

“Walk to the troops’: SMS sent Tamils to their death”. The other side of the story.

Posted on May 14th, 2011

Don Wijewardana

Ben Doherty’s sensational article “Walk to the troops’: SMS sent Tamils to their death’ appearing in The Age of 14 May is one sided. At the time the war ended Palitha Kohona was Secretary of Foreign Affairs. As such he did not have any operational responsibilities relating to the war. All what he did was to provide information on how to surrender to anyone who enquired including Ban ki Moon’s Chief of Staff Vijay Nambiar. The story should have ended there. But the LTTE rump desperately searching for someone to pin responsibility for the defeat of the terrorist group is clutching straws pursuing Kohona.

Besides this there is another fundamental aspect of the incident Doherty has failed to examine. That is that if Nadesan and Pulidevan indeed were intent in surrendering to the armed forces they were killed by the LTTE. There is considerable evidence to support this view, than the conjecture that the army killed them.

On 15 May 2009, three days before the war ended, President Rajapaksa had reiterated an earlier appeal he had made to the LTTE to surrender to armed forces unconditionally. B. Muralidhar Reddy, reporter for the Indian Frontline who was embedded with the security forces in Mullathivu noted “Frontline learnt from impeccable sources that from Jordan Rajapaksa sent a message (on 15 May) to the ICRC that his government was ready even at that late stage to accept the surrender of the Tiger leaders if it was unconditional. The message was duly conveyed but the initiative failed because the Tigers were ready to surrender only to a third party and not to the military”[\[1\]](#).

This is confirmed in the last telephone call to international media the day before the war ended, when Balasingham Nadesan, head of political affairs of the LTTE insisted that surrender should be to a third party. Nadesan had contacted Marie Colvin, senior journalist with The Sunday Times (London), on his satellite phone in the early hours of May 17 and asked her to broker surrender. “We are putting down our arms. We are looking for a guarantee of security from the Obama administration and the British government. Is there a guarantee of security?” he had asked her[\[2\]](#).

But Prabhakaran was not keen on the idea. Living in a bunker without proper intelligence he was certain that at some point the military drive would come to

a halt. Thus he continued to stay put. According to veteran journalist DBS Jeyaraj the Tiger leader was relying very much on a massive counteroffensive planned to destroy army defences in the Puthukkudiyiruppu region. But the debacle at Aanandapuram resulting in the deaths of 623 cadres including his charismatic northern force commander “Col” Theepan put paid to those plans.

Even after this, as the army drew closer and closer to the beleaguered Tigers the senior deputies began entreating Prabhakaran to withdraw from the war zone. But Prabhakaran, stubborn and obstinate, would not listen.

As the circumstances became increasingly perilous Prabhakaran’s recently appointed global chief Kumaran Pathmanathan (KP) tried to salvage the situation. KP went into action immediately and got a number of western countries and the United Nations involved in a possible rescue bid. On the early morning of 17th May he was pleading with the United Nation’s Vijay Nambiar to arrange for surrender.

This was the day before the war ended. But when KP conveyed the idea of the plan to Prabhakaran he was furious^[3]. Prabhakaran not only rejected the plan to surrender but also reprimanded KP saying, “Unakkum Porattatm vellum endru Nambikkai Illaiyaa”? (Do you also not have faith that the struggle will succeed). That was on 17 May the day before it all ended. So it is very clear that till the very end Prabhakaran did not agree to surrender and if they had to, he wanted them to go down holding head high.

On the other hand Prabhakaran’s deputies were well aware of their fate if they did not surrender. In the circumstances if the group led by Nadesan and Pulidevan broke rank and went to surrender to the armed forces it is clear that it was against the orders of Prabhakaran. As such it was much more likely that Prabhakaran’s own guards shot them. His success that far had been the well disciplined militia. On the other hand, if the armed forces killed them it would have meant flouting an order of the commander in chief.

[1] B. Muralidhar Reddy in the war zone, FINAL HOURS, An eyewitness account of the last 70 hours of Eelam War IV Vol:26 Iss:12 URL: <http://www.flonnet.com/fl2612/stories/20090619261200900.htm>.

[2] Marie Colvin, ‘Tigers begged me to broker surrender’, the Sunday Times (London) Internet Edition, May 24 2009.

[3] D.B.S. Jeyaraj, [LAST DAYS OF THIRUVENKADAM VELUPPILLAI PRABHAKARAN – Part 2 –](#)

Posted on 01 June 2009 by Sailanmuslim,
<http://www.sailanmuslim.com/news/?p=1165>

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6 Responses to “‘Walk to the troops’: SMS sent Tamils to their death”. The other side of the story.”



- 1.
2. **PRIYAN WIJEYERATNE Says:**

[May 14th, 2011 at 5:31 pm](#)

There is a little point in debating on who killed whom now that the people of North and East have come to enjoy the fruits of their Liberation from LTTE. We must gather all credible and real evidence and keep them securely to use in case of need to protect our Leaders. Else, let the past be history.

Rating: +4 (from 10 votes)



- 3.
4. **Kit Athul Says:**

[May 14th, 2011 at 6:35 pm](#)

Author, DON has given an excellent analysis. Priyan, you are wrong. Past cannot be history until the Moon Report is reduced. Thanks again to author Don Wijewardana making the Moon Report ridiculous and hilarious.

Rating: +8 (from 10 votes)



5.

6. **Ratanapala Says:**

[May 14th, 2011 at 8:31 pm](#)

Would it be wrong to surmise that Poo-paharan was confident of the Christian West coming to his assistance even at the very last moment. The very same thing happened when he promised to hand over weapons to the Indians within 72 hrs and reneged on his promise, by making only a token hand over of weapons and finally took on the IPKF single handedly. I would say there too he was given assurances from very powerful friends of the LTTE in the West to fight on and that they would be helped and funded. The fact that the Christian West is complicit in keeping the LTTE going is now history. Even now they are keeping the LTTE rump wagging its Tiger Tail.

Even to the last hour he was waiting for the Marines to come charging to rescue him provide him with safe haven. Unfortunately for him although the West tried their level best they couldn't make up their minds to send the Marines! Milliband and Kuchner tried their best soft approach but to no avail.

Under these circumstances it is not difficult to imagine that he would have shot anybody who was willing to surrender and at least smart enough to understand that the end of LTTE as a fighting force was nigh.

Rating: +6 (from 6 votes)



7.

8. **Dham Says:**

[May 14th, 2011 at 11:33 pm](#)

The point is Osama Bin Laden too , surely wanted to surrender when he was fully surrounded by troops.

But too bad so sad ! This is the fact of life.

Rating: +4 (from 4 votes)

9.



10. **Lorenzo Says:**

[May 15th, 2011 at 12:43 am](#)

Well said Don. This is the true context of it. LTTE jokers have their knickers in a knot.

If 40,000 died, so be it. We have peace thanks to their demise. Had they turned on the LTTE terrorists and killed them, they would have survived. If they provided a human shield to the LTTE, they don't deserve to survive as they are terrorist accomplices.

Rating: +4 (from 4 votes)

11.



12. **AnuD Says:**

[May 15th, 2011 at 7:34 am](#)

I remember to to listen one you tube clip by Wickramabahu Karunaratne and he says that just a few days before the end of the war, Nadesan had said they would not surrender.