

• LTTE STRATEGY AND THE MADRAS FACTOR •

— James Glad

— Mervyn de Silva

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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AFGHANISTAN, CAMBODIA AND... IDR RESEARCH TEAM

Afghanistan and Sri Lanka: A Comparison of Operational Styles

The 1970s

THE DECADE OF THE 1970s can in retrospect, be called the decade of decisive conventional wars. A number of decisive conventional conflicts occurred in the Third World that saw entire countries fall before invading/liberating armies. As a contemporary Indian writer has pointed out, in 1971 India liberated Bangladesh; in 1978 Tanzania liberated Uganda; in 1979 Vietnam freed Cambodia from the Khmer Rouge; in 1979, the penultimate year of this tumultuous decade, the Soviet Union launched a major thrust to occupy Afghanistan.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was a model of ruthless military efficiency that sent shock waves across the globe. Soviet special forces (Spetsnaz) seize Bagram air base near Kabul. The elite 105 (Guards) Airborne Division flew in to seize the capital. Hafizulla Amin's presidential palace was attacked and Amin himself was killed. Simultaneously, five Soviet motorized rifle divisions crossed the border into Afghanistan. In five days all of Afghanistan was under Soviet

Jahideen with sophisticated weaponry through its frontline ally Pakistan, and encouraging a guerrilla-type war. In Cambodia itself the Chinese and their Western allies did their best to bleed the Vietnamese forces in Cambodia in a bitter guerrilla war. In a classic reversal of roles the West engaged the USSR and Vietnam in a low-cost, low-intensity conflict through the indigenous guerrillas. In 1983, another low-intensity conflict of a different sort came to light in Sri Lanka—a vicious ethnic war between the Sinhalas and the Tamils into which India got enmeshed in a web of its own creation.

As this decade draws to a bloody finale we have come to what appears superficially as the final denouement. The Soviet forces have withdrawn from Afghanistan and the Vietnamese from Cambodia. An obvious inference that any military analyst can draw is that it is virtually impossible for any nation today to enforce a prolonged military occupation of another country. Given a motivated population, a committed leadership, a supply of basic small arms and sanctuaries in neigh-

1989 the world held its breath. Western media reports had long been predicting a bloodbath in Kabul in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal. Shorn of their Soviet protectors, the Surrogate regime of Najibullah was expected to come down like a house of cards. The world waited timorously for a bloodbath as the vengeful Mujahideen were now expected to sweep down from the hills and put Najibullah's Afghanistan to the torch and wreak terrible vengeance on the perceived quislings. The world waited in vain.

Kabul, despite all American hopes, was not really a mirror image of Saigon. Amazingly Najibullah regime held. The 'faithful' launched repeated assaults on Jalalabad, in the hope of securing a prestigious political objective where the provisional Mujahideen Government could be installed. But the Afghan Army held out resolutely. The uncoordinated Mujahideen attacks petered out amongst bitter, mutual recriminations. The world was somewhat surprised. However, to anyone following the events closely in Afghanistan the results should have come as no surprise.

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TRENDS

ALLY QUIT

EROS, the LTTE's ally, pulled out its MPs from parliament on July 23. "The military offensive and the restriction of supplies of amenities give the impression that there is a war between two nations and it forces our people to feel that they do not belong to this country", they said in a statement. The thirteen MPs represented the Eelavar Democratic Front, the political wing of EROS.

WILL NOT QUIT

Four SLFP national list MPs have refused to obey their party leader. Dr Mervyn de Silva, Messrs Somasara Dassanayake, Kamal Karunanayake and L.A. B. Perera were asked to resign their seats by Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, SLFP president and leader of the opposition. They have decided to stay put.

WHOSE POSTERS?

Posters put up by enthusiastic supporters to welcome back the SLFP's Anura Bandaranaike, a member of the parliamentary delegation to India, were torn down by unknown persons. But the posters were back on city walls a few hours later.

BRIEFLY

● Former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi told a meeting of his Congress (I) party in Delhi that the South Indian state government of Tamil Nadu was collaborating with Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers to form a separate state on the island. "There is a clear nexus between the DMK and the LTTE", Mr Gandhi said.

He said that the federal government was not restraining (Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi's) DMK because it was a partner in the five party National Front that governs India.

● The DMK government of Tamil Nadu was well aware of the LTTE's activities in the South Indian state and had abetted the Tigers by keeping the central government agencies in the dark about their links, the *Indian Express* said in an expose published on July 26. Many startling facts about the state government's protective attitude towards the Tigers had come to light, the report said.

● Addressing the US House of Representatives Sub-committee on Human Rights and Asian and Pacific Affairs, Deputy Assistant Secretary for State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Teresa C. Schaffer said that "the recent attack by Tamil sep-

arartists on government security forces is a tragic step backwards in Sri Lanka's road to normalcy".

"We laud the Sri Lankan government's offer to resume talks to end the fighting and encourage the Tigers to accept it", he said.

● PLO leader Yasser Arafat will definitely visit Sri Lanka before the end of this year, Palestinian deputy Foreign Minister Abdul Latif Abu Hajlah told newsmen at the Galadari Meridien hotel in Colombo. He said that the PLO delegation was in Sri Lanka to strengthen ties and develop good relations following the departure of the Israelis.

● Minister Ranjan Wijeratne showed Colombo based foreign diplomats pictures of mass graves to indicate "how ruthless and brutal they have been even before we began to retaliate". The security forces have had high casualties but the government was most worried about civilians stepping on mines, the Minister said. Casualty figures released on July 23: Killed — army 173, police 290, navy 1, air force 4; wounded — army 585, police 566, navy 4, air force 13; missing — army 111, police 352; Total killed 468, missing 463, wounded 658.

● Defence Secretary General Cyril Ranatunga told newsmen at a weekly press briefing that government progress in the North-East war was "fantastic" and "very great". "Starting from zero what we have achieved is fantastic. From no preparation what we have achieved is very great". Minister of State for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne agreed with the assessment. This result was possible because of good leadership, careful planning and efficient execution of plans by the armed forces, the minister said.

(Continued on next page)

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Six weeks of government operations had weakened the LTTE greatly, forcing them to conscript children, the minister said. Two other factors that had weakened the LTTE were: IPKF operations which had reduced the number of LTTE trained cadres, and the keeping away of the other six Tamil groups, the TULF, EROS, PLOT, EPRLF, TELO and ENDLF.

These Tamil groups were giving the government moral support, the minister said.

● The Bank of Ceylon has linked with Wardley Investment Services Ltd., a subsidiary of the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank group, to float a US\$ 30 million Sri Lanka Fund, for investment in Sri Lanka.

● During the debate on the extension of the State of

Emergency, Opposition Leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike told parliament that the SLFP had thought of voting for the Emergency this time but had changed their minds since emergency powers were being used to harass and kidnap their supporters.

About the situation in the North and the East, Mrs Bandaranaike said that all were agreed that it was very serious. It had been brought about by mishandling by the government.

After the IPKF left the vacuum was not filled by the government; it was the LTTE who filled it. They transported vast quantities of steel from Colombo to build their bunkers and the government just allowed it. The government also gave arms to the

LTTE to fight the TNA; they were allowed to build bunkers and collect taxes in these areas.

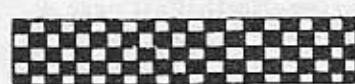
"I do not say that the President and Mr Hameed were not sincere, but the LTTE wanted nothing short of the North and East for themselves. Why do you not at least now speak to the other Tamil parties", the Opposition Leader said.

● The Sri Lanka Transport Board has been dissolved, under the government's program of 'peopleisation' (privatisation). All its liabilities will be borne by the Treasury. The Board existed for 32 years. Thirty five more state corporations and 30 other Government Owned Business Undertakings GOBUs are due to follow in this program of privatisation.

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DELHI, D.M.K. AND THE TAMIL EXODUS

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

The visit of the Sri Lankan parliamentary delegation, an entirely new diplomatic enterprise, helped to spotlight the "Indian factor" in our national crisis and the Sri Lankan political Establishment's lately acquired sensitivity to geo-politics, an elementary but welcome lesson of EELAM WAR I. The Indian involvement and the actual outcome of 50 days of fighting in the North-East remain the most critically important matters as the war, far from being a neat surgical operation, drags on. And as it does, new factors contribute to its rapidly increasing complexity. The LTTE attack on Sinhala settler villages in Madawachchiya is one such contributory element.

Both in content and style, Indian foreign policy, particularly Delhi's neighbourhood diplomacy, under the V. P. Singh National Front government, reveals some salient differences from the approach of the Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress approach. There has been a positive effort to improve relations with small neighbours. Nepal is a striking illustration. The imposition of the Indian will through "coercive diplomacy" is hardly evident. Physical intervention, benign or otherwise, has been officially ruled out.

However, the composition of the V. P. Singh administration, the coalition of ideologically disparate forces and pressure-groups, makes the inter-mestic factor in Indo-Sri Lankan relations (the Tamil problem) more complex. Besides, the nature of the coalition, there is the more sensitive consideration of numbers or parliamentary stability. The constituent parties possess much greater clout than any "ally" did in the Congress-monopolised government of Mr.

Gandhi. The recent Cabinet crisis, which led to a spate of resignations, was a very early demonstration of Mr. V. P. Singh's vulnerability. But Mr. Singh has many advantages, largely personal. He is NOT an office-seeker, dazzled by power, or by the glory of a *gadi*. He is regarded as a man of principle. He is not open to corruption and shady influences from Big Business, local or foreign, as he so bravely demonstrated when Gandhi's Finance Minister. None of this means, he is political innocent or naive dogooder. He is a master of manoeuvre and in-fighting. The way he came out of the recent crisis proved that.

Tamilnadu, with its 55 million, is an important state, a key southern state. The National Front's stronghold is the north. This makes the DMK, the ruling party in Tamilnadu, an influential partner, all the more because its main, traditional rival the AIADMK was a very important partner of Mr. Gandhi's Congress when M.G.R. was the Chief Minister. MGR played "God-father" to Prabhakaran and his LTTE.

Karunanidhi has tried these past few months to slip into that role, or rather regain a role which he once held as the most nationalist of Tamil leaders. That attempt has got him into deep trouble with the Centre and Prime Minister Singh. The issues were his "boycott" of the reception to the IPKF on its return from Sri Lanka. Even more than the Civil Service, the Indian army is independent India's most valued legacy from the British raj. Besides, the IPKF and therefore the Indian army regards the LTTE which "humiliated" it and continues to pour scorn on the "world's fourth largest army"

as so much "scum", in the lingo of top-bracket army 'brass'.

Mr. Kurunanidhi has also antagonised RAW by accusing it of causing "friction" between the DMK and the Centre. He has accused RAW (and Mrs. Gandhi, and Rajiv) of establishing training camps for the 'Tigers' in the South.

It should be noted that R.A.W. and the IPKF, despite many a *fracas*, ran the 'Indian operation' in Sri Lanka for two and half years.

The Centre's attitude then is not supportive in any way of the Tamil 'Tigers'. If anything it is intensely hostile to an LTTE which has launched the new war in the midst of serious, prolonged negotiations with the Premadasa government, and this war seems in deadly earnest — the goal an independent EELAM. With Kashmir, under direct Centre (Army) rule, and Punjab a running sore, Delhi is in no mood to tolerate any form of secessionism.

However, Delhi does have a serious concern — and here, we see continuity of Indian foreign policy, rather than discontinuity or change. The concern is spelt out in the loose word "security". The "threat-perception" as Indian spokesmen and analysts keep saying arises from the possibility/probability of Colombo's "inducting outside powers" in the "war" against the separatist 'Tigers'. Delhi knows that no big power, and no extra-regional power, is likely to get involved in the Sri Lankan imbroglio and run the risk of alienating India, too important a country to antagonise. So, it is only a code-word for a "power" in the region. And there is only ONE power which has the resources to assist Sri Lanka in any meaningful way

i.e. militarily. The "power" it has in mind is of course Pakistan, right now locked in a bitter dispute over divided Kashmir, the original conflict that made these newly independent states mortal enemies.

In 1971, Mrs. Gandhi's secret emissaries received Soviet assurances of help in the event of an India-Pakistan war, and US-Chinese aid to Pakistan. That Indo-Soviet Treaty is still valid. Yet, Prime Minister Singh decided to visit Moscow to hear Mr. Gorbachev give the self-same assurances publicly, and declare the USSR's unreserved support for the Indian position that Kashmir should be discussed on the basis of the Simla Agreement.

Pakistan is the obsession. And that is vis-a-vis Sri Lanka however adolescent we may find such a view, or suspect that it is merely a pretext for interference. The rumpus in Delhi, even in the most respectable newspapers in India, over the visit to Colombo of "Pakistani warships" carrying weapons, is a ready illustration. It was soon found that these were Pakistan Coast guard vessels. They stopped in Colombo on the way home from China. A 3-4 column story with huge headlines soon became a single para in many papers.

