

NDPT

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THAMILEELAM

THE FUTURE OF THE WAR OF NATIONAL LIBERATION OF TAMIL EELAM:

From the military angle, the Operation Oyatha Alai (Unceasing Wave-OA) has gained a historical significance in the Tamil Eelam National liberation war. The success of the Tigers in the III stage of OA over the joint military command of Sri Lankan state at Elephant Pass and Iyakkachi is a progressive military development in the history of war of the Tigers. The military advance of the Tigers to recapture Jaffna has stopped at the defense line of Kozhumbuthurai Sarasalai region. The crisis in the Sri Lankan army was so acute that it gave rise to a number of speculations such as that the attacks of the Tigers on Palali military base and Kangesanthurai Port would continue, the Jaffna would once again come under the control of the Tigers, the 30000 government troops would surrender to the Tigers or that these troops after the prior warning of the Tigers would either voluntarily leave Jaffna or would be evacuated with the help of some foreign countries. But by resorting to emergency military and political domestic measures and by mobilising emergency international military and economic aids, the Sri Lankan government has ensured that its troops' withdrawal has at least helped temporarily stabilising its defense lines. The Tigers too have abandoned their advancement towards Jaffna and are concentrating on strengthening their defense lines and getting militarily prepared to defend the areas that have come under their control. Both sides are engaged in military steps to safeguard their defense lines. Tigers resorted to the threat of tactically moving forward to attack the government army positions; they also made temporary shell attacks on Palali camp. On the other hand, the Government troops are trying out limited aerial bombing as a testing measure. The echoes of political changes and crises resulting from the change in the military balance of power brought about by the victory of the Tigers in the III stage of OA are reverberating both internally and internationally. This change in the balance of military power, the victory of the Tigers which is a significant advance in the struggle for Tamil Eelam and their political impact have not made the Sri Lankan government and the ruling class

parties to climb down and come forward to a just political solution for the Tamil Eelam demand or for a political negotiation; nor has the international community or the foreign countries have brought about a pressure on the Sri Lankan Government, the ruling class parties and the racist and communal organisations. They limit themselves to saying that the Tigers must be talked to and that the peace and negotiated settlement are not possible without the involvement of the Tigers. Some countries are taking initiative for the peace process and negotiated settlement.

Emotionally responding to the victory of the Tigers in Elephant Pass Gate , a political propaganda celebrating the victory has been launched as if it has opened the doors of Tamil Eelam and that the only work remains to be done is to enroll Tamil Eelam in the UNO this year. The propagandist activities and the political steps undertaken by the Tigers and their sympathisers have either missed the ground realities altogether or are deliberately exaggerating the impact of the military victory. It is quite appropriate to celebrate the military victory of the Tigers over a huge military base of the enemy and greet them for this achievement. Nor is it inappropriate for the leadership of the Tigers , basing themselves on this victory, to launch a propaganda claiming that their politics is the only nationalist politics and that the war of the Tigers has become People's war. They would definitely do this. But the Revolutionary Patriotic Forces of Tamil Eelam should not succumb to this euphoria.

In the history of the war of Tamil Eelam Liberation struggle, the Tigers alone have conducted the resistance war against the Indian aggression following the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan accord, and then again from 1991 onwards till date against the Sri Lankan state. The Tamil people and the Revolutionary Patriotic Forces are bound to be grateful to and greet the leadership of the Tigers and their leader Pirabakaran, the great martyrs and the militant Tigers in the battle field who have kept alive the flame of war of Tamil Eelam Liberation struggle uncompromisingly. There is nothing wrong about it.

At the same time, the people of Tamil Eelam and the Revolutionary Patriotic Forces should bear in mind the activities of the LTTE leadership and its leader Pirabakaran that have been objectively weakening the Tamil Eelam Liberation struggle and the mistakes being committed by them against the victory of the Liberation War. They should also bear in mind their history of eliminating or banning other liberation movements , which, despite the contradictions between them

and the Tigers on certain principles relating to war , were fighting the Sri Lankan State. Such practices of the Tigers have only helped weakening the Tamil Eelam war against the Sri Lankan State besides establishing the dictatorship of a single organisation; They should also the Tigers' history of banning along with the organisations which turned traitors in the wake of Indo-Sri Lankan agreement, even the political and military activities of those Tamil Eelam Revolutionary Patriotic Forces which stood determined in their resistance to Indian aggression, in their resistance to the Sri Lankan state and in their anti-imperialist stand, arresting and eliminating them and forcing them to go underground and function clandestinely.

We certainly welcome the political struggles, military activities and the victories achieved by any liberation organisations including the Tigers for the success of Tamil Eelam Liberation struggle and war. At the same time, we, the Revolutionary Patriotic Forces should be clear and firm in pointing out, at appropriate times and spaces, the erroneous and purely militaristic outlook of the liberation movements , their erroneous militant activities which harm the advancement of the war of liberation and the liberation itself and the far reaching impact such mistakes would make and in criticising them and putting forward the correct line. It is essential that the leadership forces of the liberation movements mature themselves in the following way: they must be capable of recognising both the agreements with as well as the contradictions between other fraternal movements that are struggling against Sri Lankan state and International enemies; they must be capable of handling such organisations in such a way as to co-ordinate them on the basis of the core perspective of enhancing the strength for winning the new democratic Tamil Eelam Liberation, develop the spirit of criticism and self-criticism to take forward the joint activities of the social liberation movements opposed to the common enemy. Then alone, the allied forces under the fraternal organisations can with full strength and vigour take part in politico-military joint activities in the respective fields of action..

