

HUMAN RIGHTS AND LIMITS OF SOVEREIGNTY: IMPLICATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

Major General J J P S T Liyanage, RSP, USP, ndc, IG, Idmc

INTRODUCTION

Respect for state sovereignty and human rights, the key values of International Law and the key components of the UN Charter of 1948 co-exist uneasily. These two principles have more often confronted than partnered each other. A country affected by terrorism would find it a major challenge to adhere to the norms of human rights, as military operations against terrorists are likely to lead to violation of the fundamental rights of people. The need to keep some arrested suspects incommunicado for sometime to facilitate investigations violate human rights. The absence of such operations, on the one hand, can seriously undermine the security of the state. A developing country engaged in such punitive actions against terrorists stands to be labeled a black sheep by Human Rights watch dogs that tend to place such actions under the microscope and immediately report such incidents to the UN Human Rights Commission, subjecting the country concerned to great pressure diplomatically and through economic embargoes.

The U.N. Charter in Article 2(7) prohibits the organization from intervening in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of member states¹. On the other hand, it is the duty of the particular state to protect human rights within the state by arranging laws, rules etc. into a system that can ensure that individuals within the state are accountable for international crimes. In addition to respecting for human rights, states need to investigate, prosecute or extradite individual perpetrators. If the state fails to ensure this, or is unable or unwilling to do so, other states and the International Court may intervene in the internal affairs of the state. The emergence of human rights as a subject of concern in international law affects sovereignty because these agreed upon principles place clear limits on the authority of governments to act within their borders. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that emerged in the 1960s-70s have been striving to uphold human rights. The sovereignty of states is no longer limited to a simple exercise of power within a defined territory. International law, although still state-centric, has become more permissive regarding cross-border intervention to protect human rights and prosecute individual offenders residing abroad. In the light of the above, sovereign states facing threats to their national security from terrorism are confronted by the dilemma of maintaining

1. Charter of the UN, Chapter I, "Purpose of the Principle", available at <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/chapter1.htm>, accessed on 01 May 2007.

human rights while ensuring national security. In such cases those countries have no option but to formulate laws to protect international interests, even if this involves curtailing certain human rights.

Sri Lanka, a developing country faced with terrorism, has been taken as the case study for this paper. It is aware of the limitations that govern its actions in safe guarding its national security. However, national security is non-negotiable. Hence, it is prudent to study and analyze the limitations it has, and its impact on national security in fighting terrorism within the frame- work of human rights so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid international sanctions and diplomatic pressures which could cause hardships to its people and hinder its development.

TERRORISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

“Fighting terrorism is central to the human rights cause. But using illegal tactics against alleged terrorists is both wrong and counterproductive,” Kenneth Roth.²

In countries where terrorists are active, government forces are frequently blamed for violations of human rights. However, violations of human rights by terrorist groups are not often condemned. The violation of human rights by terrorists (be it by a terrorist organization or a sovereign state) is well within the very definition of terrorism. Though it is the duty of the state to protect its citizens from terrorism, it has no right to sidestep democratic values. In countries where terrorism exists, the state often forgets that even terrorists have rights in the course of their apprehension and prosecution. They thus have the rights not to be subjected to torture or brutal methods of interrogation and the right to be presumed innocent until they are found guilty as well as right to a public trial. For the security forces, in other words, it is a ‘damn’ if you do or ‘doom’ if you don’t situation.

The Relationship between Terrorism and Human Rights. Terrorism and violence go hand in hand. Where there is violence, there has to be violation of human rights. Governments that come to power through elections enjoy absolute power of governance. Thereafter, some states forget their responsibility towards their people because of the unlimited power they enjoy. Such states violate the human rights of their people in trying to implement some of their policies, although these may not be acceptable to the majority. As a result, those who get affected due to a government’s actions at times resort to terrorism and violence

2. Human Rights News, “Human rights world report 2006”, <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2006/01/13/global12428.htm>, accessed on 03 June 2007.

to hit back at the government. This vicious cycle continues. The situation in Kashmir, Punjab, Assam and Sri Lanka can be cited as examples. Wide powers are given by the state through the Prevention of Terrorism Act No 48 of 1979 to the Sri Lankan armed forces/ police to act against terrorism. Similarly, the Indian armed forces/police too were empowered by the Special Powers Act enforced of 1958 which was amended in 1972 to fight terrorism. These acts give additional power to the armed forces to search without warrants, arrest, and keep those arrested incommunicado for a period of time. Interpretation of Section Two of Article 29 of the Charter of Universal Declaration of Human Rights indicates that a nation has laws to protect its sovereignty against terrorism, terrorism- related acts, separatism and laws that ensure the prevention of such situations.