LEGITIMATE CONCERN

Besides these 'security concerns' on which the Sri Lankan delegation was treated to many lectures, there is the Tamil refugee problem. And that IS a legitimate concern. So far, 48,000 Tamil refugees have fled the fighting in the north, according to usually reliable Indian sources. The Indian navy is patrolling India's side of the Palk Straits. Yet the refugee flow continues. Innocent civilian families are leaving their homes and seeking shelter in the Mannar area. The Sri Lankan navy is simply not equipped to control the situation. Although we are a small island and this exodus was seized by Mrs. Gandhi as a 'tool' of coercive

Indo-Lanka Parliamentary Consensus

The parliamentary delegation in the course of their discussions highlighted the following issues and concerns on which there was a broad consensus:

a) The fact that all political parties agreed on the need for action to restore law and order and civil authority in the North and East of the country.

b) That all political parties in Sri Lanka were in agreement that the final resolution of the current crisis must be a political one within the democratic framework.

c) That all were agreed that the military option which was proceeding was not one against the Tamil community but against the LTTE as an armed group which was committed to secession.

d) That the public statements made by political parties in regard to the present conflict had ensured no ethnic backlash as had occurred on previous occasions.

e) That the settlement of the ethnic problem, which is an ongoing process, must build on the foundations already established.

f) That Indian soil should not be allowed to be used for any clandestine activity by any armed groups against Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan parliamentary delegation also informed all groups it had interacted with, that it greatly appreciated the very clear statement of policy made by the Indian Prime Minister. This was to the effect that,

i) India stood by the unity, integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka

ii) India would not intervene in the internal affairs of its neighbours

iii) India would not allow Sri Lankan Tamil guerrilla groups to operate from or maintain bases on Indian soil

The delegation was gratified to note that all political parties and individuals they met, completely supported this policy.

Through their intense interaction with the major Indian political parties, the Sri Lankan Parliamentary delegation was able to obtain a clear understanding of India's concerns. These were broadly:

i) Concern at the reported inflow of refugees from the conflict into Tamil Nadu and the level of civilian casualties

ii) Concern at the possible involvement of '3rd parties' in the Sri Lankan conflict which could affect India's security

iii) Concern and interest in seeing an early end to the conflict and the resolution of the ethnic problem through the provision of as much devolution as possible within the framework of the unitary Constitution of Sri Lanka.

diplomacy, expansion of the Sri Lankan navy has been neglected. A modest rise in its budget may have paid good dividends.

One of India's best known commentators, Inder Malhotra observed in a *Times of India* article:

"By July 1987, the feelings in Tamil Nadu over the plight of Lankan Tamils were so inflamed that inaction on New Delhi's part would almost certainly have caused a major explosion in the southern state... it is amazing that Mr. Inder Gujral's statement that India would not intervene militarily 'anywhere under any circumstances has evoked very little comment. Utmost caution in intervening even in areas of vital concern to this country is of course called for. But to rule out Indian intervention, altogether regardless of consequence to Indian security, is just not on."

THE WAR

What some sections of the Indian intelligentsia regard as LTTE arrogance and ingratitude, promotes on the other hand a pro-Colombo attitude and a wishful thinking that would doubtless please many a Sri Lankan. In the same respected paper, chief political correspondent A. S. Abraham predicts rather too blandly:

"It was so bloated with a sense of victory that it over-estimated own strength and underestimated that of Colombo. The result is the imminent collapse not only of the LTTE but of the entire decades-long Tamil struggle. The wheel has come full circle".

Has it? Everything points to bitter fighting in the North-East where the troops have recaptured some police stations and restored government authority in the towns, while the 'Tigers' enjoy total mobility in the countryside. Its proving a long, painful, and costly war. The LTTE has been taught that it can declare Eelam but cannot govern it or even protect life and property. Yet as long as it has supplies, the LTTE can continue its guerilla war.

Statements on Sri Lanka

U.S.

In Sri Lanka, the welcome winding down of the bloody insurgency by the revolutionary JVP has tragically given way, in recent weeks, to renewed fighting between Sri Lankan security forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. We laud the Sri Lankan government's offer to resume talks to end the fighting and encourage the Tigers to accept it. We have long believed that minority grievances must be addressed by peaceful means within the framework of a sovereign Sri Lanka.

Mr. Chairman, the second key U.S. regional objective I would like to highlight is encouragement of democratic government. Democracy has a strong base in the Subcontinent. India and Sri Lanka have enjoyed forty years of representative government. Pakistan rejoined their ranks 18 months ago; its new democratic polity has already shown resilience under stress. And, as I testified recently before Chairman Solarz's subcommittee, the winds of democratic change that have swept the world these last twelve months have reached Nepal.

Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka are all faced with the gravest test confronting democratic governments: maintaining public order in the face of often violent dissent without undermining the very democratic values for which they stand. The balance is a difficult one.

U.K.

Mr Wyn Jones in the commons on 2 July asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has made any representations to the Government of (a) Sri Lanka and (b) India concerning the recent escalation of violence in Sri Lanka and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The British High Commission in Colombo is in

regular contact with the Sri Lankan Government, and we have also made contact with the Indian Government. We are deeply concerned by the renewed fighting in Sri Lanka and by the suffering and loss of life this is causing. We are dismayed by the decision of the Tamil Tigers to break off negotiations with the Sri Lankan Government and resume fighting.

E.E.C.

Mr. Mario Sammartino, Charge d' Affaires of Italy as the representative of the current President of the EEC, Italy handed over the attached declaration, states the Foreign Ministry.

The declaration states: "The Twelve wish to express their deep concern at the current deterioration of the situation in Sri Lanka. They deplore the refusal of the LTTE to continue negotiations and its decision to renew fighting in the North and East of the country which both causes great suffering among the civilian population and leads thousands of people to seek refuge in other areas.

In conformity with President Premadasa's appeal for consultation, compromise and consensus, they hope that a peaceful solution will be found to the domestic problems of the island with the object of safeguarding the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Sri Lanka.

Australia

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, today condemned the actions of the Tamil militant group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), in breaking the ceasefire with the Sri Lankan Government.

(Continued on page 21)

Armed ethnic conflict reaches crucial stage

The final showdown

James Clad in Sri Lanka

Blunders and terrible cynicism have pushed Sri Lanka into yet another outbreak of internal armed conflict and communal killing, the fifth in less than a decade. President Ranasinghe Premadasa has only a few weeks in which to get the upper hand in an increasingly savage war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). If he fails to make quick gains he not only risks an erosion of political support at home and abroad but also an end to the promising economic revival which began late last year.

The latest war with the dominant Tamil separatist group was triggered on 11 June when LTTE guerrillas began the massacre of hundreds of Sinhalese police. The bloodletting came just three months after the pull-out by New Delhi of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF), inducted in July 1987 to try and achieve Tamil autonomy within Sri Lanka. With that withdrawal, the LTTE was free to eliminate its rivals and consolidate its forces.

Having achieved effective control of the Tamil-dominated north-east, the Tigers — anticipating an eventual election in the region — moved against the police in an apparent bid to ensure that all forces of law and order were in their hands. The tactic backfired, and gave the army, held in check by Premadasa while he negotiated with the LTTE, the excuse to respond in what could be the final showdown between the government and the militants.

In the short term at least, Premadasa has three advantages. First, weariness prevails in India

over Sri Lanka's ethnic turmoil, all the more so given New Delhi's preoccupation with crises in Punjab and Kashmir. Second, the president has gained a breathing spell from the wait-and-see attitude to the war among Sri Lanka's external, aid-giving friends.

Finally, the president owes a lot to the stupid cruelty of the LTTE. After precipitating this new war by butchering hundreds of policemen, the LTTE compounded its error the same month by massacring 14 Tamil opponents living in exile in Madras, the capital of India's Tamil Nadu state and the traditional refuge for Sri Lankan Tamils. Its standing in the Tamil diaspora and in the wider world has never been so low.

Despite these useful gains, opponents within and outside the president's United National Party (UNP) say Premadasa's tactics with the LTTE — which included a year of negotiations — compounded the war's cost. They claim he has landed himself in the worst crisis of the presidency he assumed in late 1988. Some senior Sri Lankan military leaders regard Premadasa's faith in the LTTE as being partly responsible for the suffering now being incurred by the army in order to regain an edge over the Tigers, whose forces are estimated at slightly under one-third of the 60,000 soldiers and sailors comprising Sri Lanka's defence and paramilitary forces.

If the parliamentary opposition parties competing with the UNP for votes in the majority Sinhalese community successfully make an issue of this, Premadasa could be put on the defensive. Currently, however, the

Sri Lanka Freedom Party and most others are subordinating partisan advantage to the war, which the government is trying hard to portray as a conflict between the state and one terrorist group, the LTTE.

The first government-LTTE war began in 1983. It ceased in 1987 when India sought to achieve Tamil autonomy within Sri Lanka by interposing the IPKF between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan army. Yet when the Tigers, who had been armed and trained by Indian intelligence agencies previously, became hostile, the Indians showed themselves woefully short of sufficient force to keep the peace.

The fighting between the LTTE and the Indian army ended with the March withdrawal, but immediately afterwards there erupted a pitiless war between the LTTE and different Tamil factions who had supported the 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka accord. The agreement had promised devolution of power to a northeast provincial council, comprising the merged northern and eastern provinces; Tamil groups participating in this council, notably the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), collided with the Tigers.

Critics claim Premadasa turned a blind eye to the LTTE's ruthless power-plays against its Tamil rivals. Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan security forces used the respite given by the presence of the IPKF to destroy by last year a violent movement of alienated Sinhalese youth grouped under the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP, or People's Liberation Front).

These overlapping wars have often made it extraordinarily difficult to keep the various

(Courtesy: FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW)

combatants clearly defined. Other differences turn on caste (among Tamils), on religion (between the Sinhalese Buddhists, Tamil Hindus and the minority Muslims) and on ideology and social class, as in the intra-Sinhalese war against the JVP following the 1989 killing of at least 20,000 people.

This hatred has spawned new agents of violence. Shadowy death squads answer to senior politicians. Different branches of the Sri Lankan security services now employ terror routinely, an aura that hangs heavy on units like the Special Task Force (STF), an elite detachment of police. Some of the most callous LTTE fighters are little more than children, aged 15 or less.

The current war has the feel of a showdown. The LTTE, after all, has worked for 18 years to achieve an independent state in the Tamil-dominated northeast. The origins of that struggle lie in the myopia of Sinhalese linguistic chauvinism, in implicitly anti-Tamil public-service hiring policies and in deliberate Sinhalese colonisation of lands in the northeast. The point of no return was reached after Sinhalese-Tamil rioting in 1983.

The sense of settling scores also results from the Sri Lankan army's need to avenge past humiliations, some of which it blames on Premadasa's negotiations with the LTTE. The president genuinely believed that he alone could bring the LTTE, whom he regarded as people of similar populist bent to himself, to an agreement. Neither he nor the Tiger leaders have much patience for the English-speaking, educated elite. Premadasa also thought that LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran and his battle-hardened comrades might slowly be tamed once they became undisputed administrators of their autonomous northeastern patch within the wider Sri Lankan polity. He also hoped, in the future, that this would lead to a reliable UNP vote bank in that region.

Premadasa did not ignore the signs of LTTE war preparations; some, such as the construction of bunkers right next to army positions, as in the northern fort of Jaffna, spoke loudly enough. This gamble on sincerity is crucial to understanding Premadasa's effort to reach a deal with the LTTE. When police in the eastern region tangled with the LTTE, he removed them, ordering them to keep out of the Tigers' score-settling among rival Tamil gangs and factions. Even when signs, as in Jaffna, almost shrieked of an imminent LTTE attack, the Inspector-general of police was forced to order his men not to resist the LTTE.

* * *

Sri Lankan generals also took deep breaths when ordered to evacuate positions gained, often at some sacrifice, during the first government-LTTE war. Kankasanturai, at the northern tip of the country, provides an example; relieving the Jaffna garrison without this nearby post has become a very costly exercise. Officers also swallowed hard when teenage guerrillas harassed them at LTTE checkpoints; with Premadasa's acquiescence, the LTTE had demanded the right to vet military movements. Still the presidential order held: give no cause for a breakdown of the truce, give no cause for the destruction of the autonomy talks.

Now that process lies in ruins. Yet despite Premadasa's bitterness at this betrayal he retains a number of important advantages.

● It is not 1983 nor 1987; India is simply unable to swivel 180 degrees so soon after withdrawing its troops. New Delhi's stance is defensive, seeking to minimise the wars "push" effect on Tamil migration across the Palk Strait. India's dislike of a separate Eelam state remains as strong as ever, while its military brass relish the sight of the LTTE being hammered.

● The LTTE's brutal record. Even in the context of Sri Lan-

ka's five internal wars, in which no one has won any human-rights awards, Prabhakaran has gained a reputation for ruthlessness.

● Retaining a conciliatory pose while prosecuting the war. Justice Minister A. C. S. Hameed, a Muslim, still works for a truce despite the almost immediate collapse of his earlier ceasefire agreements in June. On the other hand, Minister of State for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne breathes fire, telling the *REVIEW* candidly that he aims to kill the LTTE leadership in the way he had helped annihilate the JVP.

● A hardened military. From 12,000 soldiers in the early 1980's the Sri Lankan military now has five times that number. Israeli and other advisers have helped to train them and they now have much better weapons. The STF strikes special fear.

The military hopes to retain its garrisons in the northern region and gradually crush the Tigers in the east. Despite the impression of relentless progress given by the Colombo newspapers, Wijeratne acknowledges that it will take "months, not weeks" to put the army back on top. Yet it has made gains, notably the relief of the Kiran army camp near Batticaloa and the destruction of a major LTTE base in Ampara on 10-11 July.

"First we will retake the whole of the eastern province," Wijeratne said. "We have put a brigadier as area commander in each of that province's three districts. We are reopening police stations. Then we will bottle up the peninsula".

