

## Is it Endgame for LTTE?

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**Abstract:** The LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) struggle against the Sri Lankan Government has taken different forms at different times since early 1970s. However, developments since 2006 have had an adverse impact on the LTTE and its efforts to seek a solution through violent means. The LTTE's numerical strength has fallen and it is also not doing too well in drafting recruits and procuring arms. The territory under its control is shrinking visibly: from the loss of the East and now with the intrusion of the Sri Lankan troops deep inside Killinochchi. The global war on terrorism (GWOT) and the ascendancy of the Sri Lankan Security Forces (SLSF) have contributed for the present quagmire. Despite the support from Tamils in Sri Lanka and diaspora, the LTTE's depleting profile raises certain fundamental questions about the efficacy and its existence. While the LTTE is weakened, it is doubtful that it will be completely dislodged from the Sri Lankan scene. There is even less reason to believe that the LTTE would concur with the government conceding its armed struggle for Eelam to save its strength. The argument in this article is mainly about the importance of taking into account the LTTE's profile in the post-2006 scenario.

**T**he Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE),<sup>1</sup> one of the deadliest non-state armed groups in the world, has been waging a violent secessionist campaign in Sri Lanka since the 1970s for Tamil Eelam. Its struggle has taken different forms at different times, including both conventional and guerrilla warfare.<sup>2</sup> From 1976 to 1989 the LTTE tried to consolidate its position and establish its supremacy over other Tamil groups also fighting for the rights of the Tamil people. It did so by systematically eliminating the leaders of other groups (both moderate and militant ones) and by forcing their supporters to either join its ranks or leave the areas under LTTE control.<sup>3</sup>

However, developments such as the 'Global War on Terror' (GWOT), the subsequent change in the international perception of insurgent groups, and the ascendancy of the Sri Lankan Security Forces (SLSF) since 2006 have had an adverse impact on the LTTE efforts to seek a solution through violent means. The LTTE partly realized this and participated in the peace process initiated in 2002. However, due to lack of sincerity on the part of both the parties, the peace process failed by early 2004. In spite of the efforts of the international community to put the process back on the track, by the end of 2005 the civil war restarted. During the last two years of intense fighting, the government forces have succeeded in pushing LTTE out of the East and are advancing to the North. LTTE's numerical strength has fallen. It also seems that LTTE is finding it difficult to draft fresh recruits and acquire arms. The territory under its control is shrinking visibly.

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In this context, the LTTE's depleting profile raises certain fundamental questions: does this signal the end of LTTE? Or does this mean that the LTTE is playing a tactical endgame to achieve its aims? Now that they seem to be losing on all sides, will it be possible for them to bounce back from this state? If the LTTE is weakened and marginalized, what will be the implications for the Tamil cause and for India? What are India's options?

This paper is divided into two sections. The first section analyses the LTTE's changing face since 2000 and the factors that led to its present plight. The second section attempts to answer the questions of whether it is endgame for the LTTE, what will be the implications for the Tamils and for India, and India's options.

### **Changing face of the LTTE since 2000**

The course of the LTTE's struggle, especially since 2000, has taken different forms conditioned by changes in both the national and international environment. From 2000 to 2005, by and large, the LTTE projected a moderate and conciliatory stance, although there were some acts of violence committed by them.<sup>4</sup> Four reasons may be cited for this change in the LTTE's behaviour: one, the GWOT and the changed international public opinion; two, the LTTE's failure until the end of the 1990s to capture Jaffna; three, it found the government willing to talk and hoped it could maximize its gains through a peaceful dialogue; and four, it found the international community ready to mediate and oversee the process of dialogue and thus there was an opportunity for LTTE to legitimize its position as a representative of the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Since late 2005, however, it changed its tactics and resorted to open violence and provoked the Sri Lankan state to launch an all-out offensive against it. There could be four reasons for this change: (1) they found the government reluctant to accommodate its maximalist position put up for discussion in the form of Interim Self Government Administration (ISGA); (2) the major internal split within the LTTE led by Karuna and his support of the government; (3) the change of government in Colombo and its disinclination to continue with the policies of the earlier government; and (4) LTTE's calculations that this was the now-or-never moment for them to engage the government in a military conflict and secure its goal of Eelam. With President Rajapaksa assuming power in 2005 and the ascendancy of the nationalist thinking within the administration due to his alliance with Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) (National Liberation Front) and Jathiya Hela Urumaya (JHU), the new government was perhaps also not ready to go ahead with the peace process. Moreover, the increased surveillance and pressure on the LTTE at the international level, and the government's determination to try out the military option, may also have played their role in cornering LTTE and restarting the war. Let us examine these phases in detail.

### **Phase I: Conciliatory face (2000–2005)**

#### ***From brawl to concord: GWOT and the LTTE***

Emerging from the setback of the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) operation and the covert understanding with the Premadasa government, the LTTE engaged in a fierce war—Eelam War III—with the SLSF, which ended in a stalemate by the year 2000.<sup>5</sup> In December 2000, the LTTE declared a unilateral ceasefire and subsequently entered into a Norway-facilitated Cease-Fire Agreement (CFA) with the government in February 2002.<sup>6</sup>

A possible reason for the LTTE's change of tack was its failure to capture Jaffna in 2000, which seemed even more unlikely in the longer run. Moreover, there was consensus

building up around the world that adoption of terrorist methods to secure ethno-cultural rights, even in the most genuine of cases, was not legitimate. The United States declared the LTTE a foreign terrorist organization in 1997. The United Nations adopted the Conventions on the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings in 1998, and the resolution on the suppression of Terrorist Financing in 1999. The United Kingdom proscribed LTTE in February 2001. After 9/11, this view gained further international legitimacy. The international consensus on the need to fight terrorism in all shapes formed the basis of initiatives like the GWOT. The LTTE, perhaps, saw the writing on the wall or alternately were made to understand this by international mediators like the Norwegians by the year 2000. Through its declaration of ceasefire in December 2000, the LTTE expressed its intention to pursue the path of dialogue rather than war.

Ranil Wickramasinghe, who won the parliamentary election held in December 2001 on a clear mandate for peace, after incidents such as the loss of the Elephant Pass in April 2000 and the LTTE's suicide attack on the Katunayake International Airport in July 2001, went forward with the process of peace. His peace-oriented approach led to a swift march of events at least until 2004.

