

Yank and a Hanuman to battle it out

Saturday 5 December 2009, by [KARUNARATNE Vickramabahu \("Bahu"\)](#) (Date first published: 22 November 2009).

In the letter General Sarath had sent to the president he said "With pain of mind it was noted that the Army which gained victory for the Nation was suspected of planning a coup and thereby alerting the Government of India once again on the 15th of October 2009, unnecessarily placing Indian troops on high alert. This action did tarnish the image and reputation gained by the Sri Lanka Army as a competent and professional organization which was capable of defeating a terrorist group after the Malayan Emergency. This suspicion would have been due to the loyalty of the Sri Lanka Army towards me as its past Commander who led the Army to the historic victory." However according to a PTI report "The External Affairs Ministry made it very clear that the Indian Army was never placed on alert. There is no substance to the story. The government has officially informed the public that the Indian Army has not been placed on alert". But that does not rule out any request made by the Lankan president nor the suspicion of a coup entertained by the government. However we are told by another news item that "The UNP leader was asked by Indian leaders in New Delhi whether Sri Lanka is going to be ruled in future by a military strongman.

Watching the situation

Wickremesinghe's reply had been that Fonseka is very democratic, and that India need not entertain worries on that count. However, India would be watching the situation closely, we learn, and it had been made clear that any regional ambitions by a future military leader in Sri Lanka, if they ever materialize, would be resisted." To complement this, yet another report said that "Sri Lanka is confident that there is no basis for recent Indian press reports that the government of India wants two warships returned, which it had leased to Sri Lanka in 2007 on annually renewable contract." All these indicate that the Indian government is concerned about the politics of General Sarath Fonseka. Most probably, in the coming period it will back the re-election of Mahinda. The latter has been their blue eyed boy and Mahinda has acted according to their agenda. It is an agenda given with the knowledge of the western powers.

Then who is behind Sarath Fonseka? Already the chauvinist leaders of the UNP are behind him. Sarath Fonseka is a Green card holder who is very close to the conservative American establishment. In fact his method of warfare resembled that of Pentagon. Their method is to search and destroy terrorists disregarding the damage done to the ordinary people. Bombing and shelling suspected areas; search, hunt and kill suspects; hunting suspects using snipers, all these we saw in Iraq and we see that now in Afghanistan. What happened between 8th and 18th May in Lanka was exactly the result of this Pentagon method. So we have ample reason to believe that General Fonseka is to the right of President Mahinda; a yank general to battle with Mahinda, the Hanuman of Delhi. In fact we are given a poor choice. To escape the claws of a tiger we are now pressurised to jump into the jaws of a lion. General Fonseka sheds tears about the IDPs and the lack of a political solution to the Tamil national problem. In fact, in his letter to the president he said that "Your Excellency's government has yet to win the peace in spite of the fact that the Army under my leadership had won the war. There is no clear policy to win the hearts and minds of the Tamil people, which will surely ruin the victory we have attained, paving the way for yet another uprising in the future." So the General agrees that it was an uprising of an oppressed people of this country yearning for a national liberation which he ventured to crush with much venom.

There was no foreign intervention except on the side of the government. If there was a policy at that time to win the hearts and minds of the Tamil people, then the Tamil uprising would have liquidated by itself. The brutal intervention of the armed forces could have been avoided. It is sad that General Sarath Fonseka did not realize this simple fact which was aptly spelled out by yet another General, Dencil Kobbekaduwa, two decades ago.

P.S.

* From lakbimanews column, 22 november 2009.