Wijeratne insisted he was playing the war transparently. "The foreign press can come and go anywhere, see anyone. The ICRC (International Committee for the Red Cross) is free to work. I am fighting the LTTE like I fight any other terrorist group. They are criminals and we will destroy them." The local press reports defeats as well as victories.

Arms from Pakistan and, especially, China keep the army well-equipped. Armoured personnel carriers, helicopters and especially howitzers are now being bought from Iraq following a visit there at the end of June by the Sri Lankan air force chief and the military's chief of ordnance, sources said. An immediate need is extra Dvora class speedboats from Israel which are highly valued by the Sri Lankans.

Financing the war may be feasible if a position of strength is rapidly defined and talks begin again. Parliament accepted Wijeratne's request for Rs 2.5 billion (US\$ 62 million). A National Defence Fund is receiving contributions from state corporations, and other circular devices are being employed. The effect will be to siphon off funds from other sectors.

A longer war will raise the inflationary spectre unless the government resists the temptation to print new money via central bank credit. During the week of 8 July IMF and World Bank teams were visiting Colombo. The draft IMF report worries about the public-sector deficit going above the current 11-12% of GDP mark but a trade-off is likely if, as seems certain, Premadasa sticks to a structural adjustment programme revised last year. There is no sign that the aid consortium is considering withholding assistance (65% of development spending in Sri Lanka is foreign-financed).

This backing results from the sense that Premadasa had been sincere in his dealings with the LTTE. Indeed, the LTTE at the time of the IPKF withdrawal had achieved something better than all earlier efforts. They ruled in the north and east with the passive (even sometimes active) acquiescence of Colombo. Premadasa had felt he could deal better with an ethnic adversary speaking with one, authoritative voice. But any lingering hope for a plural, civilised Tamil polity expired in the three months following the IPKF's

departure. Anton Balasingham, one of the LTTE's few accessible spokesmen, has admitted that ill-disciplined cadres led to the 11 June massacre of police, and the war is seen as gravely mistimed.

There is no doubt that, as fighting continues, the distinction between "civilians" and "guerillas" will become even more difficult to draw. Already Sri Lanka is witnessing the largest movement of refugees in its history, estimated by the government at 100,000 families. Dreadful communal killings wrack the eastern region, with Tamils bottled up in Batticaloa and to the south of Trincomalee. Wijeratne accepts that there have been some "excesses" in the east by security forces. An overall northward movement of Tamils is under way, towards Jaffna which remains more peaceful than the eastern area. Another 40,000 people are heading north after army units closed in on Mannar island, to the south-west of Jaffna.

Reports of an economic blockade of the north are misleading, however. Violence, far more than government policy, accounts for the slowdown in lorry traffic. Essential supplies are low in government-occupied towns in the north, but outside there is food. Premadasa understands all too well how quickly the comparatively well-intentioned international reaction will evaporate if the government is believed to be engineering a famine. An ICRC-arranged convoy of food and medicines left Colombo for the north on 11 July.

Premadasa's immediate goal is to gain a decisive negotiating advantage for the next round of talks with the LTTE, which must occur, since he cannot "win" militarily. A war the length that Wijeratne envisages would intensify the communal focus to this conflict. Already, banners in Sinhalese script over roads leading north or in Colombo make frank appeals to ethnic chauvinism, though the government is not pandering to

these sentiments. The capital remains free of communal rioting, unlike in 1983. A display of blood and gore under the noses of tourists, who continue to arrive, would be a disaster.

For all that, the government has ineptly presented much of the evidence in its favour from this war. The massacre of police at Uppaveli and Kinniya, both near Trincomalee, or at Batticaloa (during which women LTTE cadres are believed to have applauded) has not made its way into a dossier. Similarly, the LTTE's use of industrial chlorine powder in an 18 June attack on an army camp at Kiran did not prompt the authorities to have the 20 affected men examined by impartial observers.

With the obvious exception of the JVP suppression, the Tamils have been at the receiving end of every one of Sri Lanka's brutal wars. The current conflict, for its sheer destructiveness, may prove the worst yet. Reliable accounts of hundreds of civilians killed, especially in the deeply unsettled Batticaloa area, now reach foreign embassies. The movement of refugees; the use of naval and aerial bombardment; the "necklacing" with flaming tyres and other dreadful calling cards; the near-starvation cynically used to propel a refugee exodus — all these point to a prolonged and vicious conflict. Despite the presence of up to 36 ICRC delegates, the minimal standards of humanitarian warfare, a misnomer perhaps, fail to be observed on both sides.

It all hinges on speed. With eyes on the Kashmir crisis and possible war with Pakistan, the Indians desperately want to avoid intervention. Clumsy LTTE attempts to portray a Pakistani hand in Colombo's military operations elicited a denial from New Delhi that two Pakistani corvettes, visiting Colombo in mid-July were "warships." New Delhi's prompt reaction was meant to head off domestic criticism of "government inaction"

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Jaffna Tamils alienate South Indian brethren

Worm-out welcome

James Clad in Madras

If political support from India figured highly in calculations by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE); then its renewed war with the Sri Lankan military since June could not have been more badly mistimed. At both national and state levels in India the LTTE has reached the bottom of the trough.

Dislike for "Jaffna Tamils" has slowly grown since the first wave of refugees began arriving in Tamil Nadu, an Indian state of 55 million people, after Sri Lanka's ethnic war erupted in 1983. Those crossing the narrow Palk Strait then could count on a sympathetic reception and aid from the state government. There was also a willingness to look the other way at clandestine traffic to the Jaffna peninsula and Mannar island, using fishing craft powered by several outboard engines.

Yet within the state capital Madras, Sri Lankan Tamils have now acquired the reputation of being both snobs and thugs. Residents complain about drug smuggling, brazen show of weaponry by young LTTE supporters driving around in Suzuki jeeps and about a deterioration of law and order. There also is a tendency to blame high rents and other problems on the emigres.

The formation of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) following the July 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan accord put Tamil Nadu's loyalties to the test. The war breaking out soon afterwards between the mostly north Indian IPKF soldiers and the LTTE came down to a choice between sympathy for the nation or blood-feeling for kin.

Although local journalists and politicians describe it as touch-and-go for some months, nation-

al loyalties seem to have prevailed. India admitted losses during the IPKF operation of 1,155 dead and 2,984 wounded. But when IPKF soldiers died in LTTE ambushes there was no rejoicing in Tamil Nadu, though the moustachioed LTTE chief V. Prabhakaran enjoys a cult following among working-class Tamil youth.

None of this has prevented rival Tamil Nadu political parties from playing favourites among the Tamil emigre groups whose names are an alphabet soup of acronyms: the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF) are only the most prominent, with the LTTE — better known as the Tigers — greatly predominant.

The state government, led by Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi's Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) party, became friendly with the LTTE after coming to power in early 1989, not least because, his aides claim, the EPRLF hobnobbed with the opposition coalition between the then nationally ruling Congress party and the Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party. The DMK now belongs to Indian Prime Minister V. P. Singh's National Front and has a voice in national policymaking.

No one knows how many Sri Lankan nationals live in this fourth-largest Indian city, but they number at least several hundred thousand. Under heavy pressure from New Delhi, Karunanidhi ordered a registration drive following the 19 June killing in Madras of 14 officials of the EPRLF by the LTTE. Landlords uneasy about this penchant for murderous rivalry saw their chance to evict many emigre families.

The killings struck a chord of revulsion, especially among the middle class. The victims included the party's secretary-general K. Padmanabha and two MPs of the Sri Lankan parliament.

Now Karunanidhi is backing away from his former friends. Following the June killings, several detachments of police are being trained to use high-powered rifles. But some analysts believe police sympathies lie with the LTTE or, at the very least, doubt their stomach for trying to control its battle-hardened supporters. Still, some tougher police action, following New Delhi's cue, seems inevitable.

The renewed fighting caught Karunanidhi off guard. The chief minister had played the statesman in February, welcoming LTTE spokesmen Anton Balasingham, the EPRLF's Padmanabha, TELO secretary-general A. Selvam and ENDLF secretary-general Paranthan Rajan to Madras. Yet a month later, Karunanidhi virtually pushed several boatloads of Tamil refugees associated with the failed, Indian-imposed Northeastern provincial council in Sri Lanka away from Tamil Nadu. He was also absent from a reception in Madras for the retiring IPKF force whose commander, Lieut-Gen. A. S. Kalkat, could barely disguise his contempt for the chief minister.

This mixture of Tamil ambivalence and senior Indian officialdom's great dislike of the LTTE, means the Tigers have an uphill task to regain whatever confidence they may once have enjoyed. Since December, the LTTE has been proclaiming their love for India, with Balasingham on one occasion saying the Indo-Sri Lanka accord

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Afghanistan and Sri Lanka: A Comparison of Operational Styles

The 1970s

THE DECADE OF THE 1970s. can in retrospect, be called the decade of decisive conventional wars. A number of decisive conventional conflicts occurred in the Third World that saw entire countries fall before invading/liberating armies. As a contemporary Indian writer has pointed out, in 1971 India liberated Bangladesh; in 1978 Tanzania liberated Uganda; in 1979 Vietnam freed Cambodia from the Khmer Rouge; in 1979, the penultimate year of this tumultuous decade, the Soviet Union launched a major thrust to occupy Afghanistan.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was a model of ruthless military efficiency that sent shock waves across the globe. Soviet special forces (Spetsnaz) seize Bagram air base near Kabul. The elite 105 (Guards) Airborne Division flew in to seize the capital. Hafizulla Amin's presidential palace was attacked and Amin himself was killed. Simultaneously five Soviet motorized rifle divisions crossed the border into Afghanistan. In five days all of Afghanistan was under Soviet occupation. If this was not total war, what was it? The Western world condemned the Russian invasion. India's call for the evacuation of the foreign presence from Afghanistan was muted. Was India at the time aware that she would be forced into a similar situation?

The 1980s

The decade that followed saw a series of low-intensity conflicts break out in Asia in the wake of these invasions. The Americans were determined to make Afghanistan the Soviet Vietnam by equipping the Mu-

jahideen with sophisticated weaponry through its frontline ally Pakistan, and encouraging a guerrilla-type war. In Cambodia itself the Chinese and their Western allies did their best to bleed the Vietnamese forces in Cambodia in a bitter guerrilla war. In a classic reversal of roles the West engaged the USSR and Vietnam in a low-cost, low-intensity conflict through the indigenous guerrillas. In 1983, another low-intensity conflict of a different sort came to light in Sri Lanka—a vicious ethnic war between the Sinhalese and the Tamils into which India got enmeshed in a web of its own creation.

As this decade draws to a bloody finale we have come to what appears superficially as the final denouement. The Soviet forces have withdrawn from Afghanistan and the Vietnamese from Cambodia. An obvious inference that any military analyst can draw is that it is virtually impossible for any nation today to enforce a prolonged military occupation of another country. Given a motivated population, a committed leadership, a supply of basic small arms and sanctuaries in neighbouring states, the cost of such occupation can be made highly unprofitable. Afghanistan proves a point that such occupation seems beyond the capabilities of even a superpower.

However, the results of the Afghanistan conflict bear closer scrutiny. A more detailed analysis will present rather startling conclusions.

The Success of Nativization

As Lieutenant General Boris Grasmov, the Soviet Commander, led the last Russian troops out of Afghanistan in February

1989 the world held its breath. Western media reports had long been predicting a bloodbath in Kabul in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal. Shorn of their Soviet protectors, the Surrogate regime of Najibullah was expected to come down like a house of cards. The world waited timorously for a bloodbath as the vengeful Mujahideen were now expected to sweep down from the hills and put Najibullah's Afghanistan to the torch and wreak terrible vengeance on the perceived quislings. The world waited in vain.

Kabul, despite all American hopes, was not really a mirror image of Saigon. Amazingly Najibullah regime held. The 'faithful' launched repeated assaults on Jalalabad, in the hope of securing a prestigious political objective where the provisional Mujahideen Government could be installed. But the Afghan Army held out resolutely. The uncoordinated Mujahideen attacks petered out amongst bitter, mutual recriminations. The world was somewhat surprised. However, to anyone following the events closely in Afghanistan the results should have come as no surprise.

Since about 1983 the Soviets had been following a careful policy of 'nativization'. They had increasingly been shifting the burden of military commitment on the Afghan Army. The initial pattern of major operations by Soviet forces had given way to specialized operations by the elite Spetsnaz troops. The Afghan Army had six years of 'probation fighting' under the watchful eyes of their patrons who stepped in whenever they felt their proteges were in trouble. The Soviets provided training, equipment and effective air co-

(The above report appears in the annual report of the INDIAN DEFENCE REVIEW)

ver. The Soviets sent in their elite Spetsnaz troops for blood-ing in this 'combat laboratory'. These forces undertook unconventional operations and in 1985-86 almost succeeded in preventing the return of the Afghan Mujahideen who had gone for 'wintering' in Pakistan. Apparently the Soviets left only when they were fairly certain that their Afghan proteges could stand on their own feet. This was a calculated risk that has to date paid off.

Learning their lessons from the outcome of the Soviet withdrawal the Vietnamese have withdrawn from Cambodia. The Western media were rife with reports of the blood-thirsty Khmer Rouge sweeping down triumphantly from the hills and jungles and putting Phnom Penh to the torch. Nothing of that sort has happened to date. The Vietnamese had also taken ten years to 'nativize' the conflict and have now departed confident that their Cambodian surrogates have found their military legs.

