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60th year of Independence: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE: MAKE 2008 THE YEAR OF VICTORY!

by Dayan Jayatileka

"...You can't make the mistake of being weak. If you're weak with security, you are defeated." - Fidel Castro: My Life (2007: 321)



We are about to step into 2008, the 60th year of Sri Lanka's Independence. It shows every sign of being a decisive year. Indeed it must be made so. Sixty years after independence is the right historical and psychological moment to resolve the major problem facing Sri Lanka. That is the reunification of this small island. Sri Lanka's natural borders must be its political boundaries. Its armed forces must enjoy the sole monopoly of might throughout its territory. Whatever its internal arrangements, the country must be one, single, indivisible political entity.

What does this mean in concrete terms? It means that the LTTE must be eliminated as a military challenge to Sri Lanka's unity and territorial integrity. This would create the opportunity for the LTTE to convert itself into a democratic political formation, provided it accepts that any solution to Tamil political grievances and identity issues must be pursued peacefully and democratically within the parameters of a single, united Sri Lanka.

This objective is both imperative and feasible. It is imperative because any sustainable progress requires the elimination of the enemy armed force and its capacity for instant destabilisation. Sri Lanka can move forward only if it eliminates the obstacle in its path. Its economy can grow in a sustainable manner only if military expenditure levels off and is progressively reduced, and more fundamentally, if the national market is reunified, which means the reunification of the national territory as a single space.

It is feasible because, the war can be won. We are at a rare moment in our country's history in which we enjoy a favourable confluence of factors: a President (and Defence Secretary) with political will and determination; an experienced and respected military leadership; massive popular support; high military morale; increased recruitment; high performance on the part of all three armed services.

2008 must then be designated as our Year of Victory. Certainly the war cannot be won by solely military means, but let there be no illusions: a war can be won only by primarily military means. All else is utopianism. However the war effort must be supported by politics and diplomacy. Prabhakaran will attempt a

replay of 1987, when he successfully leveraged the external factor (at the time, sub-regional, i.e. Tamil Nadu). Today it will be pressure from those countries which have a large, electorally significant Tamil Diaspora. These countries seem determined to prevent the military victory of the Sri Lankan state over the Tigers, and seem to prefer the survival/existence of the Tigers as a military entity. Sri Lanka cannot afford to be deterred by these pressures, and sacrifice its future.

The anti-Sri Lanka campaign will accelerate next year as Sri Lanka makes headway in the struggle to overcome the Tigers. The West, preceded by the Western-dominated media, will howl about a "humanitarian crisis", and brandish the policy of R2P ('Responsibility to Protect') at us as we close in on Prabhakaran's bunker. It must be blunted by three counter-thrusts.

First, we must rebuild our national defences by rejuvenating our National Human Rights Commission and/or creating new and credible institutions headed by internationally respected Sri Lankans.

Second, we must devolve power to the North and East, swiftly and sustainably. This means, as a first step, reactivating the 13th amendment, as proposed by Douglas Devananda.

Third, our foreign relations must be consciously reoriented, and foreign policy must turn for inspiration to "Kadrigamar Chintanaya". Those Sri Lankans whose natural tendency is to ask "how high?" when the West says "jump", as well as those whose knees knock at the

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thought of Western cutbacks, neither recall the history of Sri Lanka's own foreign policy nor understand contemporary international relations.

As for those who would counter that the Socialist camp existed at the time as an option, it is to be recalled that the "moment of uni-polar hegemony" has passed its zenith or is in crisis, and we live in the period of the Iraqi debacle, the revitalisation of Russia, the rise of China and tendencies towards multi-polarity. Under President Rajapakse, Sri Lanka has already embarked upon a diversification of its dependence. I advocate a return to that emergent thrust, within an overall Realist policy of power balancing, especially multi-polar power balancing.

Until this war is over and won, our foreign policy has to be the handmaiden of strategy, an overall strategy whose primary goal and objective must be the unification of the state through the military defeat and destruction of the secessionist-terrorist enemy, the LTTE. Foreign policy must be defence-

driven, rather than the other way about. In our 60th anniversary year Sri Lankans would do well to be inspired by the words of Fidel Castro, a product of another small island nation in the tropical sun. In his 700 plus page autobiography My Life (2007) Fidel Castro says "Those who don't respond, those who don't fight, those who don't combat, those people are lost from the beginning, and in us, you'll never find that kind of person."

