

The culmination of the LTTE rise was the CFA authored by the LTTE, Norway and UNP which granted territorial and judicial rights to the LTTE in a huge portion of Sri Lanka. The war intensified, Norway was discredited, LTTE defeated and Mahinda Rajapaksa got an unassailable political position with the Opposition discarded.

One would have therefore thought that the UNP would fight shy of any connection with the Norwegians that brought them down, especially with Eric Solheim. But its leader recently visited Norway, met the infamous Eric Solheim and other Norwegians who conspired against Sri Lanka.

No wonder Sajith Premadasa publicly called last week to "rid UNP of Tiger proxies." He added that he was not the type who said soldiers were heading towards Pamankada instead of Alimankada, and Medawachchiya instead of Kilinochchi. He was of course referring to the infamous words of Ravi Karunanayake, but his real target was Ranil whom Sajith wants to replace as UNP leader. (But Sajith conveniently forgot that it was his father who once gave heavy arms to the LTTE).

CMI and SOAS

There are several Norwegian based institutions that still pontificate on the failed CFA as well as indirectly on us such as the Norwegian Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI) of Norway and of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of London. Knowing both these, let me digress. A couple of decades ago, I had lectured at CMI on academic colonialism - precisely the function the CMI and Norway are engaged in now. At SOAS in the late 1970s, I had given a similar talk and I visit SOAS library regularly ever since my wife did her Ph.D. there. More significantly, Sri Lanka as well as the Royal Asiatic Society (RASSL) was instrumental in the institutionalization of Asian studies in London which led to the formation of SOAS as the premier institution of Asian studies in Europe if not in the world.

Many of the earlier leaders of Sri Lankan culture like Malalasekera, Adikaram, G.C. Mendis, Hettiarachchi, Ariyapala and Godakumbura were associated with SOAS.

SOAS was thus partly created by lovers of Sri Lankan culture and heritage and became a clearinghouse for higher learning. But, now hardly any Sri Lankans go there because of lack of money from our recent governments - a truly foolish act. In contrast, one finds plenty of Chinese, Japanese, Thais, Arabs etc deeply involved there. In recent years, Sri Lankans

associated with SOAS were not sympathizers of Buddhism and culture but NGO types. In the early 1990s, LTTE front organizations had a conference at the SOAS basement to justify their war and publicized falsely as an official event of SOAS. It is therefore not the sympathizers of our culture that today have contacts there but those who question our sovereignty.

The person from SOAS to lead the Norwegian evaluation is Jonathan Goodhand who has "worked for some years managing programmes in conflict situations in Sri Lanka, and has extensive experience as a researcher and advisor ... for a range of NGOs and aid agencies". His research interests "include ... NGOs and peace building ". He is thus hardly a sympathiser of our local culture and is part of the global network of NGO interventionists of the new Western empire builders. The Norwegians mention that the evaluation team also includes "four highly qualified members from Sri Lanka. The team has a broad professional background within studies of peace and conflict, and includes political scientists, anthropologists and historians". It will be interesting to see who the Sri Lankans are. I am sure, they would not be anybody who opposed the Norwegian intervention and probably would be those neo-colonial hacks that have lived on Norwegian handouts in return for subverting the country.

First Evaluation

But this was not the first evaluation of Sri Lanka done by the Norwegians or by CMI. It had earlier evaluated International Alert formed in the early 1980s, and its map of the future Tamil Eelam had a larger territory than claimed by the LTTE itself. And when in 1995, our Army was about to take over Jaffna, its then director went on BBC to ask for UN intervention to prevent Sri Lanka from regaining its territory.

The IA report of CMI admitted that in Sierra Leone "IA has been subject to serious allegations ..., IA's neutrality and transparency was... widely questioned by the [Sierra Leone] authorities, international organizations and other governments"....

The report criticizes the IA for lack of transparency and credibility, "contradictions between IA's stated position and its actual interventions. - continued to affect IA ...

The CMI report's one author noted that "conflict resolution has been privatized" by NGOs. And that, this "Western intervention ... created a major expansion opportunity for both international and local NGOs". It mentions that the growth of these conflict resolution NGOs has been accompanied by the "demise of alternative political projects within the regions ... which, in different ways, attempted to maintain national independence and autonomy".

Translated, what this meant was that these NGOs actively helped erode national independence and sovereignty. Through these NGO, mechanisms "the ability of the West to directly modify internal political processes ... is greater today than at any time since the colonial period".

~ www.dailymirror.lk ~ By Susantha Goonatilaka