The horrendous events of September 11, 2001 in the United States and the subsequent developments such as GWOT, the UN Security Council Resolution (No. 1373) against terrorism,<sup>7</sup> and the freezing of the sources of terrorist funding as a result of the close networking of the intelligence and counter-terrorism agencies considerably dried down the LTTE's fund-raising and arms procurement activities throughout the world. In October 2001, Canada, host to a considerable number of Sri Lankan Tamils, adopted an Anti-Terrorism Act under which the LTTE was designated as terrorist group.

Against this backdrop, the peace process mediated by Norway started in Sri Lanka in earnest and a CFA was signed by the two parties to the conflict, the LTTE and the government, in 2002. Thereafter, both the parties continued their negotiations through Norway's efforts from 2002 to 2006. During the ceasefire and the talks, there was a significant decrease in violence. The LTTE even showed its readiness to accept the idea of autonomy within a united Sri Lanka, and asserted that separation was only the point of last resort.<sup>8</sup> At the end of October 2003, the LTTE submitted a proposal for setting up an Interim Self-Governing Authority in the Northern and Eastern provinces.<sup>9</sup>

The LTTE, also simultaneously, expanded its political presence. It entered into an agreement with the Tamil parties such as All Ceylon Tamil Congress, Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) (Suresh wing), Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), and Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and a coalition, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), was formed as a joint political platform for pro-LTTE political forces. The LTTE allowed TNA to function in the North and the East on the condition of accepting the LTTE as the 'sole representative' of Tamil people.<sup>10</sup> The LTTE also engaged Rauf Hakeem, leader of the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress (SLMC), in direct negotiations, which resulted in the Hakeem-Prabakaran Agreement of April 13, 2002.<sup>11</sup> The LTTE also utilized the changed environment to strengthen its military strength. It was thus apparent that the LTTE was getting used to the changed conditions and trying to transform into a political force at one level, and preparing itself for the worst and strengthening itself militarily to face any adverse situation. By April 2003, when it withdrew from the peace talks, citing the government's failure to implement the CFA in true spirit, the LTTE perhaps felt that the peace process would not lead anywhere given the government's intransigence, and reverted to its subversive tactics. Subsequent efforts to restart the negotiations were unsuccessful. Let us now analyse the perception of the LTTE during this period.

### ***Tormenting the tigers: Change of Colombo's policy and Karuna's exit***

By 2003, the government's anti-LTTE rhetoric became more strident and the LTTE began to reverse its conciliatory stance gradually. President Chandrika Kumaratunga, despite being in favour of a federal government structure at one time (through her devolution package in 1995), adopted a hard-line approach against the United National Party's (UNP's) approach to the peace process. She considered Ranil's approach as too reconciliatory and pro-Tamil. There was an argument that Ranil might concede more than the LTTE deserved. She suspended Ranil's government in 2004, accusing him of being too soft on the LTTE and accused Norway of helping the LTTE to import radio equipment under the guise of brokering peace.<sup>12</sup> Chandrika's party won the subsequent elections in April 2002. Mahinda Rajapaksa, who became Prime Minister in April 2004, gradually reversed the UNP's approach to the peace process, even though officially he stated that he would continue the peace talks. His party's electoral alliance with JVP and JHU, and the nature of competitive nationalist politics in Sri Lanka, contributed to this hardening of stance. For instance, while his government under President Chandrika Kumaratunga signed the Tsunami aid-sharing deal (Post-Tsunami Operational Management, P-TOMS) on June 24, 2005,<sup>13</sup> it failed to move forward on this arrangement due to strong opposition from the JVP and JHU. Through the agreement, the government and the LTTE pledged to work together in distribution of aid in the Tamil areas under LTTE control. The nationalists argued that the deal was a *de facto* recognition of LTTE suzerainty over the areas under its control. The Sri Lankan Supreme Court also came to the rescue of the Sinhala nationalists by blocking the deal in 2005.

This nationalist constituency gained further strength as the same coalition helped Mahinda Rajapaksa win the presidential election in November 2005. Of course, the electoral boycott<sup>14</sup> did play an important part in the defeat of Ranil Wickremesinghe, but it has to be acknowledged that the Sinhala card played by Rajapaksa succeeded in winning over the right-wing JHU and the left-wing JVP. Following this, the government hardened its stand on the LTTE, the peace process and Norway's mediation.

Rajapaksa's government sought to mobilize international opinion against the LTTE as a terrorist organization. The assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, allegedly by the LTTE, on August 12, 2005, and their CFA violations provided further ammunition to this approach. His regime also raised objections to Norway's role as both peace facilitator and commander of the truce observers (drawn from the Nordic countries), which created hurdles in the peace process.<sup>15</sup> The government adopted an active policy of strengthening the armed forces.<sup>16</sup> Contrary to the general aspiration of the Tamils and the All Party Representative Committee (APRC) majority report, the ruling Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) in May 2007 proposed, in place of provincial devolution, enhanced powers to village authorities and some devolution to the district level.<sup>17</sup> Finally, the government's handling of the issue of the de-merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces following the order of the Supreme Court in October 2006, and the closure of the A9 highway<sup>18</sup> led to a breakdown of the peace moves in Geneva in February and October 2006,<sup>19</sup> and subsequently led to an all-out military offensive.

During the course of the negotiations, the Sri Lankan Government also succeeded in dividing the LTTE by organizing the defection of Karuna, a trusted and effective lieutenant of Prabhakaran and LTTE Commander from the East.<sup>20</sup> In fact, since Karuna's defection LTTE looked at the peace process with suspicion.<sup>21</sup> The LTTE also felt cornered by its exclusion from the March 14, 2003, preliminary conference in Washington, DC,<sup>22</sup> and the EU's ban on the LTTE on May 30, 2006. All these factors contributed to LTTE's hardening of stance and there was a simultaneous rise in violent activities in Sri Lanka from early 2006. The LTTE allegedly conducted several assassination attempts from the beginning of 2006. The first one was on the Army Commander, Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka at the army headquarters

in Colombo on April 25, 2006. This was followed by the assassination of Deputy Chief of Staff, Major General Parami Kulatunga on June 26, 2006, and the attempted assassination of Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa on December 1, 2006.

