Lanka army occupies and controls every inch of territory presently under LTTE control, guerilla warfare could continue with devastating effect.

In the UK, Irish nationalists waged sporadic guerilla warfare for 300 years until the UK was split into 2 states in 1922 and the Irish nationalists achieved their aim of a separate, independent, sovereign Irish state.

Conflicts with nationalist, secessionist guerillas are extremely long-lasting. Throughout the long period of the conflict the state opposed to the guerillas has never been able to comprehend how the guerillas manage to keep going. As a result the imminent collapse of the guerillas is predicted at frequent intervals and time limits are set and re-set constantly for the end of such wars.

Nationalist secessionist guerilla organisations are not states and, consequently, do not have the multifarious responsibilities of states. Their sole object is warfare conducted by mostly unpaid, dedicated volunteers. Whereas a state is debilitated by warfare, guerilla organisations are strengthened by it, especially and paradoxically, by military setbacks. The immense sacrifices of personnel by guerillas in battle are a crucial factor in inspiring ready replenishments. This is a basic and fundamental factor in every theatre of such conflict. It is a factor which is almost impossible for the state and its conventional military organisation to understand as their own experience is the reverse, i.e. the difficulty of recruiting adequate numbers for a paid army or even for replacing deserters. Generals and "Top Brass" whose thinking is confined within a conventional frame of reference and whose military education and training are derived from set-piece battles and historic campaigns are the per-

sons least capable of understanding the dynamics and psychology of their guerilla opponents. Invariably both their judgements and their predictions have been proved wrong but like the Bourbons they learn nothing and forget nothing .

This is why in every democracy the civil power is placed above the military. Unhappily, inexperienced civil governments are easily gulled into accepting military assessments and predictions. The proper function of a civil government, however, especially at a time of war, is to take a wider view based on the world's experience. Civil governments which have neither the quality nor the resolution for such independent judgement become, all too often, the lackeys of their military servants and let themselves be railroaded to ruin.

Refusal to Compromise on "Raison d'etre"

It is not lightly or wantonly that people take up arms against their state. It happens when they can see no other course open to them. They are very much alive to the sacrifices such a course entails for them and also to the hardship and suffering that will inevitably befall the society from which they have emerged and in whose name they fight. They have no illusions of quick or easy victory. It is a "do or die" effort; a lifetime and life-consuming commitment. The independence of their people and their country is a cause which evokes a fervor that no other cause can match. It is a

fervor that feeds and grows on sacrifice, suffering and military defeat. It cannot be extinguished by military means. It dies away only with fulfilment.

This is a dynamic that the state which opposes nationalist guerillas cannot comprehend. The state by definition is a symbol of fulfilment. Those within it fight to maintain a *status quo* that already exists. For them there is no threat

to hearth and home and livelihood. Their motivation is of a lower order. The urge to subdue and absorb, on which all great imperial efforts have been based has proved to be less powerful and durable than the urge to break free and be independent. It is a divide that goes to the deepest roots of human psychology. Too often it has proved to be an insuperable problem for the state to understand the motivation of nationalist secessionist guerillas. It has proved easier to turn to demonization.

This is the fundamental reason for the conviction that nationalism can be appeased or bought off by "concessions" both constitutional and otherwise. Imperial governments have tried consistently to dampen nationalist aspirations by constitutional concessions both offered and implemented. India and Ceylon were outstanding examples of this policy as well as of its failure. Concessions have the reverse effect on nationalists - they whet the nationalists appetite for ever greater doses of independence and finally for total separation.

The very same policy is being adopted now by the governments the newly independent states in relation to nationalist secessionist

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movements within them. Constitutional concessions are expected to satisfy the moderate nationalists who are then expected to wean away support for the guerillas from their people. In the nationalist secessionist discourse the moderates are tainted with the stigma of treating with the enemy and the whole strategy has turned out to be an exercise in futility.

As for the guerillas themselves their room for constitutional manoeuvre is extremely limited due to the fact that they continue to be armed in defiance of the state. Constitutional form of necessity must reflect existential reality to be relevant and workable. History bears a remarkably consistent witness to this. Every armed nationalist guerilla war of secession that has ended in this century with a peace treaty has resulted in the splitting up of the old state into two, the peace treaty being between the old truncated state and the new. Nowhere have nationalist guerillas fighting for secession from the state compromised on the fundamental issue which is their *raison d'etre* and accepted a lesser alternative.

