
Enigma of Prabhakaran and the Tamil Tigers

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by Muttukrishna Sarvananthan Both in life and death, Velupillai Prabhakaran divides rather than unites the Tamils in particular, Sri Lankans as a whole. Therein lie the enigma of Prabhakaran (Thambi Anna to me), whom I first met almost thirty years ago in August 1979, and the Tamil Tigers.

“Assuming the LTTE finished is fantasy masquerading as fact”, exclaimed a self-styled “leftist” academic (Sri Lankan born American), namely Qadri Ismail, on March 1, 2009. Qadri Ismail is not alone in fantasizing about Prabhakaran and the Tamil Tigers. Anita Pratap, a veteran Indian journalist, too fantasized about the invincibility and immortality of Prabhakaran and the Tamil Tigers in an article published on May 03, 2009 claiming that the Tiger is just “crouching”, not dying. Both Qadri Ismail and Anita Pratap are journalists by profession, though the former is a journalist turned academic lately; most journalists are very good at writing sensationalism and romanticism of the “other” or the underdog. Anita Pratap also tosses some contradictory claims in her writings for The Week dated May 3rd and 31st. She claims that Prabhakaran has told her that he never launches any attack on a date that add up to number eight (08, 17 or 26) because he believed it to be unlucky. As a matter of fact, LTTE launched its first ever air raid in Colombo on March 26, 2007. Further, she claims that, because Prabhakaran’s son Charles Anthony does not believe in his father’s superstition he had sent a suicide bomber to kill Sri Lanka’s Army Commander on April 26, 2006 in Colombo. Again she was wrong; in fact the attempted assassination of the Army Commander took place on April 25, 2006. I hope by now the righteous “leftist” and the adulatory journalist would have realised who really have been romanticizing about Prabhakaran and the Tamil Tigers. “Strangely”, Prabhakaran’s death had left Vasuki Nesiah, a Sri Lankan born Tamil American academic, “numb”. Whilst concurring with her that death cannot be celebrated or glorified, I am immensely relieved that a psychopath and his army have been vanquished. Prabhakaran and the Tigers were cancer in the body politic of the Tamil community. To me, removing the cancerous cells in the body politic of the Tamil community is neither “poetic justice” nor glorification of death, rather a necessity to preserve and protect life within and beyond our Tamil community. Vasuki, when a cobra or viper attempts to bite you, would you allow yourself to be bitten to death? The enigma of Prabhakaran and the Tamil Tigers pricks the conscience of not only a few academics and journalists, but one of my siblings too who is a medical scientist. But, ironically, none of the foregoing persons have been uncritical of Prabhakaran and the Tigers in the past and present. Following is my sibling’s indictment of myself just past week. “I am very sad that at a time of sorrow and hardship for fellow human beings of our race in SL you are writing such unwarranted matters that are published! I think we were brought up by our parents to have solidarity and unity. I wish you shut up and stop writing; it is unwarranted when the wounds are very sore. Everyone/organisation has mistakes and problems, so nit picking doesn’t help.” “Please keep your mouth shut, and keep your opinions to yourself… because your judgements are very very poor.” warned a person from the Tamil diaspora in March 2009 and goes on to issue a fatawa against me, “You are an unwanted human in this world.” I hope this righteous person would have realised by now whose judgement was false. However, I received a rare solace in March 2009 from a reader of one of my recent writings – “I am completely speechless. This would be the first time I have heard an ethnic Tamil known to me take a stand on facts, without justifying or demonising one “side” or the other.” wrote a recent acquaintance. Prabhakaran is dead! Long live the enigma of Prabhakaran and the Tamil Tigers!! May the souls of thousands of soldiers of the security forces and Tamil armed groups, dissidents and politicians of all ethnicities, Velupillai Prabhakaran and his family, thousands of fellow Tigers and Tigresses, and above all countless civilians from all ethnicities (overwhelmingly Tamils) rest in peace! Courtesy: groundviews.org