However, as per Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, states are restricted from using their powers to violate human rights and discriminate against any groups.

The relationship between counter-terrorism and human rights was elaborated in 2003 at a ministerial level meeting of the UN Security Council in a statement annexed to resolution 1456 (2003). The council made the following declaration:

“States must ensure any measure(s) taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, and should adopt such measures in accordance with international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and Humanitarian Law”.³

This position was reaffirmed by Resolution 1624 (2005) adopted by heads of state and governments at a meeting of the Security Council during the 2005 World Summit.⁴ Though international law allows states to fight terrorism, it is allowed to do so with many restrictions.

Post 9/11 Scenario. Before 9/11, western governments and human rights champions were critical of efforts taken by elected governments to maintain national security and ensure public safety in the face of terrorism. After 9/11, the perspectives on human rights issues in counter-terrorism operations undertaken by the states changed drastically. In countering terrorism, little or no regard was now given to human rights. After the declaration of “the Global War on Terror” by the United States, it was observed that western democracies with long

3. UN Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee, “Human Rights”, available at <http://www.un.org/sc/ctc/humanrights.shtml>, accessed on 17 May 2007.

4. UN Security Council 5261st meeting, “Security Council Meeting Of World Leaders Calls For Legal Prohibition of Terrorist Incitement, Enhanced Steps to Prevent Armed Conflict” available at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/sc8496.doc.htm>, access on 22 June 2007.

records of respecting human rights also became defaulters. The UK, Australia, and European countries too restricted civil liberties for some of their citizens. The UK is one of the perpetrators of illegal detention, and has been transporting terrorist suspects to detention camps in a third country where they are often subjected to torture.

Violation of Human Rights by the Terrorists. There are many books/articles written on the violation of human rights by states. However, there is hardly anything available in print on the violations of human rights by terrorists who violate human rights on a large scale. Terrorism is based on violence. In their process to achieve their goals, terrorists ignore the fact that violence can also be countered by violence by the state. As a result, violence and counter-violence is on the rise, and mass violations of human rights by both terrorists and state agencies and consequent chaos is evident in many places of the world. Thus, terrorism has an impact on human rights in three ways:

Firstly, it is itself an extreme denial of the most basic human right and it creates an environment in which people cannot live free from fear and cannot enjoy basic human rights.

Secondly, the threat of terrorism can be used by governments to enact laws that strip away civil liberties and political freedoms.

Thirdly, without necessarily amending laws or enacting new ones, governments can make fighting terrorism an excuse to stifle dissent and criticism and imprison or threaten domestic opponents.

Hence, terrorists striving at self-determination, states may end up violating their human rights. The proper way to achieve the right to self-determination needs to be realized by means of political activities and not by terrorism. However, this process is time consuming. People lose their patience due to the slow nature of this process. As they suffer, they end up thinking that the only solution is to fight the system (government). For the process, the leaders emerge who try to grab power by hook or by crook. This is how most terrorist organizations come into being. Often when they feel they will not be accepted by their own people in a democratic situation, they do all they can to avoid a peaceful settlement. Even when offered an amicable power sharing solution, they will not settle for anything less than absolute power. The present situation in Sri Lanka is the best example of such a situation.

Importance of Training and Equipping Security Forces. The role of the security forces in combating terrorism has come under increasing scrutiny of the media. Human rights NGOs and also the judiciary have been making their job

