

**LANKA**

# **GUARDIAN**

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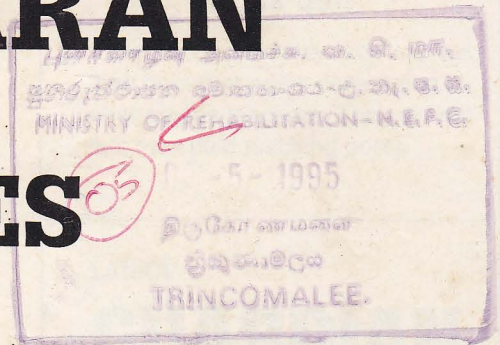
**RED ALERT! RED ALERT!**

**PRABHAKARAN**

**LAUNCHES**

**EELAM WAR III**

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**UNDERSTANDING INTERNAL WARS**

- *Kingsley de Silva*
- *John Richardson*
- *Shinjinee Sen*

**CHANDRIKA'S  
HEARTS AND MINDS WAR**

— *Mervyn de Silva*

**SRI LANKA'S ECONOMY**

— **not "TIGER STYLE"**

— *Manik de Silva*

**DEMARCATING ELECTORATES**

— *Dayalal Abeysekera*

**DEFENCE CONCEPTS**

— *Humayun Kabir*

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**IMPORTANT:** There will be **no** issue of the *L.G.* on May 15 since the Ananda Press will be closed for a month. Subscribers will be informed about the June 1st issue.

## **BRIEFLY...**

### **Tigers resume hostilities**

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) broke their truce with the government on April 19 by blasting two naval gun boats anchored in the East coast Trincomalee harbour. The cessation of hostilities for on-going peace talks had held for a little over three months. A dozen sailors were killed in the under-water attack and two dozen were injured. The boats were valued at 225 million.

The attack came less than three hours after the LTTE had informed the government of its intention to break off negotiations although the truce terms stipulated 72 hours notice.

### **Another Tiger attack**

The LTTE followed up its April 19 Trincomalee harbour attack with another, two days later, on an East coast army camp killing nearly 50 soldiers. About 80 more were reported missing. Seventy Tigers too were reported dead in hand to hand fighting inside the camp in a fierce gun battle raging three hours.

Army reinforcements cleared the site later and removed the wounded.

The LTTE began the attack with mortars and rocket propelled grenades at about 11 p.m. on April 21, survivors said. The soldiers took on the advancing Tigers and the battle raged non-stop till near 3 a.m. the following morning.

### **Serious crisis, says Srimani**

Democratic United National Front (DUNF - Lalith Faction) leader and Transport Minister Srimani Athulathmudali said in a Lalith Athulathmudali commemoration (second death anniversary) message that the cou-

ntry was facing a serious crisis after the breakdown of the peace negotiations.

The message said: "The PA (people's Alliance) Government led by President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga has made genuine efforts to bring about peace in our land. Thus it is with great concern that we face the breakdown of the peace process in the North East issue. After three months of ceasefire Sri Lanka is once again confronted with the threat of violent conflict..."

"Today we are faced with a serious national crisis with the breakdown of the peace process"...

### **Government still for peace**

The government will continue to pursue peace with or without the LTTE, President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga told a mass rally in the traditional Sinhala Southern district capital of Matara. History had many lessons for those who pursued peace, the President said; if the people of a country yearned for peace, armed groups of militants had to bow their heads to the people's will.

The people of the North has faith in the P.A. and were convinced that the government's pursuit of peace was genuine, the president said.

### **The City's security**

Police intensified security checks in Colombo following the resumption of LTTE hostilities in the North and East and the breakdown in the peace process. About a thousand persons were held for screening in checks for Tiger infiltrations.

Meanwhile Reuter reported President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga telling The Times of India: "We are interested in peace. But if the LTTE breaks the whole

thing and gives us signs they are not going for peace, we are strong enough to go to war".