### **Phase II: LTTE's Incendiary face (since 2006)**

By early 2006 the atmosphere was too vitiated for the peace moves to restart. The initiatives by Norway fell off one by one and Sri Lanka slid into civil war once again. The LTTE went on provoking the government to launch an all-out war and succeeded in this move. If one analyses its behaviour during this phase, one finds that the LTTE had a certain endgame in mind and hoped to benefit from the escalation of the level of violence by drawing international attention at one level and sympathy of the Tamils at another. At another level too, it hoped that the LTTE would be able to retain its hold on the territory under its control and perhaps could force the government to accept their stand at a later date.

### ***Eelam war IV unfolds***

On July 20, 2006, the LTTE closed the sluice gates of the Mavil Aru reservoir in the East, which blocked water supply to 15,000 villages in government-controlled areas. When the government troops attempted to reopen the reservoir, fierce fighting broke out. Thus began Eelam War IV. Eventually, government troops gained full control of the reservoir by August 10, 2006.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, clashes erupted in Muttur on August 2, 2006, when the LTTE launched a heavy artillery attack and gained control of some parts of the town. The military regained the town by August 5. In the process, over 150 LTTE cadres and at least 30 civilians were killed; about 25,000 residents of the area were displaced.

Next, the LTTE intensified its attacks from its base at Sampur, targeting Trincomalee. The SLSF began their ground offensive at Sampur with air cover provided by the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF). Possession of Sampur enabled the LTTE to target Trincomalee harbour and also threatened the key supply routes to Jaffna. On August 29, the military launched an assault to retake the LTTE base in the Sampur and Thoppur area. The SLAF carried out an air strike against selected targets in the rebel-held Mullaitivu area, in order to deter the LTTE's movement to the East from the North. Reportedly, 61 children were killed in the government's air attack at Sencholai in Vallipunam in Mullaitivu district on August 14, 2006, which embarrassed the government at the international level. However, the SLSF, led by Brigade Commander Sarath Wijesinghe, recaptured Sampur on September 4, 2006. This was the first major victory for the government forces for a long time.

With its supremacy in air power, the SLSF carried out 'pre-emptive' shelling in the Vaharai in Batticaloa district, the principal stronghold of the LTTE in the East, in October. The army subsequently began an offensive on Vaharai on December 8.<sup>24</sup> Vaharai came under the control of the SLSF on January 19, 2007, with minimum bloodshed. This marked the biggest loss for the LTTE. It was also the first time the SLAF jets bombed areas in Kilinochchi after the CFA. In a fresh offensive, to clear the remaining LTTE bases in the East, the SLSF captured a key LTTE base in Kokkadicholai on March 28, the strategic A5 highway on April 12,<sup>25</sup> and Thoppigala, the last pocket of influence of the LTTE in the East in July.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Tigers unfold their wings***

In a surprise development, the LTTE carried out an aerial attack on March 26, 2007, followed by four others, mainly targeting Colombo City. The LTTE's air assault on the Katunayake

Air Force base, adjoining the Katunayake International Airport,<sup>27</sup> added a new dimension to the conflict. The bombing raid reportedly originated from Wannī.<sup>28</sup> Through the air attacks the LTTE demonstrated its ability to establish almost a quasi state structure with its own army, navy, and air force. There were reports that the LTTE had two to five aircraft, possibly including one Czech-built Zlin Z-143 and a Swiss-built Pilatus PC 7 trainer. The air attacks led to restrictions on flights at Katunayake and a sharp drop in tourism.<sup>29</sup>

Subsequently, LTTE targeted the Kolonnawa oil installations and the gas storage facility at Muthurajawela, near Colombo (April 29) and lent support to a ground attack on the Air Force base at Anuradhapura (October 22). With international support and procurement of military hardware, the government was able to overcome its weakness exposed by these air attacks<sup>30</sup> and continued its offensive on LTTE bases in the North.

Thus the LTTE provocations in the East did not work according to its expectations. The Rajapaksa government made good use of the Karuna faction, in particular Sivanēsathurai Chandrakanth alias Pillayan and succeeded in repulsing the LTTE cadres from the East in March–April 2007. The government established complete control over the East in September 2007.

### ***Drift towards the North***

Encouraged by its success in the East, the government attacked the LTTE defences at Uyilankulama, Thampanai, and Parappakandal in Mannar in the North. These LTTE strongholds were lost to the SLSF in December 2007. On November 2, 2007, S. P. Thamilselvan, the leader of the political wing of the LTTE, was killed in an SLAF air strike somewhere south of Kilinochchi. The reported injury to LTTE supremo Prabhakaran during the SLAF air strikes carried out at Jayanthinagar on November 26 and the killing of ‘Colonel’ Charles, head of LTTE Military Intelligence, on January 5, 2008, boosted the confidence of the Rajapaksa government. Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa affirmed that the SLSF would target the rest of the LTTE leaders too. On December 7, 2007, Defence Minister Keheliya Rambukwella informed parliament that Kilinochchi was ‘within sight’.<sup>31</sup> The army chief also claimed that it was quite possible for the SLSF to defeat the LTTE in 2008.<sup>32</sup>

In the North, however, the army has to face an estimated 4,000-strong LTTE cadre in the Wannī. At present, in spite of both sides exchanging heavy artillery fire in the Forward Defence Line (FDL) along the Mannar-Vavuniya sector, there is a stalemate due to the unique topology of Nagarcoil and Muhamalai, two major FDLs. Meanwhile, the government has called off the CFA<sup>33</sup> and conducted local elections in Batticaloa in March 2008 and subsequently held Eastern Provincial Council (EPC) on May 10, 2008.

### **Underlying factors for LTTE debacles**

#### ***Karuna’s defection***

Karuna’s defection severely affected the strength of LTTE especially in the East. Karuna pulled out about 2,000 Eastern cadres<sup>34</sup> to fight on behalf of the government. Reports also suggest that he took away a significant amount of the LTTE’s arsenal. In addition, his inputs about the LTTE’s strategy and tactics and support base were invaluable for the government. Karuna and his deputy Pillayan went on to form a political outfit named TMVP (Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Puligal or Tamil Peoples Liberation Tigers),

which is asserting its control in the East, both overtly and covertly before and after their election to provincial council in the May 10, 2008 election, and is reported to be involved in the abduction and killing of LTTE cadres and supporters. Karuna also appears to have played a significant role in enticing non-LTTE Tamil groups such as Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) (Siddarthan), and EPRLF (Perumal) to work against the LTTE. Though these groups are small, their intelligence inputs about the LTTE have immensely helped the SLSF.

