

Why and how the Tamil Tiger lost the Battle: LTTE Case Study

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Abstract: The present essay has tried to look at various factors which led to the defeat of LTTE. It has been argued that the downfall of Tamil Tigers was the result of both internal and external components. At the internal level, the LTTE as an organisation experienced various flaws which made them weak. While, at the external level, the strong political will of the Sri Lankan government to curb terrorism made the authority victorious.

Keywords: LTTE, Tamil Tiger, curb terrorism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ever since the Second World War, numerous developing nations have witnessed political violence as one of the distinctive features of their internal politics. Military coup, revolution, guerrilla warfare, political homicides and political terrorism were experienced by almost all the developing states. Huntington claimed that by 1960s almost all the third world nations had experienced the course of modernisation which caused this political violence. And the political modernisation included the reasoning of power, the segregation of arrangement and the enlargement of political participation (Samarnayake,1997).

Sri Lanka an island, situated in the Indian Ocean showed some similar pattern. In 1948 it became independent from the British Rule. And subsequently it has experienced the internal political violence. Since 1970s Sri Lankan politics was dominated by the left wing revolution, guerrilla fighting and political terrorism (Samaranayake, 1999). The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and the Tamil Tigers were the two organisations which could be said to have emanated from the same process of the political modernisation. The Tamil Tigers or the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam which later became the terrorist organisation emerged during the 1970s. The emergence was against the backdrop of ethnic conflict between Tamils who were minority and the Sinhalese being the majority. The Tamil Tigers demanded a separate homeland 'Tamil Eelam' because they believed, that was the only way Tamils could enjoy all the constitutional rights. And from then, they had been a great threat to the Sri Lankan politics. The Tamil Tigers which influenced the Sri Lankan politics for nearly three decades were eventually defeated in 2009 by the government.

RAND Corporation (2008) conducted a study on how terrorist groups end, on examining 648 terrorist groups which existed between 1968 to 2006, found that 43 percent ended with the transition in political process, 40 percent ended because of good policing strategy. For 10 percent, the goals were achieved while for other 7 percent military force resulted to the end of terrorist groups. Military force were effective in cases where the groups were large, well organised, and were involved in insurgency. The case of Tamil Tigers could be included in the last category. But the way they had been defeated, is still of a great debate in the international community as Wickramasinghe (2009, p.65) commented, 'By claiming that terrorism is the gravest threat facing Sri Lanka, Rajapaksa's government has given it- self a license to use undemocratic, often brutal methods to govern, with the quiet approval of a war-weary Sinhalese majority community.'

The present essay has studied the context in which Tamil Tigers had emerged because it is very important to know the root of any cause before deriving at any conclusion. Also, how they were defeated at the hands of Sri Lankan government has been evaluated by looking at the counter- terrorism mechanism of the authority. Further, the factors which led to the failure of Tamil Tigers to lose their struggle for separate land have been identified. The essay has tried to argue that there were several factors that weakened the Tamil Tigers as an organisation. Some of them were internal factors arising inside from the organisation whereas others emanated from outside the organisation. Therefore, the failure was a combination of

internal and external elements. However, the larger argument which this paper has tried to make is on the conclusion of Bloom (2005, p.71) who stated, 'The LTTE is not defeated but neither is it victorious'.

2. SRI LANKA- ETHNIC CONFLICT AND RISE OF THE TAMIL TIGERS

Sri Lanka, an island is located at just south of India formerly known as Ceylon. It became independent in 1948 from the British rule. Its politics has been turbulent almost ever since. There are two ethnic groups namely Sinhalese who is in the majority and Tamils being the minority. Tamils are backed up by larger Tamil population residing in Tamil Nadu, a state of India, since some of them were brought to the island as labourers. The Sinhalese policy which ruled in majority has been less than tolerant towards the minority. This was clear from the language policy which gave importance to Sinhalese only, the refusal of citizenship to Tamils, and sends them back to India even if they had been born in Sri Lanka. (Whittaker, 2007). The Tamils were occupied the regions called Jaffna, Batticaloa, Vavuniya, and Trincomalee. The Indian Tamils were remarkably remained in the Nuwara Eliya and Badulla, the central highlands districts. Within Colombo and adjacent areas both Indian and Sri Lankan Tamils reached above 11 percent of the inhabitants. The population breakdown was 74 percent Sinhalese, 16 percent Tamils including both native and Indian Tamils and 10 percent Muslims. The majority of the Tamils were in the eastern and northern part of Sri Lanka while Colombo and south had noticeable numbers. (Bloom, 2005).