Nativization is not something new. The British did it in India two centuries ago. They conquered and ruled India with the help of a native Indian Army that far outnumbered the British troops (never more than 50,000-70,000). The failure of the Americans in Vietnam was their failure to effectively nativize the conflict. Their Vietnamization programmes were seemingly not effective. Their surrogates just could not stand without external support. And no nation, not even a superpower, can provide such external support indefinitely. With this as the backdrop let us analyse the Afghan conflict a little more in detail.

LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT: AFGHANISTAN

Strategic Orientation: Defensive or Offensive Thrust?

When the Soviets launched their decisive push into Afgha-

nistan in 1979 the Western world in particular was troubled. Western analysts conjured up visions of a Soviet warm-water thrust towards Pakistan's Arabian Sea coast of Makran. Yet others related it to the confused, unstable situation in Iran. If the Soviets wished to intervene in the Iran-Iraq conflict they had their divisions in the right place. In hindsight it is now reasonable to assess that the Soviet thrust was a defensive move to block a perceived threat to their Islamic Republics in Central Asia. The Soviets had spent forty years in pacifying these Muslim Khanates. A fundamentalist Muslim regime in Afghanistan, in harmony with the Shia zealots in Iran and a *mullah* General in Pakistan, orchestrated by the CIA, became a Soviet security nightmare.

The Soviets under Brezhnev struck out offensively. The intensity of the international reaction however must have given them cause for thought. Their Afghan policy seems to have had its ups and downs but in the end their decision to nativize the conflict seem to have paid off. Nativization (inclusive of Afghan Army probation) has taken almost nine years. However, if their protege in Kabul holds out it would be a major politico-military triumph for the Soviets.

Gorbachev's subsequent decision to seek a withdrawal was designed to cut Soviet costs and dilute the intensity of Afghan emotions to the presence of the 'Shaurvi'. With the Soviet troops gone, the Mujahideen would lose their rallying cause. Their internal dissensions in this set-up would make it disintegrate. All was dependent however upon the military performance of Najibullah's native troops. A successful nativization programme held the key to an acceptable resolution of this conflict on Soviet terms.

Afghanistan has an area of 649,750 square kilometres. At its peak the Soviet deployment never crossed 115,000 troops.

In addition there were 12,000 KGB and MVD advisers/operators who trained the Afghan secret police, the Khad. By itself this force was quite inadequate to tame a major insurgency in this type of terrain. The Soviets had relied upon a policy of minimal risk based upon holding the main towns and communication arteries.

Edgar O'Bullance estimates the Mujahideen strength to vary with the season and range from 2000 to 90,000. The CIA operatives alone claim to have sent in over 200,000 weapons. What assisted the Soviets most, however, was the tribal and extremely divided nature of the Afghan society. Strong tribal animosities and rivalries were successfully exploited by the Khad. By and large the Mujahideen armed groups were nothing but the fighting arm of the families and tribes. There are over 15 Mujahideen political groups operating in Peshawar. The 8 Shia groups based in Iran are drawn primarily from the Hazara tribes of Central Afghanistan and include mainly the Saz-Man-I-Nasr, Sepah-i-Pasadaran and Hizbolah groups. The 7 main Sunni groups in Peshawar include the Hezbi-Islami of Gulubddin Hekmatyar and Professor Burhaunudin Rabbani's Jamat-i-Islami. Prominent leaders (besides Hekmatyar and Rabbani) are Mojaddidi, Gailani, Mohamadei, Rephani, Rosoul Sayaf and Kahalis. These numerous factions present the very picture of discord and constant squabbling.

The Afghan resistance remained a fractured tribal uprising and failed to graduate into a proper National Resistance movement. Its primary failure lay in its inability to unite the various feuding tribes. The most successful Mujahideen leader was Ahmad Shah Masoud, a Tadjik leader of the Panjsher Valley. He was highly successful militarily and tried to forge a pan tribal alliance over the four Northern provinces — Badakshan, Kunduz, Takhar and

Baghlan (as well as Kaisa and Pharwan provinces around Kabul). However, being a Tadjik his leadership was resented by the Pathani tribes of the South-east. His influence therefore remained confined to the Hindukush Ridge and the Soviet border.

As time went by the Soviets and their Afghan surrogates were able to drive a wedge between the local Mujahideen field commanders operating inside Afghanistan and the bickering political leaders ensconced in Peshawar.

Ethnically, the Pathan is an individualist. He is brave and fanatical but does not subordinate his freedom to group discipline. His loyalties feudal and tribal in character and sudden volte-faces were not uncommon in this war. A number of Mujahideen leaders switched sides with their entire following. Their ethnic characteristics have ensured that while the Mujahideen may do well in the guerrilla phase they will not be able to effect the switch to conventional operations easily.

Foreign Aid

The USA maintained a covert arms assistance programme worth \$300 million a year and an overt humanitarian assistance (food and medical supplies) programme worth \$3 — 5 million annually. Pakistan, as the frontline state, provided bases and training and all weapons supplies were routed through it. In later stages, weapons were delivered directly to the Mujahideen as Pakistan was reported to be keeping portions of this 'largesse' for her own military needs, possibly for use against her arch enemy, India. China also provided significant arms and especially in the category of heavier weapons, for example, anti-aircraft guns like the 12.7-mm machine gun, and later the ZPU-1 and -2 (14.5mm Anti-Aircraft Gun), 75-mm RCL guns and the type 63-107 mm multiple rocket launcher system with a range of 8-10 km. Saudi

Arabia, Egypt and other Arab states provided both financial and arms aid. Iran, as the other contiguous frontline state, provided bases, sanctuaries, limited weapons and training facilities. Its aid was directed primarily towards the Shia groups.

Self Financing: The Golden Crescent

A permanent enduring feature of all covert wars in the last four decades has been the establishment of organized narcotics empires to finance such wars. The 'Golden Triangle' in Indo-China was set up to finance covert operations in the long and bitter struggle in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. That war has ended but the Golden Triangle persists. Such drug empires acquire an autonomous existence that outlasts the wars they were supposed to finance. 'The Golden Crescent' came into prominence as the source to finance the Afghan-Mujahideen war. It fits into the well-established pattern of narco-terrorism in the world today. It is well on the cards that the Golden Crescent, like the Golden Triangle, will long outlast the Afghan war.

Soviet Military Strategy in Afghanistan

The Soviet military strategy in Afghanistan has been marked by a careful control of the level of violence and force commitment. Soviet troop levels never went significantly beyond the 115,000 mark of the initial invasion and comprised primarily five motorized rifle divisions, element of an airborne division (the 105 [Guards]) and Spetsnaz troops.

The Soviets, always great exponents of mechanized warfare, tried a conventional solution initially. Their occupation of Afghanistan proved counter-productive and instead of pacifying the region provoked a fierce nationalistic opposition that at first united the Afghan tribes in a common cause. Replacement of Hafizulla Amin (who had made callous efforts to dismantle the tradi-

tional tribal structures of Afghan society) with Barbrak Karmal, failed to mollify the Afghan people. The stridency of international condemnation of the Afghanistan occupation seemed to have surprised the Soviets. Soviet military operations however persisted and can be divided into two clear stages:

Stage One (1979-82). After the successful initial occupation the Soviet forces seemed confused. Scattered and apparently unrelated military operations were launched to pacify the population. The Soviets had initially sent in green and untrained troops. A large proportion of them were from the Central Asian Republics. They had been sent possibly to reduce the hostility of the Afghans to the presence of foreign troops. Their combat performance appears to have been wanting in terms of professionalism. The mechanized forces were just not attuned to the conduct of counterinsurgency operations in a mountainous setting.

Stage Two (1983-89). In this phase the Soviets launched major and well-coordinated attacks on the 'Markhazes' (the Afghan Mujahideen bases). These often took the form of set-piece assaults by tanks and mechanized infantry supported by helicopter gunship (MI-24 Hind D) attacks and extensive air strikes. The Soviets launched a methodical resources control effort. This resulted in a ruthless campaign of what the Western media has described as 'Desertification' or a 'Scorched Earth' policy. In Mujahideen-infested areas the Soviets and their Afghan surrogates carried out a systematic destruction of agricultural resources to deny logistics support to the guerrillas. This forced the Mujahideen to operate in smaller groups. Soviet/Afghan Army operations pushed the Mujahideen and their families from the valley floors to the higher hills. There were reprisal bombings of villages harbouring the Mujahideen. This ruthlessness took a heavy toll and forced many Afghan tribes to sue for

peace. Khad and KGB exploited this and purchased the loyalties of many tribal groups.

Very early in this phase the Soviets carried out a reassessment of their tactics and realized the need for skilled infantry for these mountain operations. In order to minimize their casualties, the Soviets began to shift the burden of set-piece operations on the Afghan Army. They now brought in their elite Spetsnaz troops to launch unconventional operations against the guerrillas. The helicopter gunship was extensively used to counter the speed and elusiveness of the guerrillas. Over 300 helicopter gunships (mainly MI-24 Hind Ds) were employed and these soon became the nemesis of the Mujahideen. Heavy emphasis was placed on close air support. MiG-21, MiG-23 and Su-25 aircraft were extensively employed for bombing, rocket and strafing attacks. There is little or no cover in the Afghan mountains due to lack of vegetation and this greatly facilitated the employment of air power.

Spetsnaz Operations

The Soviets made a deliberate policy decision to employ their elite Spetsnaz troops in Afghanistan and give them valuable combat experience. Spetsnaz troops were used for heliborne raids on Afghan guerrilla camps. In addition they were employed in conjunction with major operations by the tanks and motorized rifle units. They were helilanded on hilltops and ridges to cut off the Mujahideen escape routes while mechanized troops and infantry attacked along the valley floors. Unlike Western Special Forces, the Spetsnaz do not operate in small teams. There are no known cases of their employment in Afghanistan in less than 50-man missions. The standard operating group appears to have been the company. One of the most successful use of the Spetsnaz was in the Eastern provinces bordering Pakistan in 1985-86. The Spetsnaz covered this area with unconventional night ambushes and were so highly successful that they almost

prevented the return of the Mujahideen, who had crossed over to Pakistan to spend the winter with their families, into the combat zone.

Apart from the use of the elitist paratroops/Spetsnaz, the Soviets increasingly pushed the burden of fighting on to the Afghan Army. The concern for minimizing their own casualties was quite palpable and obvious throughout this campaign.

Area Grid System

The Soviets began to consolidate their hold on the major cities/urban areas. The methodology was to establish their military and political grip on the population centres and then progressively expand their influence outwards. A concentric perimeter defence was steadily pushed outwards so as to keep the population centre out of the reach of the multiple rocket launcher systems supplied by the Chinese. Tanks had extensively been used as static pill boxes in Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandhar and Herat. In Jalalabad resolute city defence had beaten back several Mujahideen assaults with heavy losses. When cut off these garrison cities were all maintained using the airfields much in the tradition of the British Admin Boxes in Burma during the Second World War. So effective has been this air-maintained defence that Afghan Mujahideen have started asking for special mortars to crater the airfields. This may not work as bulldozers can easily fill such craters in a short time. What it does go to prove is that the Mujahideen's switch to regular warfare has been highly premature.

In the rural areas also the Soviet and Afghan troops had established a complex network of fixed strongpoints with stone bunkers and pill boxes, and *sangars* along with tanks in static role. These strongpoints were protected by extensive minefields. The Soviet and Afghan troops made a special effort to keep their lines of communication open. Major emphasis was placed on the Kabul-Jalalabad highway. This

was secured by such strongpoints and dominated by effective patrolling and ambushes.

Combat Laboratory

The Soviets have used Afghanistan as a combat laboratory for field-testing new weapon systems. The new Soviet Ak-74 (5.45 mm) assault rifle and its shortened Krinov version were field-tested here. It was felt that the 5.45-mm bullet was not lethal enough and in some cases Soviet units were re-equipped with the older 7.62-mm Ak-47. The RPK-74 light machine gun AGS-17 Plamya (30-mm grenade launcher), the RPG-18 rocket launcher and the PFM-1 anti-personnel butterfly mines have all been field-tested in Afghanistan.

The Soviets used this war to test their MI-24 helicopter gunships and devise combat tactics for their use in the mountains. This weapon system proved the most effective and was a major source of demoralization for the Mujahideen. The Su-25 close support aircraft was also field-tested here. Some successful innovations were the use of AT-4 'Spigot' anti-tank missile by the Spetsnaz against the Mujahideen stone *sangars* and the conversion of the BMP-1 into a carrier for the 120-mm mortar. Additional metal plates were added onto tanks and APCs to protect them against Mujahideen anti-tank RPG.

The Stinger Impact: Myth or Reality

As stated earlier, one of the most successful weapon system of this war was the titanium-hulled MI-24 helicopter gunship. It was invulnerable to the lighter anti-aircraft weapons like the 12.7-mm machine gun available with the Mujahideen. Later the Chinese supplied the 14.5-mm ZPU-1 and 2 Anti-Aircraft Machine Guns. However, these were very heavy for carriage by a mobile guerrilla force. The Mujahideen had fervently been asking for a light anti-aircraft weapon to negate Soviet air

supremacy. The Egyptians supplied the SA-7 Stella missile in 1982. However its IR homing head proved prone to locking on to false sources. It was easily deflected by magnesium flares. Besides, its white plume gave away the firer's position. Subsequently, the Blow Pipe missile was fielded. However this is a Command Line (CLOS) weapon and proved too sophisticated for the Mujahideen to operate.

