

From John D'Oyly to Robert O'Blake by Lt Col (Retd) Anil Amarasekera

I have read many e-mails and articles with regard to the presidential election but failed to gain the better of my profundity to express my point of view. However soon after the successful conclusion of the presidential election when the mind was placed at ease once more, I regained my depth of thought or understanding to write this article. This therefore is an article written to express my profound gratitude to the ordinary people of this country for having taken the correct decision at the just concluded presidential election. If they had taken the wrong decision this nation may well have suffered once more under foreign domination, as it did from 2nd March 1815 for nearly 133 years under the British colonial administration, until independence was regained once more on 4th February 1948.

In 1803 the British were well established in the Maritime Provinces of our country. However the Kandyan kingdom was still under the rule of the Sinhalese king Sri Vikrama Rajasimha. The British Governor Frederick North (1798- 1805) was confident that he could defeat the king of Kandy with the support of the First Adikar Pilimatalawa. He therefore decided to launch a short military campaign and a British expeditionary force was dispatched under MacDowall in 1803 to Kandy, the capital of the Kandyan kingdom. However he had grossly underestimated the personal influence and the power of the Sinhalese king and the degree of support that he could generate among the people with the assistance of the Sinhalese Chieftains. When this British expeditionary force reached the city of Kandy they found that the king and his army had evacuated. However King Sri Vickrama Rajasimha's army had only withdrawn from the capital to regroup under the leadership of the chieftains in preparation for a prolonged guerrilla campaign, which was their customary tactic against invading armies.

The British expeditionary force was besieged in the city of Kandy with a sullenly and hostile population. All British reinforcements and supplies were ambushed and prevented from reaching the city of Kandy by the Sinhalese army. When the

monsoon set in sans food, medicine, supplies and reinforcements, the British expeditionary force began to suffer from disease and many troops began deserting in droves. The remaining attempted to evacuate the capital they had occupied. On the 24th of June 1803 the remaining British expeditionary force that was withdrawing from Kandy was intercepted at Watapoluwa by the Sinhalese army and totally annihilated. Sri Vickrama Rajasimha and his army returned to the capital city of Kandy in triumph. The defeat was so humiliating to the British that an order was sent by the colonial secretary in Britain for all remaining British troops to be withdrawn from Ceylon forthwith. However before this order from Britain was received by Governor North, he had on his own initiative negotiated with his friend who was the viceroy in India to obtain reinforcements from India for the purpose of defending the British territories in Ceylon. Sri Vickrama Rajasimha too did not have the necessary strength to exploit his victory for the purpose of driving away the British from Ceylon.

Sir Thomas Maitland (1805 – 1811) who succeeded Fredrick North was more cautious and did not want to engage in hostilities with the king of Kandy. He instead followed a different strategy of waiting for the correct opportunity for a regime change. First Adikar Pilimatalawa with whose assistance the king had usurped the throne was later found to be plotting with the British to depose the king and was treacherously murdered in 1809. The king appointed Eheylepola to succeed him.

Sir Thomas Maitland sensing that misunderstandings were rampant between the king and his chieftains engaged the services of John D'Oyly, an expert on Kandyan affairs to exploit this advantage. It was the First Adikar Eheylepola that John D'Oyly befriended to destabilize the Kandyan kingdom. The king next began to suspect Eheylepola too of conspiracy. Eheylepola was summoned by the king but knowing what the consequence of such summons would be, he retired to Sabaragamuwa of which he was the Dessave or chief. The king realizing it was just a matter of time before Eheylepola would deflect to join the British appointed Molligoda as First Adikar. It took D'Oyly nearly seven years to create adequate dissention between the king and his chieftains through an efficient intelligence

network that also kept him updated on every move that the king made against the British. He was in constant communication with several Sinhalese chieftains who by then had fallen out with the king, as the king was becoming more and more suspicious of the Kandyan aristocracy.

Sir Thomas Maitland was succeeded by Sir Robert Brownrigg (1812- 1820). John D'Oyly's efforts for a regime change commenced in 1809 were beginning to yield results with the alienation of the Kandyan aristocracy from Sri Vikrama Rajasimha, paving the way for the British to intervene decisively. With the aid of his spies D'Oyly had conducted the necessary negotiations with the Kandyan chieftains including the First Adikar Molligoda and had created the necessary environment for the British to capture the Kandyan kingdom by end of 1814. Governor Brownrigg himself an Army Officer in the rank of a Lieutenant General with the assistance of Ahalepola, who had by then deflected to British territory, made the necessary plans to invade the Kandyan kingdom in early 1815.

