

# Victory of Sri Lankan army tarnished



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AFTER a protracted conflict against the Tamil Tigers that shed a lot of blood and pulled down a vibrant economy, Sri Lanka is jubilant again. However, the war-winning hero General Sarat Fonseka, the former army chief is in military custody on sedition charge. He is the defeated candidate of the combined opposition in the recently conducted presidential election. Obviously, questions arise about his safety and the fairness of military justice. The general apprehension is since the president has ordered the court marshal of his top general he is not letting General Fonseka go scot-free with his military rank and popular image untouched.

The military courts on many occasions raised

more controversy than confidence on carriage of justice. The military courts are not permanent institutions; they are a contingency plan for military discipline and are best left to the barracks only. The popular president appears to be on a political vendetta skirted under military discipline of smudging the uniform of the general days before joining politics. The temptation of executing a political maneuver with stringent military law or, dealing military discipline with civil law is equally counterproductive and on many occasions harmful for a society. As a smart politician, President Rajapakse has his finger on the pulse of his electorate, harvesting repeatedly on his popularity following the destruction of Tamil Tigers. Followed by overwhelming mandate for the president, his United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) has secured resound-

ing victory in the recent parliamentary election. The complete destruction of high intensity insurgency is rare in military history. The elimination of Tamil rebels in the northern districts of Sri Lanka will henceforth be a part of military study for many armed forces. In spite of years of war, the Sri Lankans today exude confidence about their future as I could read from the face and words of the newly appointed Sri Lankan envoy.

Bangladesh is happy to participate in the training effort of the Sri Lankan armed forces in their difficult time. A commander in chief, the political boss of the forces, must always be demanding in battle and should also be generous in recognizing achievements. The apparent disappointment with the general must not blindfold the wisdom of Sri Lankan political

foresight. Frustration and humiliation within the barracks is more dangerous than in the enemy camps.

This generation of Tamils might have been defeated. However, if the cause is left unattended, the next generation may raise their ugly head. History has witnessed many times that a total military victory is difficult to manage, especially in a third world environment. To build the future of Sri Lanka majority Sinhalese will have to be magnanimous towards the northern Tamils. Sri Lanka should treat the demoralized Tamils carefully with political accommodation short of sovereign right, to draw them into the main stream of the national activity.

Victory has many fathers and eventually a deliberate quarrel broke out as to who is the architect of this outstanding victory - the military or the political bosses of the country. Before dissecting further, one must also observe that such conflicting claims on accomplishments surface in the third world countries where integrity of political supremacy is vaguely understood and frequently distorted. There is a general tendency to look for scapegoat down the ladder to hide personal failures. Many officers of the Pakistan army privately confess today that late Z. A. Bhutto, while trying to absolve himself from the debacle of '71, put all the blame on the military; that hastened his downfall and eventual hanging.

General Fonseka moved too fast to make political mileage from the knockout victory. He did not get the maneuver of the opposition politicians to slice the war winning cake of popularity between President Rajapakse and himself to stop the landslide of the incumbent president in the elections. Fonseka's hope for presidential candidacy was premature and made the thankful president hostile who feared that military popularity would be converted into a vote catching tool. The result was disastrous for the victorious military establishment. General Fonseka badly lost in the presidential bid and well over fifty senior officers of the Sri Lankan army lost their jobs and landed in trouble.

Many generals in third world countries do not care that their restive ambition for political gain destroys the finest professionals who serve under

them. In the melee for political ambition of the kind, we have lost many fine career officers that eventually led to appointment of questionable qualities to higher echelons of leadership. General Fonseka, without a political platform and entirely dependent on halfhearted support of the opposition parties, as expected, was soundly defeated in the presidential bid. The precipitated move by the general made the proud army a doubtful political platform. Hopefully, this feeling would not persist to make a lasting scar on the honorable profession or, still worse, destabilize Sri Lanka.

People are always godly in their wisdom. The sympathetic electorates have given the general a slot in the recently conducted parliamentary election. He should have taken the lesson from General Fidel Ramos of Philippines who loyally served President Corazon Aquino for six years after retirement through the turbulent days of 1986-92 before being propelled to the presidency by the people. The people have given General Fonseka an opportunity to lick his wounds and mature in the parliament, if only the grateful-President-turned-sworn-political-enemy allows him to do so. Meanwhile, who will take the responsibility for the dishonour of the war winning army and disgrace of so many battle-hardened heroes now in trouble? This question deserves an answer from General Fonseka.

Like the army of Julius Caesar, the Sri Lankan army, in spite of the fall of the general from grace, deserves hero's pageantry for the victory at a colossal cost of lives and limbs. The wrong move by the commander must not be allowed to make this outstanding victory into morning mist, ready to go with the rising sun.

