

# Post Geneva Stakes: Strategic Agendas, Imperatives of the Regime and Path to Freedom and Democracy:

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The aftermath of the Geneva drama has brought out new dimensions and intensified contradictions internationally, regionally and locally. This article is an initial attempt to strategically map the emerging scenario, position the various major players and locate their respective agendas, and charter a path to freedom and democracy.

## The Role of the US:

The resolution led by the US at the UNHCR in Geneva on Sri Lanka reflects its strategic agenda. The US has moved to encircle- but not strangle- the Mahinda Rajapakse Regime in an attempt to wrench it away from its growing economic, political and strategic links with China, while offering economic and military aid as incentives. To be sure, apart from this acute conflict of interest over strategic balance of power, neither the US nor India, nor world imperialism in general, have any structural contradiction with the Rajapakse Regime. Mahinda Rajapakse has proven to be a most faithful and reliable enforcer of the neo-liberal imperialist global development agenda. I assert that this strategic concern over displacing the growing expansion of Chinese power is the overriding interest of the US in its current dealings with Sri Lanka. The fact is that China has steadily developed a strategic network, including the 'string of pearls' which has begun to threaten the strategic balance against the US – and Western Imperialist dominance – throughout the region and globally. It has also threatened the security of India, which has become a key strategic partner of the US. The US hold over Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan is being shaken and undermined and China, along with Russia and Iran are making strategic inroads into these vital regions. Besides, China has also penetrated the economic and financial centers of the US and the European Union creating a situation of dependency and vulnerability for the Western Imperialist bloc. China has become the single biggest creditor to Sri Lanka and also gained access to vital economic and strategic assets as over the Hambantota port, the Norocholai power plant and exclusive rights to free trade zones, etc. Its diplomatic support has been indispensable to the Regime. It has been reported that China had given Rs 1 billion to the President to be used simply at his discretion. A new way of buying influence. India has also made important economic, political and strategic inroads into the country. All this means that all the regional and international powers are engaged in an intense rivalry to drag Sri Lanka into their respective strategic matrices, and have deployed their local agents and coalitions to maneuver for advantage in this volatile situation.

The US could care less about human rights and war crimes, given that its own record of war crimes serve to expose the US as the number one Terrorist State and the primary generative source of genocidal crimes in the world. Besides, it supported the Mahinda Rajapakse regime politically, militarily and strategically in the war against the LTTE. Both India and the US are accomplices in gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including alleged war crimes and atrocities *that are not just confined to the last stages of the war*. The entire period of the war from 1983 to June 2010 had been characterized by systemic and continuous gross violations of human rights by every successive regime aimed at the political subjugation and violent suppression of the Tamil nation and against the people of Lanka. The resolution has been drafted and time-framed to isolate the Rajapakse regime, while exonerating other regimes, *and the system itself* from accountability. The US also needs to paint itself as the international guardian of Human Rights, given that its complicity and accountability in war crimes and genocide is on trial by the people of the world. The resolution against Sri Lanka was intended to cover up for its naked defense of Israel in all international fora. Besides, the resolution does not hold the Sri Lankan State directly accountable for war crimes. It simply calls for a credible internal investigation by the Regime, combined with a plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the report of the LLRC. It represents a typical carrot and stick approach. The LLRC report remains an instrument of a power play among all these predator powers. We could well ask these powers to begin by implementing such reforms and recommendations in their own countries, as setting an example.

### **Creating Splits and Corraling the Regime:**

The resolution has been presented by the US with the full knowledge that it will split the ranks of the Regime, where already the die-hard, fundamentalist, chauvinist forces of the JHU-Jathika Chintana tribal camp have threatened to go on the streets to oppose even any consideration to be given to the report of the LLRC. Some ministers have begun to state that the LLRC has gone beyond its mandate, while others are stating that the Regime is not constitutionally bound to implement any of its recommendations. These may be expressions of the gyrations and gimmickry of the Regime itself. They may also refer to real conflicts within the regime. The resolution is also intended to give new life to the UNP and the rest of the Opposition, including the DNA, and create space for more maneuvering. In the context of this encirclement, the UNP has been emboldened to confront the Rajapakse Regime and have found new ground to assert its claim to state power. There is even talk of possible defections from the Regime.

