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CONCENTRATE ATTACKS OUTSIDE COLOMBO :

**Beaten Tigers in another ruse**

Ranil WIJAYAPALA

The LTTE is trying to achieve what they could not achieve during the past two and half years period both in the battlefield and elsewhere in the South at a time 40,000 troops have surrounded less than 35 square kilometres stretch in Puthukudiyiruppu the last terrain held by the Tiger outfit.



The scene of the Akuresa LTTE suicide attack last Tuesday on a Muslim religious festival

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Peace Process of

DEFENDERS OF THE NATION

Department of Government Information

Ministry of Defence public security, law and order

SRI LANKA

Godapitiya, Akuresa was such a desperate attempt by the LTTE to destabilize the south and terrorize the south at a time the LTTE is facing certain defeat.

Amidst all pressures both militarily and internationally to give up arms at the last leg of the battle to face their certain defeat, the Tiger outfit has decided to fight against the Security Forces until they lose their last cadre in the battlefield.

Not only in the battlefield, the LTTE is also trying their best to spread their wings of terrorism to the South at the last moment by activating their sleeper cadres in the South to create mayhem and exert pressure in the south.

The suicide attack on the national Milad-Un-Nabi celebrations, at

**Security risk**

The suicide cadre who blew himself up mingling with the VVIPs participating at this religious ceremony killed 15 people including Provincial Councillors, Local Government Members and innocent civilians and injuring more than 40 people.

Many of the Cabinet and non Cabinet Ministers were fortunate enough to survive from the suicide blast and Minister Mahinda Wijesekera who had a narrow escape is still undergoing treatment at the National Hospital.

It is noteworthy to highlight the public reaction in the aftermath of this suicide blast. The public did not endorse the manner in which such a large number of Ministers participated in a public function as they were aware of the security risk involved.

Comments and suggestions to : Web Editor

People are now aware that the LTTE has deployed their cadres in each and every part of the country and many of them are moving out of Colombo due to strict security measures maintained in Colombo.

Under these circumstances possibilities are very high for the LTTE to take unexpected targets outside Colombo rather than harbouring their cadres in Colombo and suburbs taking risks.

It was amidst this situation the Defence Ministry had to issue guidelines making it obligatory to have Defence Ministry approval to hold public functions.

The decision by the Defence Ministry is most welcome at this decisive moment as a precautionary measure to avoid repetition of suicide missions or any other terror attacks targeting public functions.

The most highlighting aspect is that the people are also aware of the seriousness of the situation and the way they have to reacted to such a situation in a more responsible

manner.

The attitude of the people towards the LTTE has undergone immense change as they have learnt that the LTTE want to create mayhem in the South. They have realized the real consequences if the Government had let the LTTE continue terror campaign in the guise of the peace negotiations.

The massive bombs they have manufactured, the bomb factories and chemical weapons they were trying to manufacture, the submarines and massive craft which were in possession of the LTTE has given a correct idea to the people of the direction the LTTE was heading towards in the guise of bringing freedom to the Tamil community.

As  
Defence  
Secretary



ON THE BATTLE FRONT: Rifles held high, troops in a combing operation at Puthukudiyiruppu  
Pic: Rukmal Gamage

Gotabhaya Rajapaksa stated at a function held recently the recoveries made by the Security Forces are enough to establish another Army in the country.

The truth is, that the LTTE was in possession of arms and ammunitions in equal terms with the Sri Lanka Army. The only shortage they had was manpower. But they still manages to survive recruiting thousands of Tamil civilians into the outfit after providing them with crash weapon training.

The reality is that the LTTE has the capability to provide arms for each and every Tamil civilian living trapped inside this narrow stretch of land in the North of Mullaitivu and put them onto the battlefield to fire at least a single shot at the advancing troops.

Military intelligence sources have confirmed that they are in the process of inducting those civilians into the battlefield after providing them with basic weapon training.

That is the strength of the LTTE inside the small terrain they are holding at present. Under these circumstances the Security Forces have d their operations systems to capture each and every inch f land under the control of the LTTE.

Although the Security Forces did not focus on capturing areas the, they have to change the modus operendi at this juncture as the LTTE is making use of each and every inch of land under their control to unleash violence against the Security Forces.

