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1.The Military Operation and its After Effects

1.1 A Question of Accountability

The July offensive in Jaffna is the first major military thrust undertaken by the PA Government. The Government was pledged to higher standards of accountability and was in its twelfth month in office. It is therefore of practical relevance to ask whether the people of Jaffna saw a qualitative difference in the attitude of the Government and the behaviour of the forces?

The short answer is : very little.

The Armed forces:

To begin with the Army had for some days prior to the July 9th operation distributed leaflets at Thandikulam check- point to north- bound travellers. These merely instructed people to take refuge in schools and places of worship in the event of a military operation. Few in Jaffna were aware of this.

Following the commencement of the operation on the 9th morning, the radio repeated the call to go to places of refuge. But the intensity and indiscriminate nature of the shelling was such that this call was irrelevant. There was nothing to suggest that the shelling respected places of

refuge. The intensity of the shelling was such that people who had intended remaining in the areas, and had done so during previous operations, fled for the first time with their families with shells falling around them. About 130 civilians died in shelling alone during the first few days when there was hardly any resistance from the LTTE. Those who visited the injured in hospital said that the injuries were qualitatively more severe this time. The one surgeon attached to Jaffna Hospital, and his assistant, together with a handful of doctors and medical staff, rendered yeoman service working round the clock to deal with the masses of surgical cases and amputations. There was also high intensity shelling outside operational areas including Navalay and the Manipay hospital area. It was obvious that the artillery units were ignorant of, and oblivious to, places designated for civilian refuge.

If this was not bad enough, even more unpardonable was the attitude of the Air Force. The bombing in Navalay was not just the slip of one individual pilot, but, as we demonstrate later, the long standing practice of the institution. Artillery gunners may be careless or incompetent in the matter of identifying places of refuge on their field maps. In the matter of bombs which were dropped around Navalay church, the pilot could not have missed seeing the church. But he dropped his cluster of bombs apparently to hit one LTTE vehicle in the area. This was an old habit, and the pilot does not seem to have received any instructions about civilian interests.

Significant measures had been taken, such as sending monitoring groups, to check the behaviour of the Army. But this too made little impact since shelling had driven most people out of the area, and few actually encountered the troops. But strains in the attitude of troops were beginning to show after the LTTE counter - attacked on the 14th.

The measures taken, however, were not entirely adequate to prevent troops from looting civilian property. On the testimony of civilians the looting was done by soldiers, some poorer sections of the local population who did not go far from their areas, as well as by the LTTE. The latter seem to have taken advantage of the expectation among civilians that the Sri Lankan Army will loot. There is therefore little room to commend the army as having been disciplined, although there was a qualitative change.

The operation was therefore, as in the past, conducted with little thought given to the civilians, the ground reality and to the predictable behaviour of the LTTE. The civilian reactions to the operation were determined primarily by the experience of shelling and the aerial bombing of refugees at Navalay. [\[Top\]](#)

The Government:

The president was informed of the aerial bombing of refugees near the church by the ICRC, both by the ICRC and the Bishop of Jaffna. Her initial reaction of expressing sympathy had a positive side to it. She also appealed for authentic information and called for an inquiry. But her taking cover behind saying that the armed forces were unable to investigate since the area was outside their control, was an admission of weakness. It also implied that the Government had no communication with the people of Jaffna, no way of finding out what was going on there, and could trust no one, not even its Government Agent.

From this point the handling was almost entirely negative and alienating to the people of Jaffna. The Foreign Minister and government officials picked a quarrel with the ICRC on a formality concerning the issue of a statement on the true plight of civilians caught up in the

offensive. The official media publicity which was laced with fiction obfuscated the plight of civilians, and even tried to blame solely the LTTE for what happened at Naval Church.

When the Government and the media started making play of the fact that the Naval Church was physically intact, contrary to some careless reporting, nothing could have been more alienating to civilians who saw the bomber dropping the bombs and then people being killed - about 65 in all.

The official claim that the military operation was one to liberate the people of Jaffna from the clutches of the LTTE could not have failed to strike a sardonic note. The claim implied that the Government had legitimacy among the people of Jaffna. Although the Government's legitimacy had been continuously eroding from the late fifties, it was totally lost by the time the Jaffna Public Library was burnt in 1981. The real task of the Government is to win back that lost legitimacy. To that end it needs to show that every aspect of its activity is geared towards that goal, particularly during a military operation.