extremely difficult. Especially, when troops are fatigued because they have been fighting militants for years, troops are likely to break the laws. When their lives are exposed to constant threats and they are unable to avail leave, troops tend to take the law into their own hands. This leads not only to serious human rights situations but also cause serious breaches of discipline amongst troops. Excessive deployment round the year, inadequate rest and family obligations that they have not been able to meet lead to psychological stresses that culminate in violent outbursts. This is very evident in the campaign directed by the Sri Lankan armed forces against the LTTE terrorists. In such a trying environment to safeguard the national security, troops must be well-trained, well-equipped, and well-motivated. Sri Lanka has had tremendous pressure exerted on it by human rights NGOs and foreign countries in its conflict with the LTTE. Such pressures not only put troops in a defensive posture, it also allows the enemy to take advantage of the government forces. The Sri Lankan Army has taken action to set up a 'Human Rights and Humanitarian Law' directorate under Army Headquarters, with a view to making army personnel voluntarily and consistently comply with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights (HR) principles, and ensuring that the army leads by example in pursuit of its fundamental objective of preserving the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the nation. Its mission has been to transform the army into a force that 'voluntarily observes' the principles of IHL and HR through training, enhancement of awareness and dissemination of knowledge in the field, thereby minimizing IHL and HR violations. This has paid off dividends and the human rights situation has improved tremendously in recent times.

Troops must also be well-equipped to fight terrorists. Basic protection like body armour and helmets must be available to them to make them feel secure. It is only when a soldier feels secure that he will think of the security of others. Motivation also plays a major role in make up of a soldier who must be able to bear mental and physical stresses and who must tackle situations where human rights can be abused.

Importance of Intelligence. Accurate and timely intelligence can often prevent terrorist activities, thereby saving lives and protecting property. Information gathering, processing and timely dissemination inside and outside the country are the main roles of the intelligence agencies. State intelligence and military intelligence must work hand in hand to ensure state security. Intelligence personnel must be provided with the necessary and latest technology to combat terrorism. An effective and committed intelligence network backed with technology can ensure greater security for a country. More importantly, there should be no cases of arrest and release of accused terrorists due to lack

of evidence if the intelligence agencies are effective. An efficient intelligence service must have the intelligence required to put these culprits behind bars. There must be no violation of human rights due to torture, because a suspect will talk, if he is convinced that he cannot hoodwink his interrogator.

Efficient Police Force. It is essential for a country to have an efficient, well-equipped and unbiased police force to maintain law and order and to maintain human rights. When Sri Lanka fought a bloody insurgency in the south of the country in 1988 /1990, there were many abuses of human rights by the police. Then many innocent people were killed or were reported missing. This was caused mainly because the police had succumbed to the pressure exerted by the ruling party.

IMPLICATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND LIMITS OF SOVEREIGNTY ON NATIONAL SECURITY

The concept of national security has been much debated in human rights discussions. Basically, the controversy revolves around the balance between the “interest of the society” and the “interest of the individuals”. However, any individual’s security depends on the security of the society. Hence, “National Security” must take precedence over all other interests. In previous paragraphs, it was clear that though sovereign entities possess absolute power, they cannot use it in a manner where a part of society loses fundamental rights. When there is a real threat to social order and to civilians life, national security must be restored at any cost. Sadly, more often than not, states distort the concept of national security, suppress political dissent and curb fundamental freedoms and the rights of people.

In a wartime situation, where the life of soldiers and their families are threatened, preservation of human rights becomes almost impossible. When human rights are quite often violated by government agencies, the government loses public support, and political stability is threatened. Foreign aid too may be stopped due to pressure exerted on the government to cease human rights violations. The development process can slow down or stop altogether due to insufficient financing. These can be plus points for terrorists leading to take the upper hand and endanger the security of the nation. Furthermore, things could happen as they did in 1987, when India sent its peace keeping force to Sri Lanka, even without UN approval. This was one instance where national security of Sri Lanka was threatened to the ultimate degree. Had the President of Sri Lanka refused to sign the agreement (peace accord) with the Indian Premier in 1987, Indian invasion of Sri Lanka would have been inevitable.

In 1956, when the Sri Lankan government made Sinhalese the only official language they wouldn't have ever thought the country would bleed as much as it did and that national security would have come to the brink of collapse. They had thought then only of the majority Sinhalese vote that would give them political mileage. Unfortunately, deprivation of fundamental rights of the Tamils led to a war where, at least, 70,000 lives have been lost up to now. Over hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced and thousands of people have been maimed. One of the world's most ruthless terrorist organizations came into existence in Sri Lanka and at one point, the country's sovereignty was threatened by its neighbour, India. When the fundamental rights of the Tamils were denied by the Sinhala Only Act, two ethnic communities that had lived harmoniously for hundreds of years were at each other's throat. Though this problem was rectified almost immediately, the psychological damage remains even now. Its effects on national security have been enormous. Further, it has led to human rights violations in a big way. As mentioned earlier in this paper, in any country where terrorism is fought, if one side errs in human rights violations the other reciprocates in a much worse manner, putting national security at risk.