The Europeans began to colonise the island of Ceylon, they were least concerned for the peninsula of Jaffna because of its unsuitability for the agriculture. Hence, they focused on increasing large scale tea plantations in southern areas which were more fertile. The Sinhalese of that region were outranked to serve as plantation labour, while the British imported Tamils from the north to promote them in running the colonial economy. Thus, as a result of the 'divide and rule' policy, Tamils had an advantage of British education. Sinhalese, who were deprived of all those perks, were annoyed and anguished (Mason, 2003).

From 1948 onwards Sinhalese who were religiously Buddhist with a few Christians increased their control over Sri Lankan government. This outcome had been feared by Tamil leaders like G.Ponnambalam of the Tamil Congress, who tried until last minute to persuade the British not to decolonize before adequate minority protection had been established. In 1956 Sinhala was made the official language of Ceylon under Prime Minister S.W.R.D Bandaranaike. The Sinhala Only Act sparked off non-violent civil disobedience by Tamil politicians that immediately provoked first anti Tamil riots. These were followed by more serious anti-Tamil riots in 1958 after Bandaranaike had an agreement in 1957 with the head of Tamil Federal Party S.J.V Chelvanayakam to set up regional council for the Tamils. In 1959 Bandaranaike was assassinated. In 1960 Bandaranaike's widow, Sirimavo took over as the Prime Minister who took tougher line with the Tamils. The biased legislation was enacted under a novel republican constitution in 1972. Under which Sinhala was made as the national language, Buddhism the state religion and Ceylon became Sri Lanka. Protections for minorities contained in the post-independence constitution of 1947 were abolished. Not only that, introduction of quotas prevented Tamils from entering universities and public services. (Hopgood in Gambetta, 2004).

During 1970's Tamils called for separation and increased militancy. The policy of the United National Party (UNP), during the general elections of 1977 which got Junius Richard Jayewardene to power finally acknowledged Tamils. Despite Tamils' support for Jayewardene's campaign on the grounds of improved ethnic relations, Sri Lanka observed the eruption of brutal communal violence which blew-out all over the island. In 1972, four Tamil political groups namely the Tamil Federal Party (TFP), the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC), the Tamil Progressive Front and the Ceylon Worker's congress united to form Tamil United Front (TUF) so that Tamil language could get equal status. In May 1973 the TUF decided to work for sovereign state "Tamil Eelam" the Tamil Homeland. The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) recognised in 1972, began calling for a separate state in 1976 to be attained legitimately (Bloom, 2005). The 1983 riots prompted Tamils to leave the island in droves and seek refugee position in India and Western nations, thus creating a Tamil diaspora that would shortly backed up the quest for Eelam. Many of others escaped to their cities and villages in the north-east, believed that forming a separate Tamil state was their only substitute. Thus, rebel groups number increased dramatically. Sri Lanka's civil war had begun. (DeVotta, 2009).

The Tamil guerrilla movement was largely comprised of groups well-known as the 'Tigers'. This is a comprehensive word given to the several factions of the secretive organisations which came about from the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). Primarily, there were 35 guerrilla groups. Five groups, namely, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), the Peoples Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS) had

dominated over the other guerrilla groups. Further, the LTTE became the hegemon among the other guerrilla organisations through factional struggles. The continuing objective and the slogan of the LTTE was to form an independent Tamil Eelam or state including Sri Lanka's northern and eastern provinces. (Samarnayake, 1997). Formed under the leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran on May 5 1976, the LTTE had developed as the most deadly, well planned and self-controlled terrorist force. Wanni being its headquarter. The Governments of India, Malaysia, USA, Canada, UK, Australia, European Union proscribed the LTTE as a terrorist organisation. It had a substantial terrorist arrangement for propagating, funds raising, obtaining and shipping supplies to sustain their terrorist campaign in Sri Lanka. India was the first country to ban LTTE in May 1992, while Sri Lanka itself is the newest in the list banning the organisation on January 7, 2009 (South Asia Terrorism portal, 2013). FBI (2008) stated 'Needless to say, the Tamil Tigers are among the most dangerous and deadly extremists in the world. For more than three decades, the group has launched a campaign of violence and bloodshed in Sri Lanka, the island republic off the southern coast of India.'