From the reimposing of the ban on several goods immediately after the LTTE's unilateral violation of the cessation hostilities, to the recent Operation Leap Forward, the experience of the people was that even this Government which had seriously talked about peace was not concerned about their welfare. The last operation was both of short duration and with next to no fighting around civilian concentrations. Yet the random shelling and bombing had taken a heavy toll of civilian casualties. How would things be when the Army moves for the second time where significant Tiger resistance is expected? [\[Top\]](#)

1.2 Fiction, Reality and Alienation

An ICRC statement issued from Geneva on 11th July referred to the military operation which commenced in Jaffna on 9th July as involving 'intensive artillery shelling and air strikes which forced tens of thousands of civilians to leave the area'. The statement added later: "According to eye-witness accounts, this church [of St. Peter & St. Paul at Naval] and several adjacent buildings were hit by further Air Force strikes at 4.30 P.M, the same day. During the attack 65 people were killed and about 150 wounded, including women and children".

On the basis of testimonies received independently by us, the statement issued by the ICRC was accurate as concerning the plight of the civilians and the harm done to them. It is this that mattered most. Subsequently the Government made play of the ICRC's breach of protocol and what emerged later, that the church building did not receive a direct hit and was largely intact. Of course among those killed were several people in the church compound. At a press conference in August this month the President said in response to a question that the church is almost intact and that she was awaiting details on civilian casualties.

On the other hand the military spokesman, during the course of the operation, quoting 'intelligence reports', said that about 130 civilians were killed when an LTTE ammunition truck exploded. The Government which could still not confirm the number of civilian casualties at Naval was confidently coming out with the number of civilian casualties attributed to the accidental LTTE blast, which it repeated for several days. Even a Sri Lankan diplomat in London claimed this figure in a BBC interview. But to the people in Jaffna it was a cruel joke. Indeed there was such an explosion in the Thavady area and only about six persons were killed, all of them to be presumed LTTE cadre!.

on 20th August the Sunday Observer and Sunday Times gave publicity to an ICRC report on the incident with photographs released to the press by Operational Head Quarters. Defence officials used the photograph of a crater to facilitate further evasion. It was suggested that bombs aimed at an LTTE convoy triggered off 'sympathetic explosions' in underground LTTE ammunition dumps, and it was these that claimed most of the lives.

The ammunition dump theory is based on a crater in an ICRC photograph being about 6 feet deep and 15 feet in diameter. To people in Jaffna this is nothing very remarkable given their long experience of aerial bombing. They have seen so many craters of this kind resulting from aerial bombing.

Take some instances in the recent history of aerial bombing. Two places of refuge which were bombed are Thurkkai Amman Temple Tellipalai in July 1992 and St. James' Church Jaffna in November 1993. Then we have, the maternity ward of Killinochchi hospital in November 1993 and St. Theresa's school Killinochchi bombed several times during 1993 but without casualties, although on some occasions the school was in full session. The reason behind all these was evidently that an LTTE vehicle or establishment was close by.

In the case of St. James' Church the current Air Force chief admitted in a press interview where he pledged to fight a 'clean war' that the target was an LTTE vehicle. In the case of the hospital the target was a tank captured by the LTTE at Pooneryn. All these are instances where the target was missed and, in most cases civilians killed. The Naval bombing falls into this pattern. If pin-point accuracy is claimed, why drop a cluster of bombs to hit a vehicle in a residential area? The performance of the Air Force represents therefore, as we mentioned earlier, an unchanging, tradition.

Shelling again was indiscriminate and the noise was described as a continuous and loud drum-beat. A number of shells fell wildly, far outside the operational area and the army's positions. Shells fell in Navalay, Uduvil, near the Kokkuvil Hindu College refugee camp, one near a shop in the Jaffna Hospital protected zone and around Green Memorial Hospital in Manipay - including several near the Swedish run children's home, Elim House, in Memorial Lane. One falling inside the hospital on 10th July caused severe damage to the back portion of the nurses quarters. More than a hundred civilians were killed as the result of shelling. Several people who were running towards Jaffna town from their homes were killed by shelling on the way.

The next time the Army marches in there are going to be several more minefields and more bunkers to harass the army. It must also be kept in mind that the principal reason for the civilian casualties during the Indian Army's advance into Jaffna in 1987 was because the troops were un-nerved by land mines and by small numbers of LTTE cadre remaining to harass the Indian Army as it moved into civilian areas, before running away.