Human Rights and Economy. When the human rights situation of a country deteriorates, the economy of the country too deteriorates. Hence, it is not then possible to procure much-needed equipment to fight terrorists. Though there is no direct link with the economy and military effectiveness, a country with a good economy will have a stronger military than one with a weak one. In the world today, it is countries with stronger economies that are militarily powerful. The stronger the economy the better will be the army. If the human rights situation of a country is bad and there is a terrorism problem in it too, with the international embargos the country's development can be stopped or restricted. When it is economically weak or its economy declines in relation to the challenges it faces due to terrorism, national security of a country too will become weaker. Therefore, to achieve state security, a state must aim at securing economic growth and social justice and not act the other way around.

Effects of the Limits of Sovereignty on National Security. Though sovereign states have the supreme authority and absolute power within their territory, they cannot use it absolutely. According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, derogating obligations on the covenant should be done only when the life of the nation is threatened. However, as per Article 4 of the same covenant, no derogation from articles 6, 7, 8(1 and 2 Paragraphs), 11, 15, 16 and 18 are allowed even if the security of the nation is at risk. That also has to be done without discriminating on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion or social origin.⁵

5. Dr S.Subramanian, *Human Rights: International Challenges*, New Delhi, Manas Publication, 1997, p21.

Due to the limitations imposed by International Law, a state faced with a terrorism problem may not be able to arrest and keep in custody a terrorist, even a suicide bomber who has been arrested without any explosives, weapons, ammunitions or any other evidence betraying him as a suicide bomber. Therefore, what he or she has to do is to wait for the most opportune time to go for the target. This is clearly a major threat to national security.

Without special laws likely to curtail fundamental rights, terrorism cannot be fought effectively with the limitations faced by states. In a situation where a country's national security is threatened due to terrorism, there is little scope for a country to fight terrorism if International Law is respected fully. This can pose a threat to national security.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Good Governance. Good governance is the key to solving many problems in states in the world today. It gives confidence to citizens. If the state looks after the rights of its citizens, there is no need for any violence against it. Under good governance, there is very little chance of human rights violations. For good governance, the constitution of the country must give guidelines so that all governments that come to power will follow its provision for the betterment of its people. To avoid human rights violations, states must strive to bring their constitutions in accord with international standards. The legislature of states must incorporate the International Bill of Rights in their constitution. Such actions will make security forces and police personnel accountable for their actions and will ensure transparency in tackling security situations in the country.

Maintain Well-trained, Well-equipped and Motivated Security Forces. The security of a nation ultimately lies in the hands of its security forces. Hence, it is essential to train them well and educate them in International Humanitarian Law and International Laws to make them better professionals. The quality of the service is much more important than its size. Therefore, an army should be of the size the country could afford and of a proportionate quality.

Maintain Efficient Intelligence Agencies. Intelligence agencies in the state must be well- trained, well-equipped, motivated and accountable for the intelligence they provide. Latest technologies in the field of intelligence must be made available to them. Capable and efficient officers must be selected for key appointments. Intelligence agencies must be integrated at the national level to make them more effective.

Maintain an Efficient, Uncorrupt and Politically Unhindered Police Force. It is essential for a country to have an efficient, well-equipped, corruption-free and professional police force to maintain law and order and to ensure human rights. The police must be allowed to perform its duties unhindered by political influence. There have been many instances in Sri Lankan history of terrorism and insurgency where the Police have been accused of human rights violations.

Enact Laws to Fight Terrorism. Safeguarding its citizens is the core responsibility of a State. When a state fights terrorism, emergency situations arise where swift and decisive actions are required to safeguard the national security of the country. Under these circumstances, certain types of special legalisation that do not normally belong within the legislative framework of a democracy such as emergency regulations and the Prevention of Terrorist Act (PTA) are necessary to combat terrorism and uphold democracy.