### *Declining strength and recruitments*

It is estimated that as many as 3,345 LTTE cadres have died due to escalated hostility in 2007 alone; in contrast, casualties among the security forces are said to be around 499.<sup>35</sup> Until September 2008, the LTTE lost about 6,800 fighters compared to 674 soldiers on the government's side. High-profile leaders such as Thamilselvan, 'Colonel' Charles, 'Lieutenant Colonel' Anpumani alias Alex, 'Major' Mihuthan, 'Major' Nethagy, 'Lieutenant' Adhigivel, and 'Lieutenant' Vahakai Kumaran have been killed in the SLAF air strikes. Desperate to shield its depleting strength, the LTTE withdrew about 100 fighting troops from Thoppigala in mid-2007 and offered little resistance at Parappakandal (Mannar) on December 29, 2007. Some of the LTTE cadres are also reported to have deserted as a result of the ceasefire and either migrated to the Gulf or to the West to seek family life.<sup>36</sup>

Iqbal Athas estimated the LTTE's strength in 2003 as 19,750.<sup>37</sup> By this reckoning, the LTTE's strength currently would be about 10,000 (see Table 1). The LTTE's trained and experienced cadres are estimated to be around 4,000. The post-CFA recruits may not have adequate war experience.

The LTTE is also facing difficulties in getting recruits. The loss of the East has combined with the Eastern Tamils' indifference to the LTTE cause in creating this situation. The East used to be the hub of the LTTE's recruitment. Human rights organizations, in particular Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW), campaigned against the LTTE's practice of recruiting children. Many Tamil families, afraid of their children's forcible recruitment, moved their children out of the district.

### *International pressure on the LTTE*

The death of the LTTE's main spokesperson, Anton Balasingham, has left a vacuum in the ranks of the LTTE and affected its campaign at the international level. In comparison, the Rajapaksa government has managed to garner the international community's support for its efforts. For instance, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, R. Nicholas

Table 1. Depleting Strength of the LTTE.

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 (till 10 March)	Total
Defection (with Karuna)*	—	2000	—	—	—	—	—
Casualty <sup>†</sup>	26	69	87	2319	3345	1923	—
Total	26	2069	87	2319	3345	1923	9769

\*Inference from discussion with a Sri Lankan analyst during the author's visit to Sri Lanka and South India, June and September 2007.

<sup>†</sup>Compiled from the SATP datasheet, 'Casualties of Terrorist Violence in Sri Lanka since March 2000', at [http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/database/annual\\_casualties.htm](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/database/annual_casualties.htm).

Burns, reaffirmed the US position that the LTTE was a terrorist organization responsible for considerable bloodshed and that the Sri Lankan Government had a right to protect the country's stability, security and territorial integrity.<sup>38</sup> Many countries have curbed the LTTE's fund-raising, procurement, and transfer of arms and ammunition to Sri Lanka, by apprehending their supporters. This is perhaps because the international community would not want a legitimate government to fall at the hands of a rebel group. On April 6, 2007, the French authorities arrested 17 LTTE suspects. It is reported that among the arrested persons was the leader of LTTE's branch in France, Nadarajah Mathinthiran alias 'Parathi' and Thuraisamy Jeyamorthy alias 'Jeya', who were in charge of fund-raising in France. On April 25, 2007, the 'director' of the LTTE in New York, Karunakaran Kandasamy, was arrested by the FBI in Queens. On May 1, 2007, two LTTE supporters in Australia—Sivaraj Yathevan, in charge of *Eela Murasu*, a Tamil community paper, and his aide Arooran Vignanamorthy—were arrested during raids conducted on 10 premises in Melbourne and Sydney.<sup>39</sup> The United States clamped down on the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO), charging it with raising funds for a designated terrorist group in November 2007.<sup>40</sup> Canada added the World Tamil Movement (WTM) to its list of banned terrorist organizations in June 2008. These actions have had a major impact on the LTTE's network and flow of funds and arms.

The London-based *Jane's Intelligence Review* in its August 2007 issue reports that the LTTE has a 'profit margin' of \$200–300 million annually<sup>41</sup> and is reported to be one of the best financed terrorist groups in the world. HRW describes the LTTE's fund-raising method as 'extortion'.<sup>42</sup> Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary Palitha Kohona confirmed this in his interaction with the Australian media and said that the LTTE internationally raised approximately \$10–30 million a month, almost 20 to 30 per cent of it from Australia.<sup>43</sup>

Thus cornered, the LTTE is now trying to project a profile that is internationally more acceptable. The tone of Prabhakaran's speech on November 27, 2007, on the occasion of the annual Mahaveerar Thinam (Heroes' Day) proves this point.<sup>44</sup> The LTTE has also been trying to project human rights violations by the government and the security forces through its supporters and political allies, the TNA. It is also demonstrating a more diplomacy-oriented approach as the LTTE's attempt to reach out to political leaders in the state of Tamil Nadu<sup>45</sup> and the Indian people. The LTTE's expression of 'regret'<sup>46</sup> on June 27, 2006, about Rajiv Gandhi's assassination was an attempt at testing the waters in India.

### ***Ascendancy of the Sri Lankan forces***

Currently, the SLSF are better equipped and trained than ever before, and there is a considerable increase in their strength.<sup>47</sup> They are using superior artillery, recently inducted Kfir, MiG 27, MiG 29, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), a newly acquired US-built Beechcraft, and advanced radars. The ascendancy of the SLAF seems to have seized the initiative from the LTTE in defining the pace, depth and duration of this emerging phase of war. Government's defence spending increased by 19 per cent, a record Rs 166.4 billion (\$1.5 billion), in the budget presented in November 2007.<sup>48</sup>

It remains to be seen, however, how the government is going to win the hearts and minds of civilian Tamils in turning the present triumph into an enduring peace. It will be difficult for the government to sustain the war, given the growing inflation and the international community's declining patience at the lack of a political devolution package for the Tamils.



### **Eelam War IV: Is it the LTTE's endgame?**

During this new phase of the war, three factors will decisively determine the LTTE's present and future status. These are international support, the support of the Tamil diaspora and Tamils within Sri Lanka, and the LTTE's military capability.