If the Government deems it necessary to go ahead with another operation, it should be frank with the people of Jaffna on what they are to expect and is moreover duty bound to persuade them that the steps taken to safeguard their welfare are serious ones. The ICRC is there for such a purpose and should be used to the full. The whole strategy centred around aerial bombing and random shelling needs to be re-evaluated on the basis of human suffering, political aims, military effectiveness and ground realities. These matters cannot be allowed to be determined by the Military alone as it has cornered itself into a brutal culture resulting from the politics of the past. [\[Top\]](#)

1.3 The operation of 9th July: Some salient features

The operational area was the north-western sector of Jaffna peninsula, west of the extended Palaly base from which the troops set off at 5.30 AM on the 9th morning, Sunday. One column marched close to the north coast through Moolai and Ponnalai, and the other through Alaveddy and Sandilipay and then westwards through open areas; leaving Uduvil, Manipay and Navaly about two miles to the south, all of which were shelled. The two columns made a rendezvous in Vaddukoddai on the 11th and made a brief foray into Araly to the south. The area enclosed was about 27 square miles.

The initial part of the Army advance was without incident. In areas close to Pandeteruppu, people woke up to find the army already there. Some saw soldiers on their way to church. They were reassured and not interfered with. Many children had already left for Jaffna town on bicycles in the early hours of the morning for their tuitions. Subsequently civilians too began leaving.

The curfew was announced by radio at 6.00 AM and subsequently the shelling commenced. People were asked by radio to seek refuge in schools and places of worship. By mid-morning shelling had claimed casualties around Navaly which was five miles away from advancing troops. A huge exodus to Jaffna from places as distant as Pandeteruppu included parents with clothes and books for their children who were then told that they cannot return home.

People are in general unsure as to why the LTTE as expected made no serious move to resist the Army advance. What in fact it was doing was to dismantle its camps and shift its property. In Manipay for example which the LTTE expected the Army to enter, but which the Army bypassed while moving west, the LTTE was seen removing goods from places fled by their owners. It was subsequently reported that much of the property was returned in areas where the army had not entered. Equipment, including computers, removed from the Jaffna College Technical Institute, for which the Army was initially accused, were later recovered from the LTTE. The LTTE had no past record of eagerness to protect civilian life or property.

The experience of the Jeyasingam family of Navaly gives a picture of the trauma undergone by many people living in and around operational areas. Jeyasingam arrived at a place of refuge in Jaffna town with his wife, son and three daughters. Jeyasingam then went back to Navaly alone to attend the funeral of his sister and her husband who had been killed by shelling that morning. He then went to his house close to the Navaly church near which bombs fell that evening. Next morning the son arrived from Jaffna town to discover that his house had been bombed. The mangled body of his father lay in the compound. To spare the rest of the family that sight, he swept the compound, performed the last rites for his father, and then went to town to inform the rest of the family. The coming week he sat for his A-Level examinations.

According to an eye witness, a young girl who was in Navaly when the bombs were dropped, the first impression on seeing the cluster of bombs was that leaflets were being dropped to guide the civilians. She then heard the voice of a man, "They are bombs, lie down!" She escaped by throwing herself flat on the ground. Those who had remained inside the church escaped. Among the casualties were those who ran out of the church, those lounging under trees in the compound, those engaged in cooking for the refugees in the compound, and refugee families in the vicinity travelling southwards, who were just arriving. There were also three Grama Sevakas who had come on official duty to prepare a list of refugees so as to

distribute government rations and had meanwhile gathered people around them. Many of them were among those killed along with the Grama Sevakas. It is therefore not, as has been made out, misleading to say that the church was bombed if one was concerned about the people rather than a material structure.

We have mentioned that troops were comparatively disciplined in their encounter with civilians. It was from Vaddukoddai that we got definite testimony that the Government has instituted some praiseworthy measures in the matter of troop discipline. With the army arrived an independent group in mufti. This group moved among civilians and became friendly with them. Their purpose was to monitor the conduct of the troops and obtain public reactions. The LTTE's counter-attack on the 14th night in the Sandilipay - Alaveddi area under cover of pitch darkness caused confusion among the troops. The casualties were placed at well over 50 dead. Government troops however re-established control in the morning, in the course of which an LTTE fired missile brought down a Puccaro bomber. This event it appears influenced the decision to withdraw the troops from most of the areas brought under Government control. The decision to withdraw caused puzzlement among troops according to civilians in those areas.