Success of 'OA' of the Tigers, the fall of Elephant Pass -Iyakkachi camp of the joint forces of the Sri Lankan state, hoisting of the Tigers flag - all these have boosted the morale of the Tiger militants and Tamil Eelam people. It has given confidence to the supporters of Tamil Eelam all over the world. It has made the experts in military affairs wonder over the Tigers military development. Even those Revolutionary Patriotic Forces that are not involved in military action or do not pay attention to the Tigers' actions are deeply surprised by this victory of Tigers. If we look deep into the

history of the development of Tigers, one can understand the facts. And the truth will be evident.

Significant Role of Tigers in National liberation war

From the very day the LTTE and its leader Pirabakran decided that it is only through the armed struggle (violent revolution) against the Sri Lankan state that the national liberation of Tamil Eelam people could be achieved, they stand firm in that decision and continue to develop the armed guerilla struggle activities till date.

Fighting against the aggressive war unleashed by the Sinhala state with its three joint forces in 1985, Tiger leadership has developed the struggle into the National Liberation War of Tamil Eelam. Significant in this is the role of the leadership Pirabhakaran. . In the later part of 1986, the Sri Lankan forces in their 'Operation Liberation' strangled the neck of the Tigers in Vadamarachi; in 1988 the 'Operation Pawan' of the Indian forces pushed the Tigers to retreat into Vanni region; there was a time when Rajiv declared that "a only few Tigers are prowling in the forest"; in 1996, Tigers were flushed out of Jaffna, that was ruled by them for 5 years by the Sri Lankan forces during its 50 days 'Operation Sunrays' and pushed the former into retreat to Vanni again; there was also a time when the defense minister Anuratwate declared that the "Tigers leadership has run away to foreign lands".

But the Tigers withstood all these defeats and set backs. In the face of the enemy's military campaigns of attrition, they correctly assessed the strength and weakness of both themselves and the enemy and in a way appropriate to its vanguard method of war, brilliantly conducted guerilla and mobile warfare both strategically and tactically, now advancing and then retreating, thus ensuring the immense development in their military activities in the Vanni region. They conducted the 'OA' military campaigns in the form of positional war. Through their victory of strategic counter-offensive achieved in 'OA-3', the enemy was forced to retreat from the very big army base (Elephant Pass). Thus, they have brought the Tamil Eelam Liberation war militarily into its third stage of our strategic counter-offensive and the enemy's strategic retreat. It is the Tigers alone who have made full and decisive contribution to the Tamil Eelam National Liberation War. Some Revolutionary Patriotic Organisations, despite the ban imposed on them by the Tigers, are functioning only as political groups. So long as there is no military activities of other groups in the war against the Sri Lankan state, the situation that war means Tigers and the Tigers means war would continue.

Retreat to Vanni and the development of Tigers

During the 'Operation Sunrays' campaign of the Sri Lankan forces, Tigers resorted to counter attacks only to hold on to a few places. The Tigers made their counter-offensives and retreats in such a way as to gain time for the safe retreat of their military infrastructure and leadership (not for protecting the area of their control), to prevent the enemy from making sure whether they (the Tigers) were actually retreating and also to divert the attention of the enemy to prevent him from attacking them in their route of retreat. Here one should make a distinction between the retreat from a single camp (small or big) and the retreat from a larger camp that is running smaller camps within an area of control; and between the retreat from an area which can change from our hand to the enemy hand or vice versa at any time and the retreat from the liberated area like Jaffna which for a long time remained under our control. These distinctions should be clearly made and understood from the politico-military scientific perspective.

Several people compare the withdrawal of Tigers from Jaffna to the long march of Chinese Communist Party under Mao's leadership. Tigers forced hundreds of people to accompany them for their retreat. Explanations such as "people did not want to stay in the area of aggression", "troops could capture only empty lands" and "people will be persecuted by the enemy as they had accepted the rule of the Tigers for the last 5 years" were offered. The tactics adopted in the method of vanguard war of the Tigers in using the people for their military retreat had never been adopted by the Chinese Communist Party or Mao. It is true that though the liberation wars of both the Tigers and the Chinese Communist Party have resorted to retreating and advancing in guerilla warfare as well as in regular warfare, the methods of the People's War and the the methods of vanguard war and their respective politico-military sciences can never, at any place be equated with one another; nor can they be identified with one another.

After their retreat from Jaffna, in Vanni Tigers reviewed their military weaknesses and mistakes. By analysing the reasons for the defeat, they realised the need to develop from guerilla warfare to regular warfare, the need to procure heavy weapons for conducting regular warfare, the need for hierarchical command systems and the need for the development of material supplies to the fighting forces. In Vanni region they launched the training necessary for deploying the regular army. From the Tamil Eelam Guerilla units they selected the militants for the regular army and restructured

the guerilla activities in the East and Vanni area. They prioritised the development of regular army. They focused on guerilla unit of the sea tigers in the eastern waters and concentrated sharply on the activities of the suicidal squad of the sea tigers. In the East they carried out limited guerilla attacks. Most importantly, they initiated the infiltration of black tigers into and their attacks in Sinhala territory. They infiltrated into the upcountry and concentrated on blasting the electric power transformers. They created a separate wing to target and kill the political and military leaders of the Tamil parties which collaborate with the Government forces. They formed small pistol groups to infiltrate into the area of control of the enemy –including Jaffna itself - and stepped up their activities there. Increasing the activities of the sea tigers in the eastern waters, they imported weapons from foreign countries.. They created new armed units. They set up the panther unit, strike force, border security force, anti aircraft front and such other fronts for the intelligence wings that would work in many fields and areas. They spread their network of intelligence wings into the collaborationist Tamil parties, opposition camps, across the country as well as internationally.

The contradiction that arose at the level of leadership of the Tigers was handled deftly by Pirabhakaran. He firmly and determinately prevented the Tiger militants surrendering to the enemy .He did not give any chance to the enemy to organise ‘ a show of captured weapons’.