As an objective of policy it is futile to aim for such a compromise. Those who do so suffer from a delusion which is founded on failure to understand the fundamental motivations of nationalist secessionist guerillas.

Guerillas Re-Equip from Adversary's Arsenal

The methods by which nationalist guerillas, fighting on their home ground for secession, secure their arms are of necessity secret. So little is known on this subject that the resulting ignorance produces mistaken assessments of guerilla military capability. The very great difficulties that the state experiences in procuring the military hardware needed for its forces leads to the facile conclusion that the guerillas could soon run out of arms and ammunition due to their lack of the resources and facilities available to the state.

This reasoning is so sound *prima facie* that events to the contrary constantly cause a great shock. This is especially the case where a naval blockade of guerilla-held areas is enforced by the state. It is assumed that such a *cordon sanitaire* effectively prevents overseas military supplies reaching the guerillas. There is little public knowledge, however, of the enormous cost involved in establishing and maintaining an impenetrable, round-the-clock, 365-days-a-year, naval blockade. Even the Royal Navy has not been able successfully to establish such a blockade around the coast of Northern Ireland after decades of effort. The ill-equipped, numerically small naval forces of the poorer countries are quite unable to enforce a non-porous naval blockade.

This is especially the case where a neighbouring country across the sea is only a few miles away. In the case of Sri Lanka, just two hours away by fast motorized boat lie the many safe havens of the state of

Tamilnadu which has a population largely sympathetic to the LTTE's cause. Also, the Tamil people of the northern port towns of the Jaffna peninsula have a long history of sea-voyaging in the Bay of Bengal reaching right up north to the Burmese ports. It is rumoured that the LTTE has links with some of the coastal areas of Myanmar (Burma) where guerillas have waged wars of independence against the state of Myanmar for over 50 years now and are still as active as ever.

However, the most important factor in a guerilla forces ability to keep a war going is their seizure of weapons and ammunition from the states forces in surprise attacks. This is the essence of guerilla warfare and is evolved into a fine art as such wars go on. It is now known that the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front was able to sustain a 30-year long war to its successful conclusion mainly by re-supplying themselves from their Adversary's arsenal. In the Vietnam war much of the southern Viet Congs military hardware came from ambushes of the governments forces. The Viet Minh in Northern Vietnam had no such opportunity for there were never any enemy troops on their soil; consequently they depended exclusively on Russian and Chinese supplies. For a guerilla force the hostile military occupation of their territory is virtually a supply of arms on their doorstep. With over 200 Sri Lankan army camps of varying sizes in the north-east province the LTTE will not be short of military hardware for their needs.

Guerilla forces invariably represent only a small fraction of the numbers of the states forces opposing them. Consequently, they

need only a small fraction of the military supplies of a conventional army. In Northern Ireland the ratio of British troops to IRA guerillas is 100 to 1. In Myanmar the ratio is even higher. In Sri Lanka it is 10 to 1. It is these high ratios which facilitate the re-supply of guerilla armouries from their adversaries arsenals. The higher the ratio, the easier the re-supply. No guerilla force anywhere in the world has been known to run out of military supplies.

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It is the civil governments and its military high commands inability to understand this universal experience of guerilla warfare that impels them constantly to increase the numbers of the states forces engaging the guerillas. Such escalation increases the guerillas opportunity for re-supply and produces a corresponding expansion of guerilla forces. If and when the states forces are withdrawn from the north-east province, the LTTE will be in the same difficult situation as the state i.e. total dependence on imported sea-borne supplies of military hardware. The logic (or ill-logic) of the war in Sri Lanka is such that the LTTE is very unlikely to be put to such dire straits.

The Ability to Absorb Enormous Casualties

The ability of nationalist guerilla movements to suffer enormous battle casualties and yet keep on renewing themselves defies the conventional wisdom. Throughout the Vietnam war the boffins of the Pentagon were convinced the Viet Cong had been decimated in the early fighting (before the Viet Minh regulars from North Vietnam came in) and were finished. In fact their huge losses were replenished constantly with new volunteers. Later, when the Viet Minh came south in support of their southern brethren, the fighting reached a higher level of intensity. The combined battle casualties of the Viet Cong and Viet Minh rose exponentially. In the Korean war the Americans had had their first experience of an enemy (the Communist Chinese) for whom manpower was an expendable commodity on a scale unknown to western armies in recent times. In Vietnam even that experience was eclipsed. Over 1.25 million Viet Cong and Viet Minh battlefield deaths led only to the renewal of their cadres and a stiffening of the will to fight on. Stanley Karnow's book already mentioned emphasises the severe psychological impact on American military strategists of their constantly repeated predictions of Vietnamese collapse being proved wrong over and over again.

