Misguided Tamil protesters

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National Post Re: Expressway March Called Spontaneous; No Leadership Group, Say Demonstrators, May 12. While all Canadians must be concerned about the killing of Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka, there should be no misunderstanding about the objectives of the demonstrators who blocked the Gardiner Expressway in Toronto on Sunday. If their primary concern had been the safety of Tamil civilians, they would have been calling on the Tamil Tigers to allow those trapped in the war zone to flee to safe areas, instead of using them as human shields. Clearly, however, the objective of the demonstrators was to bring about a situation that would allow the Tigers to preserve their fighting capability and prolong the insurgency.

When one of the demonstrators was asked by an interviewer why she was carrying a Tamil Tiger flag, she replied that it was because this was the only group that was fighting for the interests of Tamils in Sri Lanka. To the extent that there is any truth in this statement, it is a reflection of the fact that the Tigers have relentlessly hunted down and murdered moderate Tamils dedicated to achieving justice for their community by peaceful and democratic means. These include people I knew and admired, such as lawyer, human rights activist and member of parliament, Neelan Thiruchelvam, and the head of the Tamil United Liberation Front, Appapillai Amirthalingam, along with many other Tamil political leaders.The demonstrators borrowed a page from the Tiger playbook -- exposing young children to danger. Unless Canadian authorities are prepared to prevent such illegal activities from taking place in the future, the residents of Toronto and other Canadian cities should be prepared for more such incidents by groups using Canada as a base for settling scores in their former homelands. Martin Collacott, former Canadian high commissioner to Sri Lanka, Vancouver.Martin Collacott Former Canadian Ambassador, Martin Collacott studies issues related to terrorism. Mr. Collacott has 30 years of distinguished service in the Department of External Affairs for Canada. His assignments included Director General for Security Services and in this capacity, he was responsible for the coordination of counter-terrorism policy at the international level. He represented the Department of External Affairs in Indochina, Hong Kong, Lagos, and Tokyo. During the late 1960s, he served as the Chinese-speaking member of the Canadian negotiating team which established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Later in his career, Mr. Collacott was appointed as High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Ambassador to Syria and Lebanon, and as Ambassador to Cambodia. In the course of these assignments he had major responsibilities for the delivery of immigration and refugee programs. Courtesy: Nationalpost