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Disinformation

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By Bernard Goonetilleke - A recent program on Sri Lanka in "Unreported World" by Britain's Channel 4, focusing on the current situation in the conflict areas, interviewed Sri Lanka Army Commander Sarath Fonseka on Nov. 9. When asked why unidentified gunmen still run amok in the east, the lieutenant general responded, "it will happen as far as the LTTE and its operations are continued." Pro-Tiger media twisted his words and substituted it "will happen as far as the anti-terrorist operations are continuing," to make it appear he was admitting to government responsibility, when in fact, his actual response left no doubt he held Tigers responsible. Nevertheless, Tiger intention was to deceive the international community.

The Sri Lanka Embassy in Washington, inundated with inquiries from concerned individuals, who had taken exception to this distorted version of the interview, was left to explain, that this was the latest strand of a cunningly woven web of deceitful Tiger propaganda, spanning decades of creating and building nonexistent grievances on situations that never existed and incidents that never happened.

Take for example, the recent YouTube presentation, "Short History of Sri Lanka — Tamils Against State Terrorism." This bogus documentary is designed to ensnare members of the international community unfamiliar with Sri Lanka's conflict, and younger generations of Tamil diaspora, whose knowledge of Sri Lanka's history is scant at best.

That program starts thus, "When the British took over the island in 1796, there were two distinct kingdoms, one Sinhalese, and the other, Tamil. In 1948 British granted independence to the island, handing power to the Sinhalese majority." (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkJOR-cJ3GI>) These falsehoods accompany a flag of a Tamil kingdom that never existed.

Those who follow Sri Lanka's fortunes are aware that successive Sri Lankan governments tried to negotiate peace with Tigers in 1985, 1987, 1989/90, 1994/95, 2002 and 2006, but, the Tigers came to the negotiating table only to buy time to regroup and build its fighting capability, and never allowed discussions to focus on settling the conflict. Yet, the YouTube documentary accuses the government of employing "traditional methods of intransigence and foot dragging."

In deeper analysis, the very foundation of the LTTE demand for "Tamil Eelam" is fictitious, for at no time in Sri Lanka's history was there "a traditional Tamil homeland," comprising north and east as claimed by Tigers. The Vaddukkodai Resolution of 1976 of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) tried to establish a Tamil homeland (Eelam) in those two provinces, based on a paragraph from an ill-informed Minute by the first British colonial secretary, Hugh Cleghorn. Tamil political groups, selectively chose a section of the Minute to buttress their claims: "Two different nations from a very ancient period, have divided between them the possessions of the island: First the Sinhalese (Singhalese) inhabiting the interior of the country in its southern and western parts from the river Wallowe to that of Chilaw, and secondly the Malabars (Tamils), who possess the northern and eastern districts.

These two nations differ in their religions, language and manners." The TULF and LTTE conveniently ignored that then-Governor of Ceylon Fredrick North expressed reservations on the accuracy of Mr. Cleghorn's Minute, where Mr. Cleghorn had also erroneously stated that the Sinhalese derived their origin from Siam (Thailand). This statement was craftily left out by Tamil political groups as it would cast doubts on the veracity of their claims to a Tamil homeland. Tamil scholar Mudliyar C. Rasanayagam in his 1926 book, "Ancient Jaffna," says, "That Jaffna was occupied by the Sinhalese earlier than by the Tamils, is seen not only in the place names of Jaffna, but also in some of the habits and customs of the people."

Thus, Tigers have masterfully distorted history, demography and geography to mislead the world on a dubious claim of the existence of a "historical Tamil Homeland." According to Tiger sources, over the past twenty-four years, they have sacrificed 19,538 young men and women, including child soldiers, up to August 2007, in pursuit of a homeland. Tigers, who try to forcibly foist their will on Tamils as "their sole representatives," are the very source single-mindedly decimating the Tamil race in Sri Lanka.

On Nov. 28, Tigers used a disabled Tamil woman as a suicide bomber in an attempt to assassinate former militant-turned moderate Tamil politician and Cabinet Minister Douglas Devananda. It is obvious Tigers act with little consideration for Tamils. Thus, the international community in general, and the Tamil community in particular, need to recognize the Tigers for what they are — a group of ruthless terrorists, who demand sacrifice after sacrifice from Tamil youth, while rapaciously milking the Tamil diaspora, until their mythical "Tamil Homeland" becomes reality.

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