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WikiLeaks: Fonseka Did Discuss The “White Flags Story” With US

By [Colombo Telegraph](#) –

A classified US diplomatic cable under the name of Patricia A. Butenis, the US ambassador to Colombo shows, the Presidential candidate General Sarath Fonseka stood by the controversial “white flag” story published by the Sunday Leader.

The cable written on December 14, 2009 at 13.50pm by the ambassador Butenis and classified as “Confidential” recount the details of a lunch meeting she had with UNP deputy leader Karu Jayasuriya and Sarath Fonseka on December 14, 2009.



Fonseka- did not know the flurry of phone calls

“After Fonseka arrived, the former general discussed his interview in the Sunday Leader news paper

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end of the war the shooting of any LTTE leaders who might try to surrender under flags of truce." she wrote to Washington. The ambassador further wrote "Fonseka claimed he did not know until two days later about the flurry of phone calls between Gotabhaya, the Norwegian ambassador, and the LTTE leadership regarding surrender and said he had been told details by journalists. Nevertheless, he said he took full responsibility for the actions of the men in uniform." The Colombo Telegraph publishes the full cable below.

The editor Sunday Leader Frederica Jansz was given an interview by Fonseka and it was published under the name title of "Gota Ordered Them to Be Shot" – Genaral Sarath Fonseka" on December 13, 2009. Read the story [here](#)

After the story broke, the government began to portray Fonseka's allegation as an act of treachery. The story of the massacre was irrelevant. What mattered was that by speaking out Fonseka was betraying [Gotabaya](#), the army and the country.

A government backed campaign to publicise particularly in Sinhala, a distorted version of the story, and present the General as a traitor. The objective behind the campaign was to convince the General that his accusations were eroding his popularity and to force him to back down in the interest of winning more votes. This campaign began immediately after the newspaper went on sale with radio shows denouncing the story as an act of treachery by early Sunday morning.



Frederica Jansz – subjected to smear campaigns

It was only as the government's denunciation campaign intensified with TV, radio, and internet sites declaring the former war hero a traitor that Fonseka's advisors Mangala Samaraweera, Anura Kumara Dissanayake and Vijitha Herath in particular advised him to retract part of the story.

At a meeting with the Chairman of The Sunday Leader, Lal Wickrematunge on Monday, December 14, senior UNP leaders together with Samaraweera and the JVP insisted that a retraction was necessary as the story had damaged Fonseka's reputation as a patriot.

Read **Frederica Jansz's story** [here](#)

Read the full US embassy cable below;

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001139

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INSB

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SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: ELECTIONS UPDATE NO. 1

REF: COLOMBO 539

COLOMBO 00001139 001.6 OF 002

Classified By: AMBASSADOR PATRICIA A. BUTENIS. REASONS: 1.4 (B, D)

1. (SBU) Introduction: As an air of anticipation builds in Sri Lanka in advance of the upcoming Sri Lankan elections, including a presidential election scheduled for January 26 and a parliamentary election anticipated for later in the spring, post will provide update reports as events dictate, with emphasis on the quick relay of breaking news. This is the first such update. Post will provide more in-depth analysis in separate cables.

FONSEKA, UNP DETAIL ELECTION

ISSUES FOR AMBASSADOR

2. (C) At a December 14 lunch for Ambassador and DCM, to which General Fonseka also dropped in, host UNP deputy head Karu Jayasuriya said the UNP-JVP "alliance" was not a coalition, though all were for a return to democracy. Jayasuriya had a long list of complaints about media harassment by the government and Rajapaksa corruption and "family rule." As for the Tamils, the UNP leader said he

they had been treated by the Rajapaksas. After Fonseka arrived, the former general discussed his interview in the Sunday Leader newspaper on December 13, in which he had accused Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa of ordering at the end of the war the shooting of any LTTE leaders who might try to surrender under flags of truce. (NOTE: These killings were detailed in the State Department Report to Congress on Incidents at the End of the War, and in RefTel, though details of the orders issued were not known to the report authors. END NOTE.) Fonseka claimed he did not know until two days later about the flurry of phone calls between Gotabhaya, the Norwegian ambassador, and the LTTE leadership regarding surrender and said he had been told details by journalists. Nevertheless, he said he took full responsibility for the actions of the men in uniform.