### **Attempt to arrest Dr Swamy**

Tamil Nadu State opposition Leader S. R. Balasubramanian told a press conference in Madras that Chief Minister Jayalalitha had ordered the arrest of her chief detractor Dr. Subramanian Swamy at the behest of LTTE Supremo V. Prabhakaran. Dr. Swamy's crime was that he dubbed Prabhakaran an international "pariah", a term formerly used to refer to "untouchables" in India.

### **Dons quit**

Deans of university faculties quit their honorary posts demanding higher pay as teachers. They did not quit their paid teaching posts.

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**STOP PRESS:** "MISSILE ATTACK! MISSILE ATTACK!" shouted the pilot.... his last words. The SLAF plane crashed. 52 dead. 19 soldiers killed at Araly point, Kayts. Two gunboats sunk.

# LTTE Ends Truce

Mervyn de Silva

**A** "new" war has commenced. To stick to our own nomenclature, EELAM WAR 3 has begun.

Now the battle will begin as a contest for the hearts and minds of the northern province Tamil, the Tamils in the East, the Tamils elsewhere in the island, and that very important constituency, the expatriate Tamil — London to start with, that is after Tamilnadu naturally, and from the US and western Europe to Australia and New Zealand. It is to the P.A.'s credit that the state-owned media, spotting this window of opportunity, gave maximum publicity to an official statement on the current blitz by what the P.A. introduced as "the Eelam lobby" overseas. The statement in fact named five countries US, Canada, Britain, France and Australia.

Two Tamil leaders Messrs Thondaman and Douglas Devananda have already issued statements that will help the P.A.'s Agit-prop campaign. Agit-prop of course is a weapon in this type of war. It is part of the overall strategy of isolating the LTTE by winning over non-militant Tamil organisations, including some that were part of the secessionist armed struggle before the Indian intervention. How much clout these ex-militant groups now enjoy is anybody's guess. But we should remember that EPDP, ENDLF, EPRLF, TELO etc together with the respectably parliamentarist TULF have votes in an assembly where the P.A. has no majority, having failed to win 113 seats at the August general elections for its near-50% popular vote.

Far more significant is the C.W.C. of Mr. Thondaman, a minister in the Chandrika Kumaratunga administration but hardly the figure he cut in the 17 year

U.N.P. administrations of President JR and Premadasa.

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**In the first week of EELAM WAR 3, the LTTE has demonstrated a military capability on land, and sea and a capacity to limit the S.L.A.F.'s free use of air power.**

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Mr. Thondaman's capacity for autonomous action has been restricted by the rise of young Mr. Chandrasegaram, a radical from the ranks of plantation workers. In fact, Mr. Thondaman has been cut out of the action altogether. In the early 90's, Mr. Thondaman felt strong enough to initiate an independent CWC mediation exercise that included what may be called 'personal diplomacy'.

More crucial to the President's peace effort are Mr. Ashraff's S.L.M.C. and Mrs. Srimani Athulathmudali's DUNLF — in that order. As the founder-president of the (East-based) Muslim Congress, Mr. Ashraff has clout since (a) his party has 9 MP's and (b) the future of the eastern merger.

The President's hand has been strengthened with the TULF, the oldest and the most important of Tamil parliamentary parties, declaring its unequivocal support for the P.A.'s "peace move".

This is a political-military struggle. The P.A. emphasises the first because its leader who improved on the P.A.'s unimpressive under-50% vote with her runaway victory at presidential election, was "the peace candidate". All the national minorities voted CHANDRIKA. It is

more than a matter of honouring pledges however. It is economics too, a crucial factor in the whole pre-polls equation worked out by the P.A. brains trust — Prof. G. L. Pieris, Dr. Jayawardene, Dr. J. Uyangoda, and other Colombo campus personalities and miscellaneous, heavily-funded think-tanks, and their US-EU patrons. Because their mentors were western, and also because they did not wish to offend the LTTE, the P.A. strategists kept the Indians "out", in the cold. Or so it was to the neutral eye. But President's recent visit to Delhi may have left a somewhat different impression on the strategists in Jaffna.