The US knows full well that the Mahinda Rajapakse regime cannot afford to begin a process of implementation of the recommendations of the report of the LLRC. Once such a process is initiated, it opens the door for accountability for alleged war crimes and atrocities which will inevitably lead to the Palace and the High Command itself. Besides, any move in such a direction will be seen as an act of betrayal by the armed forces and the 'patriotic' masses and will be exploited by the die-hard, fundamentalist camp to seek a radical change of course, or even regime change from inside. In this deadly game of poker, Retd. General Sarath Fonseka remains a card in the pack as a possible contender, which is being manipulated by the US, the DNA, JVP and local Comprador agents in the effort to corral or unseat Mahinda Rajapakse. Neither can Mahinda Rajapakse reject the Western bloc and turn to China, Russia, Iran and some new found friends in Africa to salvage him from his veritable quagmire. This would lead to sanctions and embargoes that would squeeze the life out of Lanka. The people of Lanka will not suffer a Myanmar. They would surely rise in revolt to assign the ruling dynasty and its mafia cronies to oblivion. The aim of the resolution is to deliver a message to Mahinda Rajapakse "Either fall in line Or be rejected, The deck is in our hands".

While the issue of accountability for war crimes is most crucial, and the issue of truth and justice is fundamental, it has also become a strategic field for various powers to advance their respective agendas. The US has made use of the natural and just grievances of the International Tamil Diaspora to further its aims, and major sections of the Diaspora have willingly pursued this common agenda. The Diaspora may view this approach as the only available option to seek justice, given the intransigent denial by the Regime of any sense of dignity to the Tamil nation. But it is a game of double jeopardy. The truth is that this diabolical agenda will only serve to deliver the Tamil nation, and the country itself, to the clutches of US imperialism and Indian hegemony. So much for the right of self-determination of the Tamil nation, which is being pawned in a deadly imperialist chess game.

### **The Role of the Fundamentalist Bloc:**

It would be fatal to underestimate the political will, organizational capacity and political base of the die-hard, fundamentalist forces, who have been nurturing and advancing their shared dream of foisting a fundamentalist-theocratic unitary Sinhala-Buddhist State for over decades. This camp has infiltrated the armed forces, the various reactionary-chauvinist elements in all major ruling class political parties, the intelligence apparatus, sections of the Buddhist priesthood, the bureaucracy and pivotal state agencies, including the media. It is being supported and financed by a rising class of Sinhala-Buddhist comprador Capitalists/ mudalalis and a new privileged urban middle class, who crave for political dominance, class privilege and social status monopolized by the dominant ruling elites, to which the late Ven. Soma thero gave powerful ideological-doctrinal expression. Caste rivalry is also insidiously at play. This fraction of the Capitalist class would seek to displace the prevailing circuits of capital accumulation and expanded reproduction monopolized by the status quo and establish their own class hegemony. The power of this reactionary coalition of forces was amply demonstrated during Black July, 1983. Their capacity for massacre and mayhem was also demonstrated at Bindunuwewa wherein some 26 Tamil detainees were slaughtered in broad daylight. These forces have their own death squads and have so far operated alongside, and in conjunction with, the para-military death squads of the Regime. It is well known that these various paramilitary hit squads had been allowed to operate freely and to abduct and kill, and extort ransoms at will by the Regime itself. (check out the Wikileaks exposures)

The abduction of Premakumar Gunaratnam and Dimuthu Atygala and their sudden release – quite unprecedented – reveals the logic driving the future course of the Regime. It is clear that the Regime engineered the abductions and then backed off given the rising tide of opposition from a wide array of political forces and human rights organizations and in the face of the spirited and determined challenge posed by the spectacular success of the founding congress of the new Frontline Socialist Party of which both abductees were leading members. The strident interventions of the diplomatic community were decisive. The Regime stands accountable for these abductions, regardless of the fact that they have now been released. Even following the Geneva resolution, the frightening fact is that death squads roam at will, threatening, abducting, extorting and killing with impunity, driven by the logic of the system and the dynamics of survival of the Regime. This process could lead to state of anarchy and violent bloodletting unlike any scenario we have yet witnessed. Perhaps this is a scenario anticipated by the US (and India) to give the justification for invading the country and exercising direct domination on the pretext of the Right to Protect. This is a possibility not to be lightly discounted, given the predatory history of both these powers. These are the possible extreme stakes at play in the post-Geneva scenario.