For the first time a M-124 type helicopter was shot down at Vetrilaikkeni in Vanni. In July 1996 during ‘OA-1’ operation, the Tigers launched their first regular army attack. It was on Mullaithivu army camp,. Tigers earned a major success in this attack. (Earlier- in 1991 and 1992 through the ‘Palavagaya’ military army operation Mullaithivu was captured by the govt. forces.) This assault took place just 7 months after the the Tigers left Jaffna and retreated into Vanni. The camp with 2000 men headed by Mayor Lawrence Fernando was totally destroyed. 1000 enemy troops were either killed or disappeared. A few hundred troops were captured. Weapons, bombs, explosives and telecommunication equipments worth of 30 million US dollars were sized. This was a success achieved by the unit of the regular army fighting a positional war that lasted only for a few days. In the history of National liberation War, the attempt of the Sinhala forces to recapture the camp by air dropping of the troops at Alambil was successfully foiled by the Tigers , in whose military action 2 officers and 50 troops were killed. Enemy’s counter attack was repulsed.. Tigers’ losses did not exceed 350 in number. The success of OA, gave the Tigers the armed

and psychological strength and the best military training necessary for the regular army. This is the reason why the leader of the Tigers continue to use the name 'OA' in all his successive battles. It is to be noted that the artilleries captured at Mullaithivu have enhanced the firing power of the the Tigers at present.

As a retaliatory measure, the Sri Lankan army launched 'Satya Jeya' (The Victory of Truth) military operation with the troops of its I Division, and after losing 500 troops, captured Killinochi that was under the control of the Tigers. After loosing more than 250 of their militants, the Tigers abandoned their control of Killinochi and retreated. Three months later, the Tigers infiltrated into the government artillery base at Paranthan, attacked and destroyed it. This was the artillery base which facilitated the advances made by government forces at earlier occasions

In the month of Masi 1997, Sri Lankan forces launched the 'Operation Jayachikru'(The Victory is Certain) to open up the high way (A-9) connecting Vavuniya and Jaffna. (it is considered to be the longest ever military operation in South Asia at any period of time). Tigers faced this immense military activity of the enemy through every kind of guerilla warfare and mobile warfare of the regular army and successfully spoiled the success of I and II stages of 'Operation Jayachikru". But in terms of human resources, they incurred a huge loss.

List of the LTTE martyrs in the National Liberation War of Tamil Eelam

Heroic martyrs in	1982.....01
”	1983.....05
”	1988.....363
”	1989.....372
”	1984.....36
”	1985.....123
”	1986.....258
”	1987.....451
”	1990.....960
”	1991...1613
”	1992.....788
”	1993.....925
”	1994.....374
”	1995...1502
”	1996...1374
”	1997...2099
”	1998...1791
Others.....	276
Men.....	11071

Women.....2240

Total.....13311

Heroic martyrs in military operations

91 Elephant Pass Sea Battle	604
Manlaaru	233
Operation Frog.....	460
Kokku Thoduvai.....	175
Operation Thunder.....	181
Operation Sun Rays.....	438
Oyatha Alai -1.....	315
Sat Jeya -2	100
Sat-Jeya 3.....	133
Paranthan-Elephant Pass.....	193
Killinochi-Paranthan.....	300
Operation Jeyasikuru.....	2146
Oyatha Alai-2.....	405
Ground Black Tigers.....	54
Sea Black Tigers.....	92

Courtesy; Sooriya Puthalvarkal 1999

Though the Tigers had enough arms, there was a shortage in the new recruits at a time when they had seen their development in military terms . This is why, they chose to adopt the methods that cause few loss of men while achieving maximum possible success. They encouraged the development of the black Tigers who can infiltrate anywhere and carry out attacks in land and sea. They deployed the Black Tigers even in the military activities of their regular army. For various kinds of war activities such as guaranteeing the defense of the areas under control , repelling the attack of the enemy forces, holding on to their grounds, compensating the losses, preparing the forces for launching new attacks on the enemy, etc., the human resources are essential. They should increase along with the development of war. In view of the political outlook of the Tigers, their holding on to 'pure' military outlook despite their firm commitment to nationalism, their failure to take into account the democratic demands of the masses or even going against them, the natural inclination of the adult men and women to keep away from the Tigers in view of the formers' past and present activities – all these things have led the Tigers to solve the problem of shortage of human resources by recruiting underaged persons, the children into

their army. It should be recalled that due to the continuous pressure of propaganda by the state, the pressure of the human rights organisations as well as children's organisations, UN representative Olera visited Vanni area in person and got an assurance from the Tigers to the effect that they would not recruit children anymore. After this incident, the Tigers came out with an announcement to sort out their human resources problem. They gave a call for the first time to the militants in all the other movements to join their organisation within a time frame. In destroying and banning other organisations, the Tigers made no distinction between the traitorous organisations from the patriotic ones. Even today when they contemplate on involving the rank and file of other organisations in war efforts, they want to achieve this only by force. Those who claim that the Tigers and the people are synonymous and that the Tigers are carrying out the People's War must explain the reasons for the shortage of human resources the Tigers continue to suffer from. It should be noted that the Tigers, unable to mobilise the middle aged men and women in Tamil Eelam, chose to bring people from Tamilnadu and give them training. One should understand the formation of Tamil National Retrieval Army only in this context.

According to an estimate, in 1985 there were over 20,000 cadres with basic military training under the 5 different movements fighting for the Tamil Eelam war. The struggle has continued for the last 15 years. It has developed to a higher stage. If this has happened only under the leadership of Tigers, then why is it that the numerical strength of the militants who are fighting under the leadership of the Tigers has not increased sufficiently? What are the political and military weaknesses of the Tigers? Sri Lankan state, in the wake of 1987 accord, neutralised many of the armed movements that rose against it, turned them against the Tigers and allowed these traitors to carry out their political and military activities in the areas occupied by it. The Tigers for their part have banned and destroyed even those Revolutionary Patriotic Forces which consider the former as their fellow organisation, which are ready for joint struggle and which have a firm stand against the Sri Lankan State and clear vision about the people's democratic aspiration and national liberation. Until the Tigers change their policy of the dictatorship of a single organisation, it should be noted, the human resources problem would continue to persist during the process of war.