In September 1986 the CIA supplied the top-of-the-line Stinger missile, but with considerable hesitation. Western media reports have hailed it as a war-winning weapon that negated Soviet air supremacy. The reports however are highly exaggerated. The Stinger is a highly complex weapon system and requires the firer to perform over 17 different functions before firing. It is a heavy and cumbersome load to carry. It was simply too complex for the Mujahideen it did inflict some losses but it was supplied in very small numbers to make any decisive impact. It was initially introduced in batches of 9 to 12 weapons only. Each guerrilla leader received a maximum of 12 launchers. These were given mainly to Hekmetyar's Hezbi-Islami and to the Khale break-away faction. Professor Rabbani's group first claimed to have shot down four helicopters near Jalalabad with this weapon. The Soviets' standard measure was to equip each aircraft or helicopter with upto 50 magnesium flares to divert these heat-seeking missiles.

The impact of the introduction of the Stinger missile is believed to be highly overrated. The rate of loss of the Soviet aircraft was reportedly manageable. In fact, the Vietnam War has proved that the anti-aircraft machine gun/guns are still the greatest aircraft killers.

Afghanization

A steady shift in the burden of fighting on to the Afghan Army seems to have been a major Soviet policy decision. As a result, in November 1986

itself, the Afghan Army launched major assaults on guerrilla bases in the Eastern provinces. In the attacks on the Shelman and Murey bases in November 1986, over 8000 troops from the Afghan 7, 9 and 11 Divisions participated, along with the 71st Rifle Brigade and the 4th Armoured Brigade. Heliborne troops preceded the attacks and occupied the dominating heights and sealed off the escape routes. The main blow was launched by tanks and APCs supported by infantry. These rebel bases fell on 19 and 22 November 1986 and the Mujahideen admitted to 42 killed and 71 wounded. The Afghan Army had given proof of its military capabilities.

The Mujahideen on the other hand seemed reconciled to operating in smaller bands and to undertaking rocket attacks on cities and strongpoints by the 107-mm multiple rocket launchers of Chinese origin. The Soviet decision to withdraw from Afghanistan was based upon an operational analysis of the Afghan Army's performance. They left only when they felt confident of their surrogate's capability to continue the fight without Soviet military presence. This Soviet assessment seems to have been vindicated at Jalalabad.

The Mujahideen's chief failure has been an inability to graduate to the third stage of revolutionary war in which guerrilla bands commence operations in large unit sizes. It has remained a tribal and localized insurgency and failed to become a National Resistance Movement despite all the foreign aid and assistance.

Future Portents

Fred Halliday, in his perceptive article entitled 'New Afghanistan Crisis — Policy Dilemma for the West' (*The Times of India*, 30 August 1989) has stated that the Americans have now instructed the Mujahideen to switch back to 'dispersed attacks' in order to prevent the Afghan Government from concentrating its forces at one point as happened at Jalala-

bad. True to American form, a technical solution is being sought by supplying the Mujahideen with special mortars to attack and crater airfields. The airfields have been the basis of the Afghan 'Admin-Box' style defences.

The Soviet-Afghan military solution is quite similar to the one tried out by the French in the First Indo-China War. The French were beaten because the Viet Minh were able to effect the transition to the third stage of regular warfare very successfully.

The fractured and split Afghan resistance does not seem capable of such a transition. In June 1989, serious infighting occurred between Hekmetyar's group and Ahmad Shah Masoud's North-Afghanistan-based Mujahideen. The biggest blow has been the withdrawal of Iran from this war. Iran does not want to see 'American Islam' enforced in Afghanistan and is suspicious of Saudi Arabian designs in this region. Islamic fundamentalism is apparently floundering on the shoals of the Shia-Sunni divide.

AFGHANISTAN AND SRI LANKA: COMPARISON OF OPERATIONAL STYLES

India has been fighting tribal insurgencies in her North-eastern states for almost four decades. The Indian Army has been successful in containing and eliminating most of these insurgencies. Political solutions have been arrived at in Tripura and Mizoram and the Naga and Manipuri insurgents have been pushed out into Burma. The Naga insurgency is racked by tribal splits and may soon wither on the vine. The same may hold true of the Meitei insurgency in Manipur.

Historical Patience

One would have thought that four decades of combating insurgency would have taught us historical patience. In dealing with such situations nation states must learn to think in terms of a long haul to quell the insurgency military and find acceptable

political solutions to meet the aspirations of the people. The long haul may cover two to three decades. No quick or instant solutions can be expected. The nation state is a lasting entity. Its patience should be inexhaustible. It must play out such problems. The Naga insurgency has taken over three decades to tame. The Mizoram and Tripura insurgencies have taken over two decades each. Yet we have sought miracle solutions in the low-intensity conflict we are waging in Sri Lanka.

The Eastern and Western Military Schools in India

The problem has been that India's Eastern Command has become a forgotten army. The glitter has been stolen by the mechanized warfare exponents of the Western Command facing Pakistan. A number of Indian Army Chiefs (including Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw) however have risen from command assignments in the Eastern theatre. They have a full grasp of the nature of low-intensity conflict. Possibly a number of military aberrations initially crept into India's Sri Lanka enterprise because the conflict was first handled by mechanized warfare enthusiasts of the 'Western' or 'Mechanized Warfare School'. Their understanding of this form of war has turned out to be quite limited.

DEFENSIVE THRUST: SRI LANKA

Viewed strictly in terms of political legitimacy there is no comparison between the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the Indian intervention in Sri Lanka. However, on the military plane there are a number of similarities which must be noted. The Indian thrust in Sri Lanka (on President Jayewardene's invitation — he was no puppet ruler and his political legitimacy is beyond question) was primarily a defensive thrust. Its aim was to insulate Southern India from subversion through any hostile footholds developing on the

island of Sri Lanka. The aim apparently was to ensure that no hostile power secured the strategic ports of Trincomalee and Colombo and foreign covert agencies did not establish a presence in the island which would be harmful to India's interests. Possibly, like the Soviet move in Afghanistan, it was an over-reaction based on frightening oneself by one's own worst-case scenarios.

In Sri Lanka however the shoe was on the other foot. The situation was tailor-made for Indian covert intervention. Unconfirmed reports indicate that in Mrs Gandhi's time this covert support to Sri Lankan Tamil guerrillas was being freely given, possibly by turning a Nelson's eye on the doings of M G Ramachandran's state government in Tamil Nadu. RAW was also involved in training and arming the Tamil militants, it is reported. The crisis arose when the Sri Lankan armed forces launched a determined assault to wipe out the Tamil guerrilla stronghold in Jaffna.

India's clear options were either to step up covert assistance (possibly stiffen Tamil resistance by inducting its special forces incognito), or try a Turkish-Cypriot solution and launch a simple and decisive campaign to partition Sri Lanka on ethnic lines. In 1987 India had both the opportunity and the rationale to do so. The domestic propaganda theme would have been the soul of simplicity itself: 'The Tamils are our people. The Sri Lankan Army was decimating them. We warned them but they did not heed our warning, so we went in and gave it to them. Let that be a warning to anyone else who wishes to knock Indians around.' The reaction to supply dropping of food, medicine etc. on Jaffna showed that such a Grenada-style operation would have been enthusiastically welcomed by the Indian population.

India's foreign policy pundits argued that such an invasion would not be welcomed by the world at large. The Ministry of External Affairs seems to have

had its way. The crunch came when Dixit, India's High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, pulled off a dramatic diplomatic coup. He hectorated President Junius Jayewardene into signing an accord on 29 July 1987 in which he invited an Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) to oversee promised Tamil surrenders in the North-east. Jayewardene did a neat volte-face. It must rank as a master stroke in *real politik*, for it soon had India fighting the very rebels she had been recently supporting.

The Compromise Solution

The deep inherent contradictions in this stance have resulted from the cognitive complexity of the world view held by the Indian political leadership. India has been keen to project an image of itself as the 'Champion of World Peace' in the Nehruvian mould. At the same time it has sought to aggressively pursue a course of regional dominance in South Asia. The dichotomy between the two stances is difficult to resolve. That is why it eagerly grasped the opportunity proffered by Dixit's diplomatic coup in Colombo. It was the exact compromise solution that India was looking for — a sop to inflamed public opinion at home and another to world public opinion at large.

The Failings of the Light Division Concept

General Krishnaswamy Sundarji (then India's Chief of Army Staff) also eagerly grasped this opportunity. It was a golden chance for him to test his newly created air assault and amphibious warfare capabilities. In an impressive operation, India swiftly flew in its 54 Air Assault Division. Keeping in view its limited brief of overseeing the surrender the division was sent in sans its heavy weapons (minus its artillery and armour elements that is). In essence, therefore, this rapid induction of a light infantry force conformed to the American Light Infantry Division model.

The divisions are primarily an infantry force. Their weakness in artillery and armour is accepted on the premise that the very introduction of such US forces in a Third World conflict zone will have a salutary impact. The overall awe of US military might will restrain the local adversary states from employing their superior fire power to attack this light infantry division.

The concept is flawed and has been questioned in the USA itself. The very weakness of this force may tempt a local adversary state of the Middle East (say Syria in Lebanon) to attack it with its armoured or mechanized forces and deliver a crippling blow.

The 54 Air Assault Division flown into Sri Lanka was a light infantry force. As we can see in hindsight, its commitment was based upon an inaccurate assessment of the ground situation. In what can be an object lesson for the Americans, its very lightness tempted the local military force (the LTTE) to engage it militarily.

Stages of a Guerilla War: The Basic Perceptual Error

What was the ground situation in Jaffna before the Indian Army intervened in the ethnic conflict? The Tamil guerrilla war had started in earnest after the 1983 ethnic riots.

According to Mao's classic theory, each guerilla war must pass through three distinct stages — the Strategic Defensive, the Stalemate and the Strategic Counter-Offensive. In the first two stages the guerrilla force is formed. It is weak and must play for time to survive and grow. It adopts hit-and-run tactics and tries to wear the security forces down by widely dispersed attacks against soft targets. As it gains strength it starts operating in larger bands and engages the security forces themselves in raids and ambushes. After many years of this guerrilla mode, it effects the switch to regular warfare to deliver the *coup de grace*.

This is the third to final stage of a guerrilla war. To get to this, a guerrilla movement may take anything from upwards of 4 to 5 years to 30 years. It can be short-circuited only if a regular army of a neighbouring state intervenes to deliver the *coup de grace* (in Bangladesh the guerrilla war lasted only 8 months, the *coup de grace* being given by the Indian Army).

In July 1987 the Tamil guerrilla campaign appeared to have entered its third and final stage. The LTTE had formed a stronghold in the Jaffna peninsula and was engaged in a regular conventional war with the Sri Lankan Armed Forces to defend it. The ferocity of the Sri Lankan attack (including bombing/rocketing by the Sri Lankan Air Force) together with an economic blockade and the help of foreign covert agencies, compelled India to intervene. The LTTE had earlier established its military supremacy over the other Tamil resistance groups in a virtual bloodbath in July 1986. The ground situation therefore was not one of low intensity but more or less a regular conventional war. The armament pattern of the LTTE included mortars and medium machine guns.

The force composition of 54 Infantry Division was based on its projected role of a Peace-Keeping Force on the lines of the Custodian Force in Korea. It was taken totally for granted that the LTTE would call off its war and lay down arms. The military moral of the story is that such intervention forces should be structured to cater for a worst-case scenario. Initial overkill is never wasted.

The Fractured Nature of the Tamil Resistance

A further military similarity between the Afghan and Sri Lankan situations is the deeply fractured and divided nature of the resistance forces in both cases. There were 15 Afghan rebel groups (Sunni) in Peshawar and 8 rebel groups (Shia) in Iran. The Sri Lankan intelligence has estimated that there were

over 35 Tamil resistance groups in Sri Lanka. Most of them never went beyond pamphleteering and poster campaigns. The militarily important Tamil groups were six.

Anti-Indian Groups

The LTTE led by Prabhakaran and Mahatya Sri had emerged as the best organized and strongest Tamil military group. It is based in the Northern province (Jaffna and Vavuniya areas).

Its ally is the EROS (Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students) which was basically a student organization formed by a Marxist Tamil leader in London.

The PLOTE (People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam) led by Uma Maheswaran is a break-away faction of the LTTE. Reportedly this group took part in the Maldives coup attempt. Recent media reports indicate that its leader Uma Maheswaran has been killed and the group is thoroughly demoralized.

Pro-Indian Groups

The EPRLF (Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front) is a pro-Indian group based in the Eastern province. Sociologically it comprises the low-caste Tamils of the East and is led by Verdaraja Perumal, presently the Chief Minister of the elected Provincial Council. In July 1986, it had suffered heavily at the hands of the LTTE and had lost 70 of its members killed and almost 500 had then surrendered ('Area of Discord', *Sunday Magazine*, July 1989).

Its ally is the ENDLF (Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front) now a junior partner in the Provincial Council.

In addition there is the TELO (Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization), possibly the oldest Tamil resistance group in existence. It is said to be patronized by the DMK leader Karunanidhi.