Apart from the P.A. - U.S. - Donor coalition (the peace dividend is the cement) the other important arm of the P.A. strategy is to co-opt the peace constituency in the North and thus isolate the hardline, militarist LTTE. One may call it an attempt to attack the main enemy, the LTTE from the rear. A third front is the widely spread Tamil expatriate communities who collect money and do very useful propaganda-publicity work in the US, Canada, Europe and Australia and raise funds. Can the P.A., which has the full backing of the US-led western alliance mount enough pressure on Tamil communities to cut off funds, and cease political support and pro-LTTE publicity?

To what extent will the US government use its enormous power and influence to help the P.A.? If the answer depends on the Embassy's reports to the State Dept., will the US reading of the situation change with a new Ambassador — an Ambassador who is quite familiar with the Sri Lankan scene and is unlikely to rely on a charmed circle for his judgments?

# The bloom is off

Manik de Silva

**A**fter a decade of shifting from crop exports to higher-value manufactured goods, Sri Lanka is stumbling in its attempts to move to tiger-style, export-led growth.

Industrial exports showed signs of weakness last year and unemployment and inflation are rising — as are the trade and budget deficits. A change of government has meanwhile raised worries about business policies. Still, overall economic growth remains quite strong, albeit a touch slower.

The main cause for concern was in textiles and garments, which make up half of all exports. Shipments grew just 13% last year — quite a contrast from the previous year's 27% surge. Producers of other goods took up some of the slack, however, enabling manufactured exports as a whole to expand nearly 16%.

In addition, exports of Sri Lanka's famous coconuts leaped 33%, and the world bought a record 242 million kilograms of Ceylon tea, a rise of 4% from 1993.

Overall, exports grew 14.7% to 158.6 billion rupees (\$ 3.3 billion). Imports, however, grew by more than 21% to 236 billion rupees, leaving a widened trade deficit of 77.4 billion rupees. The current-account deficit swelled to 5.9% of GDP, or 329 million rupees, from 3.6% in 1993.

Strength in trade wasn't the only petal that fell off an economy that had been South Asia's rosiest in 1993. Economic growth fell to 5.5% last year after reaching a 16-year high of 6.9% in 1993. And gross domestic savings fell to 13.6% of GDP, down from 17.7%.

Inflation and unemployment help explain why Sri Lankans have less to save. The Department of the Census and Statistics estimates unemployment at 13%. Inflation, meanwhile, rose to 8.4% and is projected to top 11% in 1995.

The government spent about \$ 180 million last year on welfare measures such as children's-lunch subsidies. Handouts such as these, prompted by a desire to please voters in last year's three elections,

helped push government spending to a total of \$ 1.3 billion in 1994. The government is financing expenditures by dipping into the national provident fund.

In its budget, presented in February, the government projected a deficit of 7.5% of GDP for 1995, down from 10% the previous year. But analysts at W.I. Carr call the projection "slightly optimistic", pegging the deficit at around 9%.

The prime rate is hovering around 15% after jumping to 19% in late December. While the Asian Development Bank says the government's domestic borrowing is crowding out private domestic investors, the good news is that foreign investors are still coming in. Foreign inflows are fuelling domestic investment that is close to 25% of GDP.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga appears to recognize the growing importance of private-sector interests. Labour unions took the August election of her left-leaning People's Alliance coalition as a signal that their strikes would find sympathy; in 1994 labour unrest and strikers' physical confinement of business

executives had threatened to undermine private-sector confidence. Indeed, business analysts expressed concern publicly.

But Kumaratunga recently assured businessmen that the labour unrest has abated. Her government has also said it won't tolerate labour violence, and it has arbitrated some wage settlements.

Kumaratunga says she would like to see a two-year moratorium on wage increases — but her government has yet to impose one. However, the government continues to set prices on a range of goods, rice among them. It has pushed down prices of wheat-flour and kerosene, partly with subsidies to their consumers.