In 1998, Sri Lankan State unleashed its new military operations: It was the 'Operation Rivibala' on Otti Suttan; 'Operation Ranagosa-Stages I, II, III & IV' on Mannar region; in 'Operation Edipala', the government forces through their strategic

attacks made advances and captured the places targeted by them without stiff resistance from the Tigers. In 'Operation Watershed', the Tigers suffered heavy losses. The military commentators described this victory as 'Cake War', a war which was won as smoothly as one would eat the cake. Those analysts, who from outside the theatre of war, assessed the losses suffered by the Tigers and their subsequent retreat, drew a conclusion on the basis of the depletion of human resources of the Tigers that the Tigers got caught up in deep military crisis. In reality, this retreat of the Tigers was only a tactical move but not a strategic one nor was it a strategic defeat. This was borne out by the strategic counter attack of the Tigers in 'OA-2' in the later half of 1998 in which the Tigers recaptured Killinochi defeating the government forces..

That was the time Tigers were essentially in the II stage of the strategic war. The National liberation War was in the stage of 'enemy's strategic defense and our counter offence'. In 1996, govt. troops while remaining in the strategic defense lost Mullaitheevu; the Tigers stepped up the counter offence, advanced and captured Otti Suttan and Maduppakuthi but lost Killinochi again. On the other hand, just as they ran the Tamil Eelam State in Jaffna area that was under their control earlier, they started e running a Tamil Eelam state in Vanni region with Mullaitheevu as the centre. They were conducting both the forms of the regular warfare viz., mobile warfare and positional warfare. But the guerilla attacks and the Black Tiger attacks in both land and sea remained predominant. Let us look at some examples: sinking of 2 'Doras' in the sea waters of Mullaitheevu; dragged the passenger ship 'Irishmona' inside the waters thus provoking the Sri Lankan navy to intervene and then attacking and destroying the naval patrol boat 'Jeyasakara' and "Doras"; attack on cargo ships in Colombo port; the black tiger attack on Thandikulam military supply base which was the feeder to 'Operation Jeyachikru'; the attack on the war plane stationed in the gulf of Chinan; attack on Mangulam camp; sea battles in Silavathurai and Vetrikeni. In a sea battle in Mullaithivu the Tigers suffered a huge loss. In Tirumalai, the boat of the black tigers met with an accident. Sea Tigers all along functioned mainly as guerilla forces and black Tiger units. Till 1997, 147 black Tigers had lost their lives - , 110 men and 27 women.; 5 of them in land offensives and 92 of them in sea attacks died as martyrs.

The attacks carried out by the Tigers in Sinhala country are as follows: on the Colonava Kabukaskandha fuel storage station in 1995; bomb blast in Central Bank in 1996; bomb blast in World Trade Centre in 1997; attack on Kandi Dalatha palace

in 1998; suicidal attack on politicians and military commanders in Sinhla area; 2 mayors of Jaffna, seven Panchayat leaders, military commanders of EPRLF & PLOT etc, - it is a long list.. It is to be noted that the Tigers from the very beginning have been following the policy of liquidating the political and military leaders of those whom they consider their enemies in a planned way in order to fill up in the future the political vacuum caused by the demise of these leaders in order to ensure their growth. This is the policy they have been following not only vis-a -vis the Sri Lankan state but also in regard to the fraternal organisations as well.

In the early part of 1999, the sea panthers unit attacked the Kilali naval observation post and captured radar equipment worth of several lakhs of rupees. They destroyed the radar station at Thanankillappu .The backing of artillery and mortar attacks and the air bombing played a key role in the military attacks of the Sri Lankan army and advances made by its infantry. In their victorious attack on Mullaitheevu camp, the Tigers had captured 155mm cannons each with a firing range of 39 km and a firing capacity of 3 shells per minute; 122mm cannons each with the firing range of 18km and firing capacity of 6 shells per minute; 120mm mortar with a firing range of 7.5km;. 12 mortars and 3 cannons. With these Tigers formed an artillery squad. This is an important step in the development of a regular army. The use of cannons and mortars played a great supportive role in the victory of 'OA-3'. Our improved armed strength against the enemy is an important aspect of the war. It is significant that immediately after the capture of Elephant Pass camp, 'Commander Bhanu' of the artillery unit of the Tigers hoisted the Tiger Flag and delivered the victory speech. In 1999 the air force of Sri Lanka remained disintegrated in a big way. The bomber F-10 aircrafts , Bukaras , Avros and M-1 type helicopters were shot down by anti-aircraft rockets of the the Tigers. Quite a few aircrafts crashed to the ground due to mechanical problems. This occurred both in the Tamil Eelam and Sinhala areas. According an estimate, Sri Lankan air force has so far lost 30 aircrafts . Unmanned surveillance planes became unusable. Tigers are in possession of Singer rocket missiles of American make and Sam rocket missiles of Russian make. They have rocket missiles that can be launched from surface to sky . They also have formed an anti-aircraft unit..