The invasion when launched hardly met with any resistance, as the chieftains did not support their king to defend his kingdom. However the people gave little or no support to the advancing British army. The British army was able to capture the king and the Kandyan kingdom was ceded to the British on 2nd March 1815 through a Convention prepared by John D'Oyly and signed by Lt Gen. Brownrigg on behalf of the British and by the chieftains on behalf of the Kandyan people. The subsequent rebellion of 1817-1818 was due to the fact that the chieftains had obtained British help in 1815 for the sole purpose of deposing an unpopular ruler and not for the purpose of establishing British rule over the Kandyan territories. However by the time the chieftains realized that the British had through John D'Oyly taken them for a ride, it was too late and the two rebellions in 1817 and 1848 were crushed ruthlessly by the British. Thereafter the country was under British rule for 133 years, until independence was granted on 4th February 1948.

With the sun setting over the British Empire, America was to take its place as the next super power to dominate the world. Ceylon in the British times after independence promulgated a new Constitution in 1972 and became the Republic of Sri Lanka. To a super power such as America interested in hegemony, this little

island placed so strategically in the Indian Ocean with an abundance of natural resources had to be brought under its sphere of influence. However this was easier said than done. This free sovereign independent Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka was now a Unitary Sovereign State and not a banana republic. Therefore in Sri Lanka sovereignty is in the People. It is exercised and enjoyed firstly, through elected representatives in a Parliament that is responsible for legislative power. Secondly, through a President elected by the people, responsible for executive power including defence and thirdly, through courts of law, tribunals and institutions, which exercise judicial power.

Therefore surreptitious efforts were necessary to first destabilize such a sovereign state, before it could be brought under the influence of an interested super power. Over the past thirty years such a surreptitious effort was made by vested interests to destabilize Sri Lanka. They directly or indirectly helped the LTTE for this very purpose. The efforts of America and the western nations to save the LTTE leadership in the final stages of the war were proof enough of their involvement in that effort to destabilize our country. However the nation united under the leadership of President Mahinda Rajapakse and convincingly defeated the LTTE. Therefore the ambitious plans and the combined effort of the western nations to destabilize Sri Lanka and to bring it under western hegemony did not succeed.

American Ambassador Robert O'Blake engaged in the same strategy that was adapted by John D'Oyly after the failed attempt by the British to capture the Kandyan kingdom in 1803. John D'Oyly befriended the First Adikar Ehelepola, who in today's context is no different to an Army Commander. He caused a rift between the king and the First Adikar Ehelepola to destabilize the Kandyan Kingdom. Robert O'Blake befriended General Sarath Fonseka the Army Commander and caused a rift between him and the President to destabilize Sri Lanka. John D'Oyly took approximately seven years to accomplish his task. However Robert O'Blake took only seven months to do so. This may be possibly because communication during John D'Oyly's times was through dispatch riders, while Robert O'Blake had the advantage of using information technology in this

day and age. However while the near 100% support President Mahinda Rajapakse had from the people of this country soon after the defeat of the LTTE in May 2009 had dropped to 58.7% by 26th January 2010. Was this the result of the work done by General Sarath Fonseka's campaign advisor James McGrath, a British Citizen who was responsible for a regime change in the Maldives? Or was it the result of the rumoured 140 million US Dollars given for the presidential campaign of General Sarath Fonseka by the Americans, possibly through his newly found friend Robert O'Blake?

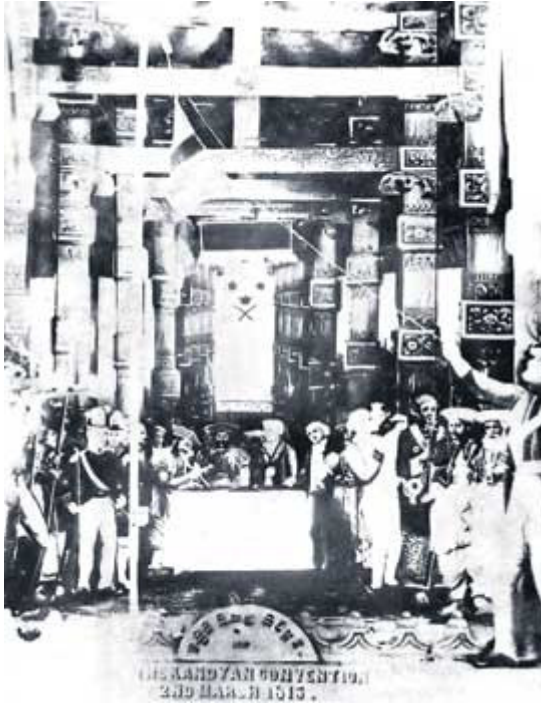
John D'Oyly succeeded in 1815 because Sri Vikrama Rajasimha was the sovereign in Sinhela and with his capture the Kandyan kingdom came to an end. Robert O'Blake failed in 2010 because in Sri Lanka sovereignty was no longer in the hands a single person but in the People. However he succeeded in getting General Sarath Fonseka to contest the President at the presidential election but failed because in this day and age sovereignty is in the people and also because they elected President Mahinda Rajapakse for a second term in office with an overwhelming majority of 1.8 Million votes. He may have even financed the opposition election campaign with 140 million US Dollars. However I believe that sum of money was grossly inadequate to buy the needed votes for a regime change in Sri Lanka. It is also a fact that we have many patriotic people in this country that cannot be bought over with money.