Every nationalist guerilla war of secession against the conventional army of the state has demonstrated how such guerillas thrive on military defeat. Fresh replacements for fallen martyrs in the national cause are there for the asking. As these wars stretch out over the decades new generations arise ready to pay the price, ready to keep the national struggle going. The War of Irish Independence lasted sporadically for nearly 300 years. The huge losses of the nationalist guerillas were replenished constantly by fresh volunteers. The 30-year long war of Eritrean Independence showed how a relatively small population of around 2 million, comprising 9 separate tribes, was able to produce the needed replenishments to keep the war going until the state collapsed in 1992.

During nearly 15 years of war in Sri Lanka the heavy losses of manpower of the LTTE have been replenished steadily. Today the LTTE is stronger than it was at the beginning of the war in 1983 despite the best efforts of a rapidly growing Sri Lanka army.

The hows and whys of this phenomenon are incomprehensible to conventional military commanders. They refer constantly to the heavy battle deaths of the LTTE, to the decimation of its middle-level officers etc. and leap to the facile conclusion that the LTTE's operational capability is fatally affected. Events soon prove how wrong that judgement is. In a little while the same judgements are pronounced, the same predictions repeated. Apparently there is not a single military commander in the Sri Lanka army who seems to understand the ability of his guerilla adversary to sustain huge

battlefield losses and replenish them and emerge with renewed strength. The reason for this mental block is that the tremendous force of the nationalist urge is neither felt nor known by those defending the *status quo*. Nationalist secessionist guerillas and conventional military forces are veritably from different worlds though they meet from time to time in the duel of death.

There is a widespread conviction among the Sinhala people and their leaders that military pressure can force the LTTE to compromise on their objective of a separate state. A moments reflection will show how dismally deluded that idea is. Any compromise by the LTTE which preserves the single all-island state requires that the LTTE disarm voluntarily for there can be no two contending armies within the one state. It is fanciful to believe that the LTTE will ever disarm voluntarily. Fifteen years of war have shown conclusively that they cannot be disarmed by military force. These realities cannot be evaded - they are the very essence of nationalist guerilla wars of secession.

Support from Small Numbers Sufficient for Survival and Effectiveness of Nationalist Guerillas

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The nexus between nationalist guerillas and the society from which they emerge is a subject fraught with misunderstanding and confusion. In conventional power structures (i.e. states other than military dictatorships) majority support confers legitimacy and provides viability. By applying the same yardstick to nationalist, secessionist guerilla movements they are often condemned as illegitimate and non-viable for lack of overt majority support expressed through a public voting procedure.

Such arguments and conclusions are flawed because a nationalist, secessionist guerilla movement is not a conventional power structure. It is, instead, a military response of last resort to the failure of a civil polity. Nationalist, secessionist guerilla movements derive their legitimacy as an expression of their nations deepest need for self-identity and security in that self-identity. They are the physical and overt embodiment of that need. A society is an amorphous agglomeration however much it adheres around a core of self-identity. Some members of any society, generally a minority, resonate to the fundamental ethos of that society more than other members. There is an infinite degree of variation in such attitudes. Those who feel impelled to give their lives for their cause gravitate irresistibly to the guerilla ranks. Others, though sharing these feelings, will be no more than camp-followers, hewers of wood and drawers of water but not fighters. Yet others, fearful of the consequences for themselves and their families try vainly for neutrality. Those on whom the dead hand of the past lies heavy look back to calmer times and yearn for peace at any price. In every society in the world the truly heroic and selfless are a tiny minority. Their strength is not the strength of numbers but of spirit. It is that little leaven that eventually leavens the whole.