Dayan Jayatillake completed his PhD at Griffith University last year and is currently the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in Geneva. He is also the Chairman, Governing Body of the ILO and Vice President of the UN Human Rights Council.

This article is an edited version of an article published recently by several Sri Lankan newspapers.



Sri Lankan Film wins People's Choice Award

The only non-Arab film to win an award at the recently concluded Dubai International Film Festival was Sri Lankan filmmaker Salinda Perera's debut work, *Dheevari* (Fisherman's Daughter). This is because Dubai's Muhr Awards are open only to Arab filmmakers. This year, Dubai instituted the People's Choice Award for which the public votes for their favourite film. The director stated that

the film was shot way back in 1994, but financial constraints led him to get it ready in wearying, stressful stages until it was completed eleven years later. Present in Dubai was leading Sri Lankan actress Sangeetha Werraratne, who plays the role of Valli with compelling subtlety and confidence.



Television - SBS - Wednesday 6th February 7.30pm
Food Safari Episode 10 on Sri Lanka, features Peter Kuruvita (Flying Fish), Sunil (Sunil's in Sydney) and the Queen of Asian cooking, Charmaine Solomon OAM. She will make one of her signature Sri Lankan chicken curries and serve it with string hoppers, pol samboal and drumstick curry. See SBS website for more details www.sbs.com.au/foodsafari

Cricket - One Day Series - Sri Lanka Vs India
5th February 1.15pm (gates open 11.45am) at Gabba, Brisbane
 Tickets at www.ticketmaster.com.au

Radio Programme Schedule

Sunday Radio 8.30 AM	Producer/ Panel Operator	Tuesday-Sandella 10.00 PM	Producer/ Panel Operator
3 February 2008	Gihan/Sandun	5 February 2008	(Youth) Sandun/Thisara
10 February 2008	Ananda/Ananda	12 February 2008	Samanmal/Ananda
17 February 2008	Kosinna/Kosinna	19 February 2008	Prema/Jayasiri
24 February 2008	Nuwan/Aravinda	26 February 2008	(bi-lingual) Derrick/ Sarath Gunatileka
2 March 2008	Jayantha Weerasekera/Jayasiri	4 March 2008	(Youth) Aravinda/Aravinda

Youth Corner



A Gift of Life Nipuna Wickremaratne Grade 11 Brisbane State High School

In a hospital, a 13 year old boy spends 3 full days for dialysis as both his kidneys are dysfunctional. His schooling is restricted to two days a week. He cannot play, run, or have fun as any of his other school mates and has no choice but to undergo this agony, until he receives a kidney transplant.

A 10 year old girl, suffering from a lung disease, fights between life and death, in another near by hospital. She is in an urgent need for a double lung transplant and in all probability will die if a lung is not found in time for the transplant.

These are only two out of millions of heart-rending events that are happening around the world. Numerous people, regardless of their age, suffer and die due to heart, lung, liver or kidney diseases. Medical revolution has allowed organ and tissue transplant for people with serious and life threatening diseases and provide them with a second chance in life. Sadly though, people are dying due to shortage of organ and tissue donors. In fact, 100 people die in Australia each year while waiting for a transplant. Moreover, there are nearly 2000 people in Australia, on the organ transplant waiting list with hope that a suitable organ would come his way with the generosity of a deceased donor. Australia has one of the poorest organ and tissue donation rates in the developed world, despite the fact that Australia has one of the world's best transplant success rates.

Organ and tissue donation is a medical process where by specific organs and tissues are removed from the body of a deceased donor and transplanted into someone else who is in need. A deceased donor is a person who dies suddenly, for an example due to a trauma. Organ and tissue donation is not just a medical process; it is an act of compassion, kindness and ultimate generosity of the donor. In Australia, organs which can be donated include heart, liver, lungs, kidneys and pancreas. Tissues which can be donated

include eye tissues, bone tissues, heart valves and skin tissues. The donated organs will be used for people who suffer from failure of one or more organs. Eye tissues are used for those who suffer from eye diseases or blindness. People who wear glasses might wonder, as to whether they can donate eye tissues. Of course they can. Wearing glasses does not pose a problem because transplanted tissue will work very well in another person's eye to restore their sight or to cure the eye disease. Donated bone tissues will help people who suffer from trauma or bone cancer. Patients who suffer from degenerative valves will benefit from the donated heart valves. Organ donors are primarily people who suffer brain death as a result of trauma. Brain death takes place when blood circulation to the brain ceases, and brain stops functioning and dies with no possibility of recovery.

