Defeat LTTE using guerilla tactics. (1995, October 08). The Sunday times.

## **Defeat LTTE using** guerrilla tactics

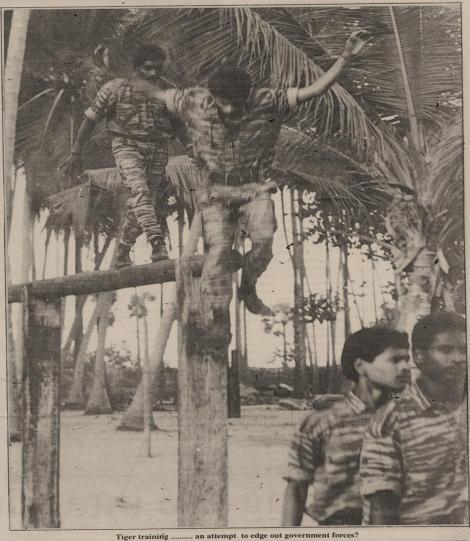
Containment was a concept generated when Eelam War II broke out. The thinking was to erode the LITE strength in the east and to maintain a low profile role in the north by merely react-ing to the strikes of the LITE. ing to the strikes of the LTTE. Recent history has proved that this concept was disastrous. The Sri Lankan military has never lost so heavily in terms of politi-cal and military leaders, officers and men, weapons and equip-ment, airforce planes and naval vessels and camps and ground. On the contrary, the develop-ments on the LTTE side has a strategic advantage to the LTTE.

This has been primarily because the LTTE was not actively en-gaged in the north and the LTTE aged in the north and the LTTE had sufficient space and time to develop their offensive and de-fensive capability. Firstly, the LTTE has doubled its strength. The LTTE morale and motiva-tion to fight has enhanced. Sec-ondly, the LTTE has purchased internationally small artillary and anti aircraft missiles and expro-priated from the Sri Lankan forces, weapons and equipment. The due the LTTE has purch. priated from the Sri Lankan forces, weapons and equipment. Thirdly, the LTTE has built both their domestic and their interna-tional infrastructure as well as enhanced their unique ability to operate in far away unfamiliar theatres like Colombo, India, Myanmar and in Europe, where they assassinated their opponents even in countries like France, Germany and Switzerland. Had the security forces concentrated on the East only for a short period at the outbreak of Eelam War II to reduce the LTTE strength and thereafter shifted a bulk of their troops to the North and struck Jaffna, the LTTE latedership would have been operating outof-time.

the jungles of Mulativu by this time. The LTTE strategy in the East during Eelam War II was to pih, down a bulk of the Sri Lankan forces in the East thereby pre-venting them from striking the north, particularly Jaffna, the the LTTE eriops substantfal sup-port. The eastern terrain was such that a relatively small number of LTTE cadres like 1200 could durarss nearly 40,000 Sri Lankan constrained troops. In guerrilla warfare, one cannot clear an area because the insur-gents are highly mobile. Wrong strategy costs thousands of lives. Since the Kurmartunga adminis-ters, the Deputy Defence Mini-ser, AnurddhaR atwatte has been determined to strike the LTTE at its very heart. Excuse number one was the need to retraintroops. But in reality, although retrain-flow dest in reality, although retrai-ned offensive operations. A guerilla should be best taken by surprise not by moving in large forma-tis. What is also needed is to de-

What is also needed is to de What is also needed is to de-ploy whatever number of troops that has been gathered in the north without waiting for a very heavy build up as the war against the LTTE is not a conventional war ut an unconventional war. Un onventional wars - termed Low stensity Operations - are war

By our Military Analyst



that have to be fought over a period

of time. By conducting one swift mili-tary operation, such wars cannot be won. On the contrary, one swift military operation will have some tactical advantage for the army, like they may be able to recover some ground, but strate-gically more people will join the LTTE as there would be more civilian casualties and destruc-tion of property. tion of property

tion of property. Further in a massive operation the element of surprise will be lost. The destruction to the LTTE will be less as they will either conduct a strategic retreat or at a moment when the Sri Lankan troops are at a disadvantage they will strike. The overall gain for the Sri Lankan government will

Tiger training ...... an attemp be low. If the Sri Lankan army is to win Eelam war III it will have no option but to conduct a number of small, limited operations towards Jaffna

wards Jaffna. Therefore the Sri Lankantroops may have to be galvanized into an offensive mindset. There will be many young leaders who will be many young leaders who will be able to mobilize them into action. The ability to win Eelam War III depends on a few factors. First, motivation. Todate Sri Lankan facear a

Todate, Sri Lankan forces re-tain features of being a ceremo-nial force. Officers and men are promoted on seniority, not on merit. Whether an officer serves in an airconditioned office in Co-lombo or risks his life in the battle field, he will be promoted when the required number of years are

completed in service. Second, the Forward Defence Lines concept should be abolished.

should be abolished. The French, particularly the French Legion, that had exten-sive experience in fighting guer-rilla wars throughout the world has condemned this concept. Troops are most effective when they are in offensive not defen-sive positions particularly when the element of surprise is ex-plointed.

pioted. Third, invest more on men than on equipment. The success of the LTTE from a force of a few hun-dred into a force of a few hun-due to the fact that they concen-trate on training. This is the big-gest incertive an army can give their men.

Fourthly, the right strategy should be not to capture terrifory but to kill as many LTTE cadres as possible inflicting minimum casualities on the civilians and on one's troops.

Unfortunately the military top brass is still thinking of fighting a guerrilla war, the same way they have trained to fight a conventional war with clear boundaries

This article has been ap proved by the censors after sections of it were deleted.

Troops who are well trained are naturally motivated. Instead of purchasing equipment that cannot be effectively used in an unconventional war, it is bet-ter to spend that money on in-tensely training the troops.