

The Collapsed House of Norwegian Cards

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The over 200 page statement of failure on the Norwegian attack on Sri Lanka's sovereignty in its faulty "Pawns of Peace: Evaluation of Norwegian peace efforts in Sri Lanka, 1997-2009" is a document on lessons we should learn. It was but a culmination of the 500-year attempt by the West to dominate us in cahoots with their local lackeys. It was the failure of a "spiritual and temporal conquest of Sri Lanka" as the Portuguese historian Queyroz termed the Portuguese intrusion.

After the Portuguese had brutalized the country, Queyroz said that the Sinhalese were "pride itself"; and think only they in the world "observed and maintained the art of government, cleanliness and propriety and that all the other nations are barbarous, low and wanting in cleanliness and propriety - especially Europeans." He said the Sinhalese considered those who do not eat as they do are the lowest and those who do not wash properly "neither clean nor proper" and that they do not bow to foreigners.

As Norwegians did dirty dancing on us - "neither clean nor proper" - we must ask who wrote the report, which publications they read and whom they interviewed. An examination of this gives a list of those in the forefront of subverting our sovereignty and misinterpreting us to foreigners. And the misleading, apologetic report is the outcome. And I personally know the major institutions and the persons involved, having written about the latter in two books published by two leading Western academic publishers.

But, before discussing the official Norwegian intervention, we should mention a little-known unofficial intervention, namely by the Norwegian academic Johan Galtung. I have come across the man academically. Once we both gave keynote addresses to the World Futures Federation, and a few weeks ago, at another global conference in a Greek resort. In a very pretentious interview at Al Jazeera he boasted how he wanted to bring peace by nearly dividing Sri Lanka but failed - he implied it was his greatest failure.

The two authors of the current report come from the Christian Michelsen Institute CMI in Bergen Norway and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. Several decades ago, I gave a lecture at the former. This was a time when tiny Norway did not have pseudo-imperial ambitions (and not the huge oil funds it now has). Later, as a Visiting Professor at the Universities of Trondheim and Oslo, I helped Prof Wenke Barth Eide of the latter, inaugurate development studies in Norway on the basis of equal academic relations between Norway and the Third World. Equality was lost in recent Norwegian postures. It was Wenke Barth Eide who got Kumar Rupesinghe to Norway after meeting him at my house. CMI itself had a previous foray into Sri Lanka in its report on the failure of "International Alert" under Kumar Rupesinghe titled *NGOs in Conflict - an Evaluation of International Alert*. Interestingly Eide's husband Asbjorn was head of the Peace Institute (PRIO) while their son Espen is Defence

Minister now in charge of war matters, especially terrorism. War is peace, peace is war. Sponsoring LTTE terrorism was a major export commodity of Norway.

SOAS, perhaps the largest and oldest institution for Asian studies was actually started with inputs from Rhys Davids and Martino De Zilva Wickremasinghe, both key members of our Royal Asiatic Society. A former Ceylon civil servant Davids set up the Pali Text Society in London with the help of 96 Sinhalese monks and became Professor of Pali at London. Wickramasinghe was Reader in Tamil and Telugu in London and Lecturer in Sinhalese and Head of the Dravidian Department at SOAS. Since then, SOAS has seen, at least up to the 1970s several Sri Lankans getting Ph.D.'s there. But by our shortsightedness, that inflow has ceased closing a vital window to the world. But this report is not by the section of SOAS dealing with Asian civilisation but with "development studies" for which knowledge of Sri Lankan culture is not required as was the case for British civil servants - like Davids earlier.

Development studies' origin was the University of Sussex where I was in the staff but left to return to Sri Lanka after writing articles in their journal such as "Development thinking as cultural neo-colonialism". A major trigger was the disgust I felt of a leading light of Marga coming with intellectual cap in hand. My intention was that I should help develop independent thinking in Sri Lanka - only to realize decades later that many Lankan social scientists were gobbled up in the pseudo-intellectual web of well-paying anti-national foreign funded NGOs.

If the background of the two authors of the report is a key window to its contents, then more so are the "authorities" they cite and those they interview. Let us begin with politicians. They have interviewed Ranil Wickremesinghe and Chandrika Kumaratunga under whom the Norwegian-LTTE sponsored CFA was signed. No interview with Mahinda Rajapakse who called the CFA bluff. No interview with JVP and JHU who opposed it very vocally. But they have interviewed the LTTE front in Oslo, Rajah Balasingham calling him a "Tamil representative in Oslo" equating the LTTE with all Tamils.