The organisational structure of the LTTE was enormously hierarchical. The Central Governing Committee, was commanded by the leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran who was responsible for the military and political branches. The organization was driven by commands with the leader dictating in consultation with a select group of military and political leaders, all aspect of policy. The LTTE military wing was divided into elite fighting wing (Charles Anthony Regiment), an amphibious group (Sea Tigers), an airborne group (Air Tigers), a suicide commando unit (Black Tigers), and an intelligence group. S.P. Tamilchelvan and Prabhakaran's political adviser Anton Balasingham headed political office. The specific ideological orientation that had created solidarity bonds within LTTE combines ethnonationalism and Maoism. Prabhakaran was influenced by the militant thoughts and deeds of Subhas Chandra Bose, who's Indian National Army challenged Gandhi's nonviolent anti colonialism in the 1940s. The training and indoctrination process was based on high degree of mental and physical discipline. The extent of ideological commitment to the cause was represented by the cyanide capsule worn by all cadres, including the leader which was taken to avoid live capture by the Sri Lankan security forces. (O'Duffy in Heiberg *et.al*, 2007).

The Tigers had used many patterns to fight with the government. Guerrilla insurgency had been their major approach. Early strategies included hit and run attacks against security forces and secluded military targets. In addition to the guerrilla strikes, terrorism was used by the Tamil Tigers. Practice of assassinations against vital government officials like president, defence minister etc. were very regular. To terrify other government officials into leaving threatened areas, they would attack government officials. Therefore weakening the control once they fled. Those Tamils who cooperated with the government were also killed. Any cooperation was seen as readiness to agree government positions. The tigers also launched attack on Sinhalese population. Later, they adopted suicide attacks to achieve their goals (Lutz and Lutz, 2004). Suicide terrorism became a dominant method in LTTE planning. The idea of embracing this approach was twofold as Hoffman (2005) stated firstly to differentiate the group from its many well-known political contenders within the Tamil resistance and entice a solid base of popular support, and secondly, to attain a perceptual force multiplier that would allow the LTTE play equal the with the Sri Lankan government.

LTTE had involved in different phases of war. Samarnayake (1999) identified three phases of ethnic insurgency. During the first Eelam war, from middle of 1970s to 1989 LTTE mostly assassinated Tamil moderate politicians, police informers, and Sinhala civilians residing in eastern and Northern Province. Attacks were also carried out in Colombo and Anuradhapura. The second eelam war, from 1990 to 1994 whereby the LTTE had an armed fight with the government militaries in North-Eastern Province. The year 1996 to 2002 was the phase of third Eelam war, broke out with an attack launched by the LTTE on a naval boat using a suicide squad on 19 April 1994. By the start of 1995, the government forces had recaptured a major part of the LTTE controlled Jaffna peninsula, and the LTTE had been forced to withdraw to the Vanni jungles. The fourth phase was phase of defeat which lasted in 2009.

3. HOW THE TAMIL TIGERS DEFEATED

The LTTE was defeated on 19 May 2009. The defeat came about by Sri Lankan military recapturing all the controlled territory by the LTTE and killing all its leadership. The year 2002-2006 with Norway intervention a peace talk was going on between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government. But due to two failed Ceasefire which happened earlier, there was lack of support from the leadership of the Sri Lanka. And the scenario changed when the Mahinda Rajapaksa came into power in 2005 (APDR, 2009).

President Rajapaksa took the charge, in 2005 of a separated country with LTTE head Prabhakaran who held the authority of Sri Lanka with the quarter of its land area and a third of its shore. He confronted with the tough military of LTTE with

his weak and fragile military. He firstly took the path of minimum fighting, conveying the army to stay passive in return to the attack of LTTE on civilians. However, simultaneously he began to individually attend each of the weekly conferences of the National Security Council. Gotebhaya was made defence secretary of Sri Lanka who was his brother. Rajapaksa assured his force that the war would terminate only with the eradication of the LTTE and Prabhakaran's detention or death. By close to 2006, Rajapaksa strengthened the military with increased funds and added around 80,000 troops. (Nalapat,2011).The counter-insurgency model which was known as Rajapakse Model was based on the premise that terrorism has to be fight out militarily and not politically. It had some fundamental attributes:

