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Friday 16th June, 2006

Shame on you, Prabhakaran!

Prabhakaran's death squads yesterday attacked a bus carrying civilians at Kebetigollewa with claymore mines, killing over 60 of them including 15 children and two Buddhist monks and injuring dozens of others. Besides being a desperate attempt by the LTTE to provoke a backlash in the South to regain sympathy overseas, the dastardly blasts were its reaction to the EU ban. Remember it vowed to unleash hell if the EU didn't change its mind. The EU refused to be cowed and the LTTE is carrying out its threat. All indications are that it will step up terror attacks on soft targets like the peasants who perished yesterday, in time to come.

How could those criminals bring themselves to target a bus packed to the gunwales with poor villagers who posed no threat to anyone? Is this Prabhakaran's liberation? The LTTE leaders have laid bare their true faces yet another time. It was only the other day that Prabhakaran reportedly celebrated his daughter's birthday on a grand scale. Before going to Geneva in April, Tamilchelvam was seen cuddling his little son. But yesterday the same 'fathers' ordered a mine attack on civilians including children. Last month, in Gomrakadawala, they got six civilians massacred together with two children; in Batticaloa, they ordered the killing of a twelve-year-old boy who had escaped from an LTTE camp, where abducted children are trained as combatants. Two weeks ago, Prabhakaran's cadres massacred twelve civilians at Welikande. Those crimes are the latest in a series of over 200 massacres committed at Prabhakaran's behest.

That the LTTE commits such heinous crimes should come as no surprise to anyone. Killing is its *raison d'être*. It exists to kill and kills to exist. What is puzzling is how it has become 'more equal' than other terror outfits in the world and is in a position to dish out so much of humble pie to the all powerful international community. The US-led forces pursued and killed an Al Qaeda leader in Iraq last week and Taliban terrorists are running for their dear lives in Afghanistan. Besides, the deposed President of Iraq Saddam Hussein is facing a trial over a massacre. Recently, the former Yugoslavian leader Milosovic, who was charged with massacres, died inside his cell. Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) chief Joseph Konny has caved in under international pressure *vis-à-vis* the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on him and three other leaders. He is willing to lay down arms and negotiate a settlement with the Ugandan government! But the LTTE is still going great guns. Last week its leaders had high level talks with Norwegian politicians in Oslo, having turned their backs on the Sri Lankan delegation. They went to Switzerland as if to mock the neighbouring EU, where it stands banned. The world powers are of the considered opinion that the LTTE is not the sole representatives of Tamils, whose cause it has hijacked. But they insist that the Sri Lanka government negotiate with it. We simply cannot understand their logic!

One may ask what's there to be negotiated with such brutes, who are massacring innocent men, women and children. If the feat of weaning the megalomaniac Prabhakaran away from terror is attainable, then we can turn vampires into vegans with ease! Talks with an outfit led by a terror-worshipping leader, we are afraid, don't have a snowball's chance in hell. How many more busloads of children, men and women should be blasted; how many more children should be abducted and how many more political leaders and civilians should be assassinated before the world stops paying lip service to battling terrorism and helps Sri Lanka remove the scourge of terror once and for all?

Meanwhile, BBC has done it again! It reports the Kebetigollewa incident and says, "The Tamil Tigers have denied and condemned the attack." Well and good! BBC should report the LTTE version, too. But the 'spin' is in the tail: BBC adds in the next paragraph, "The ancient city of Anuradhapura suffered an attack allegedly (sic) by the Tamil Tigers in May 1989, in which 250 men, women and children were gunned down.... The Tigers never denied responsibility for the attack." (Emphasis added). The implication is that the LTTE doesn't deny attacks which it is responsible for such as the Anuradhapura massacre; the attacks that it denies shouldn't be attributed to it and, therefore, yesterday's blast shouldn't be blamed on the LTTE. Pro-LTTE propaganda at its best!

Finally, we have serious doubts about Prabhakaran's and his confederates' proclaimed gender: we don't consider them men—we mean it! For, no men worth that name will ever harm children, women or unarmed men. Any gender-confused bloke can hide behind a bush and detonate a claymore mine from a safe distance or descend on a sleeping village in the dead of night. If a collective of such criminal elements were to be called a liberation outfit, then by the same token all homicidal gender-benders would be liberators, too. Shame on you, Prabhakaran!

IS THIS LIBERATION?



Some of the children killed in yesterday's terror attack. (Pic by Diyasena Ratugamage, Vavuniya corr.)

Govt. to reassess commitment to CFA

by Zacki Jabbar

The government is to reassess its commitment to the Ceasefire Agreement and also take deterrent military action in the light of yesterday's claymore mine attack by the LTTE which killed 64 civilians and injured 86 others travelling in a bus at Kohongallawa in Anuradhapura.

Plan implementation Minister and Defence Spokesman Keheliya

Rambukwella fielding questions at yesterday's cabinet press briefing in Colombo, said that the government will have to reassess both its political and military approach towards the LTTE.

"We have to talk to the Co-Chairs about the LTTE frequently violating the CFA, while the government is observing it. In the meantime necessary deterrent military action will have to be taken to prevent

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President Mahinda Rajapakse at the scene of slaughter yesterday.

Pic by Kamal Wanniarachchi

Twin blasts kill 64 civilians in CTB bus

- Villagers on their way to attend funeral
- Single largest blast since CFA
- Catholic Church expresses shock
- Sampur, Mullaitivu LTTE positions attacked

by Norman Palihawadana

International condemnation was focused on the LTTE as it blasted a state owned bus with powerful claymore mines killing 64 and injuring 86 passengers seriously yesterday morning.

The incident occurred at 7.50 AM near the remote hamlet of Kohongallawa. The commuters were all from the village of Yakawewa from where they boarded the CTB bus bound for Kebetigollewa and from there they were to proceed to Kachchikudi in Vavuniya to attend a funeral of a home guard killed by the LTTE.

Two Buddhist monks also died in the blast. Speaking to *The Island* from the Kebetigollewa Hospital, a survivor, N. Dissanayake said that there were

over 100 passengers in the ill-fated bus and they were heading for the funeral of his nephew in Vavuniya. He also said among the men, women, children and Buddhist monks in the bus there were also about 15 home guards.

"I was standing on the foot board of the overcrowded bus when there were two huge explosions. The bus was thrown a distance of about 25 to 30 meters. That is all I remember", he added.

Military spokesman Brig. Prasad Samarasinghe said that was the single largest incident in which so many people had been killed and injured since the ceasefire agreement was signed with the LTTE in 2002.

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JVP says limited retaliatory strikes not enough

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