

Eye-witness account of tiger blood sport. (1987, November 25). *Sun*.

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# EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT OF TIGER BLOOD SPORT

Tiger terrorists who had killed 13 soldiers at Kokkuvil at the height of the offensive by the Indian troops in Jaffna, cut down the remaining two Indian soldiers in a hail of gunfire, an Indian journalist who witnessed the incident has reported.

Photographer Shyam Tekwani of "INDIA TODAY" relates in the November 15 issue of the magazine how "at Kokkuvil, where 13 Indian soldiers were killed, Babu (18, and Keethan (17) were arguing about who would go and finish off the remaining two soldiers."

"I arrived barely minutes after the action, in time to witness a sight I hope never to see again — Tiger guerrillas, barefoot and in

short pants cutting down the two remaining Indian soldiers in a hail of gunfire." Tekwani says in his cover story "In the Tigers Den."

Describing how the Tigers fought, Tekwani reports that "there was one very energetic and enthusiastic lad, totally unarmed, who scurried like a rat across the street every time an Indian soldier fell, to retrieve weapons and ammunition, with no care for the bullets whizzing around. The overall mood was one of excitement and a sudden zest for the blood sport they have started to enjoy the most—killing.

"At times, the scene was surreal, like a group of boys playing cops and robbers, the only difference

being the bullets were for real. Occasionally the blood just came through, when they pulled out chocolates from the shirt pocket of a bloody corpse and passed them around while idly kicking at the remains of a human brain.

"Not once did they give any sign that they were facing one of the most powerful armies in the world. In fact, it was just the opposite. Any one of our Tiger cubs can take on the IPKF in man-to-man combat and defeat them, said one. Their confidence after two weeks of fighting comes from their conviction that the IPKF is untrained in the kind of urban guerrilla warfare that, for many Tigers has been their whole life.

"Operation Pawan" as the IPKF's activities in Sri Lanka are code named is a chapter of Indian military history, that will contain none of the honour and glory of a victorious campaign, the "INDIA TODAY" report said, quoting an IPKF officer as describing the liberation of Jaffna as "a dirty little war and that too by proxy.

The report lists the assurances with which New Delhi hopes to use to win over the local population, and quotes an Indian High Commission source as saying that "we have extracted all these assurances from the highest levels of the Sri Lankan government."

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# Eye-witness account of Tiger...

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"If Colombo reneges on any of the conditions, they are in worse trouble than before. With 20,000 Indian troops sitting in the country, it will lead to another Cyprus-type 'division.' We are confident that Jayewardene will not allow that to happen."

The assurances that had been obtained were that there would be no colonisation by the government in the eastern province, that Tamil refugees in India would return to Sri Lanka as early as possible, that the devolution package en-

visaged in the accord was fully implemented, that the merger of the northern and eastern provinces under one administrative unit takes place, that a Tamil police force is set up as soon as possible and that Tamils be permitted to enrol in the Sri Lankan army.

"Fortunately for Delhi, the reaction in Tamil Nadu to the IPKF offensive against the Tigers has been muted. In a recent poll in the state, 67 per cent of those interviewed said that Rajiv Gandhi had not let down the Tamils," the "INDIA TODAY" report added.