Nationalist secessionist guerilla movements throughout the world have shown that the overt support of a relatively small number of people is sufficient to maintain a long struggle against a states conventional army. The IRA in Northern Ireland is supported ardently only by a minority of a minority i.e. a minority of the Roman Catholics of Northern Ireland who themselves are a minority of the total population of that province of the U.K.. But that support has proved sufficient to sustain their guerilla war against the British state for 30 years. In other theatres of similar conflict too the militant core has been small but it has proved sufficient for its purposes. The dynamics of an armed secessionist struggle for independence through guerilla warfare are generically different from the political dynamics of settled societies. The failure to understand this distinction lies at the root of the misconception that a nationalist secessionist guerilla war must necessarily fail for lack of overt democratic support and of forms of governance based thereon. That misconception in turn leads to the delusion that guerilla movements for national liberation must fail for lack of support from their own people

people. This is an error to which all Sinhala leaders have been prone and from which they seem unable to gain release. It contributes in a large measure to the sense of self-righteousness with which they persist in the gross immorality of military repression of the Tamil people. For the Sinhala people who have not had to fight for their independence nor shed a drop of their blood for it, it is an almost insuperable difficulty to understand the fervor of a nationalist secessionist guerilla struggle against them. The object of this writing is to help the Sinhala people, even in a small way, to overcome that difficulty and arrive at a true and valid understanding of the nationalist secessionist guerilla phenomenon.

Guerillas Outlast State in War of Attrition

Guerilla wars of secession are extremely long-lasting, their duration being measured more properly in decades rather than in years. Their classic exemplar, the War of Irish Independence, lasted sporadically for 300 years. The most enduring war of those now in progress, the war in Myanmar, has just commenced its sixth decade; the war in Northern Ireland against the IRA the end of its third; the wars in The Sudan and Sri Lanka the midway stage of the second. It was after 30 years of incessant fighting that the Eritrean War of Independence was concluded in 1992 with the collapse of the Ethiopian state

The longevity of these wars is explained by the fact that they are wars of attrition. Unlike in conventional wars between states or alliances of states where both sides aim for outright military victory, in a war of attrition one of the combatants (the guerillas) does not seek outright military victory recognising at the very outset the impossibility of attaining it. Instead, the object of that side is the wearing down of the adversary either to the point of internal collapse (Ethiopia) or to an extreme condition of decay and decrepitude

(Myanmar) or to a conviction of the counter-productivity of continuing (U.K.) or to a combination of them progressively.

At first glance it seems incredible that a guerilla movement, which has not the organisation and economic muscle of a state, could prove more resilient and durable than a state. A closer examination, however, reveals the reasons for this paradox.

The first, and perhaps the overriding, reason is the difference in motivation. The guerillas are motivated by an unfulfilled nationalism i.e. they are fighting to establish a new state which is yet to be born. The government, on the other hand, even if it too is nationalistic, is fighting to maintain a fulfilled nationalism i.e. to preserve a *status quo* already in existence. It is now well-known that nationalism like love (it is in fact a form of love) waxes when unfulfilled and wanes with fulfilment. The fervour and ardour of the nationalist secessionist guerillas for their cause are in a different league altogether from the tepid adherence to the state of its defenders.

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The second is that the guerillas are very small in number - a minor fraction of the numbers of the states forces. In Northern Ireland it is one-hundredth, in Myanmar even less and in Sri Lanka around one-tenth. This disparity makes it relatively easy to keep guerilla forces supplied and at a minute fraction of the cost of arming, training and maintaining the states much larger forces. Thus it is comparatively easier for the guerillas to

keep the war going indefinitely than it is for the state - attrition is the very name of the guerilla strategy.

Thirdly, the guerillas are not burdened with the responsibilities and corresponding expenses of a state. All of the guerillas financial resources are devoted to the war; for the state it is otherwise, military spending being but one of a host of important items of expenditure on services to its citizens including, ironically, the very society from the guerillas have emerged. This facilitates the guerilla strategy of attrition whereas, conversely, it impels the state to go all out for military victory compounding thereby its financial burdens.

Fourthly, time is of little or no consequence to the guerillas. They may lie low for months until the states guard is down and they could choose soft targets as they present themselves. There are long spells of dormancy during which the state has to guard its vital physical assets such as hydro-dams, power stations, the oil refinery etc. The high and continuing cost of such defensive measures is little appreciated. The absence of such burdensome defensive compulsions helps guerillas keep a war of attrition going indefinitely.