The initial assessment of the Security Forces was that the fall of Kilinochchi would be the decisive turning point of this conflict and expected that the civilians will leave Tiger controlled areas with the fall of Kilinochchi.

But even at the last leg of the battle after capturing Tharmapuram and Visuamadu the civilians are still trapped inside the narrow stretch of land in the North of Mullaitivu, as the LTTE is not letting them to go.

The Security Forces have been able to face this situation effectively, with the ever best recruitment campaign carried out by the Army. According to latest statistics 13,056 youth have been enrolled to the Army within the first three months of this year and 1700 youth have been enrolled within this month of March alone.

**Enabled**

Therefore, there is a good response from the public for the victories achieved by the Security Forces displaying their clear commitment to eradicate terrorism from the country.

This has enabled the Army deploy 70,000 strength, 40,000 to the battlefront and 30,000 to man the defence line in its final leg of war against the LTTE.

At this crucial moment 58 Division under the command of Brigadier Shavendra Silva, 55 Division under the command of Brigadier Prasanna Silva, Task Force VIII under the command of Colonel G.V. Ravipriya and 53 Division under the command of Major General Kamal Gunaratne are heading towards the last stretch of land under the control of the LTTE.

Although 35 square kilometres have been left under the control of the LTTE, in actual terms only 23 square kilometres of land area is there in that territory as the other part is the lagoon.

The 58 Division which foiled a massive counter attack by the LTTE last Sunday are now in the process of securing the areas in Puthukudiyiruppu East including the crucial hospitals the LTTE was handling.

Two key hospitals the Government hospital in Puthukudiyiruppu and the other hospital run by the LTTE were fell under the control of the 58 Division troops this week as Tiger cadres amidst giving stiff resistance to the Security Forces moved towards the southern part of the Safe Zone.

The LTTE is now withdrawing from the Puthukudiyiruppu East blasting each and every building there in the Puthukudiyiruppu town. Therefore troops have to undergo immense hardships in capturing the last terrain under the LTTE.

The Task Force VIII under the command of Colonel G.V. Ravipriya now operating South of Puthukudiyiruppu is also heading towards the A-35 road and advancing to the Southern edge of the No fire Zone from the Mullaitivu North.

The 55 Division is also heading towards the Northern part of the No Fire Zone where thousands of civilians have been trapped.

The LTTE is going to face this last battle having lost nearly 300 of their cadres in a series of counter attack they launched to breach the Security Forces defences in the 58 Division.

#### **Recapture**

The top level Tiger leadership who had accomplished one of their master plans to destabilize the 58 Division defences and recapture Visuamadu and Puthukudiyiruppu, faced a humiliating defeat by losing more than 250 of their well trained cadres at the hands of the Security Force who fought back fearlessly to foil their attempt.

It was only last Thursday (March 05), that the LTTE employed its first master plan to infiltrate the Security Forces controlled areas in Ampalavanpokkanai after launching a massive assault on the link between the 58 Division under the command of Brigadier Shavendra Silva and 55 Division under the command of Brigadier Prasanna Silva.

After a lengthy battle lasting hours the commando troops who took the brunt of the battle were able to effectively foil the counter attack by the LTTE and re-establish nearly 200 to 300 metres long defence line which was breached by the Tiger cadres in the initial attack.

It was a major breakthrough by the 58 Division troops. With the reestablishment of the defences in Ampalavanpokkanai a group of Tiger cadres including top rung leaders Swarnam and Lawrence are trapped in the jungle patch South of Chalai which extends to an area more than 30 square kilometres.

Troops observing the movement of the Tiger cadres detected groups of other Tiger cadres moving towards the lagoon front. But there were no indication whether they were going to breach the Security Forces' defences either to rescue their cadres trapped inside the jungle patch or to induct more cadres into Security Forces' controlled areas.

It was around 5 am on Sunday that the 58 Division directed the first artillery attack on LTTE cadres who were moving in open terrain. Troops made the initial break dispersing the large number of Tiger cadres moving in one direction with the objective of achieving a single goal.