In Vaddukoddai, the main body of troops pulled out suddenly and the group that came to monitor them, to their surprise, found themselves alone. A lone LTTE cadre on a spying mission in the area encountered one of the monitoring group, fired at him with his revolver and missed. He then ran away. The monitors knowing that they had little time left, ran for their safety and got away. It had also been reliably reported that many in Vaddukoddai prayed for their safe get-away. The LTTE was later said to be annoyed when the people told them that the troops had been well-behaved.

Two instances reported to us are a pointer to the limitations in troop behaviour. Shortly after the LTTE counter-attacked, soldiers told civilians who had taken refuge in a temple in Sandilipay that next time something happened, they would all be killed. Later they locked the temple door with the people inside and left. The people were rather shaken by the whole experience. At Ponnalai the withdrawing troops took some civilians as cover. After going some distance they asked the civilians to stay in a temple and moved on. The civilians came out a few minutes later when a volley of shells fired from the direction in which the troops had withdrawn, fell near the temple. It is not known whether this was a parting shot at the civilians or a measure to dissuade the LTTE from following the troops.

When the troops briefly visited Araly, people in Jaffna, 5 miles away, found it difficult to believe that the Army was so close. Those seeing troops passing Araly sub-post office on television first thought that the film was shot 11 years ago. Viewing Sri Lankan television programmes is officially banned. But a privileged few with generators view government broadcasts on the sly. People were generally aware that the LTTE had counter-attacked on the 14th and that the troops had regained their positions within a few hours. But the following week the people were soon aware that troops had vacated most of the area by Monday 17th July. It appeared to them that the military spokesman had an unusual sense of humour when he went on announcing for another week that the troops were in control of the 7 miles by 4 miles strip, were re-establishing civil administration, and were strengthening their positions.

Of the original area taken, the troops retained a small portion at Alaveddy. Shelling of adjacent areas and occasional incursions continued. At the height of the operation those estimated to have been displaced numbered 300,000. By 19th July, GA/Jaffna said that 95% of

those displaced could return. The LTTE too recommended this. But in general those with the means moved closer to Jaffna town. In areas such as Chunnakam people spent the day at their home in Chunnakam to protect their property where they could also collect firewood from their compounds for cooking and move to homes of friends or relatives nearer Jaffna, such as in Urumpirai, for the night. The reason being shelling and army incursions which are more frequent at night. It was very hard on students doing their A.Levels who went about with bottle lamps looking for places where they could sit and study. The examination in two centres around Chunnakam was disrupted by military activity. [\[Top\]](#)

2. Manipulation of the Civilian Population

The experience of the military operation, particularly bombing and shelling, has enabled the LTTE to drum up the threat of a genocidal attack by the Sri Lankan forces to enforce repressive demands on civilians. It found it difficult to go this far before the July offensive. Public resistance to recruitment of school going children has fallen off after the offensive. A new round of extortion has commenced.

In our earlier reports we have described how the regime imposed by the LTTE on the people of Jaffna has strengthened its tentacles through using the vanity, opportunism and self-interest of leading sections of society. Among the latter have been bishops, leading academics and top officials of the church. During the peace process earlier this year they contributed to discrediting the Government in the eyes of the Tamils, and justifying whatever the LTTE did that was calculated to stir up doubts among the Sinhalese and strengthen the chauvinists on both sides.

During the peace talks some of them repeated verbatim the LTTE's position about Tamils wanting their 'fundamental rights' before entering talks on a political solution. Other statements by this group were to the effect that the Tamil people were one with the Tigers, 'Violence could be a form of charity' and following the outbreak of war in April, the 'Morning Star', a church journal, commented editorially that when God is creating a new nation no one could stand against it.

Two BBC interviews by the Vicar- General of the Roman Catholic diocese of Jaffna are instructive about what this group and their allies the world - over are doing to the Tamil people. The first interview given to the Tamil Service was soon after the LTTE broke the ceasefire in April. He said what is the point in talking and talking when the Government has shown bad faith in not allowing or obstructing unbanned items from coming through. The Government had admitted that there were delays in the government machinery which could be resolved given a little time. The Vicar General said in effect that the Tamil people had no choice but to resort to war. Anyone knowing the Tamil people knew very well that war was the last thing they wanted and that the Sri Lankan forces in war were going to bomb and shell civilians as they had done in the past.

