

# INDIAN MILITARY OFFENSIVE

Prabhakaran's Point of View



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## The INDO-LTTE Conflict

### Our point of view.

It is a tragic paradox that the Indian Peace Keeping Force which arrived in the Tamil homeland with a mandate to maintain peace, to protect the life and property of our people, to foster cessation of hostilities between Sri Lankan troops and Tiger guerrillas are now engaged in a full fledged war against the LTTE. This war has brought disastrous consequences with a heavy toll of civilian casualties, immense sufferings to our people with severe disruption of their socio-economic existence. Having engaged themselves in a war with violence, brutality and terror, the IPKF has lost its status as an instrument of peace but has assumed the role of a repressive invasion army, typically eliminating both the Tamil Freedom fighters and innocent civilians. The Indian military intervention has again shattered the peace in the Tamil region, shattered all civic hopes of return to normalcy and caused violence and bloodshed. Along with the military offensives the Government of India has mounted a massive propaganda war to rationalise and legitimise her action. This propaganda campaign is vicious, malicious and distortion of truth, aimed to discredit our organisation in the eyes of the Indian and World public opinion. It is precisely for this reason, we wish to articulate our point of view on the developing of Indo-LTTE conflict and the consequences that followed.

In our talks with the Indian Prime Minister on the day before signing of the Indo-Sri Lankan accord, we expressed our reservations on certain vital issues, but pledged to support the implementation of the accord and uphold the interest of our people. We also promised to hand over our

weapons on certain guarantee and assurances given by the Prime Minister of India. Recognising the pre-eminent role of India in the South Asian region, respecting India's Geopolitical sensitivity and compulsion, we wanted to avoid any conflict with Indian interests. But at the same time we were sincerely concerned with the interest and political aspirations of our people. We sincerely felt that the sections of the accord, which deal with the set of proposals for setting up of Provincial Councils fall short of the Tamil aspirations. We thought that the Government of India understood our position.

**INDIAN PROMISE OF INTERIM ADMINISTRATION -  
NEGATIVE ACTIONS BY SRI LANKA & 'RAW' -  
LAPSES IN INDIAN DIPLOMACY**

One of the assurances given by the Indian Prime Minister was the formation of an Interim Administration with LTTE playing a dominant role. There was a delay in this matter. In the meantime, the Sri Lankan Government had suddenly launched a programme of intensive colonisation of Tamil areas in Mullaitivu and Trincomalee districts. Further more, Sri Lanka has started opening up police stations in Tamil areas with the calculated plan of re-establishing its state apparatuses in the Northern Sri Lanka. Alarmed over this development, we registered our protest, with India, but no action was taken. What was more disturbing at that time, was the arrival of armed Tamil groups from South India, who, with the patronage of the IPKF, established bases in the North and East and started harassing the LTTE as well as the public. We were rather shocked and surprised why the Indian Intelligence Agency 'RAW' has armed and despatched these men to the Tamil areas at a sensitive time, when the peace process was introduced, when disarming was taking place. This was one of the main reason that led to our disen-



chantment with the policy of the Indian Foreign Ministry. It is because of these negative developments, our movement launched a fast unto death campaign spearheaded by Mr. Thileepan, which soon expanded into a massive non-violent agitation with the active participations of the people. On the 9th day, when Thileepan was reaching the brink of death, the Indian High Commissioner Mr. Dixit arrived in Jaffna to listen to our grievances. At the first meeting, Mr. Dixit offered BIG assurances which failed to meet our 5 points demand. The fast continued and Thileepan died. It is after Thileepan's death Mr. Dixit offered some concrete proposals for the setting up of an Interim Administration. If the Government of India had acted without delay Thileepan's life would have been saved. His death was a tragic loss to our movement and to our people. This tragedy further added to the estrangement of relations between India and the LTTE.

### **SILENCING THE MEDIA, THROTTLING THE VOICE OF TAMILS HERALDED THE MILITARY OFFENSIVE BY THE PEACE KEEPING FORCE.**

In this war which has lasted more than a month and a half what has shaken our people is the brutal and ruthless manner the Indian troops behaved, with a war-weary population who has already suffered immensely at the hands of Sinhala military. The war could not be confined to the LTTE but extended into a military action in comparting the entire Tamil masses with an extend of terrorising and subjugating them. In the early hours of 10th October, 1987, the day the offensive started, the Indian troops confiscated all the copies of two daily news papers, 'Murasoli' and 'Eelamurasu', blasted with explosives the printing machinery and arrested the journalists and workers. On the same day LTTE's Television Station 'Nitharshanam' was also closed. This highhanded action to silence the local

events of war in Jaffna for nearly two weeks had reported the horrors of military atrocities to Sri Lankan Government on the request of the Indian High Commission. Without communication link, there was a total black-out of news. In the meantime, the Government of India utilised the state controlled media to malign the Tigers and put out fabricated stories, about the war. We pleaded with India to send a team of observers from Amnesty International and International Commission of jurists to investigate the violation of human rights and extra judicial killings. The Government of India turned down the request.

The military offensive operation undertaken by the IPKF brought extreme hardships to the civilian population. The electricity and water supply were purposely cut-off. The food and medical supply from the rest of the Sri Lanka was blockaded. Public transport was halted. There was restriction on fishing. There was continuous round the clock curfew in Tamil areas for a month with occasional relaxation in certain specified areas. Because of these hard measures, the innocent civilians suffered immensely with the total disruption of their social and economic existence.

The LTTE leaders, pointing out the human tragedy brought about by this war, appealed to India for a cessation of hostilities and start negotiations to bring about peace and normalcy. But India continues to insist that LTTE should lay down the arms and surrender and accept unconditionally the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement.