President Bush never faced or fired a bullet and yet remained responsible for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and his father, Bush Senior, is still an American hero for the first round of Iraq war. War or peace, it is always a political decision. The highest political leadership carries the weight of it. Soldiers are the heroes of a successful campaign. They must be given due honor for sacrificing their lives for the cause of a nation.

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## The Iranian Nuclear Conference

SIDDHARTH RAMANA

THE Nuclear Security Summit discussed the safety and security of nuclear materials, and preventing its proliferation to non-state actors who could use them for terrorist purposes. While the al Qaeda was clearly identified, the Washington summit made references to the Iranians being the main problem. Iran, a signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), has been repeatedly condemned by the West for developing an illegal nuclear weapons program. The international community's concerns are accentuated by Iran's documented state patronage of terror groups like the Hamas and Hezbollah. India cannot dismiss these fears due to its own problems with jihadis in the subcontinent. Iran's linkage to Pakistani rogue nuclear scientist, AQ Khan, has further added to Indian concerns with the Iranian nuclear program. The Iranians have rejected these allegations. Accusing countries opposing their nuclear ambitions as hypocritical and organizing summits "designed to humiliate people"; Tehran launched its own nuclear summit titled "Nuclear energy for all, nuclear weapons for none". However, compared to the Washington conference, many heads of state gave it a miss, with Prime Minister Singh stating that India would only be represented at the diplomatic level, because of the last minute nature of the conference.

The official theme of the conference was to discuss disarmament challenges, and promote practical steps to achieve nuclear disarmament. But its underlying theme was to showcase Iran's vehement opposition to nuclear weapons, promote support for its nuclear program, and highlight western hypocrisy towards some non-NPT states in providing them with the nuclear technology only available to NPT signatories, and turning a blind eye to the nuclear activities of other states in the region. This was a build up from

President Ahmadinejad's September 2009 speech, where he declared a nuclear weapons program as "not being part of our plan." Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in his opening session, condemned the American nuclear weapons as 'tools of terror'; while Iranian Foreign Minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, asserted that a nuclear free Middle East "required the Zionist regime to join the NPT". The conference also discussed the legal aspects of using or threatening use of nuclear weapons, and the advisory rule (1996) of International Court of Justice on the illegitimacy of nuclear weapons which stipulates the obligation of nuclear states towards the implementation of Article 6 of NPT. The concluding statement articulated concerns about the "continued existence of Weapons of Mass Destruction- nuclear arms in particular- as well as their application or threat to apply them". Ironically, as the conference was concluding, Iran celebrated 'Army Day', which boasted an annual military parade, showcasing its

nuclear capable missiles, while extolling criticism towards Israel and the United States.

Oblique references to India were made in the speech by Iran's Atomic Energy head, Ali Akbar Salehi, who spoke about the "interferences from certain western countries which are weakening the NPT". The reference was to the Indo-US civil nuclear deal, which Iran has opposed, claiming that it weakens the nuclear proliferation regime. India and Iran have been at loggerheads over the responsibility of states in the nuclear sphere. India maintains that, as a NPT signatory, Iran would need to have far more transparent dealings with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) than at present. After India voted twice against it in the IAEA, Iran has repeatedly condemned the Indian stance, to the extent of even threatening a revision of bilateral relations. According to the Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council of Iran, Saeed Jalili, "preventing Major

Powers from imposing their influence on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is another way of promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and strengthening of NPT," which articulates the Iranian position vis-à-vis the Indo-US civil nuclear deal that it might pursue in the upcoming NPT review conference in May 2010. Iran has used the conference to demonstrate its strength, and highlight its position that the IAEA and international community have been unjust towards Iran's nuclear program. Advocating the need for an "independent international group which plans and oversees nuclear disarmament and prevents proliferation", President Ahmadinejad, outlined that such a group would need to be democratic and free from the political pressures which have marred the functioning of the IAEA.

In recent months, a number of countries have shown an ambivalent position on dealing with the Iranian nuclear program, especially in the light of their energy investments in the country, and their own political opposition to the United States. India has, of late, opposed a more punitive policy towards Iran, and urged a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear problem in bilateral discussions with the United States and multi-lateral forums, including the recently concluded BRIC meetings. Indian regional interests have informed its hardline position towards Iran's nuclear program. However mild diplomatic measures could provide Iran the much needed time for developing its covert nuclear facilities. A nuclear Iran is not in Indian interests, and while the conference professed global zero aspirations, the Iranian effort to develop covert enrichment facilities betrays that ideal. The Iranian position directs its hostility against Indian interests and deepens the battlelines that are being drawn before the NPT Review Conference.

IPCS, New Delhi



## Iraq bomb attacks fail to derail US withdrawal

THE resurgence of bomb attacks in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, will not affect the timeline established for the departure of US combat troops, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said on 6 April.

However, the attacks underscore the security pressures complicating the political impasse following the surprise outcome of recent parliamentary elections, Middle East analysts suggest.