Mr K Subrahmanyam, in an article in *The Times of India* (29 July 1989) has highlighted this similarity between the squabbling Afghan Mujahideen groups and the equally divided Tamil resistance. There is however one essential difference. By a brutal process of 'natural selection' (a euphemism for elimination of the opposition) the LTTE had clearly emerged as the strongest Tamil militant group. It was this fact which has caused all the complications. Having entered the third stage of its guerrilla war, the LTTE had possibly gone too far down the Eelam road. It refused to accept the Indo-Sri-Lankan Accord. K Subrahmanyam has correctly indicated this failure to produce a unified Tamil opposition/resistance as the prime failing of the Sri Lanka intervention. He writes,

The lack of a detailed assessment of the compositions of different Tamil resistance groups, or why there were so many groups instead of a single United Front which the TULF was meant to be... From the way alignments have been shifting in Sri Lanka, it does not look as though there was an in-depth assessment on the sociological composition of different groups and their motivation and inter-relationship before our armed forces were committed to peace-keeping operations. Nor did the military leadership of the armed forces seek answers to such questions.

Prabhakaran: The Hafizulla Amin of Sri Lanka?

The LTTE had become a brutal and fascist organization. Lamp post killings, tyre treatment and cyanide capsules had come to symbolize a killers' cult of surprising viciousness. The key question was that since the LTTE had emerged (by natural selection) as the strongest Tamil group should India (as the patron of the Tamils) have come to terms with it? Had the LTTE turned completely renegade and unres-

ponsive to Indian interests? What were the factors which made India decide that a Tamil Eelam state led by the Prabhakaran Mahitya-Sri duo was not in her national interests? This was really the most crucial and agonizing decision of this campaign. For it was this that prompted the radical Indian volte-face from supporting an insurgency to fighting an insurgency.

We are living too close to events to take a true perspective and very little of the official veil of secrecy has been lifted so far. The simple fact however is that this turnabout does not seem to have gone down well with domestic audiences. The Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' mission of keeping international public opinion favourable has been achieved but at considerable military and economic cost. Time alone will tell if the domestic cost of placating world opinion were justified.

The Will to Project Power

There is little doubt in world circles that India is a regional superpower. Today she has one of the world's most professional armed forces with state-of-the-art weapon and support systems comparable with frontline military powers. India does not lack military muscle, but she lacks the political will to project power when it is in her interests. The only example of political will to project power that India has displayed since Independence was in the Indo-Pak War of 1971. Unfortunately the same ruthlessness and politico-military resolve have not been seen again. Sri Lanka provides ample proof. Our worry about what the world would think of us has introduced unwarranted complications in our decision-making process. In trying to balance peaceful rhetoric with regional power ambitions we have made for too many military compromises. This urgently needs to be rectified.

For instance, if we had come to the clear and unambiguous conclusion that Prabhakaran had become a 'Hafizulla Amin' our response should have been as ruthless and straightforward as the Soviets'. They carefully bided their time, completed methodical preparations and then stunned the world with a swift and decisive blow. One air assault and five motor rifle divisions were thrown in. Result: Hafizulla Amin's presidential palace was attacked, Amin himself was killed and Barbrak Karmal of the rival Parcham faction came riding in on Soviet tanks. All of Afghanistan lay prostrate in five days.

If media reports give the correct picture, India chose a compromise solution again; a flexible and graduated approach was adopted: attack on the LTTE TV Station as a warning signal followed by a hasty and ill-planned assault thereafter. The 'Coercive Diplomacy' approach does not seem to have worked at all! Possibly a neater solution would have been to commence a highly visible and deliberate build-up of force levels. That by itself would have sent more meaningful warning signals, gained time in a fluid and confusing situation and enabled a better overall response. This however can only be said with the benefit of hindsight. One is not aware of the quality of intelligence input regarding the strength, armament pattern and motivation of the LTTE but surely external intelligence-gathering agencies such as RAW should have been able to give us this information? Indian military leaders freely admitted in the media that there had been a major intelligence assessment failure.

The Counterinsurgency Phase

The battle for Jaffna became a brutal slog but the Indian Army prevailed as it was bound to. It was simply too big and too powerful for any insurgent outfit to defeat in a regular set-piece battle. This blow to the LTTE regressed the insurgency move-

ment back from stage three to stage two. The Army now embarked upon a more methodical build-up and brought in its Eastern counterinsurgency experts and divisions. The force levels went up from one to four divisions plus (over 50,000 troops). Like the Soviets, the Indians appear to have made full use of this valuable combat laboratory to blood the bulk of their special forces and test most of their new weapon systems.

The introduction of 'Eastern expertise, in terms of divisions trained for years in counterinsurgency operations of the North-east helped greatly in stabilizing operations. From what little has appeared in media reports the Indian Army applied its standard tactics of establishing an area grid of posts to dominate the area. It then concentrated upon classic cordon and search operations to flush out the insurgents. Its methods have been humane and civilized, possibly a little too soft for the stage of the insurgency encountered. The velvet edge has been added to the iron fist and this humane element has been sustained at considerable cost in lives.

The availability of strong rival Tamil groups inimical to the LTTE in the Eastern province provided better intelligence and has possibly led to more successful ground operations there. The urban centres of Batticaloa were cleared in major search operations in March 1988. After being driven out of Jaffna the LTTE seems to have holed up in the dense Vavuniya jungles. Very fierce and major battles have erupted in this green hell repeatedly. This is classic Vietnam country where brigades and divisions could just melt away. Sociologically the Vani Tamil is the best fighter amongst the Tamil groups. The skill with which the LTTE has switched from urban to jungle warfare is remarkable. To tackle a motivated guerrilla outfit in such a dense tropical jungle would by itself

require upwards of three to four divisions. It would necessitate a classical encirclement and annihilation campaign on the model of the fifth campaign of Chiang Kai Shek against Mao's communist guerrillas in the Chinese civil war. The German General Von Seeckt himself had master-minded this mammoth operation which had almost destroyed the infant People's Liberation Army and forced it to undertake the Long March. Indian strategists seemed to have realized at this point that their relentless counterinsurgency operations had forced the LTTE to withdraw to its Vavuniya jungle redoubt.

The urban centres and countryside in the Northern and Eastern provinces have largely been cleared of militants in a less than two years' time-frame. This is by itself a remarkable achievement in the annals of low-intensity conflict. The veracity of this hypothesis was tested when the Indian Army was able to create the conditions for the successful conduct of provincial elections in the North and East and the installation of the pro-Indian EPRLF in power. The LTTE's failure to stir from its jungle lairs was positive proof that the IPKF had asserted its unchallenged control upon the countryside and urban centres and marginalized the LTTE to a few jungle redoubts away from the population centres. The lay public does not understand that counterinsurgency campaigns take long periods in time to yield success. Such a measure of success in under two years does call for a standing ovation for the Indian Army's infantryman and his leaders.

It was a grim counterinsurgency campaign fought in a tragic setting which set Indian troops against people of Indian origin in a foreign country. The confused political thinking which bogged down military operations stemmed from one basic flaw — the failure of the Indian state to define its national aim and permanent interests in the

island of Sri Lanka. Selection and maintenance of 'aim' is a cardinal principle of war. Lack of a clear-cut politico-military aim leads to adhocism, dithering and pure confusion. A peace accord cannot be an end in itself. Despite this the intensive operations launched by the Indian Army did help in producing a climate where diplomatic initiatives could be floated. The anti-Indian Tamil groups led by the LTTE were driven into jungle hideouts and a pro-Indian Tamil group was installed in power in the Northern and Eastern provinces.

In purely military terms, India had ensured the emergence of a Tamil leadership more amenable to her interests. This alarmed both the Sri Lanka no and the LTTE. In yet another volte-face the Sinhala and the LTTE joined hands to demand an ouster of the IPKF in July 1989.

In very stark terms the matrix of Indian options was as follows:

- (a) *Nativize the conflict.* India had succeeded in installing a pro-Indian Tamil group in power. This now had to be strengthened militarily so that the conflict could be nativized. This implied raising an EPRLF/EN-DLF armed force that would progressively take over the burden of fighting the LTTE. The pertinent point was that this could not be achieved overnight. The Soviets had taken almost nine years to bring the Afghan Army to full fighting potential, so that it could hold its own against the Mujahideen. This implied that India would have to maintain her present level of force commitment for at least two to three years more while the EPRLF force found its military legs and completed its period of probation fighting.
- (b) *Come to Terms with the LTTE.* The pertinent military difference between the Afghan Sri Lankan scenarios was that by a brutal process of 'natural selection' the LTTE had emerged as the most powerful Tamil resistance group. To that extent an

Indian decision to come to final terms with it by giving it its due share in the democratic set-up in the North-east would be a most logical one. The Sri Lankan conflict had seen too many mind-boggling about-faces, U-turns and changes of alignments that one more would make little difference. If the Sri Lankans and the LTTE could sink their differences, why couldn't the Indian leadership also alter course? Nations have no permanent friends, only permanent interests. This was ideal but was this still possible? Much blood had been split on both sides and resumption of such a dialogue would need a major political initiative from the very top. With the change in political leadership after the elections this has become a very viable and attractive option. It would be relatively much easier for the new Indian administration to come to terms with the LTTE.

(c) The third, somewhat extreme option, was for the Indians to come to a clear-cut decision that the LTTE had turned renegade and had to be destroyed militarily whatever the costs. This would have called for the induction of minimum of say two more divisions and the unrestricted employment of offensive air support to act as a force multiplier to offset the lack of adequate ground troops.

Both options (a) and (c) would involve India in a long politico-military haemorrhage. However, beyond a particular point it becomes a question of 'loss of face' and such a loss may not be palatable to a regional superpower. The point is, having chosen to intervene in a confused and complex situation the Indians could not just get up and go.

The Use of Offensive Air Support

The discussion of the last option leads us to one of the most pertinent military lessons of this campaign against the LTTE. Indian counterinsurgency methods were taken from

years of trial in her North-east. However, the tribal insurgencies there have been rather benign. They never progressed beyond the first or at best the second stage of resistance wars. The LTTE had already graduated to the third stage. This was clearly seen in the initial battle for Jaffna. Restraint in using offensive air support while clearing a densely populated built-up area is understandable but the same restraint being exercised over the dense Vavuniya jungles is difficult to comprehend. The population density here was much lower and chances of collateral damage to civilians were minimal. The area could have been depopulated anyway. The only plausible argument against air support was that in dense jungle terrain it was likely to be less effective. The catchword is 'less' — it does not become ineffective. Offensive air support, though restricted due to Allied requirements in North Africa and Europe, was freely given in Burma in the Second World War. It was a tremendous force multiplier for US and ARVN forces in Vietnam. China freely used air power against the Khampas in the Tibet and the Pakistanis against the Baluch guerillas in the arid wastes of Baluchistan.

The Indian tendency to pull punches against an insurgency that was qualitatively very different from its own tribal insurrections is difficult to understand. The Soviets in sharp contrast freely employed offensive air power as a key force multiplier in Afghanistan. The 300 Hind helicopter gunships proved to be the real nemesis of the Mujahideen. In addition, Soviet ground attack aircraft were employed extensively. When the war graduated to its final stages the Soviets gave Scud missiles to their Afghan proteges. Such clear-headed military decisions come from a clear definition of the nation's basic politico-military aim.

The military lesson that clearly emerges is that if a nation does not corrode its own political

will and defines its security interests in clear and unmistakable terms, it can achieve success even in hopeless 'Vietnam scenarios'. The Soviets and the Vietnamese have done just that in Afghanistan and in Cambodia. India needlessly hamstrung herself by the cognitive complexity of its schizophrenic world view. The need of the hour is cognitive simplicity in our geopolitical perceptions. Let us clearly define our politico-military aim and then refrain from putting unwarranted military restrictions on ourselves. Clausewitz had said, 'War is such a dangerous business that the mistakes that stem from kindness are the very worst.'

CONCLUSION

The decade of the 1980s has been the decade of low-intensity conflict in Asia. The Afghan and Cambodian wars and the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka are campaigns that merit close study and analyses. It is apparent that if a nation state clearly defines its security goals and is ruthless in their pursuit then it should have no difficulty in dealing with such conflicts at least in its immediate neighbourhood. What is required is a ruthless political resolve that translates itself into clear-cut military objectives. Fighting such wars needs historical patience. As Afghanistan and Cambodia amply demonstrate, the minimum time-frame is a decade. A nation should not undertake such a politico-military haemorrhage lightly. It should always be its last option. Even a conventional short-duration high-intensity campaign is preferable to such a military quagmire. However, if a nation is forced into it, it must mobilize itself psychologically for a maximum effort. This cannot be done by simply pretending that such a war does not exist. That does not diminish its unpopularity.

Soldiers fighting such a campaign need all the popular support they can get to sustain military morale. If we are not prepared to mobilize this support we should not commit our

troops. Any counterinsurgency campaign undertaken in a foreign country has historically been a politico-military haemorrhage that few nation states have shown the capability to bear. The 'Spanish Ulcer' bled Napoleon white and Vietnam drained America. The recent campaigns in Afghanistan and Cambodia however show that given the political will, such conflicts can be managed and played out provided they are successfully nativized. It remains to be seen if India can successfully nativize the conflict in Sri Lanka.

According to recent media reports, a Citizens' Volunteer Force has been raised from pro-Indian Tamil groups. However, the decision to withdraw Indian troops by this year's end would give it little time to stabilize or find its military legs. A premature withdrawal of Indian military support could lead to its collapse. The question however is whether the long-term investment of military effort in the wrong strategic direction would be justified. India's prime military threats are from her North and West. The wastage of so much military effort in the South may prove to be a costly digression. It may therefore be much more sensible to accept ground realities and come to terms with the dominant Tamil group that has won its spurs in a bloody process of natural selection. The most positive result that the region can hope for is an assimilation of the LTTE into the democratic process in the North-east.