- Political Will
- Go To Hell, which included elimination and annihilation
- No Negotiation
- Regulation Of Media
- No Cease Fire
- Complete Operational Freedom
- Accent on Young Commanders
- Keep your neighbours in loop

The so called humanitarian operations against terrorism commenced in August 2006. By that time the LTTE controlled an area of 15,000 square kilometres. The security forces killed almost all top leaders of the LTTE and drove them away from their ruled area. For example, after rescuing the Eastern Province from the control of terrorist in June The troops launched the Wanni humanitarian operation to release the innocent civilians from the terrorists in 2007. Gradually, captured Kilinochchi, the de-facto administrative and the political capital of the LTTE, Elephant Pass and Chalai, marking the liberation of the whole Jaffna peninsula from the terrorists. (Shashikumar, 2009). The military killed almost all the leaders of the LTTE including the chief Prabhakaran. Finally, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa confirmed victory over terror on May 18, 2009 and invited the world, involved in a so-called global war on terror (GWOT), to be his pupil in counter-terrorism (Parasram,2012).

Gunaratna (2009), an expert on the terrorism and LTTE identified three elements of the Colombo government that made them successful to win the war and led them to defeat LTTE. They comprised of political, naval and military strategies. Firstly, appointment of Colonel Karuna by the government in 2004 who was the former commander of the Eastern Province of LTTE. With his help and intelligence the government could planned the strategy to fight. Secondly, the strategy of Admiral Wasantha Karannagoda the navy chief who was able to take the Sri Lanka Navy's convoy out to the deep sea, into international territorial waters, to search and destroy LTTE supply ships .Through his leadership qualities and intelligence the LTTE ships were destroyed which used to carry killing machine in Sri Lanka. And Thirdly, the expertise of Sri Lankan army under. General Sarath Fonseka and Gotabhaya Rajapaksa. They realised the fighting strategy on various levels and weakened the ability of LTTE to fight.

However, the counter terrorism adopted by the Sri Lankan government is still of great debate among the international community. An international panel was invited by the government to carry out investigation of alleged human rights abuses in 2008 but one of the panel members said that the authorities were disturbing the panel's work. The government argued that any criticism on grounds of human rights abuses would be a challenge to sovereignty of the Sri Lankan State. Journalists were also attacked physically for criticizing the government's conduct of the war. Those miserable records of human rights annoyed the international human rights bodies as well (Wickramasinghe, 2009). In 2011, the credibility of the report, mandated by United Nations confirmed the accusations. Sri Lankan authority abused civilians during the last stage of the war .The U.N. and other global agencies estimated that around 40,000 civilians were killed at that time. Later, the dreadful details of the carnages that happened were exposed the international community demanded for the international investigation. Since the Sri Lankan government opposed for the inquiry, the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva took the issue. It condemned Sri Lanka in 2012 and 2013 for grave human rights abuses. The Prime Minister of United kingdom David Cameron visited Jaffna during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting where he witnessed the tales of the Tamils. In a press conference, he called for a reliable mechanism to probe allegations

of the war crime. Cameron fixed a deadline i.e. March 2014 for setting up the independent inquiry commission by the Sri Lankan government. Else, he cautioned, Britain being the permanent member of the U. N. Security Council would to appeal the UNHRC to launch an international investigation (Cherian, 2013).

4. WHY THE TAMIL TIGERS DEFEATED

'The victory achieved by defeating the LTTE is the victory of the entire country.' (India Today, 2009). The statement was made by the President Rajapaksa subsequently the demise of LTTE leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran. The final downfall of the Tamil Tigers which came with the death of its leader was the outcome of several factors operating at different level.