#### ***International support***

At the diplomatic level the LTTE stands isolated. The Tamil diaspora's support<sup>49</sup> has also dwindled. However, for most of the Tamils, the LTTE is the last hope for achieving their reasonable rights in Sri Lanka.<sup>50</sup> In the absence of an alternative, the LTTE is seen as the Tamils' best bargaining option against the Sinhala chauvinists. The government's hard-line policy and lack of a fair power-sharing package induce at least the old generation of Tamils within the diaspora to pledge their support to the LTTE.<sup>51</sup> This is also a reason why the LTTE still finds sympathy and support even among Indians, in particular in Tamil Nadu. Proscription appears to have had little impact on the diaspora and does not prevent the LTTE from raising and disbursing funds. The second Annual Mega Musical Festival, organized by the White Pigeon, an alleged LTTE humanitarian front, at the Great Hall of the Alexandra Palace in London,<sup>52</sup> was attended by over 4,500 people. The objective of the event was to raise funds to support humanitarian projects in the North and the East. Similarly, the demonstration at Canberra in 2006<sup>53</sup> and the 'Tamil Eelam' meet in Durban in November 2007<sup>54</sup> are cases in point.

The Tamil diaspora tend to donate generously when the LTTE is actively engaged in battle and less so otherwise. Any further escalation of violence and human rights violations by the SLSF will reinforce diaspora support. However, the LTTE needs to transform as a political entity, keeping its military objectives subordinate to greater objectives and also avoid actions that lead to its proscription.

#### ***Domestic support***

From the late 1970s, when the moderate Tamil political parties and leaders failed to secure the rights of Tamils, the LTTE has been able to convince its domestic audience that it was the protector of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka. In fact, Tamils—both Sri Lankan and Indian (also known as Plantation Tamils), and to some extent Tamil-speaking Muslims—look to the LTTE's struggle as a principal reason for their secure livelihood today in Sri Lanka.<sup>55</sup> After the CFA this perception had changed. Many in the North and East view the LTTE with aversion even today. The recruitment of children for war duty and high taxes imposed by the LTTE in the areas under its control were major reasons for this change of perception. The harsh administrative system imposed by the LTTE, with lack of educational facilities and freedom, added to the frustration of local Tamils. However, since the restart of the war, the Tamils, well aware of the alternative to LTTE, i.e., domination by the Sinhalese, have apparently been forced to support the LTTE. They tend to view that LTTE's demise will extinguish their hope of dignified survival. Till the government puts forth a reasonable devolution proposal with required constitutional changes, the local Tamils are expected to continue their support of the LTTE.

#### ***Military capabilities***

In the recent past, the LTTE's attempts to transfer artillery into its base in Sri Lanka were thwarted either by the Sri Lankan Government or by other countries. In addition, a continued

SLAF air offensive has caused irreparable damage to the LTTE's military hardware. Desperately in need of military hardware and manpower for progress, the LTTE's ability to pursue prolonged fighting is now doubtful.

The LTTE still has a strong defence line, starting from the Black Tigers to the Jeyanthan Brigade. With the estimated 4,000 committed and trained cadres, the LTTE is still in a position to wage guerrilla warfare and protect Killinochchi from the SLSF invasion. In particular, the presence of air power along with the Black Tigers can cause immense damage—if not physical, at least at the psychological level—to the SLSF and the establishment. Their coordinated attack last year at the Anuradhapura Air Force base is a case in point. It appears that the LTTE is lying low and is cautious in order to refurbish its image at the international level. It may also be waiting for a few military errors on the government's side in terms of some civilian casualties in the North—such as the Sencholai incident—to retaliate. While the loss of leaders like Thamilselvan and 'Colonel' Charles are great setbacks for the LTTE, it is indeed the LTTE chief Prabhakaran, and intelligence chief Pottu Amman, whose loss will have major implications.<sup>56</sup>

Though the defection of Karuna has given a severe blow to the LTTE's military strength, in terms of arms and ammunition the LTTE appears to have replenished its war coffers adequately between 2000 and 2004, as was demonstrated by the TAF in 2007. Also, in spite of the heavy surveillance the LTTE has been able to smuggle some essential arsenal from the Tamil Nadu coast and South East Asia. It appears that the LTTE is in a position to defend its northern territory for at least one or two years, unless SLAF air attacks and an all-out offensive change that position.

As regards the loss of the East, the LTTE was never strong in that region. It is possible that the LTTE will tactically allow the government to capture it, by which it can prevent the loss of its cadres and equipment.

In short, given the history of LTTE and the present stalemate in the North, although the government forces seem to be weakening LTTE to an extent, complete victory over them may not be too easy to come by. The most likely scenario that could emerge is that LTTE may be holding their stronghold Wannai territory and may revert to guerrilla tactic in coming days. Thus, the fighting will go on for a long time until both the warring parties adopt a more sensible means to settle the issue through negotiation.

### **Implications of a weakened LTTE**

The LTTE's demise, though unlikely at present, would affect the Tamil cause and Tamil Eelam and would also have implications for India.

### ***Impact on the Tamil cause and Eelam***

The LTTE's struggle has not brought it closer to its objective of establishing Tamil Eelam. Nevertheless, to an extent, it has managed to stave off the Sinhala hardliners and government's discrimination against the Tamils. An end of the LTTE would invigorate the Sinhala hard-line elements and could lead to a backlash against the Tamils in future. Even the basic demands of the Tamils, such as a federal state, equal civil rights, and livelihood opportunities are not likely to be addressed by the government, in the event of a conclusive defeat of the LTTE.

The downfall of the LTTE will also open a Pandora's Box. If Prabhakaran is eliminated, the rebel outfit may split. Even groups such as PLOTE, TMVP, and EPRLF (Perumal) may want to try their hand at attaining supremacy among the Tamil population.

They may also resort to violence to improve their respective positions vis-à-vis one another and may eventually take up arms against the government.

However, the question that begs to be answered is that in case of a stalemate, with LTTE slipping back to guerrilla warfare, will it be possible on the part of the government to initiate a dialogue with a weakened LTTE? Similarly, in case of a total victory by the government forces, will an ascendant Sri Lankan Government bring about a reasonable devolution package acceptable to the Tamils unilaterally?

