

# In Pursuit of a Mythical State of Tamil Eelam: a rejoinder to Kristian Stokke

MUTTUKRISHNA SARVANANTHAN

**ABSTRACT** *This is a rejoinder to an article by Kristian Stokke published in Third World Quarterly, 27 (6), 2006, which is euphorically entitled 'Building the Tamil Eelam state: emerging state institutions and forms of governance in LTTE-controlled areas in Sri Lanka'. This author's critique of Kristian Stokke's article is twofold: one criticism relates to the way research for the article was undertaken; the second is of the glaring factual inaccuracies on which Stokke's article is based. This article presents statistical and other evidence to refute the claims made by Krishan Stokke that the LTTE is a liberation movement with mass support, performing state functions in areas under its control.*

It is necessary to distinguish clearly between sabotage, a revolutionary and highly effective method of warfare, and terrorism, a measure that is generally ineffective and indiscriminate in its results, since it often makes victims of innocent people and destroys a large number of lives that would be valuable to the revolution. (Guevara, 1985: 62–63)

Sabotage has nothing to do with terrorism; terrorism and personal assaults are entirely different tactics. We sincerely believe that terrorism is of negative value, that it by no means produces the desired effects, that it can turn a people against a revolutionary movement, and that it can bring a loss of lives to its agents out of proportion to what it produces. (Guevara, 1985: 140)

This is a rejoinder to an article by Kristian Stokke,<sup>1</sup> published in *Third World Quarterly*, 27 (6),<sup>2</sup> which is euphorically entitled 'Building the Tamil Eelam state: emerging state institutions and forms of governance in LTTE-controlled areas in Sri Lanka'. This author's critique of Kristian Stokke's article is twofold: one criticism relates to the way research for the article was undertaken; the second is of the glaring factual inaccuracies on which Stokke's article is based.

My first criticism is that field research (interviews) for the article was undertaken *only* among the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and its

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*Muttukrishna Sarvananthan is at the Point Pedro Institute of Development, 'Maanikka Vasa' Thambasetty, Point Pedro, Sri Lanka. Email: sarvi@slt.lk.*