

Voice of Shakthi Thursday 10 May 2001

US President George Bush's missile defence plan may have its critics but from the Sri Lankan point of view, it can spell disaster for the country's independence and sovereignty. A system of defence which relies on gathering information from the many US listening posts throughout the world brings into focus the vital role the so-called VOA [transmissions](#) facility at Iranawila in Sri Lanka can play in this scenario and its implications for the separatist war in Sri Lanka".

Everyone is aware of the role of Pine Gap in US global strategy but there is hardly a word about what is admitted to be the second most powerful transmitting facility outside the US, found in the tiny island of Sri Lanka, at Iranawila.

Like at Pine Gap, the real capabilities of the Iranawila station is shrouded in mystery, beyond public knowledge and operating under conditions no Sri Lankan government would even dare to question. And there is no doubt that the US will capitalise on this capacity in its quest to becoming the most powerful military state in the world.

Let's have no illusions about the role the US expects the Iranawila station to perform in this grand order of things; it will certainly not be limited to transmitting US propaganda to South Asia. More importantly, let's not go overboard on the sudden concern felt by the Big Powers about the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

The warm reception Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadiragamar received in [Washington](#) recently, the possibility of a visit by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, the posting of military advisers to Sri Lanka and the hardline stance of the US, Britain and Australia towards the LTTE can all be attributed to the importance the world's biggest military power affords to this facility at Iranawila, and more broadly the place of Sri Lanka as a link in the global US military chain.

This new-found nexus will see Sri Lanka linked inexorably to the US, Britain, Australia and Israel in their battle against [China](#) and the so-called "rogue states". Even mighty [India](#), with its defence installations within easy reach of Iranawila facilities, seems willing to play the game, at least for the time being. At the moment, China is the enemy of the US! India is playing the same game that China played with the US against the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s. But what is certain is that Sri Lanka is fast replacing Pakistan as the base for key US facilities in South Asia.

LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran would be naive indeed if he cannot see this reality. You can accuse the LTTE leader of many things, but naivety is not one of them. Which also explains why the LTTE is now suing for a compromise. And why the US and its closest allies are trying to impose a 'solution' that ensures that their interests are secured, with both the government and the LTTE accepting that its they who wield real power and have the final word.

Even the JVP seems to have already accepted this reality. The arch-enemies of American imperialism are now said to be wooing American diplomats in numerous ways. It was not long ago that the JVP leadership presented their Five year Plan to resurrect the country to the American diplomats in Colombo. And according to latest reports, they are now regular guests on the diplomatic [cocktail](#) circuit!

Hopefully, those who advocate a military solution to Sri Lanka's crisis will understand these realities even at this late stage. Uncle Sam is not coming to preserve Sri Lanka's unsullied Sinhala Buddhist culture from the Dravidians, nor to save Tamils from chauvinist Sinhalese.

What Sri Lanka will get is not independence and democracy but the status of a client state, a de facto US colony, and a pawn to be used and abused in the militaristic adventures that are being cooked up by those who dream of a Washington based holy empire. And guess which country will be one of the first targets if the US and China ever confront each other militarily, as is bound to happen if the US Administration continues its current hawkish foreign policy?

All of us have become victims of our own failings, to be used and discarded by foreigners who will use our land for their own purposes. Unless, even at this stage, we realize what captives we have become to other interests.