

India under attack in pro-LTTE media

India has come under attack from a media sympathetic to the Tamil Tigers since a dramatic guerrilla air raid on a Sri Lankan military base left two Indian engineers wounded.

The revelation about the presence of the Indian radar experts at the base at Vavuniya, 254 km north of Colombo, shocked many even in India, which has repeatedly advocated a negotiated settlement to the quarter-century-old ethnic conflict.

Sections of the Sri Lankan Tamil media known to be sympathetic to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are livid.

Tamil newspaper Sudar Oli, which is believed to reflect the thinking in the LTTE, said in a stinging editorial that the presence of the Indians in a military base had 'exposed' New Delhi.

'It has been proved once again that India makes its moves to suit its geographical, political and economic interests,' it said Sunday.

'Now it has come to light that India had supplied not only weapons but also troops (to Sri Lanka) to fight the war while preaching a political solution,' the daily said.

The LTTE carried out a stunning pre-dawn suicide attack on the military base Sep 9 and claimed to have destroyed its radar installations, the communication and engineering facilities as well as anti-aircraft weapons and ammunition depot.

It said all its 10 Black Tigers, or suicide commandos including five females, were killed in the meticulously planned raid. It claimed to have killed 20 military personnel.

The wounded Indians, who Indian sources said were radar operators, were quickly flown to Colombo. [New Delhi](#) has admitted to providing radars to Sri Lanka to detect low-flying light wing LTTE aircraft.

Another Sri Lankan Tamil newspaper, Uthayan, has also lashed out at India, accusing it of duplicity.

In an earlier editorial, it echoed criticism by pro-LTTE politicians in Tamil Nadu that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's call for negotiations to end the Sri Lankan conflict was not borne out by 'this brazen and material manpower support' to Colombo.

The LTTE has not commented on the presence of the Indians in Sri Lankan military bases. But it has in recent times been very critical of New Delhi's support to Colombo.

India says it is opposed to any break-up of Sri Lanka but that Colombo must work towards a credible power-sharing deal with the Tamil minority.

India's National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan recently stated that Colombo may be able to win the battle against the LTTE, but it cannot win the war because it does not have the Tamils on its side.

The pro-LTTE media and Indian Tamil politicians sympathetic to the Tigers, however, blame Narayanan for India's de facto military support to Sri Lanka while publicly declaring that it will not provide offensive weapons.

India's relations with the LTTE have undergone dramatic changes since 1983 when anti-Tamil riots in Colombo led to New Delhi's overt and covert intervention in the island nation.

From a country that provided sanctuary to the LTTE in the 1980s, India became the first to outlaw the Tigers after the outfit was blamed for the 1991 suicide killing of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Even as the LTTE's anger against India has grown, the Tigers have become increasingly furious over what they feel are Western double standards vis-à-vis Sri Lanka.

In the LTTE's view, Western backing for a 'negotiated solution' in Sri Lanka aims to disguise its support for Colombo's military agenda. Pro-LTTE Tamils say the only answer to such an attitude is to double up efforts to form an independent Tamil state.

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