The leadership style is very important to any organisation. And for the Tamil Tigers, their leader had a great role to play as Hoffman (2006, p.142) stated 'From its inception, the development and strategic evolution of the LTTE has been inexorably guided by Prabhakaran's domineering leadership and omnipresent influence.' O'Duffy (2007) explored the dominant position of the LTTE leader Prabhakaran through the way of handling the dissent. He eliminated the rival paramilitary organisations very comprehensively and ruthlessly. Prabhakaran's elimination of Mahattaya who was his closest allies and confidants, who also established credentials in furthering the struggle and the ejection of Vinayagamorthy Muralitharan, an important military leader in the Eastern Batticaloa region, revealed the totalitarian grip of the leader. Similarly, Whittaker (2007) examined two decisions which he called as 'political blunder' by the Tamil Tigers leadership. Firstly, the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 which made India not to show any sympathy towards them. Since India had helped in the insurgency at an earlier stages. And secondly, when they rejected autonomy offered by the Sri Lankan government in 1995. These traits of personality of Prabhakaran made him a kind of dictator of the organisation. This made Nalapat (2011) to state that the individual dictatorship of Prabhakaran and his denial to endure anyone other than flatterers had so discouraged LTTE commanders that some of them even admit defeat to the government. This in turn could be discouraging for the organisation and its cause of struggle. Many argue that the reason for the downfall of the Tamil Tigers was the megalomaniac approach of LTTE supremo Prabhakaran. His confidence that he was larger than life led to fake idea of supremacy and an obstinate approach. The LTTE had any association left with the Tamil cause was doubtful. The cause which had brought them together seemed fading gradually and they were interested in constructing their supremacy. Had LTTE interested in finding the solution they should have had given up the guns and concerned themselves to the ballot long ago. However, the organisation fixed with its adamant perspective (Sethi, 2009).

The overconfidence of Prabhakaran came out to be disastrous when he decided to boycott the 2005 election. The election made Mahinda Rajapaksa to win indirectly. Prabhakaran took it very casually and under-estimated the will of the government to curb terrorism. Price of this decision had to be paid by the LTTE (Buncombe, 2011)

Caste factor was very sensitive among the Tamils. It was one of the features of the LTTE that every leader other than in the east should originate from Jaffna, whereas a major chunk which came from the lower castes were recruited in Ampara, Mannar, and Batticaloa. Many argued that LTTE was using the lower castes as cannon fodder for their war (Bloom, 2005). The so called upper caste Tamils saw other Tamils inferior. LTTE as an organisation also had this superiority-inferiority complex. It taxed cruelly to eastern Tamils in government controlled areas whereas it was not so with the northern government controlled areas. With these grievances Colonel Karuna who was from the east split from the LTTE (DeVotta, 2009).

The LTTE had a unique feature of recruiting the women and children. Though, the organisation did see it as an advantageous in many ways. For example women and children could easily escape the security. However, it did manifest a flip side to the coin which showed that the organisation lacked the man-power. LTTE initiated the policy of recruiting women and children just after the ratification of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) Accord in 1987. This was to fill up the gap of shortage. In furtherance of this they forcibly kidnapped and threatened the families to give the child (SATP, 2013). This could be one of the reasons why Tamil Tigers lost the support among its people (Buncombe, 2011).

And the spilt of Vinayagamorthy Muralitharan (aka) Colonel Karuna is seen as one of the major causes of the weakening of the organisation. As Bloom (2005, p.71) stated that 'In March 2004, a rebel on the East coast formally broke with the LTTE complaining that the east was not being represented by the organization's northern-based leaders.' While leaving LTTE, Karuna took 6000 troops of the 15,000 strong rebel movements.

The other factor that weakened the LTTE as an organisation was the natural catastrophe in 2005, called tsunami. It had changed the balance of power. Before that the LTTE either sought too much or the government was willing to yield too

much. It did a severe damage to many areas of Sri Lanka that the rebels and government forces were contesting. The calamity eventually weakened the dissidents and their resource base permitting the government to gain the upper hand (Lutz and Lutz, 2013).

The organisation had also been criticised as it was never serious with the ceasefire and the peace processes. Chandrika Kumaratunga, the former president of Sri Lanka was convinced that Prabhakaran was a merciless megalomaniac who was insincere about negotiating settlement, and determined to eliminate any LTTE rivals interested in peace. The negotiating settlement had been interpreted as purely tactical to relieve pressure and allow LTTE to rearm for the next phase of struggle (O Duffy, 2007). The organisation did not care about the anguish and wound of people and therefore weakened because it lost people's support. It destroyed all peace efforts, development and reconstruction projects in the Northern and Eastern parts of Sri Lanka. When Japan and other donor countries tried to give aid in 2003. LTTE, rejected it as it linked the peace process to the offer (Sethi, 2009).