Educate the Public, Security Service and Police. Education in International Humanitarian Laws (IHL) and International Law must be given to security force and police personnel including the public. Refresher training must be conducted from time to time for the armed forces and police personnel to make them respect human rights in order to demonstrate the professionalism of government troops before the international community.

Strive to Achieve Economic Security. The economic security of a country will ensure social security too. When opportunities are created for citizens to contribute to their economy, they will have less time to think of armed struggle. In fact, there is no need for them to fight unless they face discrimination on the basis of race, sex, language or religion.

The Judiciary must be made Independent and Fair. The Judiciary must be separated from the Executive. This will allow the Judiciary to take independent decisions without being biased to the executive. The constitution of the state must strengthen the judiciary to bring in transparency in government actions. As the saying goes, “Justice delayed is justice denied”; hence, to avoid delays in tackling human right violations, it is recommended that a court of session be specified in all district courts. Speedy action taken against human rights violations will be a deterrent for those who are likely to violate human rights.

Train Media Personnel and Achieve Media Freedom. The media plays a vital role in controlling human rights violation in a country. Hence, it is important to arrange seminars and workshops to educate the media on human rights violation without taking the sting out of it and without harming national security. There should be no restrictions on the media to give more transparency

to action taken by the government. A responsible media would be expected to highlight aberrations from the norm, which would check the arbitrary actions of police and security forces personnel, thus making them more professional.

Allow Liberal NGO Activities. States should allow renowned NGOs free access to prisons and detention camps to make actions by the government much more transparent. They must even be allowed to visit terrorist controlled areas.

Use of Diplomacy. For particular, developing and least developed countries must have very good relations within and outside the region to protect their national security. Cooperation with inter and intra-regional organizations like SAARC, BIMSTEC, NAM and ASEAN has to be encouraged to build a 'all for one and one for all' type of concept to strengthen the national security of each member state.

CONCLUSION

*"We should all be clear that there is no trade-off between effective action against terrorism and the protection of human rights. On the contrary, I believe that in the long term we shall find that human rights, along with democracy and social justice, are one of the best prophylactics against terrorism, "Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, 2002"*⁶

There isn't a single country that has not violated human rights whether it is the US troops in Afghanistan or in Iraq, Indian troops in Kashmir, the Bangladesh army in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the IPKF in Sri Lanka or Nepal against Maoist Guerrillas. They have all violated human rights. If an advanced and most powerful country like the USA violates human rights, other countries can be expected to do the same. It is practically impossible for troops not to violate human rights in conflict situations to protect the national security of the country. However, a sovereign state has obligation to its citizens and must protect them if their lives or the material base required for their existence is in danger. That is what national security is all about. Hence, it becomes necessary and justifiable for the state to take action to safeguard the nation disregarding other considerations such as the civil rights of the citizens temporarily; however, once the national security is ensured, civil rights must be restored at the first opportunity. At the same time, it is also very clear that states cannot take cover behind sovereignty to violate human rights at their will even within their domestic jurisdiction. Hence, there has to be a balance in upholding national security. The United Nation

6. UN Security Council-Counter Terrorism Committee, "Human Rights", available at <http://www.un.org/sc/ctc/humanrights.shtml>, accessed on 29 June 2007.

Charter clearly legalized the defense of the territorial integrity of the state but also commits a state to ensuring human rights and guarantees the rights of groups to self determination. When a country genuinely makes an effort to safe guard the fundamental and human rights of its citizens, it is not necessary for its people to resort to terrorism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

1. Dr S. Subramanian, Human Rights: International Challenges, Volume 1 & 2, India, 1997.
2. B.S.Waghmare, Human Rights: Problems and Prospects, India, 2001.
3. K.P.Saksena, Human Rights: Perspectives and Challenges, India, 1995.
4. K.P.Saksena, Teaching Human Rights: A Manual for Adult Education, India, 1996.
5. Gopal Bhargava, Human Rights: Concern of the Future, India, 2001.
6. S.K Ghosh, Terrorism: World Under Siege, India, 1995.
7. Imtiaz Ahamed, Understanding Terrorism in South Asia, Sri Lanka, 2006.
8. Pramod Mishra, Human Rights in South Asia, India, 2000.
9. Rohan Gunaratna, Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution, Sri Lanka, 1995.
10. R.C.Paul, Situation of Human Rights in India, India 2000.
11. Jaswant Singh, National Security, India 1996.
12. The Cambridge Encyclopedia

