

THE LIBERATION OF THE EAST by Lt Col. A. S .Amarasekera

When we speak of liberation the question arises as to who was liberated and from whom. If it is interpreted as the liberation of the citizen living in the eastern part of our country from a psychopath who is terrorizing them to subjugation, then indeed it is the bounded duty of a government voted to power by the people of this country to liberate people in the east from such a predicament.

Most parts of the eastern province that was liberated recently from LTTE control is in the historic Digamadulla area. Those who are uneducated in history do not understand the agricultural importance of this landmass that was liberated recently. Therefore they question the validity of liberating agricultural lands that are scarcely populated. They do not know that the Digamadulla area was the ancient granary that provided food to sustain military campaigns of our ancient kings that succeeded in driving away invaders from our country. It is this area that sustained the LTTE cadres in the east. With its liberation not only did the LTTE lose an area that provided them with food, they also lost all the revenue that they were extorting from the cultivators in this area.

Those who are uneducated in geography cannot comprehend the value of a certain part of this landmass that was liberated for the protection and security of the Trincomalee harbour, which is the main life line to sustain the Security Forces in Jaffna. Then there are those who know nothing about military strategy that question the validity of capturing Thoppigala. They do not understand the value of holding and dominating ground of tactical importance such as Thoppigala, for the protection and security of the agricultural land in its vicinity. That such people were not only Ministers and that one of them was even a former Minister of Education and a Prime Minister of this country speaks volumes for the deterioration of not only the standard of education but even the security situation in our country.

There are some foreign countries with vested interests who are surreptitiously working towards the eventual balkanization of the country. There are Non Governmental Organizations that are directly or indirectly funded by these foreign countries. There are also some political stooges and a few local Non Governmental Organizations who come under the influence of these vested interests, through direct or indirect financial support. All of them are advocating a federal solution to the current problems in this country that they identify on an ethnic basis. Their aims and objectives have been seriously affected by the defeat of the LTTE in the east and are sulking over this fact, while the majority of the people of this country are rejoicing and congratulating the Security Forces and the Police for this magnificent victory.

Victory in the battle field could be achieved by various means. It could be achieved through frontal attacks, flanking attacks or by encirclement. Of these three methods encirclement or laying a siege may be time consuming and may require more troops, but the eventual benefit far outstrips these disadvantages. It prevents the unnecessary loss of life among own troops and it also gives an opportunity for the enemy to surrender.

The enemy in this case happens to be our own citizen who have been misled or forced into conscription by a psychopath. Therefore to implement a siege though time consuming could be considered as definitely the most humanitarian method of conducting a campaign of this nature, wherein loss of life on both sides, be it our own troops or the enemy, is minimized to the maximum extent possible. Therefore our Security Forces and the Police need to be specially recognized, not only nationally but internationally, for a military campaign immaculately well planned and executed, with the minimum loss of life.

Our ancestors were experts in implementing such strategy and it is heartening to note that our Security Forces have indeed not forgotten the lessons they learned from history. In 1802 the British Expeditionary Force that was sent to capture Kandy were encircled by the army of the Kandyan king, once they entered the hill capital. This British Expeditionary Force suffered such a humiliating defeat subsequently that the Colonial Secretary even went to the extent of ordering the whole of the British Army out of this country. This order unfortunately was never implemented, as reinforcements had been sent to Ceylon from India before this order was received.

The first part of the campaign is now over, with the liberation of the east. It is the second part of the campaign that of holding on to the land liberated, which is the daunting task the Security Forces and Police are now saddled with. The government and the public have to help the Security Forces and the Police in this endeavour, by doing the best they can to develop these areas that have come under government control. They must make the people to realize that their future happiness, wellbeing and prosperity is only possible in an area that is under government control. As it was correctly pointed out by Mao Zedong terrorists are like fish that survive in water. Sans water fish will not survive. Similarly, sans the support of the masses terrorist cannot survive.

The Security Forces and the Police have through their blood, tears, sweat and toil, sometimes by even sacrificing their life and limb achieved this victory to protect and preserve for posterity the unity and territorial integrity of this nation and its ancient cultural heritage. The President received the mandate of the people for this very purpose at the last Presidential election. Therefore, as the Commanding Chief of the Armed Forces and the President of this country he has acted with courage and determination thus far to give proper leadership, despite the pressures brought on him by foreign countries with vested interests.

The President should beware of those who have surreptitious indentations to balkanize this country. He should continue to give heed to the sound advice of his younger brother Lt Col. Gotabaya Rajapakse, whom he has appointed as his Defence Secretary. In him we have a senior officer that worked under General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, who has not forgotten how the Security Forces were robbed of their well deserved victory over the LTTE, with that infamous Indian Parippu drop. Had we defeated the LTTE in that Vadamarachchi Operation, we would have been able to regain the lost paradise, which sadly never happened!

The Secretary of Defence I am aware will never allow history to repeat itself through interference by foreign countries, when victory over divisive forces in this country is imminent. I firstly take this opportunity to recognize and thank Lt. Col. Gotabaya Rajapakse for his tremendous contribution towards this victory, through the proper coordination of the Security forces in his capacity as the Secretary of Defence.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate and thank the Officers and other ranks of the Security Forces and the Police for defeating the LTTE in the east and for liberating the people in those areas that were under the LTTE control from the misery that they suffered, for many years. I have to also take this opportunity to thank the President for his courageous leadership that made this victory possible.

Lastly to those who still continue to belittle this magnificent victory, may I remind them of that Sinhalese story about a *Nariya* (fox) that went around saying “*ambul rasai may midhi*” (sour are these grapes), because he was unable to pluck them. This is understandable because the one who is saying so most loudly is the nephew of a person who was well known in this country, in his day and age, as the old fox.