While the government is under pressure from exporters to devalue the rupee and make Sri Lankan goods cheaper on world markets, inflation fears are preventing it from increasing the supply of rupees. Money-supply growth slowed to 19.6% of GDP in 1994 from 23.5% in 1993.

(F.E.E.R)

## Rao gets free hand to revamp Congress

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, in a stinging rebuke to his opponents, has been given a free hand to revamp the ruling Congress (I) party after a string of humiliating election defeats.

Some 130 leaders of national and state chapters of the Congress who attended a meeting here of the policy-making Congress Working Committee (CWC) extended "unflinching support" to the 73-year-old Rao, a spokesman said.

"The support was unanimous", the Congress spokesman said, adding that Rao was given sweeping powers to reorganise the crumbling party ahead of general elections due by the middle of next year.

The CWC stoutly defended Rao's economic reform programme and pledged that the Congress government would not slow down the opening of India to foreign capital and competition, the spokesman said.

A resolution passed at the ninehour meeting which ended around midnight at the prime minister's residence blamed the recent state election losses on dissidents opposed to Rao's leadership of the 109-year-old Congress.

Several CWC leaders demanded action against the rebels, saying a crackdown would stem dissidence and restore unity to its ranks. — Reuter

# India-Sri Lanka: from mediation to intervention

Kingsley De Silva

## 1. Introduction

Few international relationships in any part of the world are quite as asymmetrical as that between India and Sri Lanka whether one considers population or physical size: India has nearly 50 times Sri Lanka's population of 17 million, and is a large subcontinental state while Sri Lanka is a small island of 25,000 square miles. Inevitably therefore the wider issues of regional power versus small power relationships figure prominently in, indeed dominate, any discussion and analysis of the theme of this paper.

Linked to it as the second issue, are conflicting visions of the essentials of national security from the time these two neighbors emerged from colonial to independent status in 1947 and 1948 respectively. While this paper seeks to deal with this theme, the discussion here is admittedly brief and is intended merely to explain why certain decisions were taken by the two countries at various times since independence and especially in the 1970s and 1980s.

Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict of the mid and late 1970s and 1980s provided India with the opportunity to intervene in the island's affairs. This paper will not deal at any great length with the complexities of the island's ethnic conflict. It will merely draw the reader's attention to some of the recent writings on the subject, and will concentrate instead on some of the issues in the conflict which have a bearing on the theme of our discussion in this paper. Two facets of this conflict are of special interest: the size and role of Sri Lanka's Tamil minorities and the question of devolution of power.

Sri Lanka has two Tamil minorities. The indigenous Tamils who have lived in the island almost as long as the Sinhalese, i.e., over 2000 years, at present constitute 11 percent of the island's population, and the Indian Tamils as they are called, a smaller group, about 5 percent of the population. The latter are comparatively recent immigrants brought to the island as

plantation workers by the British, or migrants to the island in British times because of the greater economic opportunities the island provided in comparison with southern India. Although they have a common language, they are two separate, if not distinct groups, kept apart by the geopolitical location of their main settlements, and by class and caste distinctions.

Throughout the 20th century those who ruled India, whether they be British Viceroys, or Indian politicians, have been deeply interested in the fate of the Indian community on the island, especially in insisting that the bulk of them be absorbed by Ceylon or Sri Lanka as its citizens. The controversies over these issues have been especially acrimonious since 1928. Agreement was reached on the terms of a settlement of this question between India and Sri Lanka in 1964 and 1974 but it was only in 1988 that the residual issues stemming from the earlier agreements were settled. India's interest in the problems of Sri Lanka's larger Tamil minority is a more recent development, something that emerged and grew in the 1970s and 1980s.

This study of India's involvement in Sri Lanka's affairs in the period 1987 to 1991 is a contribution to the growing literature on managing ethnic conflict in deeply divided societies, especially the involvement of regional powers in such disputes. Several recent examples spring to mind: Turkey in Cyprus, Israel and Syria in the Lebanon. No doubt several other examples will emerge from the burgeoning ethnic conflicts of Central and Eastern Europe in the future. This paper is also a case study in the usefulness or otherwise of accords and treaties in mediating ethnic conflict.

