
LTTE media targets Sonia over war debacle

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M.R. Narayan Swamy New Delhi, April 9 (IANS) Congress president Sonia Gandhi has come under vicious attack in Tamil Tiger media over India's failure to end the war in Sri Lanka, worrying the Indian security establishment. In media controlled or influenced by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and also in pro-LTTE street protests, fingers are being pointed at New Delhi for the stinging military reverses the Tigers have suffered.

In this scenario, Gandhi is seen as the villain because of whom India has started publicly calling the LTTE terrorists - for the first time in years and in a language mirroring Colombo's. Gandhi is also held responsible for what the Tiger media say is India's covert backing to Sri Lanka's war that has come close to crushing the LTTE, which assassinated her husband and former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. Along with Sonia Gandhi, her ally and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi is also a target of the LTTE media. The Puthinam Tamil website, which is reportedly linked to the LTTE political wing, has carried a long commentary faulting India and Gandhi for the killings and suffering of the Tamils. 'This is India's war, Sri Lanka is but a puppet,' said the commentary. It added that India would not allow the war to end even if Sri Lanka wanted to. It alleged that Gandhi 'will not sleep in peace till the last nail is hammered on (LTTE leader Velupillai) Prabhakaran's coffin'. It concluded: 'Not Sri Lanka, India is the enemy of Tamils.' Nitharsanam, a Tamil website identified with the LTTE intelligence, has a caricature of Gandhi, portraying her as a blood thirsty goddess - implying she is culpable for the bloodshed in Sri Lanka. LTTE media has also asked its supporters to focus their energy on India so as to bring pressure on it to make Colombo end the military offensive that has now left the Tigers with a small chunk of land in just one district: Mullaitivu. The Congress party is frequently dubbed 'Sonia Congress' in their media. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and other key figures in New Delhi do not figure in this frenzy, implying that Gandhi is singularly responsible for the Tigers' predicament. All this is in contrast to the manner Gandhi's elevation as the power behind the Indian government was viewed by the LTTE soon after a Congress-led government took office in May 2004. At that time, one confidant of Prabhakaran had voiced admiration for Gandhi. Fears that she might avenge her husband's killing virtually disappeared in Tiger thinking as she made friends with parties like DMK and the vocally pro-LTTE PMK in Tamil Nadu. The Gandhi family's interest in the welfare of Nalini, an Indian woman accused in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, also conveyed an impression that the Congress president might have forgiven the LTTE for what it did to her husband. At the same time, India appeared to pursue a hands-off approach vis-a-vis Sri Lanka. That perception quickly changed as Sri Lanka launched a military offensive against the LTTE from mid-2006, inflicting one major loss after another on the Tigers. As the war progressed, India made repeated appeals for a political solution to the ethnic conflict but refused to pressure Colombo to halt the war. LTTE supporters say this was a ploy to covertly aid Colombo with military hardware and equally valuable intelligence. The concentrated attack on the Indian government and Sonia Gandhi equals the vehemence shown against Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa and his aides who oversee the war against the LTTE. Courtesy: IANS, Photo: Expressbuzz.com