At least 50 people were killed in as many as eight bomb blasts in the capital on 5 April, building on a nearly week-long spate of attacks that have left some 119 civilians dead, according to published reports. Targeted attacks on members of the Awakening

Council - Sunni militias who were given financial incentives to cease their activities in support of Al-Qaeda's operations in Iraq and collaborate with the government - have also claimed the lives of some 25 people in the early days of April. The targeted killings are seen as retributive, carried out by Al-Qaeda insurgents against their former allies.

Al Qaeda is also being implicated in the wider violence as it seeks to capitalise on the failure by the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to cement stability gains won by US forces during their 2007 surge, in which tens of thousands of troops were deployed to stem the insurgent aggression. ISF troops have been blamed for a series of lapse

and failures and their inability to close security loopholes was cited as one of the reasons for the surprise, albeit narrow, electoral defeat of Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki, who had staked his political future on his ability to ensure security across Iraq.

Despite some USD 20 billion in training, capacity building and resourcing spent by the United States to reconstitute the armed forces, the ISF's more than 650,000 personnel have failed to intercept or deter a series of politically motivated blasts beginning in August 2009 that targeted key government installations.

James Defence Weekly

## Taiwan exercise focuses on possible China assault

Taiwan's military has lifted the veil on how it would respond to a massive Chinese air attack, showing that the island still takes the risk of war very seriously despite improving ties.

On April 27, journalists were invited for the first time to a drill simulating aerial assaults on Taiwan's major air bases and testing the military's ability to recover quickly from such a shock.

The maneuvers, staged at a military air base near Hualien city in eastern Taiwan, played out a scenario in which runways were bombed by waves of bombers or missiles from the mainland.

"The drill is aimed to test our ability to repair runways as soon as possible so that fighter jets can take off should the air base be attacked," Taiwanese air force spokesman Lt. Gen. Pan Kung-hsiao said.

The exercise involved hundreds of troops, some operating heavy engineering equipment such as bulldozers, hydraulic shovels and bomb disposal engines.

Pilots and logistic supply staff also demonstrated emergency procedures for four French-made Mirage fighter jets, which were ready for take-off six minutes after being scrambled.

Military analysts say any Chinese invasion of Taiwan would be preceded by saturation air bombardment meant to wipe out civilian and military airports and key government facilities, and paralyze transportation systems.

The exercise came after a Chinese flotilla, including two submarines and eight other ships, conducted drills in the East China Sea near Okinawa and then moved to the Pacific Ocean, according to Japanese media.

The appearance of the Chinese fleet - the largest assembly of Chinese warships ever spotted in the region, according to Japan's defence ministry - has triggered alarms in Taiwan.

Taiwan's Deputy Defense Minister Chao Shih-chang warned in parliament April 26 the operation indicated China was now able to bypass the island's fortified west and attack the island from the east.

Ties between Taipei and Beijing have improved markedly since Ma Ying-jeou of the China-friendly Kuomintang party came to power in 2008, pledging to boost trade links and allowing in more Chinese tourists. But Beijing still maintains it could use force against the island.

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## USAF broadens plans for Next-Generation UAV

The U.S. Air Force has begun re-evaluating and expanding the missions its MQ-X next generation tactical UAV will be required to perform to go beyond battlefield strike and ISR, service officials announced.

The move is intended to make sure specifications outlined in the aircraft's initial capabilities document meet mission requirements for new UAVs in the service's just completed Remotely Piloted Vehicle Flight Team, according to Col. Bruce Emig, chief of Air Combat Command's (ACC's) irregular warfare requirements division.

The flight plan calls for a next-generation, medium-size UAV such as the MQ-X to perform several new mission sets, such as cargo hauling and aerial refueling, that don't fall under ACC's purview, according to Emig.

"We need to see if the [current definition of MQ-X] is a good solution" for those missions, Emig said during an April 27 speech at an Institute for Defense and Government Advancement conference in Tysons Corner, Va.

At a minimum, MQ-X is slated to replace the service's MQ-9 Reaper UAVs in their role as medium-sized strike and ISR planes.

ACC is now working with Air Force Materiel Command, Air Mobility Command and Air Force Special Operations Command to determine what they need out of a next generation UAV, according to Emig.

The service plans to have the requirements finalized in time to be included in its 2014 Program Objective Memorandum, he added.

At a minimum, the aircraft must have protected communications and datalinks, the ability to survive in contested airspace, and enough power generating and cargo capacity to allow it to carry a variety of sensors and weapons, according to Emig.

The aircraft must also incorporate so called sense-and-avoid technology to prevent collisions with nearby aircraft, he added.

Service officials want the MQ-X and all future UAVs to be able to carry and operate a variety of mission payloads in the same way a C-130 can today.

The Air Force's chief intelligence officer, Lt. Gen. David Deptula, said this probably won't have a serious impact on the service's plans to field the plane - which he described as "an order of magnitude" more advanced than the MQ-9 - close to 2020 to 2022.

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