Two issues figure prominently in the mediation of the Sri Lankan conflict: devolution of power and the re-construction of the post-independence Sri Lankan polity; and the demand of the Sri Lankan Tamils — as distinct from Sri Lanka's Indian Tamil minority — for the creation of a Tamil ethno-region covering the island's northern and eastern provinces. To understand why these issues figure so prominently in the debates and discussions on

Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict it is necessary — indeed essential — to go back, briefly, into the island's troubled history.

The Sinhalese and the Sri Lankan Tamils have sharply different perceptions of the nature of the Sri Lankan state; and diametrically opposed attitudes to decentralization and devolution of power to regional units of administration. Although the early proponents of decentralization (from the 1920s onwards) were Sinhalese, the situation has changed since independence. The main political parties of the Sri Lankan Tamils have become the principal if not sole advocates of decentralization and devolution. These demands have provoked strong opposition from the Sinhalese, both in the mainstream political parties, as well as pressure groups representing Sinhalese-Buddhist opinion, many of whom fear, if not believe, that schemes of devolution of power are likely to lead to political fragmentation of the island, and are therefore a potent threat to the island's territorial integrity through the re-emergence of a separate Tamil state and the linkage of such a state to Tamil Nadu in South India.

The processes of centralization vigorously pursued by the British during their rule in the country (1796-1947) have proved to be a formidably stable political legacy, and one that post-independence regimes have been both reluctant and unable to repudiate. These centralizing processes were initiated in 1815-18 with the subjugation of the last independent Sinhalese kingdom, the Kingdom of Kandy, and the fusion of its territories with the narrow coastal strip the British had conquered from the Dutch. However it was not until 1832 that a unified administrative system for the whole island was set up, in the course of which the existing traditional regional and subregional administrative boundaries were eliminated and replaced by new provincial boundaries. The objective behind it was avowedly political: to hasten the break-up of the Kandyan kingdom and to weaken national feeling in the Kandyan areas. The Kandyan kingdom had successfully resisted Western invaders — the Portuguese and Dutch — since the middle of the 16th century and had defeated and destroyed a British expeditionary force in 1803. In

*Prof. Kingsley De Silva presented this paper at a Woodrow Wilson Center Conference. Dr De Silva is Executive Director of I.C.E.S., Kandy.*

1832 the island was divided into five zones of administration in the form of provinces. When changes in these boundaries came in the course of time between 1845 and 1889 they were mostly a belated recognition of some traditional boundaries. By 1889 there were nine provinces. With only minor adjustments to their boundaries introduced largely for purposes which can only be described as administrative convenience, this structure has survived to the present day. From the 1950s the district — a smaller administrative entity within a province — replaced the province as the largest unit of administration. Even so the province survived, bereft of all administrative energy and purpose, a remnant of a British system that refused to fade away, until it received another lease on life in 1987-88.

The pressure for revival of the provincial structure is an integral part of Tamil separatist agitation. The case for Tamil separation in Sri Lanka was built upon the modern doctrine of self-determination of people, and linked with it came, in time, the concept of the "traditional homelands" of the Tamils, "homelands" that needed to be protected from "outsiders," themselves citizens of the same country. This concept first emerged in the early 1950s. Every version of it since that time has been built on a foundation of pseudo-historical data. It was a claim based on a hazy "historical" memory of statehood in centuries past, remembered and now interpreted (and generally misinterpreted) as a continuous and continuing tradition of independent statehood and an unbroken national consciousness. In less than a decade of its first enunciation, this theory — refined as "the traditional homelands" of the Tamils — has become an indispensable and integral part of the political ideology of the Tamil advocates of regional autonomy and separatism. The definition of boundaries came in the mid-1950s and it generally encompassed the northern and eastern provinces.