Fifthly, guerilla forces are not paid and are victualled only during training and action. For most of the time they live on the bounty of their community. It is a condition tailor-made for a long war of attrition. The state, on the other hand, is progressively weakened by the pay and other costs of its far more numerous forces. Guerillas are not weakened by a war of attrition, the state is.

Finally, the fast-rising prices of even second- or third-hand military hardware in the worlds arms markets is less debilitating for the guerillas than it is for the state. As stated earlier guerillas supply themselves largely from the states arsenals by capture in action. They need little by way of imports and so, can concentrate their foreign exchange resources on small quantities of high quality equipment. The inexorable rise in prices reduces the quality and quantity of the states purchases much more markedly than is the case with the guerillas.

These are the principal reasons for nationalist secessionist guerillas being able to outlast the state in a long war of attrition. They explain the paradox of powerful states succumbing to the steady depredations of armed nationalist secessionist movements. Three of Europe's most powerful states have suffered this bitter experience - Britain in Ireland, France in Algeria and Italy in Abyssinia. The USA's debacle in Vietnam and the former Soviet Unions in Afghanistan still haunt the international psyche.

Conclusion

Nationalism need not necessarily produce nationalist secessionist guerillas if a rational and humane accommodation

with it is made in good time. Fortunately there are more examples of such wisdom than of the folly of resisting nationalism. The peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (by and large) are but recent examples. Earlier Cochinchina and The Federated Malay States separated peacefully in consonance with their respective national components.

How to cope peacefully with nationalism before it produces armed nationalist guerrillas seeking secession is one of the most urgent items on the international agenda in the 21st century. Where such prescience has not been forthcoming and as a result armed secessionist conflict has broken out, the distilled wisdom of the worlds experience is that there is no alternative to peace being secured by separation into independent states in satisfaction of the nationalist urges that lie at the root of the conflict. Such separation has usually proved to be the dawn of a new era of fresh and rational relationships between the separating states with the blessing and support of the international community. In such cases separation is not a calamity; failure to do so with the least delay is.

Mr. Asbjorn Eide of Norway made a presentation in August before the UN Sub-commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (PDPM). Mr. Eide is a member of the Sub-Commission. The following is the text of his statement's section relating to Sri Lanka.

LTTE: SHIFT IN INTERNATIONAL OPINION

Asbjorn Eide

"I shall now turn [to the case] of Sri Lanka. Some of my colleagues have been here long enough to remember that I, in 1983, was the first to criticize the government of Sri Lanka for its lack of effective measures to investigate the authors of the massacres against Tamils in the Summer of 1983, including the killing of political prisoners in the Welikada prison. I know also that many in Sri Lanka subsequently regretted that they did not listen to the suggestions we then made, which were to take prompt action to restore law and order, to punish those responsible, and to involve the International Committee of the Red Cross.

But very much has changed since 1983. Among the Tamils, an extremely militant group emerged calling itself the Tigers, abbreviated LTTE. Its leadership has developed an almost paranoid garrison mentality. That movement or particularly its leadership respects no human rights. It engages in the most heinous crimes, using female, male and possibly even child suicide bombers to create havoc and fear. Its killing is directed not only at Sinhala enemies, including civilians and their religious temples, but also against its Tamil opponents, including the courageous Tamil woman who was until recently the Mayor of Jaffna until assassinated by the Tigers. Many Tamils, including those who are struggling for a devolution of power and greater influence for the Tamils, live under constant threat of assassination by the LTTE.

What baffles me is that there are still international non-governmental organizations who lend their support to this movement. They are then not supporting the Tamil cause but an utterly undemocratic movement unable to contemplate peace in any form.

In 1994, a new President was elected in Sri Lanka, and the government has presented a package of devolution which goes as far as any government can possibly do. There is no doubt in my mind that the President is genuine, and that many or probably most Tamils would be happy if the package could be accepted. But the LTTE does not want it to happen.

At present, the LTTE is battling for the minds and the money of the expatriate Tamil community. In order to continue its fruitless and endless war, the Tigers depend on this external financial support to purchase weapons and other means. The international community, the international NGOs and governments should now seek to convince the Tamil communities in their respective countries that the way to achieve Tamil human rights is through an accommodation based on equality for all in the island of Sri Lanka, full respect for the cultures of the Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and others and a devolution of power which makes it possible through peaceful democratic means to ensure the conditions for the survival and reproduction of the Tamil culture".