After the July offensive, the Vicar General returned to Colombo in August and was on the BBC again. This time he was full of sorrow for the Tamil civilians whom he never consulted when he earlier averred by implication that they were for war. He described helpless and vagrant civilians going from place to place and seeking out bridges to sleep under, so as to escape the shelling during nights.

The LTTE itself countenanced no opinion from the people when it resumed the war. But during the third week on August it got civilians in Jaffna to take out a procession to the Government Agent's secretariat calling upon the Government to stop the war and send the food supply. This was about the time LTTE spokesman Balasingham was making noises about re-starting negotiations.

One could here, as in other instances, see a close connection between the LTTE's military and political designs for of the moment (the latter being slave to the former), when the Tamil public is allowed to and not allowed to express its opinion (which is always for peace), and when the Tamils' elite spokesmen wear their nationalist war-mongering cap and when they wear their pastoral or humanitarian cap. This politics thus thrives by robbing the people of any semblance of dignity.

In helping to debase the people, the servile elite who aid the LTTE are themselves trapped and debased. Having rhetorically identified the people with the LTTE, what is a bishop to say to the Government when a church is bombed and people are killed, or if the Army had run amok and killed some priests and people in the church after the LTTE killed five soldiers by firing from the roof of St. Sebastian's Mannar (which the Army fortunately did not do)? They have strayed far from their role of preserving public values and defending the people.

In turn the society becomes trapped at all levels. A debilitating conformity is imposed to the cost of the conscience and the intellect. It takes an exceptionally strong person to stand up, and what that may cost needs no exaggeration. Take for instance the recruitment of children and particularly minors for military activity. The vast majority feel it is wrong. Those with children live in a state of grave anxiety. There is a trend towards rationalising military service to the LTTE as part of services demanded and required by the state, without posing the deeper questions about the true nature of this war and where it is leading to. In fact the society has passed the threshold beyond which it lost its ability to preserve sanity. It has moreover built around itself a politico-military machinery which is totally geared towards acquiring maximum destructive power by any means. The fatalism may be compared with what prevailed in Nazi Germany even when its approaching end was all too evident, up to when teen- aged Boy Scouts were drafted in to defend Berlin.

2.2 Implications for the young

When we speak of rising and falling levels of recruitment by the LTTE, it becomes easy to overlook a crucial fact. The LTTE has moulded society through a mixture of terror, persuasion and patronage into one of actual or formal complicity. Its voice is ubiquitous. Even the young who are cynical and unconvinced have no voice to guide them, no guiding hand from their elders, teachers or religious leaders and no place of refuge in a closed society almost behind bars. Like with game animals in a park the LTTE has almost the ability to pick them up at will through appropriate persuasion, preying on their pride, self- respect and fear. Once in they are trapped. [\[Top\]](#)

2.2.1 Current recruitment by the LTTE

Following the July offensive LTTE recruiters entered an A. Level tutory in Jaffna and began their harangue very much in the manner of a religious meeting. Among the students was a prefect from St.John's College, a promising student who had obtained seven distinctions in the O-Levels. As the meeting progressed this student broke out into sweat,as if going into a

trance. He removed his watch and chain, passed them on to be delivered to his parents, and joined the LTTE.

Once he comes to know the stifling and perverting nature of the movement at close quarters it would be too late. He could best survive by giving his mind, body and soul to the Leader as demanded by oath and becoming blank. This blankness is the common feature of LTTE cadre performing astounding feats that are eulogised as dedication.

Another recent revealing case is that of a Black Tiger being trained in Jaffna to live in a civilian environment posing as a student. Even the LTTE police who picked him up a couple of times on suspicion and released him knew nothing. In the house he was boarded, the people only noticed that he often failed to light his lamp and lay down on his bed. He rarely spoke to others. One day he felt rather lonely perhaps, and confided to the girl of the house whom he called Acca (elder sister), that he was a Black Tiger from the East. He was fluent in Sinhalese. About 10 boys from the East were living in the area like him, he added. Likewise there were boys from Jaffna taken elsewhere. The reason was to prevent their families from seeking them out and interfering. He went daily to an LTTE camp where he was blind-folded and taken to a secret location. Here he was administered his oath of absolute fidelity and surrender to the Leader and later returned to the first camp. He had nothing to say about what motivated him or why he joined such a dreadful unit. He added almost as an apology that he would not be around long as he would be assigned a mission and sent to the South.