As a result of its overt separatist connotations the concept of "the traditional homelands" of the Tamils has generated hostility from the Sinhalese. The eastern province was an integral part of the Kandyan kingdom, and it contains the main ports of that kingdom: Trincomalee and Batticaloa. Besides, the Tamils are a minority in that province, and neither its Muslim population, nor the Sinhalese favor a linkage of that province with the Tamil-dominated northern province.

India has had three roles in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict. The first, which began with Mrs. Gandhi's return to power in 1980, was that of a covert supporter of Sri Lankan Tamil political activists operating in India. This covert support continued until 1987. The Tamil Nadu factor forms an important facet of India's complex role in regard to Sri Lankan affairs. Seldom has a constituent unit (a province or a state) of one country influenced the relationship between it and a neighboring country with the same intensity and to the same extent that Tamil Nadu did and continues to do in the case of India's relations with Sri Lanka. The India-Tamil Nadu-Sri Lanka relationship is thus a unique one in international affairs. Admittedly India's own role is a more complex one than merely reacting to the pressures of domestic policies in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu governments have provided Sri Lankan Tamil separatist activists with sanctuaries, training and bases. Not only did the central government connive in this, but it also tolerated the provision of training facilities and the existence of camps and bases in other parts of the country. These began with Indira Gandhi, and in the early 1980s, that is to say, well before the riots of July 1983 in Sri Lanka.

India's role of mediator began under Mrs. Gandhi as a calculated political response to the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983 in Sri Lanka and continued under Rajiv Gandhi himself. The third role, that of active participant began in late 1987 and continued to the middle of 1990. That too is quite unique in the history of mediation in ethnic conflict: never before has a mediator taken on the role of combatant, and the presumed guardian of an ethnic minority's interests waged a bitter war against sections of that minority, and in a neighboring state at that.

## 2. Conflicting Perception of Security

Sri Lanka is by any definition a small state, "a local power whose demands are restricted to its own and adjacent areas." The island is at once strategically situated and yet deeply isolated. If one looks north there is the Indian subcontinent separated from the island by a shallow sea which at its narrowest point is a mere 22 miles wide. To the east lies southeast Asia and the world of China; to the west, far away, is the African continent and the Arab world of west Asia. One confronts the real isolation of Sri Lanka when one looks south, for there is nothing between the island and Antarctica lying thousands of miles away.

The main point however is that Sri Lanka's geographical location emphasizes its proximity today as in centuries past to a large regional power or powers in the Indian sub-continent. The India of today is a much larger and more powerful political entity than any Indian state or states that impinged on Sri Lanka's affairs since the 16th century or earlier, with the single exception of the British *raj*. Despite its proximity to the Indian subcontinent, Sri Lanka, or Ceylon as it was called then, was never part of the *raj*. Ceylon was administered by the Colonial Office as a crown colony.

This separation from the *raj* has had a profound impact on the political thinking of several generations of Sri Lankans, and especially its influential politicians. Thus Sri Lanka's first Prime Minister, D.S. Senanayake, based his strategy for his country's security in the post-independence situation on the assumption that the most likely threat to her independence would come from a newly-independent India. For Senanayake no less than for Whitehall the defence agreements signed at the transfer of power in late 1947 — and which he had first suggested to the Colonial Office as early as August 1945 — were part of the process of adjusting to the uncertainties of a new pattern of international politics in South Asia with India as an independent state. For Whitehall the defence agreements with Sri Lanka were important because of British strategic interests in the Indian ocean, especially for securing her links with Australia and New Zealand. Senanayake believed that the agreements offered his country security against any possible threat to her independence from India. This arrangement offered the country a free ride in defence and external security in the crucially important early years of independence. Sri Lanka had no credible defence capacity at the time of independence: no army, no navy and no airforce. All these were built from scratch and under British supervision over the next decade.

Senanayake's policies survived his death (in 1952) but not the defeat of his party, the United National Party (UNP), in 1956. The time had come to think of a national defence policy, in the new strategic situation of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The central issue was the power vacuum created by Britain's abandonment of her traditional role in the Indian Ocean region. The Sri Lankan governments of this period did little to develop

even a modest defensive capacity against any external threat, or for that matter even against internal turmoil. And, more significantly, without ever considering the long-term implications of its actions or inaction Sri Lanka took shelter under the security system that Nehru's India was in the process of constructing.