### ***Implications and options for India***

The IPKF experience, the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi and the LTTE's acts of perfidy vis-à-vis India inhibit India's direct participation in any effort to bring an end to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict. The LTTE's continued belligerence and the government's militaristic approach have contributed further to India's dilemma. However, in the event of the LTTE's end or Prabhakaran's elimination, India's dilemma and the threat to its national interest will become even more acute. It is likely that India would face a large-scale influx of refugees on its southern coast. There are already about 74,110 official and 100,000 unofficial Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India and the Indian Government is spending roughly about Rs 13 crore annually for providing relief and accommodation to them.<sup>57</sup> In case of a massive influx, hosting them would be a challenging task. Other than the economic burden, the influx of refugees and militants may also lead to security problems. The rise of many Tamil militant groups in Sri Lanka will also pose a greater security menace for India than for Sri Lanka. These groups may try to utilize Tamil Nadu as their haven in case of escalation of violence in Sri Lanka. The presence of refugees will be an impetus for them to mobilize their activities on Indian soil.

Thirdly, as a result of the LTTE's downfall, tension could build up between political parties—pro- and anti-LTTE—in the state of Tamil Nadu in advocating India's policy. Given the forthcoming general election for parliament, if there is escalation of violence in Sri Lanka and refugee inflow to India, the Sri Lankan issue will revert to centre stage and also give rise to pro-LTTE groups' dominance in the state's political scene. Apart from known Tamil nationalist backers of LTTE, even political parties such as the DMK are likely to adopt a harder pro-LTTE stance. While Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict was never part of the public or political agenda, it has always been a key issue in internal Tamil politics in Tamil Nadu. As a result, even the national political parties and the Union Government may find it difficult to ignore the Tamil issue.

Finally, the end of the LTTE and start of fresh guerrilla violence in Sri Lanka may impact Indian economic and strategic interests. In the event of any anti-Tamil violence, Indian business establishments or ventures will be targets for attack by the Sinhala hardliners. Anti-India sentiments would also adversely affect India's present strong trading links with Sri Lanka, which are poised to reach a level of \$5 billion by 2010 as per the FTA between the two countries.

Besides, there is no guarantee that succeeding Sri Lankan Governments would adhere to India's interest in the region even after the fall of the LTTE. Given the growing relations between Sri Lanka and other powers, in particular Pakistan and China, India may find it difficult to influence Sri Lanka's defence collaboration and procurement from such countries. It is also likely that, as in the 1960s and 1970s, the Sinhala elite and hardliners may once again see India as a threat that needs to be countered.

On the other hand, the weakening of the LTTE will have a positive impact too, not only for Sri Lanka but also for India. First, India's national and security interests in Sri Lanka will be more secure in the absence of the LTTE menace; in particular the Palk Strait would be secured for the Indian navy and fishermen. The contraband and criminal activities of the pro-LTTE groups or criminal groups of India on the southern coast of South India will decline

along with the LTTE's demise. Similarly, the influx of refugees to India will also diminish, if a political solution is worked out along with the downfall of the LTTE. As a result, the burden of hosting refugees and maintaining the surveillance of the east coast is likely to be lightened. In this process, the pro-LTTE groups' activism in Tamil Nadu will slowly diminish. The possibility of strengthening India–Sri Lanka strategic and defence cooperation would be high and it would secure India's business and economic interests in the island nation.

### Options for India

India needs to consider changing its current policy of backdoor diplomacy in Sri Lanka. First, it should advocate an early end to the ongoing military encounters and intensify its campaign for a reasonable power-sharing model in Sri Lanka. There could be economic incentives or concessions to the Sri Lankan Government for developing the APRC's majority proposal into one accepted by all.

Secondly, the Indian Government should make sure that the Sri Lankan Government takes care of the minorities' humanitarian and human rights. Advocating a safe zone in the conflict areas in the North and the East should be of utmost importance. The creation of a safe zone will bring some relief to the affected civilian population. In the event of any major armed encounter, the people can take shelter in this safe zone. This will moderate the flow of refugees and militants into Indian territory without offending the affected civilians as well as the international customary norms.

Thirdly, India may advocate a fresh ceasefire in Sri Lanka and a new coalition of 'peace builders' may be formed consisting of the major donors of Sri Lanka—the European Union (including Norway), Japan, the United States, Canada and India to take the political dialogue forward between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government. India could consider the European Union as a mediator in the place of Norway, as a concession to the Sinhala nationalists. Although Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom are interested in playing a role in the Sri Lankan conflict, the European Union could be preferred to a single country to play a mediatory role.

Finally, although India has a policy of not supporting armed separatists now, it should not appear to be letting the LTTE fall into the hands of government forces at present, without any significant political solution to the Tamil issue. This would be inimical to its own long term interests. Given the emotional links with Sri Lankan Tamils, the downfall of the LTTE may give rise to ethno-nationalist sentiments in Tamil Nadu which can adversely affect centre-state relations. Hence, in the effort aimed at finding a peaceful solution India may consider it necessary to engage the LTTE—either through TNA or Tamil Nadu Political leaders like Vaiko (V. Gopalaswamy)—in any such negotiation as a 'peace builder', and the Indian Government should not shy away from such prospects. All in all, India has to play a more direct role to ensure that the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka gets resolved with just and equitable devolution of power taking into account the genuine interests of all communities in Sri Lanka.

### Notes

1. The LTTE was formed by Velupillai Prabhakaran with a handful of Tamil youths on May 5, 1976, as a successor to the Tamil New Tigers (TNT). For a comprehensive understanding of the LTTE, see M. R. Narayan Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerrillas*, Konark, Delhi, 1994; M. R. Narayan Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind—Prabhakaran*, Konark, New Delhi, 2003; Anton Balasingham, *War and Peace—Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers*, Fairmax, London, 2004; Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, *The Tamil Tigers: Armed Struggle for Identity*, F. Steiner, Stuttgart, 1994.