Some people might think that the doctors will not attempt to save them in an event of a trauma, hoping to harvest their organs. This is not true. No doctor would ever deliberately let a person die regardless of whether the person is an organ donor or not. A series of tests are carried out by two independent and appropriately qualified senior doctors to confirm that brain death has occurred. Organs are removed by a surgical operation and the donor's body is treated with dignity and respect. Organ and tissue donation does not alter the physical appearance of the body in any manner nor does it affect the funeral arrangements.

By registering as an organ donor, we can give someone the opportunity to live or improve the quality of their life after our death. There are nearly 2000 people waiting for a life saving organ, and one person who donates organs can save up to 10 lives. The recipients will remember you for the rest of their lives. Saddest thing is that most persons have no reservation or issue in donating organs upon their death. It is just that they have not taken that extra effort in registering as a donor. Take this decision before the end of the day; it is that simple.

So consider registering as an organ donor, and most importantly let your family and close friends know about your wish, so that it will be easier for them to make your wish come true. You have the satisfaction that upon your death you would give the greatest gift which one can ever give to another; that is the gift of life.

(Register online via <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/public/services/aodr/register.shtml> and make a difference)

Radio 4EB Sri Lankan Group actively encourages the youth to participate in programming, panel operating and other activities. Free training is provided for those who wish to get involved in panel operation. Listen to the programme every Tuesday 10pm to 11pm and send in your song requests and birthday/anniversary greetings to be broadcast. We would also appreciate if you could write an article to the newsletter. Contact the youth coordinator - Sandun Sandella.youth@hotmail.com

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Advisory Committee: Vasanthe Vithanage, Jayasiri Weerawardena and Wimal Kannangara

Children's Corner

ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ නිදහස් දිනය

මේ අවුරුද්දේ සමහරු ලෝකයේ 60 වෙනි නිදහස් දිනයයි ශ්‍රී ලංකාව නිදහස ලැබුණේ 1948 ජෙෆර්සන් 04 වෙනිදායි. 1815ට පෙර ශ්‍රී ලංකාව රජවරු විසින් ආලෝකය කැපු නිදහස් වූවකි.

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Independence Day—Sri Lanka

We are celebrating 60 years of independence on February 4, 2008. Two brothers, attending Dutton Park Primary School, have captured their thoughts in this Children's page. Malinda Abeyasekera, 12 years old, contributed to the write-up. Vimukthi Abeyasekera, 10 years old and is in Year 6 who drew the flag and gave a description.