3. (C) As for Fonseka's chances at the upcoming January 26 election, he and Jayasuriya believed they could win) if the election were free and fair. They calculated that if voter turnout were over 80 percent, they would win. This was why, they claimed, the Rajapaksas were focused on keeping turnout low. Even in the southern districts, home to both President Rajapaksa and Fonseka, the election was up for grabs because of local dissatisfaction with Rajapaksa corruption and cronyism. Finally, on the question of the desired role of the international community in the elections, Jayasuriya made a strong pitch for IC involvement to help ensure a free and fair election and level playing field.

UNF CHALLENGES PRESIDENT TO DEBATE

4. (C) On December 13, the joint Opposition held a press conference which included Gen. Fonseka, JVP leader Somawansa Amarasinghe and UNP leader Ranil Wickremasinghe. Amarasinghe challenged President Rajapaksa to agree to a public debate with Gen. Fonseka but there has not yet been any response

Fonseka and Jayasuriya both said they did not expect Rajapaksa to agree to a debate, joking that it would be hard for him to speak without a teleprompter.

PILLAYAN WAVERING -- AGAIN

COLOMBO 00001139 002.4 OF 002

¶5. (C) After a party meeting on December 11, the TMVP released a statement that appeared to back off earlier statements by its leader, Pillayan, that the TMVP would support President Rajapaksa. Observers have stated that Pillayan's December 2 pledge of support to the President angered many in his TMVP ranks, and that they forced him to retreat from that position.

TNA WISH LIST

¶6. (C) TNA MP Suresh Premachandran told media on December 12 that his party colleagues had agreed on four main points to demand of any candidate they pledge to support. The four demands reportedly included a full account of those reported disappeared or arrested during the war; to resettle all displaced persons; to withdraw from High Security Zones and enable resettlement of these lands; and to work out a political settlement. Premachandran said a delegation of TNA representatives had met with Senior Presidential Advisor Basil Rajapaksa on December 7 to discuss these conditions, and that TNA leader R. Sampanthan had presented the list to UNP Deputy Leader Karu Jayasuriya. In a meeting with PolOff on December 11, TNA MP Pathmini Sithamparanathan implied that there were still divisions within the TNA about what issues they would push in any negotiations, and doubts about how much they could expect to demand for their support.

97. (C) The President announced on December 14 that he had ordered the police to take down any campaign-related posters, including his own, as they all violated elections law. Colombo has been blanketed with pictures of the president and his brothers, including at least one enormous full profile picture of Rajapaksa that measures some 60 feet tall. Fonseka posters just began appearing around town over the weekend of December 12-13, including one large billboard-sized poster on the road from the center of town to the parliament building. On a recent trip to Galle, EconOff sighted well over 1,300 Rajapaksa posters along the 100 km route. Not more than 20 Fonseka posters were seen on the same drive, and some of these had been either damaged or partially covered by Rajapaksa posters. The Southern Province is known as Rajapaksa's home turf. At Jayasuriya's lunch, he told the Ambassador that the Rajapaksa campaign had over 40,000 cut-outs of the President created, nearly half of which had been placed in greater Colombo.

BUTENIS

←

Bharatha Lakshman on Duminda Silva's underworld connections - 4 Sinhala voice records

DR BAHU ELECTED TO MC

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Nikie / May 2, 2012



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SF is the best Army Commander in the world as some people say. But fortunately or unfortunately he missed the chance of being the worst President in this Universe.



Gunapala / May 2, 2012



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WAY BEFORE THAT BASIL ADMITED TO SHELLING CIVILIANS (also on Wikileaks)

If its tarnishing image, then Basil, Janz should be in prison

She also had no proof (recording) and admitted to publishing private discussions

Fonseka made a mistake in answering such questions, this is politics, not battle

After all he knew that will affect his chances.

(starvation and lack of medicine surely killed more as supplies were for only 70 000)



gamini / May 2, 2012



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SF is also not free of War Crimes, as the LTTE Col Rahim who was massacred was in the Forces custody while this SF was in Command. CH 4 clearly displas this fact. There can be no denial. The five students in Trinco and the Seventeen Aid Workers should take their toll.



Thissa / May 2, 2012



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To be fair, he was out touring Budhagaya and China when the worst was happening.

(Credit must be given, he accepted the blame for all under him)



DRG / May 3, 2012
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gamini / May 4, 2012

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