Looking the factors arising from outside of the organisation DeVotta (2009) stated the factors which changed the dynamics of the conflict, President Mahinda Rajapaksa's election in November 2005 was one of them. He succeeded President Chandrika Kumaratunga in November 2005. While Kumaratunga was looking solution with Tamil Tigers on federal set up, Rajapaksa, like Kumaratunga, belonged to SLFP, yet his election manifesto determined to maintain the unitary state structure. The government was determined to wipe out the LTTE, not to just defeat it. The counter insurgency tool employed by the President Rajapakse revolved around the idea that if there was a political determination, the military can fight terrorism. Hence it is clear that the new government was keen to crush the Tamil Tigers which it did eventually in 2009.

The US led Global War on Terror had marginalised LTTE. After 9/11 the organisation suffered financially. The international cooperation against terrorist financial and procurement networks was bound to cause problems to LTTE. It therefore weakened the organisation to achieve the form of self-determination that met historical aspiration and contemporary interest of Tamils. Freezing LTTE controlled bank accounts worldwide had prevented \$4 billion from reaching the Tigers in 2002 (O'Duffy, 2007). The biggest blow came when Canada banned the LTTE's funding networks in 2005. LTTE received around \$12 million per year from networks in Canada. Similarly, European Union carried out processes in 2006 to prevent expatriate transfer of funds. So unfortunately, the LTTE lost almost all monetary sustenance from the West. This was the period when the government was growing stronger than LTTE as it was facing multilayered problems (Smith,2010) .

Parasram (2012) argued that the new meaning of Global War on Terror helped the government of Sri Lanka in overcoming the LTTE militarily. After the Al Qaeda attacked the US and the whole equation of terror changed. Now the government had a strong mandate to end the terrorism. In addition to prevent any division of Sri Lanka as a singular state. The idea of who had a right to wage war and how that war ought to be waged was not clear.

The crucial factor in the victory of Sri Lankan government over LTTE was the diplomatic achievement acquired by the President Rajapaksa. Norway and the EU were barred for the first time from striking a cease-fire that would let the LTTE to regroup and rearm. The critical element of the plan was Rajapaksa's obtaining India's assistance and China's open sustenance for his war ambitions (Nalapat,2011) .In defeating the LTTE, China factor played an important role in Sri Lanka. Conventionally Sri Lanka was given military aid by US, European Union, Japan and Canada. However, during 2005, China started giving aid. This led Sri Lanka to cut its ties from the Western countries regarding the aid given for anti-LTTE operations. On return China got rights for the port services and other several investments. Through this China influenced the balance of power of South Asia, giving competition to India. Through the help Sri Lanka got all the military control which it required to defeat the Tamil Tigers (Smith, 2010). On larger picture China also helped Sri Lanka on political front. China and Russia protected Sri Lanka from being targeted in U.N. Security Council.(DeVotta,2009).Sri Lankan military operations was helped by India as it provided intelligence and other kinds of strategic backing (Shashikumar, 2009).

5. CONCLUSION

The growth of Tamil Tigers was the result of ethnic rivalry between Sinhalese and Tamils. Later, it adopted lethal terrorist ways to attain a separate land, Tamil 'Eelam'. As O'Duffy (2007,p.257) remarked, 'The rise of the LTTE from a group of 30 poorly armed dissidents in 1983 into one of the world's foremost paramilitary groups by 1991 demonstrates what may happen to states that attempt to ignore ethno nationalism and impose majoritarian democracy.' The terror of LTTE came to an end in 2009 with the government's new model of countering terrorism.

The present essay has tried to look at various factors which led to the defeat of LTTE and thus it may be argued that downfall of Tamil Tigers was the result of both internal and external elements. At the internal level, the LTTE as an organisation experienced various flaws which made them weak. While, at the external level, the strong political will of the Sri Lankan government to curb terrorism made the authority victorious.

However, looking at the counter-terrorism mechanism adopted by the government, that actually crushed the physical existence of the organisation by eliminating all the leaders and cadres of the LTTE. It could be argued that military defeat is just a temporary solution for the insurgency problem. The major problem, which includes addressing the sentiments of Tamils and protecting their right are crucial for the government. Hence, it could be said that 'The Sri Lankan government has won a battle but not the war' (Sethi, 2009). As the crushing of LTTE is under the scrutiny of the international community, this essay therefore to certain extent has argued on the conclusion of Bloom (2005, p.71) 'The LTTE is not defeated but neither is it victorious'.

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