

Diplomacy, Rule Of Law, Ending Of Corruption And Racism Pivotal In Fighting LTTE Networks Abroad



By Udara Soysa

In the context of LTTE elements getting momentum in the Western world, it is very important for the Sri Lankan state to develop world class diplomats; and end domestic turmoil due to the collapse of law and order, racism and corruption, said counter terror expert Prof. Rohan Gunaratna, when interviewed by The Sunday Leader.

Failed Diplomacy

“Traditionally Sri Lankan diplomats have not understood the importance of fighting the malicious propaganda of the LTTE. As a result, the LTTE mislead some Western governments over the developments in the No Fire Zone,” said Gunaratna.

Gunaratna further stressed that the centre of gravity of the LTTE activities has now shifted to North America, Europe and Australia, countries traditionally soft on terrorism and extremism.

“The Foreign Ministry through its missions failed to inform the world of the ground reality. The LTTE international network can be dismantled the very same way the LTTE in Sri Lanka was dismantled. It requires creative leadership, resources and training. The lead agency should be the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka working both with the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Information,” he said.

Suicidal Nationalism

Gunaratna also pointed out that the misguided nationalists both Sinhalese and Tamils have nearly destroyed this country. Religion, language and caste are very private and they must never be used to build political strength, he warned.

Gunaratna stressed that we must be very careful of ethnic and religious entrepreneurs that seek to divide people on the basis of their ethnicity or faith. “They are scoundrels that must be rehabilitated,” he said. “If the government gives way to the ultra Sinhala nationalists, who advocate that Tamils are second-class citizens, we will never have a united Sri Lanka,” Gunaratna warned.

“The same way, the Rajapaksa government has defeated the armed Tamil fanatics, Mahinda Rajapaksa has to use his Sinhala credentials to contain ultra Sinhala nationalism and build a truly united Sri Lanka. Within his term of office, the President should build a visionary plan and work towards making Sri Lanka a united country where every ethnic and religious community can live in harmony. The Rajapaksa legacy should be not only to defeat the most ruthless terrorist group but also to build a prosperous Sri Lanka. Otherwise, a segment of Tamils will cling on to the legacy of Prabhakaran.”

Top-Down

The counter terror expert defined ‘good governance, economic development and the rule of law’ as the ‘best medicine’ for terrorism. “President Rajapaksa must prosecute his corrupt officials and sack his incompetent ministers and civil servants immediately. There are many. Like Singapore, Sri Lanka should develop a zero-tolerance policy against corruption and incompetence. Not only should ministers and officials be honest but they should also appear honest in their conduct.

“The presidential drive to eradicate corruption should start from the top. Ministers and civil servants must become role models. Nonetheless, many ministers and civil servants have become immune from justice. As discipline is central to development, the President should develop the necessary institutions and procedures in this direction. At an international meeting, a Sri Lankan minister was the last to come. He had no sense of time.”

The Jokers

Professionalism should be brought back with strict discipline said Gunaratna. “Without think tanks, the intellectuals and the professionals, time will be wasted adopting trial and error methods. The President’s

pillars of success should be derived from them. When jokers are appointed, the tax payers' money has been wasted. The Presidential team should include professionals and intellectuals for the development of the economy of the country.”

3 D Concept

The 3 D concept — Discipline, Development and finally Democracy – should be introduced. Unlike previous leaders who gave priority to democracy, law and order that has deteriorated should be given priority, said Gunaratna.

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