These Black Tigers are the ones who are trained to live in a civilian environment and carry out their ultimate task. Others who are in the camps are likely to be used in suicidal attacks against military targets in the battle zone.

Compared with June this year, when spontaneous resistance to recruitment of children from parents and teachers was on the rise, there has been a marked change after the July offensive. [See: Briefing No.2]. The case of the Naval Church bombing is a telling instance of how the state aids the LTTE. A prominent banner has now been strung across elevated points in the slightly damaged church structure inviting recruits to the LTTE's anti-aircraft unit. After the Operation the screws had been tightened. The teachers had been ordered to keep away when they addressed students unless they would positively promote recruitment. Each school is visited again and again to force the numbers up. One case is that of St. Patrick's College, from which about 50 students had recently been recruited, with reportedly over twenty from one class at a single meeting and nine on another occasion.

The new programme proceeds like this: The propaganda unit walks into a class, and a stirring speech is given followed by the screening of a video. Three Black Tiger women are shown going before the Leader for their final blessing. The Leader parts with them and his heart is grievously heavy. The women are then interviewed, where they state why they are willingly going to their death. The reasons are to save their soil and to enable others to live in freedom. The women then walked away from the camera, becoming smaller as they went, marching into eternity.

A new voice then came in to announce gravely, "Twenty four hours later our comrades were no longer with us in this world ..." and their sacrifice was eulogised. The camera then turned to the scene at Naval Church that was bombed by the Air Force. Distraught women and children were shown mourning over the dead. Those who had seen the film said that it was very effective. In due course an appeal was made for volunteers. A few expressed readiness.

The rest were then harangued and asked whether they would like to be cowards while others sacrificed their lives for them. “Do you think you could study and stake out your future”?, the speaker went on, “When the Sri Lankan Army comes in, your studies will not help you...”. the number of volunteers kept increasing. The speaker threw in a bonus, “Your studies will not suffer if you join us. We will arrange tuition for you in the camp...” The volunteers went out as the rest remained with a feeling of guilt, perhaps to be worked on successfully another day.

Then Fr. Bernard, the rector of St. Patrick’s told the LTTE men that he is responsible to the parents of the students while they are in school. He said that they could take them provided the students first went home and told their parents of their intentions. The LTTE men disagreed. They then got the volunteers to write letters to their parents as instructed by them. These letters and their bicycle keys were given to the helpless Rector, and the students were taken away.

There is also the unusual phenomenon this time of a significant number of recruits of an older age group from the Jaffna University. This was directly related to the nature of the recent operation. It could also be noted that the reasons for joining are almost entirely all negative. What tipped them over are stimuli of short term duration. Blank minds are inherent to the nature of the cause. Not long after, thoughts of escape arose in several minds.

According to information supplied by escapees, Meesalai is one of the areas to which new recruits were taken. This is a coconut plantation area in Thenmaratchi. Escape meant creeping under barbed wire and running for it while vigilant sentries set off the alarm. Some escapees had been hidden by well wishers. Those caught escaping were tied to a tree and whipped as an example to others with similar intentions. Some who volunteered mysteriously returned to their schools. These are believed to be cases where the parents had special influence with the LTTE.

Once news of a son or daughter joining reached the home of the recruit, the atmosphere often changed to one of a funeral house. Women cried their hearts out, their wails piercing the silence of the night. There was no corpse, no priest, no comfort from institutional religion. The soul which prompted the mourning was still earthbound, but in all likelihood beyond hope. The life of the family was inexorably disrupted. A son or daughter on whom the family reposed their hopes for advancement or even survival, and on whose education they had spent ill-affordable resources, had been taken away. It was not the honourable decision of a mature mind that they had to come to terms with. They knew in their heart, although they could not say it, that their son or daughter, sister or brother, had been tricked. But what a stark contrast it provides to the life of the people who live outside the North-East and especially abroad, who advocate the cause of the LTTE in various forms!

We must address ourselves urgently to the plight of the people living in an environment of terror, created by both the State and the LTTE. This is necessary for anyone who wants to play a role in creating permanent peace in this country. But to explain or justify the activity of the LTTE without any reference to people’s well being, may eventually lead to the total destruction of the Tamil community in the North-East. The Sri Lankan polity as a whole too may then become irremediably brutalised.