

'KP's arrest single biggest blow to Tiger network'

666 words

9 August 2009

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

SUNOSL

English

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Colombo, Aug. 9 -- The arrest of Kumaran Pathmanathan alias KP, one of the most ruthless terrorists and the self appointed leader of LTTE (after Prabhakaran's death), is the single biggest blow to the international network of the Tigers, international terrorism expert Prof. **Rohan Gunaratna** told the 'Sunday Observer'. "He has the worst human rights violations record in the entire sub-continent," Prof. Gunaratna said.

KP was captured in a very successful covert operation by Sri Lanka defence officials, on Thursday. He is now being interrogated by intelligence sleuths at an undisclosed location here.

At the time of his arrest he was the leader of the LTTE as well as its Chief Procurement Officer. KP is also wanted by Interpol on gun running charges. Following the death of Prabhakaran, KP vowed to revive LTTE through its international network and a few weeks ago announced a 'transitional government in exile'.

In the aftermath of his arrest Sunday Observer interviewed Prof. Gunaratna, Professor of Security Studies and Head of International Centre for Political Violence, Singapore. He is an expert on LTTE's international affairs.

Q: How do you think this arrest will impact on the Government's fight against LTTE terror?

A: There were three leaders that enabled the LTTE to become the most ruthless and violent outfits in the world. One was Velupillai Prabhakaran, second was Pottu Amman and the third was KP.

Q: Will this be the end of LTTE?

A: KP's arrest is the single biggest blow to the international network of the Tigers. It was KP who enabled Prabhakaran to do what he wanted in Sri Lanka. KP was the fundraising, procurement and shipping head of LTTE.

Q: Will there be a new leader?

A: There will be many successors but neither of them will have the understanding and the knowledge and the experience of KP. He was in a class by himself. As the chief procurement officer of armaments and equipment that included 50 tonnes of TNT and 10 tonnes of RDX (plastic explosives) he was instrumental in killing tens of thousands of innocent civilians, men, women and children. He has the worst human rights violations record in the entire sub-continent.

Q: Who masterminded the operation to capture KP?

A: The operation to capture KP was masterminded by Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa. It began even before the death of Prabhakaran and the appointment of KP as his successor.

The capture of KP clearly demonstrates that the key to fighting terrorism is innovative leadership and not classical bureaucracy. The second most important ingredient in the fight against terrorism, as shown in the arrest of KP, is the ability to collect real time intelligence of terrorists and their movements (travel patterns).

In a brilliant operation masterminded by the Defence Secretary, he managed to accomplish both these aspects. It demonstrated that Gotabhaya Rajapaksa is not only the master strategist in defeating the LTTE in Sri Lanka but also was the single most important individual in planning the capture of KP.

Q: Where was he captured?

A: KP lived both in Thailand and Malaysia. He enjoyed access to very high profile political and military figures in both the countries. The cooperation both of Malaysia and Thailand was instrumental in getting his location and final arrest.

Q: What was he at the time of the arrest?

A: He was the Chairman of the LTTE and the Chief procurement officer.

LTTE sympathizers try to describe KP as one who represents the humane side of LTTE who could have transformed the outfit into a political entity?

KP is one of the most ruthless terrorists in the world. How can a man who was instrumental in killing thousands of innocent civilians be called humane? If someone calls him humane that person must be insane.

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