2. Prabhakaran played an important role in turning the organization into a formidable rebel army.
3. The LTTE believed that the struggle would be effective only if the other groups, who were much more willing to compromise on a settlement to the conflict, were not operational.
4. However, reportedly, the LTTE assassinated anti-LTTE leaders like Marimuthu Rajalingam (chairman of the Aalaiyadivembu Pradheshiya Sabha, killed in April 2003) and S. Sunderampillai (UNF candidate for Batticaloa district, killed in March 2004).
5. In a series of military operations that followed in the 1990s, the Sri Lankan army recaptured Jaffna and the town of Kilinochchi in late 1995. However, from 1998 the LTTE hit back, culminating in the capture of the important Elephant Pass base complex in April 2000.
6. After an initial deadlock in September 2001, Norway succeeded in convening a meeting in Geneva to explore a solution to the Sri Lankan conflict.
7. The UN Security Council unanimously adopted a comprehensive resolution requiring all member states to take measures to combat terrorism and to report to the Security Council within 90 days on the measures taken.
8. See ‘Tigers Demand “Substantial Autonomy, Self Government”’, September 18, 2002, at <http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=7497> (Accessed December 14, 2006).
9. ISGA was the first official document from the Tigers. It foresaw a separate state which the Sinhalese and government find difficult to accept. See Muttukrishna Sarvananthan, ‘Interim Self-Governing Authority: A Critical Assessment’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 29, 2003, pp. 5038–5040. Also for ISGA document see <http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=10311> (Accessed December 17, 2007).
10. They even secured 22 seats in the April 2004 parliamentary elections from the North and the East.
11. The talks between Hakeem and Prabhakaran also addressed many grievances of the Muslim community but the matter reached a deadlock on issues like allowing a separate Muslim delegation at the peace talks and the Muslims’ demand for autonomy in the East.
12. Norway said, however, that it had merely responded to a government request to help LTTE import communication equipment for an FM station.
13. See, for the P-TOMS Agreement, [http://www.priu.gov.lk/news\\_update/Current\\_Affairs/ca200506/20050624tsunami\\_aid\\_deal\\_between\\_govt\\_and\\_LTTE\\_signed.htm](http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca200506/20050624tsunami_aid_deal_between_govt_and_LTTE_signed.htm) (Accessed December 17, 2007).
14. Rajapaksa eventually won the election by a narrow majority, helped by the LTTE boycott, as most Tamils were expected to vote for Ranil.
15. To accommodate the government’s view, Ulf Henricsson, a retired Swedish general, replaced Norwegian Brigadier General Hagrup Haukland as head of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM), after Haukland’s term ended on April 1, 2006.
16. In 2004, defence Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake informed parliament about the government’s plan. See ‘Forces Ready to Take on LTTE: Govt’, *The Hindu*, December 7, 2004.
17. See [http://www.priu.gov.lk/news\\_update/Current\\_Affairs/ca200705/20070501slfp\\_presents\\_home\\_grown\\_proposals\\_devolution.htm](http://www.priu.gov.lk/news_update/Current_Affairs/ca200705/20070501slfp_presents_home_grown_proposals_devolution.htm) (Accessed December 17, 2007).
18. Before the closure of the A9 highway the LTTE earned a significant amount as ‘transit tax’ (around SLR 300 million monthly) from the checkpoints on the Jaffna–Colombo route.
19. Both sides met again in Geneva but talks failed over the rebels’ demand that government reopen the A9 highway. Artillery battles followed in Jaffna.
20. It is reported that UNP parliamentarian Ali Zahir Moulana helped Karuna, and later UNP Minister Milinda Moragoda in 2005 claimed the credit for splitting the LTTE. See <http://www.nation.lk/2007/02/25/politics2.htm>. Also see [http://www.bbc.co.uk/sinhala/highlights/story/2005/11/051122\\_ttte\\_boycott.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sinhala/highlights/story/2005/11/051122_ttte_boycott.shtml) (Accessed December 18, 2007).
21. It is reported that as a member of the LTTE delegation during the first few rounds of peace talks, Karuna struck the chords of dissent, even within the LTTE’s delegation members.
22. The LTTE’s practice of recruiting children for war duty was cited as one of the reasons for its omission. The US Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, is also reported to have said that issuing the LTTE’s representatives visas to attend the meeting would run counter to the US policy which since 1997 had designated the LTTE as a foreign terrorist organization.
23. In 1991, when the LTTE failed to capture the reservoir, it blew up the sluice gates and subsequently captured it in 1997. Though Mavil Aru came within the LTTE-controlled area after the CFA, it continued to water the fields in the government-controlled area. See <http://>

- www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers20%5Cpaper1908.html (Accessed January 17, 2008). Also see <http://www.ipcs.org/printArticle.jsp?kValue=2088> (Accessed January 17, 2008).
24. Vaharai has a pivotal and strategic place in the East, both militarily and politically as a 'gateway' to the districts of Batticaloa and Amparai. An estimated 20,000 civilians fled from Vaharai to the nearby government-controlled areas, fearing an imminent assault.
  25. The entire highway was brought under government control for the first time in 15 years from LTTE.
  26. On July 11, 2007, President Rajapaksa officially declared that the military had captured Thoppigala, which had remained under effective rebel control since 1994. The LTTE's military defeat was commemorated on July 19, 2007, as 'New Dawn to the East'.
  27. The LTTE chose not to target the international airport, aware of the implications it would have in the international arena.
  28. The attacking aircraft reportedly flew about 350 nautical miles at an average speed of 150 mph, carrying an ordnance load of 1,040 kg. 'Threat Potential of Air Tigers', at <http://www.in.news.yahoo.com/070401/48/6e1sl.html> (Accessed May 20, 2007).
  29. Immediately after the LTTE's air raid of April 29, Cathay Pacific suspended its flights, while Singapore Airlines switched its night flights to the daytime. Australia and some European countries advised their nationals to reconsider any plans to visit the country. Tourist arrivals came down by more than a third compared with 2006. See 'Tigers with Wings', May 3, 2007, at [http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?story\\_id=9117115](http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?story_id=9117115) (Accessed May 25, 2007).
  30. The SLAF purchased five MiG 29 fighter jets with interceptor capabilities. Earlier, SLAF fighter planes lacked interceptor capabilities. The SLAF also upgraded its ground attack Kfirs to interceptor role by adding radars and missiles. See <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/070520/Columns/sitreport.html> (Accessed January 16, 2008).
  31. 'Kilinochchi Within Sight', at <http://www.topix.com/forum/world/sri-lanka/T600H6DO8CKO9E7VH> (Accessed February 20, 2008).
  32. In an interview to the *Sunday Observer* Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka said that the army had surrounded the LTTE bases in the North from all directions. He also said that there are around 3,000 Tigers remaining and that the military targets to annihilate them within the first six months of the next year. See <http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2008/02/10/sec02.asp> (Accessed February 20, 2008).
  33. See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jan/02/haroonsiddique> (Accessed February 20, 2008).
  34. Reports that about 5,000 cadres had left with Karuna may be discounted. See <http://www.rediff.com/news/2004/mar/11spec3.htm> and [http://acd.iiss.org/armedconflict/Mainpages/dsp\\_HumanAndEconomicCost.asp?ConflictID=174&YearID=1113](http://acd.iiss.org/armedconflict/Mainpages/dsp_HumanAndEconomicCost.asp?ConflictID=174&YearID=1113) (Accessed February 20, 2008).
  35. See 'Casualties of Terrorist Violence 2007', at [http://satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/database/annual\\_casualties.htm](http://satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/database/annual_casualties.htm) (Accessed January 24, 2008).
  36. The estimated dissenters could be around 50–100. Inference drawn during the author's visit to Sri Lanka, November 2005, from discussions with some Sri Lankan families, whose family members were LTTE cadres before CFA.
  37. Iqbal Athas, a Sri Lankan journalist, says there were 9,390 LTTE cadres at the time of CFA, but in 2003 the strength had grown to 19,750. See <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/031116/columns/sitrep.html>.
  38. See 'International Donors Condemn Sri Lanka Cease-fire Violations', November 21, 2006, at <http://www.america.gov/st/washfileenglish/2006/November/20061121175232ndyblehs0.5237543.html> (Accessed December 22, 2007).
  39. They reportedly had access to AU\$526,000 in two bank accounts between August 2001 and December 2005.
  40. Earlier in August 2006 and April 2007, the FBI arrested nine persons whom the US Department of Justice subsequently charged with various crimes, including conspiracy to provide material support and resources to the LTTE. See <http://srilanka.usembassy.gov/ambsp-16nov07.html> (Accessed December 27, 2007).
  41. It is reported that the LTTE makes money through both legal and illegal commercial activities. At the legal level, it runs businesses like restaurants and shipping operations in various parts of the world, while illegally it earns through gun running and human trafficking. For details, see 'Feeding the Tigers—How Sri Lankan Insurgent Funds their War', *Jane's Intelligence Review*,