Sri Lankan army has at its command 1 lakh 20,000 troops, 12 times larger than the Tigers' army in terms of human resources strength. But the battle hardened troops number only 18,000 .Out of these only one division, the 53rd division remains as the striking force. Let us look into this aspect in detail:

Srilankan army attack weakness of the Units

In the 1990-94 period, the 'Special Unit' of the Sri Lankan army functioned as an efficient force having Manaluru as its base. It should be recalled that in 1992 it was this unit that repulsed the Manaluru assault of the Tigers and killed more than 200 of them. It functioned as an 'Independent Brigade' comprised of commando troops. This was also called 'commando regiment'. In 1995, during 'Operation Sunrays' attack on Jaffna, it developed into a full-fledged unit comprising of 9000 member Sspecial Task Force which subsequently was a transformed into the 53rd division of the Sri Lankan army in 1996. After playing a key role in the aggression of Jaffna, in 1997, it was guided by the direct supervision of a high ranking American military officer and received American aids. American military training within Sr Lanka as well as special higher form of training at American military command bases in the Pacific region were given and are continued to be given to this division. For each single soldier in this division, 4 lakhs of rupees are spent. It is this division which is deployed in the infantry attacks of the Sri Lankan army, the Tigers targeted in the battle of Vanni. They concentrated on weakening and destroying this division. During the 'Operation Jeyasikuru', in the protracted battles to capture Puliyankulam and in the Mannakulam attacks, this division was fiercely engaged by the Tigers and got crushed. In 1998 'OA-2', in the renewed offensives of the Tigers to recapture the lost areas in Killinochi and also in the battles of Mankulam and Karippatta Murippu, this division faced severe attacks of the Tigers and got weakened considerably. Thus, the 53rd division was suffering so many set backs. (Even after the victory of 'OA' the 53rd division continues to get 'Green commando' training from America. (The armies of 20 Asian Countries are receiving this training from the US).

In the political sense, it was the situation where Chandrika's war of aggression masked by peace talks was unable to offer any political solution; the 'peace package' was losing its credibility both internally and internationally. As Chandrika was keen to retain power without of course redeeming any of the pledges she made during the election campaign, she could only increase the military budget. The economic crisis forced even the Sri Lankan people to take to the streets. The conflict between the ruling party and the opposition party was coming to the fore at all levels. The bureaucracy was busy with the speculative gamblings. Big scamps of corruption and bribery in the purchase of weapons, explosives, military vehicles, aircrafts, helicopters and aircraft carriers purchased out of the defense taxes extorted from the people were

becoming rampant. There was a debate only on the procurement of inferior standard aircrafts .The contract signed with a British company that sells bullet proof jackets to UN and NATO forces alone came up for questioning. The bigger issues were left untouched.

There has been a cold war between the pro-UNP army commanders who led the aggressive war of the Sri Lankan forces from the beginning and the pro-SLFP army commanders. The cold war still continues. 25,000 troops deserted the army. 12000 men had been maimed. There were also a number of 'disappeared'. 800 troops were imprisoned by the Tigers. 'The Association of the Disappeared' , under the leadership of Dayananda was exerting pressure on the government to do the needful. The Tigers successfully made the army men imprisoned by them to resort to hunger strike and thus exerted pressure on the government thus gaining considerable propaganda mileage. They also conduct psychological war against the army of the enemy (But it should also be remembered that a number of Tamil Eelam Patriotic militants are also still being incarcerated by the Tigers). Despite the Sri Lankan State granting several amnesties and offering a number of concessions it did not succeed in persuading the deserters from its army to rejoin or in recruiting new hands. That is why Chandrika is throwing the challenge to those Sinhalaes opposed to the peace package whether they can recruit 30000 persons to the army. At the same time she issues orders that each Member of Parliament should recruit 100 persons from his/her constituency. The plan evolved by the Government after 20 years to recruit 3000 Tamils from Vavunia and Mannar has also failed miserably. It arrested some of the deserters and put them in jail. Some of the imprisoned deserters escaped from the prisons in Gurunagala and Panagoda. The deserters fearing the arrests and the ex-army men went underground and indulged in murder and decoity in Sinhala areas. Even within the army the conflict between the officers and the rank and file army personnel in carrying out the orders was becoming acute. The intelligence wings of the army such as MIL,DIT,NEB were getting weakened.

(The intelligence wing of Tigers got strengthened by the most modern methods. It may be recalled that some persons in Mullaitheevu and Elephant Pass Camps were arrested by the Military police on charges of passing on some information to the Tigers.) Only under such circumstances only, the Sri Lankan Army celebrated its 50th anniversary, whereas the Tigers launched their OA-3 strategic counter offensive on 2.11.1999. Out of the areas captured by the Sri Lankan forces during the three and a half years, the Tigers retrieved from the enemy all those areas excepting those

captured by him during his 'Operation Ranagosa' within one week after launching their strategic counter-offensive and advancing. The Sea Black Tigers and the Sea Tigers played an outstanding role in this operation. 16 companies and 40 platoons of the Sri Lankan army retreated. 11 army camps and 16 small or temporary camps were brought under the control of the Tigers. In the Sri Lankan capital the attacks of the black tigers continued. In the 1991 offensive launched by the Tigers on the Elephant Pass camp that lasted for 6 weeks, the Tigers faced defeat and suffered heavy losses. But they more than compensated that loss by their OA-3 in their offensive on the Elephant Pass -Iyakkachi camp of the joint forces of the Sri Lankan state through the positional and mobile warfare of their regular army in which 3000 Tigers participated winning the battle with the loss of less than 1000 Tigers.

The Elephant Pass military base was set up by the Dutch during the colonial aggression and during the present neo-colonial period it had been maintained and protected by the Sri Lankan forces; it was this military base that headquartered the 54th division of the Sri Lankan army which divided the Northern part of Tamil Eelam from its the South middle part and carried out the war of aggression; it was from this base the commands were issued to the 53rd division; together with the 53rd division, the Elephant Pass-Iyakkachi military base remained as the base of the joint forces of the Sri Lankan state consisting of 17000 troops. The Tigers captured the Vetrilaikkeni Kattaikadu sea base (this was the jugular to the Elephant Pass-Iyakkachi base of the joint forces). They successfully cut off the supply routes preventing the supply of food and water and dispatch of troops to the enemy base. They captured Paranthan and destroyed the waterlines reaching the military base and held the enemy troops hostages. They also achieved a victory by attacking one of the brigades of the 53rd division which was kept prepared in Thazhaiyadi for launching a counter attack on Vetrilaikkeni. Afterwards one of the units of the Tigers reached the Chavakachery-Elephant Pass Highway by taking the sea-route and through the method an amphibious attack they infiltrated into Mukamaalai and advanced towards Iyakachi. Even here one of the units of the 53rd division staggered in the face of the offensive of the Tigers. The armed forces command that refused to listen to the suggestions of Brigadier Gamini, transferred him to Trinconamallee. 30 government forces died of thirst. 1200 troops died in the combat. More than 3000 were injured. At the end, the Sri Lankan forces retreated. The Tigers hoisted their flag in the Elephant Pass on 22.4.2000. The military balance of forces were tilted in such a way as to make the Sri Lankan forces to wonder whether they would have to abandon Jaffna to the advancing Tigers or