But there is one "Melinda Morogoda" clearly Milinda Moragoda, another Norway and CFA supporter, (not even getting the spelling of their supporter correct). He had got nearly Rs. 1.2 billion rupees from Norway, the report notes. Harim Peiris, Chandrika's spokesman during the period is interviewed. He is described in a church article on church intervention on Sri Lanka as an evangelical (read fundamentalist) Christian, perhaps adding fuel to the recent articles in the foreign press linking the LTTE with the Church.

They have interviewed Norwegians Solheim, Helgesen, Westborg, Hanssen-Bauer and Bondevik all well-known government buccaneers who desecrated us. Westborg, as a tapped phone conversation reveals, was the villain who smuggled high level telecommunication equipment for the LTTE in cahoots with Bradman Weerakoon. Westborg when he was the head of Redd Barna together with Sarvodaya, settled in the Vanni tens of thousands of Indian estate Tamils being deported to India under the Sirima-Shastri Pact. When Prabhakaran was finally trapped in the Vanni, these illegal Tamils became key soldiers for the LTTE.

There are other lesser-known Norwegians interviewed: Lisa Golden from its Foreign Ministry, Iselin Frydenlund of the University and Arne Fjørtoft of World View International Foundation. Introductions are required. In the dark days of the CFA, several of us spending our own money organised several major conferences in Sri Lanka and one in Oslo under the banner World Alliance for Peace in Sri Lanka (WAPS). For Oslo, we had as speakers Chalk from the Rand Corporation, Stewart Bell of the Canadian paper *National Post*, Paul Harris, the author driven out by Prabakaran, Asoka Bandarage, H.L.D. Mahindapala, Ranjith Soysa, Douglas Wickramaratne and myself. As we landed, Jehan Perera, a recipient of Norwegian funds, was quoted in the Norwegian press saying that we were "extremists". A book based on our conference was published but is not referred to.

We had invited Solheim, he didn't come but Golden came instead. She made a brief speech saying everybody was supporting the CFA including the JVP and JHU - a blatant lie. We stopped her as she wanted to hurry away asking her to listen to the other speakers. She stayed, but our views had no effect. Frydenlund then studying Buddhism and Sri Lanka was at the conference. She is now at PRIO Peace Research Institute Oslo and her bias is seen from the PRIO site where she gives particular attention "to those Buddhist monks who have expressed support for the peace process" and talks of "War and Buddhism in Sri Lanka - a contradiction". Decades ago when we thought Norway was a friendly country, my wife did a research in "reverse anthropology" at Frydenlund's same PRIO studying native Norwegian women working in the Third World. The result: the more Norwegian women interacted with developing countries the more prejudiced they became. Finding that my wife had academic links then to Norway, then Minister Hameed got her appointed to the World View board of Arne Fjørtoft. Soon she resigned after a Norwegian newspaper quoted the unknown Fjørtoft stating that in Sri Lanka, he was as well-known as the Buddha and Marx. This arrogance was a continued thread in Norwegian interventions.

Jehan Perera, Kumar Rupesinghe and Norbert Ropers, all of the foreign NGO lobby and with known views against nationalist positions were all interviewed. The report mentions that Kumar Rupesinghe received the most Norwegian funding for the Norwegian "peace process". Ropers who through his Berghoff Foundation wanted our Armed Forces depleted and brought under the control of NGOs, was later deported. FORUT whose Director had been deported for refusing to fly the Sri Lankan flag is interviewed. Sahadevan brought as an expert to the Colombo University from the Jawaharlal Nehru University is interviewed. Just before the end of the war, he went on international TV condemning Sri Lanka. Sahadevan's anti-Sri Lanka views are a contrast to his predecessor Urmila Phadnis who was fond of Sri Lanka.

