

LTTE suffers in the East

Operation White Eagle launched by Army Commandos and Special Forces of the Independent Brigade assisted by Vijayaba troops located and destroyed LTTE's most vital base complex in the Eastern Province, last week.

The base complex, strategically located in Angodavillu, where the districts of Polonnaruwa, Batticaloa and Trincomalee meet, has been in existence since 1986, at least an year before the IPKF was inducted to Sri Lanka.

The base complex comprised of five camps. They are the Mutur camp also known as Jaya's camp, Sudhar's camp, Roshan's camp, Batticaloa camp also known as Varadan's Kovil camp and a smaller camp. These camps accommodated about 700, 300, 200, 300 and 50 cadres respectively and was the largest remaining base complex in the Eastern Province.

The area of the base complex is assessed at 5 km by 3 km and included good facilities — medical clinic and surgical theater, firing range and training grounds, paddy fields and vegetables plots, poultry and cattle farm, ordinance and tailoring units etc. Each camps had a number of huts. Mutur camp, the largest

in extent and the best in facilities had 70 huts and a parade ground.

The LTTE had located this base complex very intelligently. It is surrounded by four major waterways. Kandal Karadu Aru, Merugal Aru, Avani Aru and the Mahaweli ganga, making the access of every troops difficult and hazardous. It is the positioning of the base complex which made it possible for the LTTE to continue uninterrupted from 1986 till recently. The configuration of the camps from the air could not be seen due to the heavy jungle canopy and excellent camouflage.

The base complex is the second largest cluster of LTTE camps to be captured and destroyed in the Eastern Province. The largest was a similar structure in the Beruit area (one of the four divisions of the Amparai-Batticaloa Command of the LTTE) destroyed again by the Independent Brigade commanded by Brigadier Janaka Perera. The significance of the Beruit Base complex, located in the Toppigala jungles and the base complex in the Ayodavillu jungles is best described by General A. S. Kalkat, GOC IPKF Sri Lanka who is today a member of India's high powered policy planning committee.

General Kalkat said, "The success of counter insurgency the East will be dependent on the denial of the access to the people for cadres and resources by the LTTE. Following the destruction of their main bases in the jungles of Toppigala and Angodavillu they must be relentlessly pursued. The LTTE's scattered remnants must be denied the time to regroup and plan to reorganize or gain strength. This will force the LTTE to get killed or give up in despair."

month several LTTE teams were killed in confrontation by special forces and commando reconnaissance teams probing deep into the jungles.

Operation White Eagle, a historic operation in Eelam War II, commenced on April 22nd and reached the target on the morning of April 24th 1994. The operation which is still at its final phases of withdrawal was a joint effort by the Independent Brigade and the Vijayaba troops. The White Eagle Operational Comman-

gado his able team of pilots which contributed to the success of this operation.

The success of Operation White Eagle deprives the LTTE not only of a strategic base complex serving three districts but also their principle co-ordinating base for major operations in the East. From this base of 1500 cadres, the LTTE had conducted massacres of Muslim and Sinhala villages, attacked army camps, police stations and convoys for nearly a decade.

Its fall will also deny the LTTE of a resting base for cadres arriving from the North to the East and cadres travelling from the East to the North.

According to the Directorate of military intelligence mobility of the LTTE is high particularly at this stage because the Batticaloa and Amparai Special District Commander Karuna is in Jaffna. It is reported that Karuna has come under much criticism following the collapse of the Batticaloa and Amparai command of the LTTE, and it is likely that a new Special District Commander will be appointed.

The fall of the base complex at Angodavillu will also be a major blow

by Agni

Kalkat's statement should be remembered by all military and political leaders. Even though the complexion of the Northern and eastern theaters are markedly different, the principles of depriving the LTTE the opportunity of popular support, driving them into the jungles, blocking the supplies and hunting them in the jungles will be the decisive phase in this war.

The battle at Angodavillu was the work of the special forces and the commandos, who have been continuously engaging the LTTE militants during the past three months in that area. During the last

der was Brigadier Janaka Perera the upfront Commander of the elite Independent Brigade and his deputy Colonel Gamini Hettiarachchi, another outstanding soldier. The three Regiments which participated were, the first Commando Regiment by Lt. Col. Srinath Rajapaksa, the Commanding Officer of the Special Forces, Lt. Col. Jaivi Fernando, Commanding Officer of the Commando Regiment and Major Manoj Peiris, Commanding Officer of the eight Vijayaba Regiment. These troops were continuously assisted by the Air Force Zonal Commander, Wing Commander Laxan Sal-

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to the LTTE morale, particularly to its new recruits and those cadres who are frustrated and awaiting to leave the movement. Loosing its home and being scattered as well as a block in the main supply route which is though this base can definitely trust the enemy. The implications of the fall of this base complex will be realized only in the month's ahead.

However, the Army must be mindful that they will have to conduct operations con-

tinuously in these areas and dominate the jungle and not give the opportunity for the LTTE to regroup and reorganize.

The fall of this base complex also prevents the LTTE's injured cadres from the Amparai and Batticaloa command from receiving medical treatment before leaving for the north for treatment specialized attention. It is likely that the remaining cadres of the LTTE in the Eastern theater, which is assessed at about 600 by the directorate of military intelli-

gence, will not establish another static base complex of the magnitude but think in terms of mobile bases.

The era of static bases in the Eastern Province will be gone for long time provided the Army's elite forces keeps the pressure on the LTTE in the Eastern jungles.

While the LTTE suffered in the East, Operation Jayamaga was being conducted West of the Army controlled area in Vavuniya. The expansion of the forward Defence Lines in

Vavuniya is conducted under the direction of General A. M. U. Senviratne. The Operations Commander Brigadier Patrick Fernando was assisted by the 4 Gemunu Watch troops under Lt. Col. Mohan Sumanaseha, the 8 Sri Lanka Light Infantry under Major Janaka Masakkara, 2 Volunteer Sinha Regiment under Lt. Col. Sanath Panabokke and 2 Vijayaba Regiment under Lt. Col. Lal Wijesuriya.

The operational area, from Chettikulam to Parayanakulam, which was hitherto dominated by

the LTTE was cleared. The success of this battle is dependent on the government's ability to restore civil administration under the recovered areas. If the government fails in this endeavour, the resources expanded will be wasted in capturing territory.

Further, the Ministry of Defence must develop in coordination with other Ministries and Departments programs to develop these recovered areas in education, enterprises, health conditions, infrastructure etc. The Govern-

ment must demand that the anti-LTTE Tamil militant groups, which they are financing, play a key role in policing these recovered areas to prevent LTTE infiltration.

All this will depend on one key factor. Who will the government appoint to implement and to coordinate the administrative component of this exercise? For best results of military action, there should be a political and an administrative follow up. Upto now the government has faltered in this task.