But even if a small power like Sri Lanka could afford to ignore the external environment, India could not. She had inherited much the larger portion of the *raj*, after the partition, and was in the process of consolidating it into a cohesive state. Nehru's India and Nehru himself had inherited from the *raj* a belief in India's "natural boundaries." In its commitment to the defence of this inheritance, Nehru's India was assuming, tentatively at first, but with greater conviction with the passage of time, the strategic vision of the *raj*. This conviction grew stronger in time, especially under Indira Gandhi.

Sri Lanka had begun taking shelter under India's defence umbrella in the 1960s, as a purely voluntary act, on the rebound, as it were, from Britain's abandonment of her traditional imperial role. In the 1970s with Indira Gandhi reflecting the views of the exponents of India's assumption of the mantle of the *raj*, India decided that small South Asian neighbors like Sri Lanka must take shelter under that umbrella, and that a search for an alternative would be regarded as an unacceptable, if not intolerable, challenge to the dominant regional power. This policy was made explicit with regard to Sri Lanka, for the first time, in 1983.

From the mid-1970s Indo-Sri Lankan relations were to be dominated by Indian responses to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflicts, Sinhalese versus Tamils. The mid and late 1970s mark the beginning of the second phase in the post-independence violence in the island. The first phase was in the mid and late 1950s. At that time India had treated it as a matter of Sri Lanka's domestic politics and therefore not for diplomatic or political intervention. It was the heyday of India's perception of itself as the conscience of the Third World, and Nehru acted with a restraint in regard to domestic turmoil among India's smaller neighbors (with the possible exception of Nepal) which his daughter and successor did not show. In the 1970s the situation had changed. After the intervention in East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh India was in a more self-confident mood. The debacle of 1962, when China had inflicted

a humiliating defeat on India had long been forgotten.

The other factor which influenced the relationship between the two countries was the Tamil Nadu connection and its impact on the Sri Lankan situation. Within the Indian union, Madras, or Tamil Nadu as it became later, was one of the main centers of separatist tendencies in India. The rise of the Dravida Kazhagam (DK) and later the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in the early 1950s reflected the same powerful force of linguistic nationalism that had transformed the politics of Sri Lanka in the same period. The DK and the DMK were even more conscious of the rights of Tamils in South Asia than the Congress-dominated state governments of Madras had been, but acted with much less restraint in demonstrating their concern about these, so much so that the increasingly turbulent politics of Sri Lanka's Jaffna peninsula (the main concentration of the Tamil population in the island) in the early 1970s began to be treated as an integral part of the internal politics of Tamil Nadu. Tamil politics in South Asia thus had a regional rather than a purely local impact. The DMK, effectively checked from pursuing its separatist goals in India, took vicarious pleasure in giving encouragement and support to separatist tendencies among the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

There was an unmistakable intensification of separatist agitation from 1974 to 1975 as well as an increase in terrorist activity, of which the shooting by Velupillai Prabhakaran, now leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 1975, of Alfred Durayappa, a fellow Tamil, the Mayor of Jaffna (the administrative capital of the northern province) was the most significant incident. The security forces found the search for actual and potential troublemakers a frustrating experience as the local population would not voluntarily help in apprehending these young men; besides, when there was the slightest chance of capture, they moved across the Palk straits to Tamil Nadu which served them as a refuge, and as a bridgehead for raids into the Jaffna peninsula.

It was at this point — the passage between Jaffna and the Tamil Nadu coast — that smugglers entered the picture both as transport agents for fugitives and as sources of ready money. The safe houses established on both sides of the Palk straits for the traditional smuggling trade were now put to other uses, as havens

for men on the run, and as transshipment points for arms for the separatist cause. Very soon the more politically conscious smugglers and the terrorist groups had joined forces. Each needed and used the other. There was the inevitable metamorphosis of the smuggler into "guerrilla" and "freedom fighter" and indeed some of the most dynamic and powerful leaders in recent times thrown up by this blending of clandestine trading activity and militant and violent political agitation were smugglers.