**VIOLATION OF AGREEMENT BY SRI LANKA -  
WITHDRAWAL OF GENERAL AMNESTY -  
INDIA LED TO THE TRAP**

The incident that led a severe blow to India-LTTE relation was the arrest and detention and the tragic death of our two regional Commanders and 10 senior members.



Though they were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy, they were kept in the protective custody of the IPKF at the Palaly camp, while negotiations were taking place, between Mr. Dixit and President Jayewardene in Colombo. Though Sri Lanka insisted on taking our leaders to Colombo for interrogation, we were given assurances by the Indian side that they would be released. The arrested Tigers had already warned both Sri Lanka and India that they would swallow cyanide pills and kill themselves rather than facing torture and possibly death in the hands of the enemy. We argued with the Government of India that the arrest of these LTTE leaders and cadres constitute a serious violation of the agreement, wherein LTTE men were given General Amnesty. The two weapons they had were for the personal protection of the regional Commanders. We also insisted that the protection of the lives of our members, was the responsibility of the IPKF which assured the role of avoiding any clashes between the Sri Lankan troops and the Tamil guerillas. We also warned India of a possible outburst of violence if these men were massacred. Our plea to secure the release of our leaders was a minor concession we demanded from both India and Sri Lanka, we have just entered a major agreement with the objective of resolving the ethnic conflict. But J.R. Jayewardene was adamant, intransigent and belligerent. Mr. Dixit, was well aware of the disastrous consequences of the Sri Lanka's obstinacy failing with diplomatic endeavour. The result was a great tragedy. The massacre of 12 prominent LTTE men who were true heroes of Tamil Liberation has, outraged the Tamil sentiment. Pulendran, the regional Commander, Trinconamalee and Kumarappa, the former regional Commander of Batticaloa, were highly respected leaders. Their tragic death sparked off spontaneous racial violence which resulted in the death of several Sinhala civilians. Sri Lanka accused the LTTE for the outburst of violence and killings. India

too joined Sri Lanka in blaming the Tigers. What followed was a high level conference in Colombo between India and Sri Lanka in which a series of tough measures, including military action against the LTTE were decided upon.

### PROXY WAR OF INDIA - JAYEWARDENE SCORES

The decision to involve India in a war against the LTTE was a major diplomatic victory for Jeyewardene. India, which has been hitherto accused of providing sanctuary and assistance for the Tamil resistance movement, suddenly took over Sri Lanka's military job of liquidating the Tamil freedom movement. A week earlier the LTTE was officially recognised by both India and Sri Lanka as the major representative organisation of the Tamils and was marked to form an Interim Government. But now LTTE was banned, and the amnesty given to the movement withdrawn. The IPKF which played the role of a protector and Peace maker was turned to an instrument of terror of war. India, thus finally fell to the diplomatic trap of the Sri Lanka's racist ruling regime and turned the guns against the Tamils.

### LIMITED CHOICES TO LTTE

The LTTE, was left with no choice other than to fight for self-preservation and die with honour rather than surrender with humiliation and perish. Even in our wildest dreams we never contemplated a war with India. We never wanted to fight the Indian soldiers whom we regarded with great admiration and love. But the Indian leaders forced us into a situation which has left us to choose between honour and humiliation, between self-preservation and death, we decided to resist. Yet we pleaded with India to call off the unjust war against our movement.



## TRAGIC PARADOX - INDIA CHOSE TO IMPOSE DEMOCRATIC WILL BY MILITARY ACTION

It is surprising that the Government of India which had advised Sri Lanka for several years to give up the military option and solve the problem by peaceful negotiation is adopting the similar methodology of military offensive, terror and torture to impose its will on the Tamil people. India's attitude is unfair and undemocratic. LTTE, the main representative political movement of the Eelam Tamils, should not be denied the democratic rights of the freedom of decision and expression. In so far as the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement is concerned we reserve the right to articulate our view. In our view, the set of proposals envisaged in the accord for the settlement of the Tamil problem has serious limitations, therefore fall short to fulfill the political aspiration of our people. Hence, we pledge to extend our co-operation to the implementation of the accord in so far as it upholds the rights of our people. Therefore it is unfair and unreasonable for a democratic country like India to demand unconditional support for the accord at the point of a gun. We hope that the people of India would appreciate and understand our position on this matter.

### ISSUES AND NON ISSUES

On the question of surrendering arms, we pledged to handover our weapons to India and accordingly, LTTE was the first organisation which handed over substantial portion of its arms, as a goodwill gesture towards the implementation of the accord. Furthermore, we agreed to handover the rest of the weapons according to modality worked out, in the minutes of the deliberations we had with the Indian High Commission. We wanted to co-oper-



ate with India on the question of arms. There was no need for us to possess arms once the ethnic question is amicably settled with adequate guarantee for the safety and security of our people. Now I feel the real problem is not simply the possession of arms, but the crucial issue of the protection of life and interest of our people. Therefore we earnestly request the Government of India to abandon its military approach and engage in negotiations on the question of arms and other relating matters.

### **GESTURE OF GOODWILL AND A SALUTE TO PROTECTORS OF DEMOCRACY**

In the presence of the journalists we release the 18 captured Indian soldiers unconditionally. This action is on purely humanitarian reasons and as a gesture of goodwill towards the people of India. We hope the Government of India will respond to our desire for peace and call off the offensive operations and open door for peaceful negotiations of substantial benefits.

In India, it was the journalists, who have been preserving and protecting the concepts of democracy. To honour them we decided to release 18 captured Indian soldiers in the presence of Indian Journalists.

V. Prabhakaran.  
Leader, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Jaffna.  
18.11.1987.