- September 1, 2007, at [http://jir.janes.com/subscribe/jir/doc\\_view\\_print.jsp?K2DcoKey=/content1/janesdata/mags](http://jir.janes.com/subscribe/jir/doc_view_print.jsp?K2DcoKey=/content1/janesdata/mags) (Accessed September 26, 2007). Also see Rudiger Falksohn and Padma Rao, 'Tamil Tigers Exploit Exiles Abroad to Fund Insurgency', at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,druck-535316,00.html> (Accessed February 15, 2008).
42. HRW, 'Funding the "Final War": LTTE Intimidation and Extortion in the Tamil Diaspora', at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/ltte0306/1.htm> (Accessed February 27, 2008).
  43. See <http://www.asiantribune.com/index.php?q=node/5567> (Accessed December 22, 2007).
  44. Instead of his customary war rhetoric, Prabakaran complained that the 'partisan and unjust conduct' of the international community 'severely undermined confidence of Tamil people'. 'Propping up genocidal Sinhala State counterproductive, international community should change approach—Pirapaharan', at <http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=23870> (Accessed November 29, 2008).
  45. Though the Tamil Nadu leaders and general population came in support of Tamils, especially after the Sencholai incident, they are not in a position to come out openly in support of the LTTE. The competitive politics and the presence of anti-LTTE feeling among a considerable section of the local population were the major reasons for this lukewarm response. As a result, the LTTE now only has a tenuous linkage with Tamil Nadu. In particular only parties such as Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), Paattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), Viduthalaï Chiruthaigal, and Tamil Desiya Kazhagam continue to support the LTTE.
  46. 'Tamil Tiger "Regret" over Gandhi', at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/5122032.stm> (Accessed November 20, 2007).
  47. The array of armed forces strength is now placed at about 200,000.
  48. <http://www.lankanewspapers.com/news/2007/12/22575.html> (Accessed January 28, 2008).
  49. Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora number between 600,000 and 800,000 and are distributed in enclaves comprising: Canada (250,000), India (150,000), the United Kingdom (110,000), Germany (50,000), and Switzerland, France and Australia (30,000). Historically, they belong to two categories: those who left the country before the 1983 ethnic riots and those who fled after.
  50. This inference is drawn from the author's interaction with some Tamil diaspora in Colombo in November 2005 and also after analysing the reports of diaspora media.
  51. Reportedly the third generation of Tamil diaspora, born or brought up in other countries, does not believe in blindly being part of the LTTE's campaign as it has a complex understanding of Tamil rights. See Meena Nallainathan, 'Staring Down the Tigers', *Ryerson Review of Journalism*, Spring 2007, p. 44.
  52. See Hasan Suroor, 'LTTE Circumventing Ban in U.K.: Colombo', *The Hindu*, January 15, 2008, at <http://www.thehindu.com/2008/01/15/stories/2008011554611500.htm> (Accessed February 20, 2008). Also see <http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=24285>.
  53. <http://www.tamilbrisbane.com/content/view/779/27/> (Accessed February 27, 2008).
  54. See *The Hindustan Times*, November 24, 2007.
  55. In their view, if there is no pressure or resistance to the government discrimination policy since the late 1970s from LTTE, they may not have the space and freedom that they have today by living among Sinhalese in the south of Sri Lanka. Inference drawn from personal discussion with Tamil and Muslim groups at Colombo and Kandy, June 27–30, 2007.
  56. Other important LTTE leaders are political wing leader Nadesan, Police Chief K. Elango, Sea Tigers Chief Soosai, Air Tigers Chief Charles Anthony, Finance Division Chief Pugazhendhi, Judicial Chief Pararajasingham, Charles Antony Brigade Chief Balraj, and Women's Military Chief Vidusha.
  57. For instance, India spent Rs 328 crore for 2003–2004; Rs 341 crore in 2004–2005, and Rs 354 crore in 2005–2006. All figures are approximations. See Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, *Annual Reports 2003–2008*, at <http://mha.nic.in/Annual-Reports/>. Also see Government of Tamil Nadu Policy Note of Public Department, at <http://www.tn.gov.in/policynotes/archives/policy2004-05/public2004-05.htm>.