surrender to the Tigers without being able to withdraw, The Buddhist Bhikus who opposed the IPKF in 1987 were now trying to bring in the Indian forces. The chief commanders of the Sri Lankan military as well as the officials of the foreign affairs ministry were shuttling between Sri Lanka and India. The Defense officials and the commanders were flying to Russia, China, South Africa, Iran, Pakistan, Israel and the Czech Republic looking for quick delivery of arms. Contemplating the profitable arms trade in subsequent days, Israel, Czech Republic and Pakistan supplied arms at first even free of cost. The supply of military weapons including rapid air bombers and multi-barreled rocket launchers was ensured. Sri Lankan government allocated an additional 50 million dollars for the war efforts. The Commander-in-Chief of the Sri Lankan Army and the Army Chief of Pakistan were complementing each other saying that they were co-trainees in the same military college. Veerasoorya, the Sri Lankan Commander-in-Chief, after retirement was appointed the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka for Pakistan.

The Indian government did not want to repeat its performance of helping the Sri Lankan state by sending its troops in 1987 and crushing the struggles of the Sinhala and Tamil peoples of Sri Lanka and Tamil Eelam ; it was not prepared to re-experience its defeat at the hands of the Tigers in the three year war which its 70000 troops waged against the Tigers resulting in the loss of 1250 troops and 3500 injured.. So it declined to send its forces this time. Responding to the objections raised by those political parties from Tamil Nadu which are part of the ruling coalition at the Centre, the Government of India said that it would not give any military aid to Sri Lanka. But all three armed forces of India were ready to help evacuate the Sri Lankan forces marooned in Jaffna in what was called 'Operation Pasha'. The Chief of the Indian Air Force visited Sri Lanka while the Sri Lankan generals visited India and discussed the subsequent defense measures to be taken. Sri Lanka did not make decision on the withdrawal of its troops. Finally, the Indian government announced that it was giving 1400 million rupees worth of 'humanitarian aid'. But it has also given the Sri Lankan government a 20 billion rupees worth of a patrol boat which can carry 80 troops and has a helipad facilitating the taking off and landing of helicopters.

Internally, the Indian State is facing national liberation armed movements in Kashmir, Punjab and North-Eastern states and in other states the armed struggles of the Communist parties. In Punjab it has crushed the militants (Sri Lanka has received the advisorial help from K.P.S.Gill, the former police chief of Punjab who

played a heinous role in murdering not only the militants but also several hundreds of innocent people.) The Indian state has declared cease-fire with some movements in Kashmir and Nagaland. It is holding talks with the Tirupura National Liberation Tigers (TNLT). Despite all this, some other organisations are continuing with their struggle. The Indian state is locked in border crisis with Pakistan. It also has to face the impact of the armed struggles conducted by the movements of the North-Eastern states that have created rear areas in Bangladesh and Nepal as well as that of the armed struggle of the Maoist Communist movement of Nepal. On the basis of the report on the Kargil War (KRC) it is beefing up its military strength. It has to take counter measures to respond to China's South Asian military policy. It has gone for huge procurement of arms from Israel, France and Russia. In order to solve the border problem with Bangla Desh that seceded from Pakistan, the Indian state is preparing to erect barbed wire fences along the border lines . It is coming forward to hold talks with the national liberation movements on the condition that any solution should be within the framework of the Indian constitution. It puts forward 'regional autonomy' as the solution for Kashmir problem. It is acquiring military weapons from Israel. It has signed a pact with the Israeli intelligence organisation 'Mossad' to learn from it the experience in all fields of destroying the liberation movements all over the world. It has reiterated its stand that it would not accept secession as the solution for nationality problem in Sri Lanka. It is also making it clear that it would not allow the third parties to bypass it and take any decision.

Sri Lankan state declared that it would not leave Jaffna until the last Sri Lankan soldier stays alive there. The Tigers took the pledge that by all means they would recapture Jaffna. With the international economic and military aids, the Sri Lankan state is trying to stabilise itself. Even the U.K.is demanding that the Tigers be banned.. Both the Sri Lankan state and the Tigers, without withdrawing from their respective lines of defense, are engaged in the preparations for defending and protecting them and are carrying out artillery and mortar shell attacks. The air force of the Sri Lankan state is using Kibir planes and new MIC 27 bombers to continue with the air bombings. The army generals are making a face-saving claim that the retreat of the Sri Lankan army from Elephant Pass was only a tactical measure. The National liberation War has ushered itself into the stage of "our strategic counter-offensive and the enemy's strategic retreat". The leadership of the Tigers and the military analysts who are genuinely concerned with the victory of the Tamil Eelam War and the fighting forces should seriously reflect on

the question whether the recapture of Jaffna is so essential for advancing the war of liberation. The 'OA' has sent warnings to the Sri Lankan state and the international enemies which are keen to destroy the Tamil Eelam struggle militarily. It is the bounden duty of the Revolutionary Patriotic Forces that are fighting for the liberation of Tamil Eelam to greet the Tiger militants and their leadership.

