

Sri Lanka- An Island of Fear

I am reminded of the three monkeys when reading and hearing about the situation in the Island. Unlike most Sri Lankans who live there we are fortunate that we can form our own opinion and not trust the rubbish which is churned out by the press, TV and Radio in that country.



Hear no evil:

- Sri Lankans (both Sinhalese and Tamil) are scared to talk in public.
- Radios are silent in most houses in a country where you could normally hear the news blaring from your neighbour's radio down the road.
- No one seems to hear the wail of women being raped in Kilinochi hospital.
- No one seems to hear the anguish of the Vanni women whose pregnancies have been terminated once they entered the "liberated areas"
- No one seems to hear the screams of children maimed and burnt by bombs.
- No one seems to hear the wail of mothers (Sinhalese, Tamil or Muslim) whose sons, daughters, husbands have been arrested and never seen again.
- No one seems to care about the fate of the thousands of young Sinhalese men sent to the frontline as cannon fodder.
- No one seems to care about the suffering families of these fallen soldiers.

See no evil:

- International community is blind to what is going on in Sri Lanka.
- The people in the south say " it is a small problem in the north, no?"
- Sri Lankan airlines is flying in a couple of tourists and a two dozen or so Sri Lankans and an odd soul who is being deported screaming on some flights.
- The tourists seem blind to the suffering of the poor Tamils in the North.
- The A9 is open only to the army trucks flying dozens of the national flag like red rag to a bull. It is not the best way to win the trust of the Tamils.
- Galle Road, in Colombo 6, which gives a measure of what is going on in Sri Lanka is dead by 9.00 pm, like in 2003.
- The fear on people's faces is all there to see.

Speak no evil:

- It is a waste of time to watch local TV which full of government propaganda and cover up of battlefield loses.
- You might as well be in a village where there is no electricity.

- Moderate Sinhalese will have to speak up soon, otherwise they too will suffer eventually.
- When there are no more Tamils or Muslims to kidnap, it will be the turn of the wealthy Sinhalese.

One expatriate Sri Lankan Lady said she could “**smell fear**” in people as during the JVP uprising. People don't know what the morning will bring. Death is big business in Sri Lanka now. People come for the funeral of their relatives and quickly return home. The funeral parlour, florists and the caterers make the money as well as the airlines flying the relatives and friends in and out of the country.

The people in the open prison (Jaffna peninsula) cannot see their loved ones before they are buried or cremated in Colombo. Though the A9 is open much to the delight of Kehelika Rambukwella (Defence Spokesperson) and their cronies, it is not for the ordinary people. Flying to and from Jaffna is for the top servicemen, politicians and expatriates and not for ordinary souls.

Partly built and unsold flats in Colombo tell their own story of the situation in the country. When will the poor people realise what the Rajapakse brothers have done to bring so much misery, fear and terror to them while they and their cronies have made millions and bought luxury villas in California and Dubai?

The International Community, particularly Japan, US, EU and India, has watched while the Tamils are slaughtered, kidnapped, raped and bled to death due to lack of medical care, like Nero watching from the Tower of Maecenas on the Esquiline Hill singing and playing the lyre while Rome burnt.

The President and his ministers have played the terrorist card for too long. If the LTTE wanted to kill any Sri Lankan cricketers they would have done so at home. They don't have to go to Pakistan to do it. All Sri Lankans, irrespective of their ethnicity love cricket. They are keen sportsmen and will not touch their idols even if they are Sinhalese. This, like most of the incidents previously blamed on the LTTE but not proven, is a clever trick to get cheap publicity by this ruthless government.

As Lasantha Wickramatunge said in his final Editorial of Sunday Leader before he was killed”*As for me, I have the satisfaction of knowing that I walked tall and bowed to no man. And I have not travelled this journey alone. Fellow journalists in other branches of the media walked with me: most of them are now dead, imprisoned without trial or exiled in far-off lands. Others walk in the shadow of death that your Presidency has cast on the freedoms for which you once fought so hard. You will never be allowed to forget that my death took place under your watch. As anguished as I know you will be, I also know that you will have no choice but to protect my killers: you will see to it that the guilty one is never convicted. You have no choice. I feel sorry for you, and Shiranthi (Mrs.Shiranthi Rajapakse is a devout catholic) will have a long time to spend on her knees when next she goes for Confession for it is not just her own sins which she must confess, but those of her extended family that keeps you in office.”*

Oh Rajapakse! What have you done to this beautiful island paradise? It has become the Island of Fear! It has become Lankabwe.

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