It was obvious that the LTTE wanted to create bridge between Puthumattalan and the mainland area held by the 58 Division parallel to the safe zone declared by the Security Forces.

For that LTTE wanted to capture the islets in the South of Chalai and the land area in the West of the lagoon as they cannot operate in the coastal stretch once the Security Forces control the areas West of it.

With the launch of artillery attack, the Tiger cadres could not continue with its master plan as they were confronted by the 58 Division troops detecting their movement through the UAV. Many of them were killed while crossing the lagoon and they were driven towards the beach front.

It has been revealed that Swarnam and Lawrence had commanded the Tiger cadres to launch Thursday's attack on the 58 Division defences and later trapped inside a jungle patch South of Chalai.

#### **Search operations**

The 58 Division troops engaged in search operations recovered 63 Tiger bodies scattered in the lagoon front and continued to search the jungle patches to trace the Tiger cadres who infiltrated into Security Forces controlled areas.

It is believed that the LTTE had lost nearly 100 cadres during Thursday's counter attack as troops could collect nearly 80 T-56 weapons from the area.

After this initial success the 58 Division continued to monitor the movements of the Tiger cadres that infiltrated into the jungle patch whilst conducting cordon and search operations in the jungle deploying commando troops.

Amidst these search operations the LTTE also made few other attempts on Friday and Saturday to infiltrate into the Security Forces controlled areas by sending some explosive laden vehicles into the Security Forces defences.

It was on Saturday around 10 p.m. that the troops monitoring the movements of the Tiger cadres which infiltrated into the jungle patch, through the UAV, detected a group of nearly 50 Tiger cadres moving closer to the lagoon front. But there were no indication from which direction they had infiltrated into that area.

But they were not engaged in the first detection and confined into an open terrain in the lagoon front.

During that period there had been a lot of psy-ops by the LTTE indicating that they would send suicide vehicles and suicide cadres into the battle front but none of these materialized. This fierce battle continued till mid noon as the number of Tiger cadres infiltrated into the jungle patch was massive.

Army Commander Lt. General Sarath Fonseka took immediate measures to induct Special Forces troops into the jungle patch in search of Tiger cadres that infiltrated into the area.

It was around 2 p.m when the Special Forces were inducted into the area.

Director Operations Brigadier Udaya Perera and Director Military Intelligence Brigadier Amal Karunaskera were also with the Army Commander who was personally monitoring the situation from the operations room at the Army Headquarters.

After a day long battle 58 Division troops and the Special Forces troops recovered 86 Tiger bodies. Later they found nearly 20 to 30 bodies buried inside the jungle close to the lagoon. Scores of other Tiger bodies were found floating in the lagoon. That was the first occasion in the Vanni liberation operation such a massive number of Tiger bodies and their personnel weapons were recovered in a single day's battle.

The 58 Division troops achieved this success losing a minimum number of its men. Nearly 40 troops sacrificed their lives during this battle and over 100 soldiers were injured but many of them were in the P 3 category.

It is believed that over 90 per cent of the Tiger cadres who came to launch this attack were either killed, injured or disabled by the Security Forces who valiantly fought back to

foil their attempt to recapture the areas in Puthukudiyiruppu and Visuamadu. The most significant point is that LTTE had lost its core fighting strength as they deployed cadres from the Radha and Charles Anthony Brigades to launch these attacks.

#### **Observed**

The Military are yet to learn the destiny of Swarnam and Lawrence who were trapped inside the jungle following their initial counter attack on Thursday (March 05). During the battle radio messages of the LTTE confirmed that Lawrence was pleading for support to get out of that battle.

Amidst this scenario the Security Forces have observed that the LTTE had held a massive funeral in Puthumattalan area with the participation of all high ranking leaders on Tuesday and a large number of civilians.

But there is no confirmation about whose funeral it was. Intelligence officials who are closely monitoring the conversations of the Tiger leaders have not heard of either Swarnam or Lawrence speaking over their radio transmissions.

Therefore, there is strong belief that Lawrence was killed during the battle. Apart from that there were many top and middle rung leaders killed during this battle putting the Security Forces in a more powerful situation to face the final battle which is now on in Puthukudiyiruppu and Iranapalai.

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