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## West and East - the two faces of continuing Tiger terrorism

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For each man kills the thing he loves By each let this be heard The coward does this with a kiss The brave man with a sword  
The antics of some elements in the West get even more curious, as they seek to resurrect at least some aspects of the Prabhakaran legacy in what seems an adventurist strategy to destabilise South Asia. Interestingly enough, the latest evidence of this comes from TamilNet which still continues in a state of denial about the death of Mr Prabhakaran. Evidently controlled now by Mr Vaiko and his ilk in India, despite the stunning electoral defeat administered to them by the Indian people, TamilNet has declared that the statement of the LTTE head of International relations, Selvarasa Padmanathan, that Mr Prabhakaran had died was "an act of betrayal" and it seemed that 'Padmanathan was trying to create confusion in the LTTE by joining hands with the traitors. There was also evidence to show that Padmanathan was presently caught in the hands of international intelligence agencies, he added.' Mr Vaiko evidently wants the terrorist legacy of Mr Prabhakaran to continue in its existing form, and he will obviously do his best to further this through relentless propaganda. The effect of such propaganda will be to get even more poor innocent young Tamils to commit themselves to terror, to become fighters and suicide killers for the Tiger cause. In order to achieve this end Mr Vaiko and his ilk have to create resentment, and they do this as relentlessly as in the past. His associate Mr Nedumaran claims that 'Lankan forces have killed more than one lakh Tamil Tigers and civilians, and thousands of civilians are dying for want of food, drinking water and medicine'. This is all absolute nonsense, a grotesque expansion of even the worst case figures put forward by the most virulent opponents in the West of the Sri Lankan government. However, given the particular gallery Mr Vaiko and Mr Nedumaran are playing to, it clearly does not matter whether they say one hundred thousand or ten thousand, as in epic poetry all that is needed are numbers beyond imagining. These techniques however are not confined just to proponents of terror in the East. We have similar techniques being used by those who now subscribe to what might be termed the new Padmanathan line, which is that the Tigers will continue but will now renounce terrorism. If those countries now getting onto this particular bandwagon actually believe such a renunciation is sincere, they must be either mad or particularly evil. Here is an organisation that failed to renounce terrorism for decades, that refused to lay down its arms even when the Indo-Lankan Accord of 1987 persuaded all other Tamil groups to come into the political process, that refused to negotiate in 2003 with the most complaisant government imaginable in Sri Lanka, that launched two vicious attacks after having finally returned to negotiations in 2006, that adamantly refused to surrender or lay down arms whilst it held over 150,000 civilians hostage, that killed those trying to escape, and that finally continued to use suicide attackers even on the day the whole enterprise imploded. Is there any doubt that, as soon as they are able to rearm and regroup, not too difficult with the millions of dollars still held in western banks, they will return to terrorism? But we know that certain intelligence agencies, as Vaiko and Co. put it, had been engaged in discussions with the Tigers for years. Padmanathan, despite being a criminal wanted by Interpol, has been moving in and out of Britain freely for years. He now has full control of all the funds collected and extorted from sympathisers and victims over the years, and will of course be a notable asset for any country anxious to sell weapons of mass and not so mass destruction. Is it any wonder then that there are now Vaiko type efforts to denigrate the Sri Lankan state, albeit at the more sophisticated levels appropriate for more sophisticated but still desperately ill informed audiences? Thus we now have two British papers raising the ante by talking about 8000 civilians killed and 17000 injured, with no attempt to square this with the actual number of injured now admitted to hospitals throughout Sri Lanka. The ICRC brought down altogether 13,826 of patients and bystanders, and obviously they would not have brought down bystanders if there were patients waiting for transport. The patients include the sick as well as casualties. The figures we have for patients who are casualties are 5,499, while it seems that 1,710 of those who came through Omanthai, i.e. those who got away by land, were also admitted to hospital. Even if we assume that all of these were casualties, we get a figure of at most 7,200, which would imply that the figure for deaths is much lower. Bearing in mind that officially speaking we have no statistics for LTTE casualties, we realise that at least some of these 7,200 must be combatants, whether hard core cadres or the civilians forced into taking up weapons, a practice well attested finally by the UN, both UNICEF complaining of continuing child recruitment in the last days of the LTTE, and UNDP, moved to protest by the recruitment of the young daughter of one of its workers, who had not been permitted to leave LTTE controlled territory for several months. None of this figures in the mythology being built up by the British, with a determination parallel to that of Mr Vaiko. There is no recognition, which even Mr Vaiko, with his more gung ho approach evinces, that the dead include Tamil Tigers and civilians mixed in together in the mayhem that the LTTE perpetrated, in their Byronic 'one red burial blent'. Sadly, the continuation of the myth, whether in the Vaiko or the Padmanathan form, will only lead to more suffering for the Tamil people, as for the Sri Lankan state. Vaiko does it with the unapologetic fierceness that characterised his friend Prabhakaran. The footsoldiers of the West, sometimes pursuing destructive ideals, sometimes seeking cheap sensation, sometimes with nastier motives, use the language of love. Their potential murderousness is equally destructive for Sri Lanka, and also for India when, as is inevitable, the two strategies coincide and Vaiko and Padmanathan join together again in another dance of death, along with their shadowy supporters of all shades. Prof Rajiva Wijesinha Secretary General Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process Courtesy: SCOPP