### **Legacy of a Corrupt and Defunct Neo-Colonial Regime:**

The Mahinda Rajapakse ruling fraction may decide to compromise with the US agenda, in which case the whole resolution will be laid to dust, and the Tamil Diaspora itself will have to bite the dust, OR it may decide to oppose the US and the resolution, in which case it would have to cement unity with the die-hard, extremist-fundamentalist forces, and find refuge in the China bloc, in which case also the Tamil Diaspora would end up biting the dust. Either way, the Tamil nation will be sacrificed at the alter of imperialist politics and of the Machiavellian manipulations of the Regime, the country will be locked into the strategic agendas of this or that rival imperialist bloc, national sovereignty will be sold down the tube, the people will be bled dry to satisfy the appetites of predator powers and multi-national corporations, while the whole train of corrupt mafia cronies will continue to feast on the profits of plunder and pillage. Death squads will roam and prey unaccounted. Abductions, disappearances, political killings, torture, white fascist terror will reign throughout the Land and the country will be brought to a state of anarchy and rent apart by violent conflict. This is the legacy left to us by the Rajapakse regime and the consequences of its war of conquest and occupation of the Tamil nation designed to enthrone and perpetuate its dynastic power.

### **Role of India:**

India has played its own diabolical game. It also provided vital political, economic, military, diplomatic and strategic support to the Regime in the war to liquidate the LTTE. It is guilty of horrendous war crimes in Kashmir and in the suppression of the Maoist Communist forces and the tribal masses they are leading in struggle to claim their traditional homelands. As such, it has no moral claim to call for investigations into alleged war crimes. It gave expression to its growing strategic partnership with US imperialism by voting in favor of the resolution, even though they helped to dilute it in order to save face and ward off pressure from Tamil Nadu. India will use its leverage by voting for the resolution to further penetrate the lifelines of the economy and politics of the country in a bid to counter Chinese influence, by claiming responsibility for ensuring implementation of the resolution.

### **The Fate of the LLRC: A Cruel Farce:**

Some honest democratic forces feel that the only option to advance the struggle for democracy and freedom is to insist on the Regime to implement the recommendations and proposals of the Report of the LLRC. This is simply delusory. That will never happen. At best, there would be some cosmetic concessions, but even this is illusory given that the Regime simply cannot afford to open this can of worms, not only because it will unravel its direct accountability for alleged war crimes and atrocities, but also that it will be overwhelmed by the very same extremist-fascist ‘patriotic’ forces from within its own ranks, on whom it must rely for its own survival. Vasu, Dew and Tissa can call for the full implementation of the Recommendations, true to their role of whitewashing the crimes of the Regime as true puppets on a string. They do not represent the political will or agenda of the Regime, which places the survival and perpetuation of the power of the ruling dynasty above all else, even at the cost of driving the country to its destruction and plunging the people towards an abyss of tyranny, anarchy and terror.

**The Path to Freedom and Democracy:**

The only path towards freedom and democracy is to build a mass anti-imperialist revolutionary front of the all exploited classes and oppressed masses and nationalities in a common revolutionary struggle to overthrow this defunct and rotting neo-colonial State and political order and establish a People's Democratic State that shall enshrine the unity, equality, security, autonomy and democratic freedom of the People of Lanka, paving the foundations for genuine National Independence, People's Democracy and Prosperity. However much the ruling classes, including the Regime and the Opposition, would try to deceive and delude the masses by false promises of freedom, democracy and prosperity, the toiling, oppressed masses will come to realize that it is the prevailing neo-colonial system that lies at the root of their misery and degradation and that the only hope for a better world is to exercise their own state power in deciding and directing their life and future.

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