Web Sites

13. F.R. Duplantier, Human Rights vs State Sovereignty? available at www.politickles.com/behindtheheadlines/2001/aug01/01-0826a.php.
14. Eric Brahm, Sovereignty, available at www.beyondintractability.org/m/sovereignty.jsp.
15. Wikipedia-the free Encyclopedia, "Human Rights", available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights.
16. Wikipedia-the free Encyclopedia, "Nuremburg Trials" available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuremberg_Trials.
17. Wikipedia-the free Encyclopedia, "Augusto Pinochet", available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augusto_Pinochet.

18. Article 71 of the UN charter, “Participation of NGOs and NHRIs”, available at <http://www.ishr.ch/handbook/Chpt7.pdf>.
19. Dr T.N. Shalla, “Role of Human Rights Organizations”, available at www.kashmir-information.com.
20. Blake’s law dictionary, “Sovereignty”, available at www.hawaii-nation.org/sovereignty.html.
21. Wikipedia-the free Encyclopedia, “Sovereignty”, available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereignty>.
22. World Report 2007, “Sri Lanka: Events of 2006”, available at <http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/slanka14837.htm>.
23. Human Rights Council, “Act to End Serious Abuses in Sri Lanka” available at <http://www.humanrightswatch.org/english/docs/2007/03/13/slanka15478.htm>.
24. By a special correspondent, “Centre considering unified command for armed forces”, *The Hindu* (01 June 2007), available at <http://www.thehindu.com/2007/06/01/stories/2007060108050100.htm>.
25. Human Rights News, “Human Rights World Report 2006”, <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2006/01/13/global12428.htm>.
26. UN Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee, “Human Rights”, available at <http://www.un.org/sc/ctc/humanrights.shtml>.
27. **Paul Sieghart**, “*Indictment Against Sri Lanka*”, available at www.tamilnation.org/indictment/indict025.htm.
28. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour-USA, “Country Report on Human Rights Practices on the UK - 2006”, available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78847.htm>.
29. Department of Public Information- United Nations, “Fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, available at <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.
30. Charter of the UN chapter I, “Purpose of the Principle”, available at <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/chapter1.htm>.

Author

Major General JJPST Liyanage, RSP, USP, ndc, IG, ldmc, was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 04 April 1956. He was commissioned as Second lieutenant on 23 January 1980 to the Regiment of Sri Lanka Artillery from the Sri Lanka Military Academy (SLMA). Having initially acquired GCE Ordinary Level, he further educated himself and currently holds a Masters Degree in Management Studies from Usmania University, India. Enhancing his Military career, he attended Artillery Young Officers' Course-School of Artillery, India in 1980, Regimental Survey Officers Course - School of Artillery, Pakistan in 1985, Advance Gunnery Course - School of Artillery, India in 1990, Long Gunnery Staff Course - School of Artillery, India in 1991/1992, Senior Command Course- School of Artillery, India in 1995, Long Defence Management Course - College of Defence Management, India in 1999/2000, and Senior Executive Course- APCSS, Hawaii, in 2004. He served in different capacities in both Command and Staff mainly in operational areas. Some of his major appointments are: As a Captain Instructor at Sri Lanka Military Academy, as a Lt Col, GSO-I at Security Force Headquarters (Jaffna), Commandant of School of Artillery, Sri Lanka, Commanding Officer of an Artillery regiment in infantry role, as a Colonel, Colonel General Staff at Security Force Headquarters (Jaffna), Colonel General Staff at Army Headquarters, Brigade Commander of a Infantry Brigade in Eastern operational area, as a Brigadier, Artillery Brigade Commander, Director Personal administration at Army Headquarters, Commander Presidential Security Unit, and Director Military Intelligence. Prior to attending NDC in Bangladesh he served as the Director General Military Intelligence at Army Headquarters. He has visited India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the UK, Romania, Singapore, USA, Thailand, Indonesia and Cambodia. His hobbies are rearing dogs and horticulture. He is a Buddhist and a vegetarian. His wife's name is Pushpa. He is blessed with a daughter Yeshani 22 and two sons, Manuja 21 and Lakshitha 17.