A country's security threats must be viewed holistically. They cannot be compartmentalized. The security threats to India in the Sri Lanka context are evident but do they override the threats from our West and the long-term threat from the North? A comparative analysis of threats will dictate the force levels we should assign in each. It does appear in pure military terms that our Southern enterprise does not merit such large-scale and permanent commitment of forces. □

Statements...

(Continued from page 5)

"Whatever the frustrations of the negotiating process in which the LTTE have been engaged until this point, it cannot justify abandoning peaceful negotiations in favour of a return to the killing and destruction that has caused such misery throughout Sri Lanka in recent years," Senator Evans said.

"By resorting to violence, the LTTE has not only destroyed a real chance of a return to peace in Sri Lanka, but it also ensures that the Tamil people — the very people whose rights the LTTE claims to protect — will be the main losers as their homes again become caught up in the fighting".

There were already clear signs that the grotesque cycle of massacres and reprisals was starting up again, with the consequent death of civilians, including children, being used by each side as propaganda.

"There can be no winners from the conflict which is now taking place. The Australian Government urges both sides to act with restraint and resume their dialogue for the sake of all the people of Sri Lanka, regardless of their ethnic origin", Senator Evans said.

The LTTE has been waging a military campaign against the Sri Lankan Government in an attempt to realise its aim of a separate state, called 'Eelam', in the north and northeast of Sri Lanka.

Senator Evans said it was especially distressing that this latest round of fighting had come at a time when the Tamils had achieved most of their aims, short of a separate state, and needed only to complete the final negotiations to bring about a Tamil-controlled Northeastern Province.

The final...

(Continued from page 8)

to save the Tamils. The LTTE's accusations have a communal

edge, given the fence-sitting posture desperately sought by the 7% of Sri Lanka's population that is Muslim, most of whom live on the LTTE-contested east coast.

There had been, in the April Auruddh Buddhist New Year celebrations this year, a hint of the old Sinhalese festiveness. Families travelled to shrines, music filled the villages. Although the respite was cruelly obtained at the expense of the JVP and the LTTE's opponents, it had seemed a glimmer of peace. Now even this moment seems, in retrospect, a mere pause in the slide to more war.

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Worm-out...

(Continued from page 9)

"unfortunately led to an armed confrontation between the LTTE and Indian forces but that does not mean we are a hostile force."

Karunanidhi's options are limited. He needs V. P. Singh more than the prime minister needs him; the DMK was the big disappointment in the National Front's electoral performance last November and sent no Tamil Nadu MPs to parliament. Officials in New Delhi remain vigilant for signs of any resurgent Tamil nationalism of the kind, primarily in linguistic guise, which shook the Indian federation in the 1960s. They have viewed overt help by state authorities for the LTTE with increasing suspicion since 1987.

None of this guarantees Indian passivity to events in Sri Lanka, nor does it bestow carte blanche on Colombo's security forces. However, New Delhi will not order the Indian Navy to "do Sri Lanka's job for it" by attempting to intercept the LTTE's supply lines. Meanwhile, every day the risk grows of headline-grabbing refugee flows to the ancient homeland, an event the LTTE dearly hopes for and the Indian Government dreads.

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Changing Reality

Neville Jayaweera

Towards a multi-ethnic society?

Both in the North as well as in the South, an overwhelming number of our interviewees, from all levels of our representative sample have told us that Sri Lanka was at last emerging as a multi-ethnic society. Our main purpose in this chapter is to clear the conceptual background as a preparation for examining the evidence.

1 The concept of a multi-ethnic society

We need first to look at the concept of "a multi-ethnic society" theoretically, if only for the purpose of gaining some semantic clarity. It is not our intention to launch on an extensive theoretical discussion, or to undertake a comprehensive survey of the field. There is such a volume of scholarly literature on the theoretical issues of multi-ethnicity globally, as there is of literature on the issues of ethnicity and ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka that such an undertaking by us would be distracting and wasteful.

First, we need to distinguish between the three related concepts: "hegemonism", "national identity" and "multi-ethnicity".

All three have this in common. They recognise the objective reality of a given territorial space occupied by more than one ethnic group, over a period of time, where all groups lay claim to that space or parts of that space, as their homeland. The three concepts of "hegemonism", "national identity" and "multi-ethnicity", represent different modalities, whereby these groups relate to each other within their common territorial space.

Hegemonism

In a hegemonistic society, one of the ethnic groups, whether by reason of superior numbers, or economic power, or colour, or historical circumstances assumes a dominant role within the society, subverting the state apparatus and its resources so as to consolidate and perpetuate its dominance. There are variants of this model. Edward Shil's concept of a "central zone" within every major multi-cultural formation and Robert Redford's concept of the "great tradition" and "little tradition" are both different versions of the hegemonistic concept of Jatika Chintanaya is likewise a Sri Lankan variant of the same.

National identity

The concept of "national identity" posits a consciousness, or a sense of identity, transcending the individual ethnic identities that comprise a multi-cultural formation. Such an overarching identity is seen as more than merely an aggregate of the particular ethnic components that constitute the society in question. It is seen as a consciousness that is autonomous, that can by itself lay claim on the emotions and allegiances of the individual ethnic groups which comprise it, and even cause them to subordinate their individual interests for the greater good. An example would be the consciousness of being an "American" among the various ethnic groups that comprise the mosaic we call the United States of America. During World War II the vast majority of the citizens who belonged to diverse ethnic groups, and whose parent societies abroad were in some instances at war with their adopted homeland, were still able to subordinate their individual

ethnic loyalties and emotions and rally to the call of their new mother country. Episodic experiences of subordinating individual ethnic loyalties to the demands of an overarching national consciousness serve to generate and consolidate nationality identity. That is why an external threat is always useful as a catalyst of individual ethnic loyalties and as a stimulus to the emergence of a national identity.

In the sense in which we have defined "national identity" here, we recognise its similarity to the "melting-pot" concept of multi-ethnicity. In the melting-pot concept, it is only as and when individual ethnic identities are melted down that a new national identity emerges. The classic melting pot is of course the United States of America. However, not all multi-cultural formations are amenable to the melting-pot experience. Where the individual ethnic groups have been in exclusive occupancy of their respective territorial space for hundreds of years, and where they have jealously guarded their space and their culture against penetration by neighbouring ethnic groups, the melting-pot phenomenon does not work. A *sine qua non* for the manifestation of the melting-pot experience is the physical intermingling of ethnic groups in space and over time.

Multi-ethnicity

A multi-ethnic society differs from a hegemonistic society on the one hand and from one which boasts of a national identity on the other by two basic criteria.

Firstly there is an absence of dominance by one or other of its constituent groups. Whatever advantage a particular

group might have over the others — by virtue of its numerical superiority, or economic power, or colour, or historical circumstances — there is a willingness to forego its advantage and subordinate it to the demands of living in harmony with the other groups.

Attaining such a self-sacrificing, self-effacing posture is easy if all the constituent groups are more or less evenly placed, but extremely difficult or unattainable, if one of the groups has an obvious and blatant advantage over the other.

Secondly, in a multi-ethnic society there is also an absence of the melting-pot phenomenon. The individual ethnic groups not only retain their identity, but seek to enrich and fulfil themselves within their respective territorial boundaries. Their participation in a wider national consciousness will not be at the expense of their individual identities, but rather conditional on prior fulfilment.

The truly multi-ethnic society is one in which the individual constituents are primary. Its *raison d'être* is that it provides the environment framework, for each constituent group to find fulfilment consistent with each other's completeness. It is a society which is at once more than an aggregate of its constituents and yet encompasses them without causing a loss of their identities. The best example we have of such a society is Switzerland.

In the light of theoretical discussion — this was really an attempt at defining terms — we now turn to the evidence, to see to what extent Sri Lanka is advancing towards establishing a multi-ethnic society.

2 Sri Lanka as a hegemonistic society

Throughout most of its recent history, Sri Lanka has been a hegemonistic society. For most of the time prior to the advent

of the British in 1815, the Sinhala and Tamil ethnic groups had subsisted side by side as separate kingdoms, except during those short periods when Sinhala kings extended their dominion over the Tamil territories as well. During British times the two major ethnic groups were for first time brought under a single administration and exposed to the experience of living as one nation, although under the hegemony of a foreign ruler. It was during this period that the foundations were laid for the emergence of Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonism in the mid-20th century.

Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonism owes its origin to the strongly-held perception in the minds of Sinhala Buddhists that they were being systematically marginalized and discriminated against by the British, principally in favour of the Tamil minority. This perception provoked, by the latter half of the 19th century, a strong Sinhala-Buddhist revival which consisted mainly of a rediscovery of Sri Lanka's ancient heritage and based on that of an open confrontation with the western missionary enterprise which the Sinhala Buddhist perceived to be the colonial instrument most responsible for their decline. However, this revival was more than merely a cultural or religious renaissance. It was also a vehicle of class aggrandisement for the newly emergent Sinhala-Buddhist landed. An alliance quickly developed between the British rulers and the new Sinhala-Buddhist ruling class, to whom the British rulers within the next few decades ceded their power gradually, so that by the time of Independence in 1947, the Sinhala-Buddhist majority was well positioned to undertake what they considered to be an elaborate programme for the correction of historic injustices.

The attempt to correct what were perceived as historic injustices invested the Sinhala-

Buddhist majority with increasingly hegemonistic power over all minorities, but provoked among the Tamils the perception that they were being increasingly marginalised and deprived of their fundamental rights. With state power decisively in the hands of the Sinhala-Buddhist majority, hegemonism now found expression through a growing number of legislative and executive actions which the Tamils found increasingly oppressive and which were eventually to lead to the armed conflicts of the past seventeen years. These conflicts were not confined to the North and the East. Progressively, they provoked Indian intervention in the form of a military presence in the North-East and an extreme fascist type reaction in the form of the JVP-DJV (Deshapremi Jathika Viyaparaya) uprising from Sinhala-Buddhist youth of the South.

3 One country, two nations

The objective reality now is that Sri Lanka is one country comprised of two nations. The end product of the attempt by the Sinhala-Buddhist majority to correct historic injustices, and the countervailing fight by the Tamil minority, has been the political dismemberment of the country, the steady decline of its economy and its virtual disintegration as an organized society.

Today, even though the guns have fallen silent and the manifestations of conflict have disappeared, objectively what we have in Sri Lanka is an armed truce. Such a truce, coming as it does after nearly seventeen years of armed conflict, is indeed to be welcomed. It has provided the space for both sides to take stock, to go back to the drawing board, to embark upon dialogue and to let rationality prevail over emotion and prejudice.

It is within this space that we are looking for evidence of a nascent multiethnicity, be it

ever so incipient. We are looking for trends to which some momentum may be imparted, for growth points which may be broadened into a fuller flow.

Evidence of an emerging multi-ethnic democratic society (MEDS)

1 At the subjective and existential level

As we said earlier, the overwhelming oral evidence, North and South, from all layers of our sample, is that the Sri Lankan people as a whole have learnt the lessons of the past two decades and are now willing to live together in amity. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of this almost universally held opinion. But we find it dangerously misleading. The real meaning of what we have been hearing is that almost everyone is war-weary, and near exhaustion. There is hardly a family in the North that has not lost one of its business, or its dwelling or has not been dispersed all over the world. The causes are multiple. The periodic bursts of violence unleashed by Sinhala mobs in the South, the excesses and atrocities of the Sri Lankan services and the IPKF in the North, and not least, the brutal conflicts between rival Tamil militant groups, and the terrible wounds they have inflicted on their own people, all have contributed to create this feeling of weariness. In the South likewise, the brutal killings of civilians attributed to various Tamil militant groups, the horrors of the JVP-DJV onslaught and the equally horrendous campaign of reprisals launched by the security-vigilante groups, have generated a similar weariness.

These mutual feelings of weariness and self-criticism are positive gains. There is clearly a diminution on both sides of the self-righteousness, the sense of infallibility and the overri-

ding hubris that characterized Sinhala-Tamil relationships during the past years. Germany and Japan, South Korea and Israel converted their own traumas into cathartic experiences and extracted from them the wisdom and the energy necessary for rebuilding their societies. Sri Lanka should do likewise.

However, these subjective and existential states of consciousness are by themselves of no great value. Left to themselves, they evaporate quickly. They constitute a formless substance, capable of being moulded, but requiring the intervention of political actors before they yield their benefits.

Therefore, the claims of our interviewees that there is now in Sri Lanka a positive commitment to a multi-ethnic society, we accept only as evidence of an existential weariness which has yet to be translated into objective reality.

2 At the ideological level

The question is whether the existential weariness we refer to above is being analysed in terms of causes and linkages, and whether it is being reduced to a set of generalised concepts and framed within a set of values. Is there evidence that the prevailing weariness is being expressed in ideological terms? Are we seeing the beginnings of a multi-ethnic ideology in Sri Lanka?

A cathartic experience such as the one Sri Lanka has been through over the past several years, does not translate into ideological terms suddenly. Social scientists, novelists and journalists, the mass media, academics and politicians, and a whole range of people and institutions who comprise civil society, indeed the state itself, have to interpret this experience and extract from it, over time, its ideological potential. That process has only just begun in Sri Lanka. The fear is that

before it can gain momentum, events might again overtake the country.

We have observed among several NGOs in Colombo a flurry of activities focusing on the ideological content of the prevailing mood, and we have ourselves participated in several discussions with them. We have been greatly heartened to hear one time "hardliners", from both sides of the North/South divide, express viewpoints which are not only remarkably moderate when compared to the positions they had been known to take earlier, but are also ideological in character.