Malinda



Vimukthi

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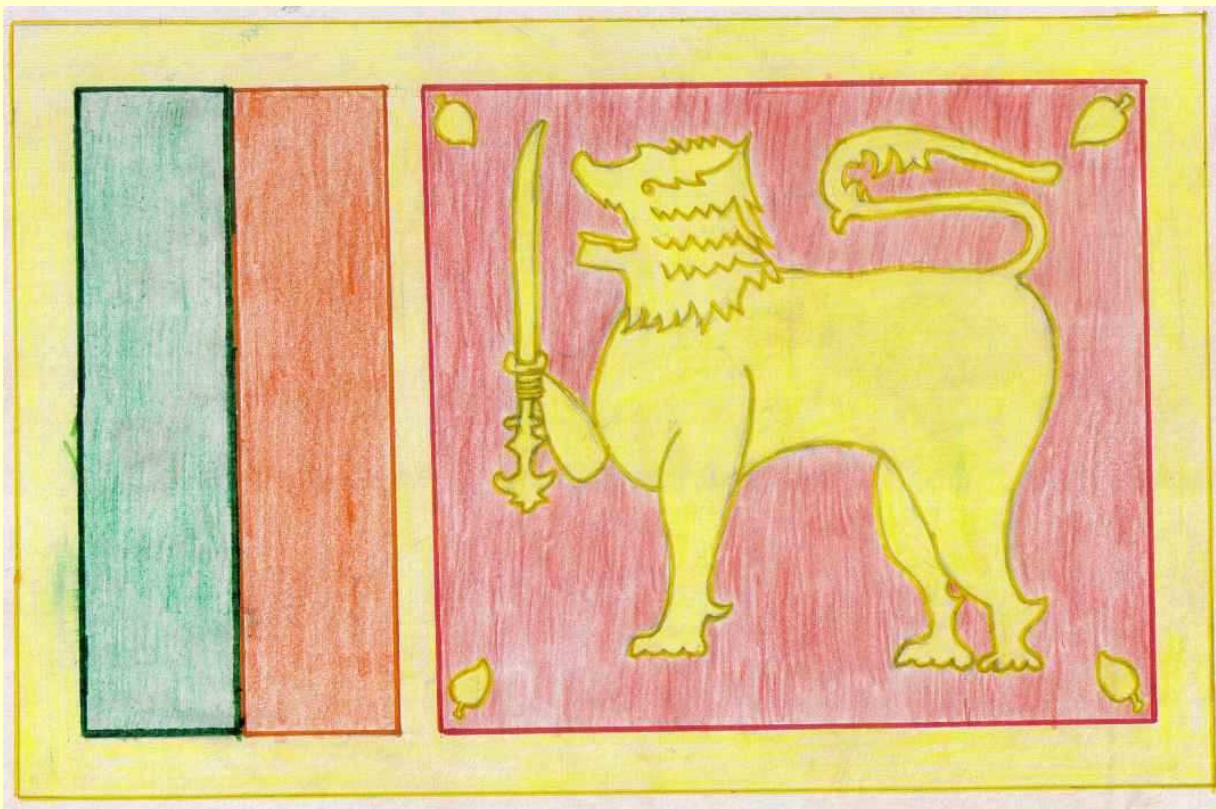
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DUTTON PARK P.S.
අවුරුදු 10



We welcome contributions from children of any age. Send us your letters, stories, poems, drawings etc. We will make every effort to publish them in future issues.

Upcoming Events

SRI LANKA SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting

16 February 6 to 9pm . .

QUT, Garden Point Campus
S block Conference Hall

Hiran Cooray 0411 480337

SILVER FAWN CLUB

Valentines Nite

Saturday 16 February 7 pm onwards
Ithaca Bowls Club, Fulcher Road, Red Hill

Tickets: \$20 members \$25 guests
Non Stop Music and dinner included

Susan on 0409 262 855 or
Davenal Flanderka on 041 902 4506
Email: dfla@bigpond.net.au



Sinhala Association of Qld presents Giriraj Kaushalya's Sikuru Hathe

Vijaya Nandasiri, Iranganie Serasinghe, Tony Ranasinghe, Veena Jayakody,
Anarkaliie, Rodney Warnakula, Anton Jude & Priyantha Senavirathne

Date: 10 February Time: 6pm Venue: UQ Schonell Theatre

Tickets from Aravinda (0412 745700) or any other Committee Member.

Celebration

60 years of
Independence
1948 - 2008

Cultural Evening and Dinner by
The Sri Lankan Community in Brisbane

Tickets can be purchased from the following

Anton Swan Tel 0433 194 852
Jayantha Pathikirikorala Tel 3808 2299
Aravinda Rubasinghe Tel 0412 745 700
Hiran Cooray Tel 0411 480 334
Davenal Flanderka Tel 0415 024 506
Jayasiri Vveerawardane Tel 3715 5415
Nuwan Bellanthudawa Tel 0433 758 979

Mary Mac Hall,
616, Ipswich Rd,
Annerley

Saturday, 2nd February 2008
6.30 pm - 11.30 pm

Adults: \$35.00
Children- \$25.00
(under 12 Y)

Dress Smart Casual
Licensed venue - no BYO

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Asanga Priyamantha Peiris

නමල් දිසානායක
Namal Udugama

ජයසිරි අමරසේකර
Jayasiri Amarassekara

Music by *SHIRAN & The Silver Rings*

එකම වේදිකාවේදී

2008 පෙබරවාරි මස 24 වන ඉරිදා සවස 6.000
6.00pm - Sunday 24th February 2008

MacGregor Primary School

McCullough Street MACGREGOR QLD 4109 UBD 200 P16

Tickets
FAMILY - \$50 ADULT - \$20
CONCESSION - \$12 CHILDREN 6-12 Y - \$10

Please Contact
Sumithra 3278 7651 Thilani 3376 9709 Temple 3818 8806

Also Available at *Saamy / Monier* shops