American and British agents such as Robert O'Blake and James McGrath failed to destabilize Sri Lanka and to bring it under western hegemony through a regime change. Therefore the next possible strategy of the western nations would possibly be an effort to organize and fund mass protests to destabilize our country, like they did in Iran soon after the presidential election. All such efforts too will fail, because the people of this country are far more educated than in the days of the Kandyan Kingdom to be taken for a ride once more by crafty foreigners. However as mentioned in John Perkins book "Confessions of an Economic Hit Man" the day of the Jackal may be perhaps the last resort available to the Americans for a regime change.

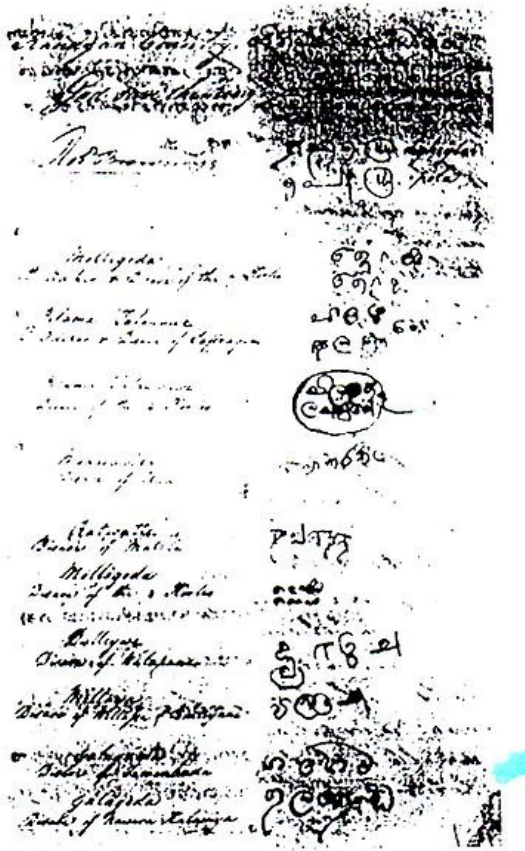
Majority of the ordinary people in this country elected a president who had proven through past action that he is able to stand up to any pressure from hegemonic western nations. They have understood that foreign interference must never be tolerated in the internal affairs of their country, however powerful these foreign countries may be. Above all they will never forget that their Security Forces, the Police, the Civil Defence Force, people in the LTTE threatened villages and innocent people in other parts of the country have sacrificed much blood, sweat, tears and toil and sometimes even their very life and limb, for over thirty long years to protect the unity and territorial integrity of their nation for posterity. Hence their correct decision to elect President Mahinda Rajapakse who defeated the LTTE for a second term in office. Though General Sarath Fonseka was the Commander of the Army when the LTTE was finally defeated, he had unfortunately joined hands after retirement for whatever reason, with a bunch of traitors and agents of western nations to destabilize and divide our country once more and therefore he had lost his eligibility to be elected as the president of Sri Lanka.



Ehelepolu, Molligoda and Kapuvatta
with D'Oyly



A drawing depicting the Kandyan Convention being drawn up at the Audience Hall or Magula Maduwa.



Signatories of the Kandyan Convention

British

- Robert Brownrigg - Governor of Ceylon
- John D'Oyly - Chief Translator to the Government
- Jas. Surtherland - Deputy Secretary to the Government

Kandyan Radalas (Kandyan Chieftain)

- Ehelepola Nilame
- Dullewe - Dissawa of Wellassa and Bintenna
- Ratwatte - Dissawa of Matale
- Galagoda - Dissawa of Nuwara Kalawiya
- Molligoda - 1st (Maha) Adikar & Dissawa of the Sath (Seven) Korles
- Molligoda - Dissawa of Thun (Three) Korles
- Pilima Talawuwe - 2nd Adikar & Dissawa of Sabaragamuwa
- Pilima Talawuwe - Dissawa of Hathra (Four) Korles
- Monarawila - Dissawa of Uva
- Galagama - Dissawa of Tamankaduwa



Kandyan Convention Signatories