The Future course of war and the Responsibility of the Tigers

Even though the Tigers who advanced towards Jaffna made the offer of temporary cease-fire twice to enable the " enemy forces either surrender or withdraw" and " for the people marooned in the war zones to leave", the enemy did not budge from his position. In Thenmaratchi 40000 people have been displaced . A few thousands of people have gone to Vadamaratchi and Vanni. Despite the fact that the enemy has been forced to this extent to make a strategic military retreat, the Sri Lankan state and the ruling class parties are only talking about the peace package talks and constitutional review but are not prepared to climb down even to recognise the Thimpu demands put forward by the militant groups including the Tigers. No third countries including India and Norway are exerting pressures on Sri Lankan government to implement the Thimpu demands. The conflict between the Sri Lankan ruling class parties has gone to such an extent that they are unable to implement even the unitary form of rule by merging the regions , let alone implementing the scheme of forming federation of provincial councils. In the name of 'Sinhala Nationalism', the racist and communal political organisations are rallying behind racist and communal frenzy the Sinhala masses. Calling the Tamil Eelam National Liberation struggle as 'terrorism' they are demanding the intensification of war to liquidate the Tigers. Sri Lankan state has started getting overt and covert arms supply from foreign countries. Aiming to crush the militants, regional and international pacts are signed by certain nations for "fighting against trafficking in narcotics and human resources"; bans on the movements of the militants are being imposed. In such a national-international politico-military situation what future course of advance the Tamil Eelam liberation war is going to take?

In the aftermath of victory of 'Operation OA', a few pertinent questions from the military point of view have arisen; some changes have taken place.

1. It is correct to say that Tigers have developed from being just a guerilla force to the stage of forming a standing army .

2. *When Jaffna was under the control of the Tigers, when they were in the second stage of the liberation war , i.e. the stage of “ the enemy’s strategic defense and our preparations for counter-offensive ”, the Tigers had failed to develop a regular army which is militarily indispensable for the progress of war; compensating that failure the Tigers today have acquired a maturity in the positional and mobile warfare of the regular army. Nevertheless the political changes they have brought about in there area of control today is not much different from those they had made in Jaffna. They have not rectified their old political mistakes. There are of course some changes in their attitudes .*
3. *When they were functioning as guerilla units, the Tigers used to mete out punishments to the people, whenever the enemy gained prior information about the attacks of the Tigers. Today the Tigers have reached the stage of giving prior warning to the enemy about the attack and requesting the people to leave the areas before launching their offensives. When Jaffna was under the control of the Tigers, it was completely left to the enemy and the foreign media to describe the events relating to the struggle and war from their own perspectives. After Vanni has come under the control of the Tigers, Tigers are able to broadcast the news about their political and military activities directly through their own International Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) then and there . This is a remarkable media development on the part of the Tigers.*
4. *Tigers have not yet rectified their mistakes of banning and liquidating the Revolutionary Patriotic Forces that are carrying forward the Tamil Eelam Liberation struggle in the interest of oppressed and exploited masses of Tamil Eelam; nor have they rectified their erroneous attitudes towards the muslim masses of Tamil Eelam. This prevents the full potentials and resistance of the Tamil Eelam people and the fighting fellow organisations being put into operation against the Sri Lankan state and its armed forces. In the interest of national liberation and national liberation war, the Tigers must rectify this mistake. They must give up the policy of the dictatorship of a single organisation and adopt an appropriate politico-military policy with an understanding that the liberation of Tamil Eelam can be won only through the policy of United front. Otherwise the history would record that the leadership of the Tigers were not genuinely and sincerely interested in the national independence of Tamil Eelam.*

5. *If we look back into the past 15 years of experience in Tamil Eelam liberation war, it could be seen that the politico - military outlook as well as the practice of functioning only in Jaffna, controlling and liberating Jaffna only are being followed continuously, i.e., capturing Jaffna and bringing it under their rule, retreating into Vanni when the enemy's strategic offensive reaches the first stage of liberation war, then again advancing towards Jaffna by weakening the enemy, capturing Jaffna and bringing it under their rule and then defending it .Only on the basis of this Jaffna –centric outlook, they formulate their military activities in South middle and eastern parts of Tamil Eelam.. This has been the pattern of the Tigers' military strategy and tactics between 1987-1995.*

The leaderships of the movements, the military commanders and the military analysts who firmly believe that the Tamil Eelam liberation can be won only through a violent revolution and that the Tamil Eelam is the only solution should seriously consider the fact that the military strategy and tactics should be worked out taking the entire Tamil Eelam areas as single war zone. From the point of view of a protracted war, in the Tamil Eelam Liberation war, the geography of Jaffna does not have the geo-political – military character which makes it possible for keeping Jaffna as a permanent liberated base area or making it capable of holding on to for a long period and fighting for the liberation of other areas. Vanni region and the eastern part of Tamil Eelam alone have such an advantage. They have a long land mass and forest cover and a wide area conducive for retreat. A long border between Tamil Eelam and Sri Lanka runs along the land mass only in these parts of Tamil Eelam. Trinconalamallee port is internationally more important than Kangesanthurai and Point Petro ports. Though the Sri Lankan state has faced several defeats during the 15 year war, it refuses to come forward for a political solution. The racist and communal forces are strengthening their racist and communal social base amongst the Sinhala people. Without the development of a revolutionary movement, an armed struggle in Sri Lanka that recognises the political demands of Tamil Eelam people and their liberation war, it is extremely difficult to achieve Tamil Eelam. Even if one could imagine such a possibility, the continuous national chauvinistic border war cannot be prevented. Therefore the only sensible strategic military line would be converting the South, middle and eastern parts of Tamil Eelam into liberated zone and help with every available means all the liberation movements in Sri Lanka that recognise the liberation of Tamil Eelam in such a way as to make them fight against the Sri Lankan state and its armed forces. Don't the Tigers who conduct the war possess this wisdom? Does Pirbakaran not think on these lines? We would like to pose these

questions. It is only here one can clearly see the politico-military weakness of the Tigers and the politico-military ideology of the Tamil Eelam bourgeoisie. The 'pure' military outlook of the Tigers is hampering the development of even the Tamil Eelam bourgeois liberation. There is now another historical opportunity for the Tigers. They must rectify their mistakes. .

