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## 'Prabhakaran, Pottu Amman hatched Rajiv killing plot'

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Colombo (PTI) Velupillai Prabhakaran and his intelligence chief Pottu Amman hatched the diabolical plot to kill former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi "silently" without the knowledge of anyone in the outfit, a former close confidant of the LTTE supremo said on Wednesday.

Karuna Amman, the LTTE commander of the Eastern region before he fell out with Prabhakaran in 2004, said he always wanted a political solution to the decades-old ethnic conflict, a view that was never subscribed by the elusive Tamil Tigers leader. "The plot to kill Rajiv Gandhi was hatched silently. None of us had any clue of this wicked plan. Only Prabhakaran and Pottu Amman planned it without taking anyone into confidence. I had always opposed such hostile moves," Mr. Karuna Amman, now a minister, told PTI in an interview. Gandhi was killed by a LTTE suicide bomber on May 21, 1991 while he was addressing an election rally in Sriperumbudur near Chennai. Prabhakaran and Pottu Amman are proclaimed offenders in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. It is alleged that Prabhakaran wanted to avenge the Indian leader's decision in 1987 to deploy Indian peacekeeping force troops in Sri Lanka. "When I once gave a suggestion letter on the need to shun violence and come to the negotiating table, Prabhakaran just tore off my letter. I was humiliated," Mr. Karuna said. Mr. Karuna said it was with pain that he watched the collapse of peace talks with the Sri Lankan government, brokered by Norway, due to "non-cooperation" of Prabhakaran. He said Prabhakaran never subscribed to the view that the conflict can be resolved politically. "Even Anton Balasingham (the ideologue of the rebel outfit) favoured negotiations... but Prabhakaran resisted," he said. Mr. Karuna, who formed the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Puligal (TMVP) quit the party following difference with his deputy leader Pillayan, and joined the ruling Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) as its vice president. Sivanesan Chandrakanthan alias Pillayan of TMVP was sworn in as the Chief Minister after elections for the Eastern Province in May last year. Mr. Karuna was recently made the minister for National Integration and Reconciliation in the Mahinda Rajapaksa cabinet. Stating that the Eastern Province has now become a peaceful region, Mr. Karuna Amman said there was huge potential for investments in the province. "Now the east is safe and sound. Industrialists have the opportunity to launch their development projects," he said. Mr. Karuna said if India had provided arms to Sri Lanka the war with LTTE could have been expedited. "More than the arms it was the training that was required. We (the Sri Lankan government) never had any scarcity of arms as we got it from China and other countries. We always had enough arms," he said. Courtesy: hinduonnet.com