Two such articulations are worth mentioning, one by the Venerable Maduluwewe Sobhita and the other by the Venerable Belanwila Wimalaratana, two widely known ideologues of Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonism. At a seminar on "National Identity", convened by the Marga Institute in January 1990, they both took up the position that what they refer to as Sinhala Buddhist culture is not a static phenomenon frozen at some arbitrary point in history, but that it is a dynamic social process, changing over time and that its survival depends crucially on its capacity to modernize itself. They saw no alternative to living in amity, and that this entails a fundamental change in perceptions and values.

Of course, articulations by a few leading Buddhist prelates at seminars held in Colombo do not add up to a national ideology. However, in the course of our interviews we gathered that throughout the country, a vast number of people are now thinking along similar lines. Similar statements have been made by several leading Tamil intellectuals as well.

We see an urgent need to provide opportunities on the widest scale possible, throughout the country, for the arti-

culuation of similar views — opportunities in the form of village level seminars and workshops, platforms of all sorts, in Sinhala and Tamil — to enable the new thinking to acquire coherence and a formal ideological content and identity.

Perhaps the greatest single contribution towards the enhancement and formalization of a multi-ethnic ideology has been President Premadasa's own unequivocal and public commitment to it.

However, we must not underestimate the constraints upon the emergence of a multi-ethnic ideology. Such constraints are both structural and historical.

Structurally, the fact that Sinhala Buddhists in fact comprise 70% of the population inevitably makes for hegemonism. Expecting them to subordinate this decisive advantage to the demands of a multi-ethnic ideal is to expect a response such as no other ethnic group similarly placed has ever made, anywhere else in the world. Be it in India, or Malaysia or Indonesia, any ethno-cultural group enjoying that kind of numerical advantage, has generally assumed a hegemonistic position, harnessing all the opportunities provided, through access to state power, to consolidate its hegemony. As noted earlier, the Switzerland model of multi-ethnicity is replicable only under conditions of more or less equal numerical representation.

Another major structural factor issue is the proximity of the Indian State of Tamil Nadu, with a population of 60 million people. Sri Lanka's Sinhala Buddhists see the Tamil Nadu presence as an overhanging boulder, dangerously perched over them and threatening to roll down and crush them.

The *historical* constraints are partly the painful experiences Sinhala Buddhists have had of

being overrun by Dravidian empires several times in their history, partly their perception of having been marginalized during 150 years of British rule, and their desire to have those injustices corrected.

These two factors remain constraints upon the evolution of a multi-ethnic ideology in Sri Lanka. The ideology natural to this objective reality is hegemonism. If hegemonism is to be replaced, there is a need for something more concrete than *a priori* or moralistic arguments. The Sinhala majority will have to be confronted with a countervailing reality — one that can make explicit the unworkability of their hegemonism, in the context in which they now find themselves.

Such a countervailing reality has now materialized. Seventeen years of armed conflict with the Tamils, the outcome of which is not yet settled in military terms, intervention by India and its continuing threat for the foreseeable future, the devastation of the economy and above all the likelihood of a permanent dismemberment of the country: these facts constitute that reality. As a matter of expediency, and by the most elementary rules of survival, the Sinhala majority cannot afford to indulge its hegemonism any longer. In order to survive, it will have to abandon hubris, change its stance, and develop quickly a strategy for survival. More than any *a priori* or moralistic arguments, these facts will have to be mobilised and developed into an "*ideology for survival*".

Today, what Sri Lanka needs most is a survival ideology rather than a multi-ethnic ideology. In fact, the pursuit of the latter, even in theoretical terms, is likely to reactivate sterile argumentation and produce a replay of the polemics of the past four decades, which might in turn prod Sinhala hegemonism into one final suicidal manifestation such as we

find presented in dramatic and grim detail by Malinga Gunaratna in his book *For a Sovereign State*. Should that ever happen again, we have to abandon hope not only of a multi-ethnic democratic society being established, but of preserving the unity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka as well.

3 At the structural and regulatory level

It is at the structural and regulatory level that most progress has been made towards realizing a multi-ethnic society. These structural and regulatory modifications were not the products of ideology, but the outcome of objective conditions that Sri Lanka had to confront in 1987. As one Cabinet Minister summed it up for us, "Sri Lanka discovered multi-ethnicity only when some Indian Air Force planes violated Sri Lankan airspace and dropped food parcels to the beleaguered Tigers in Jaffna".

By mid 1987, the Sri Lankan Army had gone over to the offensive in the Jaffna Peninsula and had overrun the strongest Tiger perimeter defence position, Vadamaarachchi. It was now poised to advance on Jaffna. At this point India, who had been backing various Tamil guerrilla groups for years, with money, equipment, training and space for base camps, decided to intervene openly. The airdrop of food parcels served as the shot across the bows. At this point, covert talks that had been going on for some months, unofficially, between Jayewardene's emissaries and Rajiv Gandhi's representatives began to bear fruit. The final outcome of these secret negotiations was the Accord, which laid the foundation for a series of amendments to the Sri Lanka Constitution. These Constitutional amendments are the most tangible expression so far, of Sri Lanka's commitment to a multi-ethnic society.

(To be continued)

C. P. and Intellectuals: Parting of the ways

Vladimir Reznichenko, (A. P. N. Political Analyst)

"Nihilism, apathy, mistrust of the Party, and nationalism are spreading in the intellectual milieu," says the resolution "On CPSU Policy in Education, Science and Culture," adopted by the 28th Party Congress, held in Moscow in the first fortnight of July.

That fortnight heard many vicious and often unjust accusations of intellectuals, especially the press, economic researchers and social scientists. Anti-intellectual sentiments dominated a part of Congress delegates, with the majority made up of Party and government officials economic managers and the top military. Anxious to drive a wedge between intellectuals, on the one hand, and industrial and agricultural workers, on the other, they showered the latter with effusive compliments.

Under the severe criticism which comes on retrograde functionaries from all sides, they did their best to secure the support of uneducated people, not too well versed in politics. As living standards slump, they spare no effort to channel the public indignation against Perestroika and the approaching economic switch to market patterns.

Intellectuals are gravely concerned. No other social stratum was so mercilessly persecuted by the totalitarian regime. Many of the best were framed up, others forced to emigrate. At home, survivors dragged a miserable, degrading existence. The powers-that-be trampled their rights underfoot.

Now, intellectuals are among the most dynamic and conscientious Perestroika activists. So the neo-Stalinist hatred could be expected.

The Congress audience booed and catcalled the few intellectuals who got the floor despite all obstacles. Among them were foremost Soviet cultural leaders. Coming straight from the heart and full of justified bitterness,

their words were heard despite the atmosphere in which they spoke.

"A situation different from what we have today would be impossible in a country where the dictatorship strangled free thought and murdered or convicted free minds or, at best, drove them underground. Our per capita cultural allocations amount to a ridiculous three kopecks a year. I wasn't least surprised to hear whistles, foot stamping and catcalls in this audience," said the poet David Kugultinov.

"Not only the Communist Party must repent, the whole nation, too — a nation which kept silent and drank itself dumb with misery," the actor Mikhail Ulyanov joined in. "Shall we ever see what's right under our noses — that our civilization is going to the dogs, that culture is drowning in the quagmire of ignorance? We must rescue our culture, the only force to protect us from savagery and barbarity."

"As the global experience tells us, a better manager than a man of property can't be found," argued the writer Chingiz Aitmatov. "The task of all communists is to make industrial workers and farmers see this truth. Now, we once again hear appeals for a class approach, class struggle and proletarian dictatorship. They tell us that the sectarian concept of socialism is still alive. No one suffers of this concept more than the socialist idea the Political parties which back it."

One of the greatest sensations came on the last Congress day

with the announcement that two USSR People's Deputies, Gavril Popov, the famous economist and Moscow Mayor, and Anatoli Sobchak, a top-class lawyer and Mayor of Leningrad, were leaving the Communist Party "to promote the formation of a multi-party system and have more elbowroom in the city councils." This step by the two influential community leaders may have an impact on many intellectuals' attitudes to the CPSU.

The situation is extremely involved. Not only intellectuals' opinion of the Communist Party matters now but their opinion of the whole country — suffice it to mention the skyrocketing emigration. Quite recently, it mostly concerned Jewish intellectuals. Now that exit has become simpler and the economic situation goes from bad to worse at lightning speed, brain drain is sure to involve people of all ethnic backgrounds.

Judging by Mikhail Gorbachev's report, the top echelons are aware of this danger. "A clever country always holds dear its intellectual and artistic potential. We need urgent steps to remove the causes of brain drain from our country," he said.

If the Communist Party really means to lead the radical effort to streamline Soviet life, it has to see the vital need to attract the best part of the nation to its side-intellectuals, on whom the country's cultural and moral potential depends. The future of Soviet intellectuals depends on this realisation even less that of the fate of the Party. Its future is at stake.

God bless Britannia

(Dedicated to Margaret Thatcher)

*The days of the century fade
Into the declining decade.
Instead of idealism before,
More and more stuck to jam
And Uncle Sam.*

Patrick Jayasuriya

PLANTATION WORKERS

P. Muthulingam writes (LG 15 June 1990): "D. S. Senanayake not only disfranchised the Indian Tamils but decitizenised them." He calls this an injustice. If it was an injustice it was, nevertheless, a measure that was welcomed by the great majority of Ceylonese including the Ceylon Tamils who overwhelmingly supported the legislation at the very first general election (1952) at which the voters had a chance to express their views on it.

The most precise and objective statement on the issues involved was in the Privy Council judgment in the Kodakan Pillai case. There were two Acts — The Citizenship Act No. 18 of 1948 and the Parliamentary Elections Amendment Act No. 4 of 1949. Kodakan Pillai, an Indian Tamil resident in Ceylon, challenged the two Acts as being in contravention of Section 29(2) of the Constitution.

The matter was finally disposed of in the Privy Council Appeal No. 7 of 1952.

Their Lordships held:

- (1) that the Acts did not offend against Section 29 (2);
- (2) that it was perfectly natural and legitimate for a country to determine the composition of its nationals;
- (3) that the migratory habits of the Indian Tamils were facts directly relevant to the question of their suitability as citizens of Ceylon; and
- (4) that there was nothing in the legislation preventing Indian Tamils from attaining citizenship provided they were sufficiently connected with the Island.

The parliamentary voting on the legislation divided, not between Sinhalese and Tamils, but between the right and the left. (N. M. Perera began his parliamentary career in 1936 by winning the Ruwanwella seat beating Mrs. A. E. Molamure with the help of the Indian plantation worker's votes.) G. G. Ponnambalam,

the leader of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (who joined the government on 3 September 1948) voted for the Elections Amendment Act of 1949. Chelvanayagam's Federal Party made the legislation an election issue in the 1952 general election and the voters of Jaffna gave him and his party a severe drubbing. Chelvanayagam losing to the U.N.P's S. Natesan who won with a large majority.

These Indians without permanent roots in Ceylon, had been distorting the electoral balance by deciding the representation in many Kandyan electorates, in effect leaving the permanent population virtually unrepresented in Parliament. After the legislation the Kandyan Sinhalese rural voter for the first time had a voice in the country's affairs.

Two quotes:

Dr. Jane Russell

"When the Kandyans first elbowed their way into politics at the expense of the Indian Tamil voters, the Jaffna Tamils were the first to make overtures to them for a Kandyan-Tamil alliance against 'low-country hegemony'. It was only when this failed that the Sri Lanka Tamils accepted the 50-50 (actually 40-60) policy formulated by the Indian Tamil leaders as a means of combating low-country Kandyan rapprochement. However, the offer of a portfolio in the D. S. Senanayake cabinet destroyed this Tamil alliance. Abandoned by their Tamilian compatriots the Indian Tamils were deprived of their civic rights. The complete rout of the Federal Party in the '52 elections was a resounding endorsement of this policy." (Lanka Guardian of 15 May-1980)

Dr. C. R. de Silva

"That all or most of the Indian Tamils should have been entitled to the vote....has never been accepted by the majority of the Sinhalese leadership and in this respect it is perhaps significant that the Indian govern-

ment agreed in the 1960s that the bulk of them should be regarded as Indians. It also does not take sufficient account of the problem of illicit immigration of Indian Tamils in the 1950s and 1960s and the fears this raised."

(The Electoral System 1947-1978: An Overview)

—Boyd Almeida

Lawyers for Human Rights

I find that the Lanka Guardian has published in its issue of June 15th 1990, a printed version of a speech delivered by me at a seminar organised by 'Lawyers for Human Rights, on the theme 'Does the Law Meet the Aspirations of the People'. I regret that I did not have an opportunity to see the printed text. While the article does represent correctly the ideas that I presented at the seminar in a talk made without a prepared script, there are many errors of both language and content. Since the Lanka Guardian usually presents articles of high quality, I think it does both me and your journal injustice to publish a piece with inaccuracies of this nature.

I would like to clarify in particular that I quoted from a dictum of Justice Gratiaen in the reported case of Chissell v. Chapman. The dictum itself has been quoted inaccurately. I would also like to mention that I am professor of law at the Open University of Sri Lanka, and do not hold a similar position in the University of Kelaniya.

I hope that you will clarify this to your readers.

Prof. (Mrs) S.W.E. Goonesekere Colombo.5

NOTE BY EDITOR:

We received the recorded version of the speech from the organisers of the seminar. Professor Goonesekere was not available for consultation. We were informed that she was abroad. We regret the errors.

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