1. *Tigers should hold on to the victory they achieved in their ' Operation OA'. They must retain and defend the areas captured by them. This is the foremost military political task.*
2. *The victory won in the Elephant pass- Iyakkachi base of the joint forces command base would guarantee the unhampered functioning of the Tigers in the Vanni region. Defending the present line of control in Jaffna is the second important military political task.*
3. *The Tigers who have developed into the regular warfare as well ushered themselves into the third stage of liberation war (not that they reached the entrance of Jaffna) should expand the area under their control in Batticaloa and by advancing and launching offensives, expand their area of control in the Vanni region. This is the third military political task. By advancing towards south Tamil Eelam and capturing it, the conspiracy of Sri Lankan state to segregate the East could be smashed politically too. The Tigers can also rectify the mistakes committed by them with regard to the Tamil Eelam Muslims, bring other forces to work closely and unitedly with the political and military activities of the Tigers and smash the political and military conspiracies of the racist government and the communal forces. We have to wait and see whether the leadership of the Tigers would do all these things. This should be the orientation for Revolutionary Patriotic Movement. Though Jaffna would temporarily be under the control of the state, the Tamil militants would continue to get the whole hearted support and help of the expatriate Tamils. If the Tigers pay their entire attention to and concentrate their entire military strength on recapturing Jaffna and achieve an immediate victory, then there would be no doubt that it would greatly enthuse the Jaffna Tamils living in European countries and the US. It is also certain that the extortion of funds for the Tigers that received a jolt by the fall of Jaffna to government hands would regain its momentum with renewed vigour. Apart from this European Parliament may increase its pressure on Sri Lankan state for political negotiations. Beyond all these, there won't be any politico-military strategic importance in the recapturing of Jaffna by the Tigers.*

We are also able to observe a tendency on the part of some of the Revolutionary Patriotic Forces of Tamil Eelam to move towards the military line of the Tigers by not limiting themselves to simply welcoming and greeting the military victory of the Tigers in 'OA'. These Revolutionary Forces of course have revolutionary politics; because of this politics they are capable of pointing out the mistakes in the mass politics of the Tigers and discussing about the alternative politics even though they themselves are not practising any military struggle. But they are however infatuated with the military line of the Tigers. Since these Forces have only a superficial understanding of People's War and also since they are not leading the armed struggle in practice, they are simply carried away by the military victory of the Tigers in 'OA'. Ignoring all the political contradictions they have with the Tigers they are calling upon the entire people of Tamil Eelam and all the political forces to unite with the Tigers in the National Liberation war. Wherever the national liberation struggles and the national liberation wars are taking place, both the bourgeois national movement and the working class national movement are mobilising only the peoples of the respective nationalities in their political and armed struggles but not the masses. Strengthening or otherwise of the participation of the masses in these struggles is dependent on the respective class-political outlook of these movements. Moreover in any revolutionary national liberation war, the direct or indirect participation of the masses may undergo ups and downs and may increase or decrease depending on the specific situations. Since the Tigers were practicing only the 'pure' military outlook, the direct involvement of the people remained less. Realising their mistakes, the leadership of the Tigers brought about certain changes in the methods of involving the people in the Vanni battle and also in the methods of meting out punishments amongst the people. It is also true that they ensured the direct involvement of the people in the village squads, para-military units and border security force. If they do not do this, they cannot move the regular army from place to place. Nor can they protect the areas under their that spread far and wide. They can still enhance the involvement of the people in the war much more than what they have done so far. In the battle of Vanni, a large number of peasants and wage workers are standing shoulder to shoulder with the Tigers. This does not mean that the Tamil Eelam bourgeois politics of the Tigers have changed into the working class political line. It also does not mean that the Tigers' method of vanguard war has changed into the method of People's war. These two the methods of war of course accept both the guerilla war and the regular war. What distinguishes these two methods of war from one another is their respective class politico-military lines.

Some of the patriotic political forces mouthing the slogan of People's War received some military training and held the positions of the commanders of the training camps (not commanders in actual military practices in the war). Influenced by ultra-leftist military outlook, these elements tried to wage the armed struggle against the state after 1987. Their ultra-leftist military initiatives were out-smarted by the 'pure' military activities of the Tigers which played a deceive role in the national liberation war. Some of them, simply carried away by the victory in 'OA' have started writing and saying that it is correct to follow the military line of the Tigers. If only the Tigers would change their policy of the dictatorship of a single organisation and adopt an attitude of openly declaring the readiness to accommodate the fraternal organisations and allow them to function, the nationalist forces without the proletarian revolutionary politico-military outlook would be ready to embrace the military line of the Tigers. If only! That is why, in all the national liberation struggle fronts, the petty-bourgeois military movements are always keen to nip in the bud, the revolutionary movements and their armed struggle activities and ban them. The revolutionary political forces and parties that are not directly involved in the national liberation war, that have not played any role in the war, fall prey to the military-political line of the bourgeois national movement that in course of time becomes decisive in the national liberation war or they would get either weakened or alienated. On the other hand, they are led into the blunder of viewing as genuine revolutionary movements only those political movements and organisations that carry out the armed struggles irrespective of the fact whether those organisations have a correct class politics or not. This militaristic outlook, diverts the class political perspective and the people's war perspective from the national liberation war. The Tamil Eelam proletarian, revolutionary patriotic movement should resolutely fight against this tendency. We must plant our feet firmly in the national liberation war, a war that is only guided by the preoletarian class politics.

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