Those quoted in the report include Marga who had earlier welcomed the Indian intervention. Sunil Bastian, an advocate of federalism. Berkwitz who wrote that the late Venerable Soma who had lived in Australia had resisted the global. Jonathan Spencer who at a recent lecture at ICES implied that Sri Lanka should not have got Independence. Niloufer de Mel who wrote of our forces' buildup to defeat the LTTE as militarisation. Mark Duffield is quoted on the tsunami but not his contribution to the previous critical report on Kumar Rupesinghe's then International Alert where Duffield said that foreign funded "NGOs were privatizing foreign policy" in Sri

Lanka. The report cites Uyangoda who in writing had advocated separatism. It quotes *Unmaking the Nation* the book sponsored by Kumari Jayawardena which made the preposterous claim that Anuradhapura was discovered for us only by foreigners and that the Mahavamsa was an imagined history. Pakiasothy Saravanamuttu is quoted but not his statements questioning the need for sovereignty. Bradman Weerakoon is cited but not the tapped and published telephone conversation of Westberg with the LTTE where Weerakoon is implicated in smuggling equipment to the LTTE. Several of these had links with ICES whose director was sent away for advocating armed intervention in the country.

All those who wrote pointing out the perfidy of the Norwegians are not quoted. While they were advocating different solutions for Sri Lanka, the restrictive Norwegian Constitution demands that its head of State should be a Lutheran Christian and that all its officials should know Norwegian. Not quoted are those who spoke at our conference in Oslo namely Chalk from the Rand Corporation, Stewart Bell of the *National Post*, Paul Harris, Asoka Bandarage, Mahindapala, Ranjith Soysa, Douglas Wickramaratne and myself. Not quoted are the numerous commentators who criticized the Norwegian exercise such as S.L. Gunasekera, Gomin Dayasiri (and very many others). Missing notably is the book by Kingsley de Silva where after careful research, the whole basis of the Norwegian intervention which assumes a fictitious traditional homeland of the Tamils is totally debunked. Excluded are the books published by Western academic presses challenging and exposing the mistruths of their key informants: one by Bandarage and two by me. Missing are the published detailed instructions of the foreign funded NGOs on how to brainwash the entire Sri Lanka spectrum from politicians, to government officials to academics.

The report says tellingly "working 'on' conflict sometimes amounted to trying to 'buy peace'" and that "Norwegians were dispersing largesse in order to buy peace... often quite lavishly ... to galvanize support for the peace process". In short, they were giving huge bribes to support the CFA like the earlier colonials gave land to those who converted to Christianity. And the numbers are astounding compared to the very meager resources academic institutions in Sri Lanka get.

The extent of the "bribes" is seen when during the period of the CFA most aid of Norway, the report notes went to "Conflict prevention and resolution, peace and security' and 'Government and civil society (read NGOs)". Of the NGOs, Milinda Moragoda got Rs. 1.2 billion rupees and the two outfits of Kumar Rupesinghe "Anti-War Front" got Rs. 203 million while his "Foundation for Coexistence" got Rs. 683 million a total of nearly Rs. 1 billion for Rupesinghe.

Moragoda was seen during the CFA in talks with soldiers. It will be interesting to see whether he carried to them the "downsize the Army" slogan of Berghof, part of the NGO agenda. Rupesinghe after getting nearly Rs. 1 billion from the Norwegians and after the report mentioned the amount he got is now ungrateful and critical of them. The meeting of Rupesinghe's Anti-War Front which was against military action was attacked publicly by angry citizens. His subsequent "Foundation for Coexistence" had no strategic use because it was the LTTE who prevented coexistence and now after the elimination of the LTTE people live peacefully. Frederica Jansz now caught up in the white flag controversy and once the local head of International Alert which was the subject of an earlier critical report by Norway praises the ceasefire and Solheim and criticises the *Divayina* and *Lankadeepa* for pointing out the faults of the CFA.

Another beneficiary of Norway, the NPC National Peace Council's Jehan Perera who was vocally advocating PTOMS which would have given even greater powers to the LTTE than the CFA did, now says the CFA "contributed to ending the war". He conveniently forgets the illegal courts, police force and other elements of a separate state which the army had to get rid of at great cost. Earlier this NPC had marched with the LTTE in Geneva singing their anthem and Perera himself had welcomed the Indian troops here.

The Norwegian report adds "Donors' close relations with a small group of Colombo-based NGOs weakened the popular legitimacy of civil society". An obvious fact, if they had only followed their earlier report on International Alert which warned of the unpopularity of NGOs in Sri Lanka. They did not learn their lesson, neither did we as these NGOs like colonial missionaries are still allowed to sing for their large supper to fit their donors' foreign requirements. Others would call them foreign spies.