### 3. India as Mediator: Mrs. Gandhi and Sri Lanka, 1983-1984

The victory of the Janatha government at the elections of 1977 marked a brief two year period when India's relations with her neighbors improved remarkably. With the landslide victory of the United National Party (UNP) at the Sri Lanka general election of July 1977, the two septuagenarian leaders of India and Sri Lanka, Moraji Desai and J.R. Jayewardene respectively, established a very close understanding, and the two countries, a very cordial neighborly relationship. The situation changed dramatically once the Janatha coalition crumbled and Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980.

Once she returned to power, she found herself at odds with President J.R. Jayewardene and his government on their outlook, attitudes and policies on regional and world affairs. There was, first of all, the Afghan issue on which the two governments adopted diametrically opposed policies: Sri Lanka, like most other South Asian states strongly condemned the Soviet invasion. India was out of step with the rest of South Asia on this issue. There was also Sri Lanka's futile attempt to secure membership of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). This was regarded as proof of the Sri Lanka government's general pro-Western attitudes, of which latter, further evidence was presumably provided in the expanded facilities granted to the United States for its Voice of America (VOA) relaying station in the island, and also in the choice of a consortium consisting of Oroleum (Pvt) Ltd, Singapore, Oil Tanking, West Germany, and Tradinaft, Switzerland, to restore to commercial use a complex of oil-tank farms in the vicinity of the strategically important port of Trincomalee. India's concern with regard to this consortium lay in the supposedly covert links between its constituent firms and U.S. interests and the suspicion that these commercial links



had concealed political and strategic dimensions. Then came the Falklands war where Sri Lanka alone of Third World countries backed Britain rather than Argentina.

Sri Lanka, for its part, found the new Indian government less than helpful with regard to Tamil separatist groups operating from Tamil Nadu. After the riots of 1977 a period of quiet and slow improvement in relations between the government and the principal Tamil party, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), had seen the passage of the District Development Councils bill in August 1980 and the establishment of a second tier of government in the island. This was a major political achievement, considering that two previous attempts (in 1958 and 1968) had failed in the face of extra-parliamentary agitation and internal bickering within the then ruling party or coalition. There were, nevertheless, occasional outbursts of ethnic violence (in 1981 for instance) and an ongoing conflict between security forces located in Jaffna and Tamil separatist activists and terrorists. As in the past the latter were using safe houses, if not "bases", in Tamil Nadu.

Given this background, the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983 gave Mrs. Gandhi a totally unexpected opportunity for intervention in the affairs of the island. She very swiftly initiated the diplomatic moves which saw India assuming the role of an intermediary in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict almost as soon as the riots erupted. It began with strongly worded expressions of concern about the situation in the island, in an avowed effort to put pressure on the Sri Lanka government on behalf of the island's Tamil minority. The Sri Lankan government was invited to accept Indian mediation — the sort of offer best described as one which could not be refused. The Sri Lankan government was greatly, if temporarily, weakened politically at home, and more so internationally, and was thus in no position to refuse.

In Tamil Nadu there were demands for Indian "intervention" (a euphemism for invasion). While there was no support for this from the Indian government, Mrs. Gandhi made no public commitment to refrain from military intervention. The Sri Lankan government was operating on the assumption that such an invasion could not be ruled out altogether. Tamil Nadu politicians were quoting the parallel of Bangladesh and the Indian intervention of 1971, in support of their demand. They

were supported in this by Sri Lanka's mainstream Tamil political party, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) whose leadership had taken refuge in Madras. Over 35,000 Tamil refugees crossed the seas to Tamil Nadu in the aftermath of the riots. Their numbers increased, in time, to about 125,000. For the advocates of military intervention the refugee problem was yet another parallel to the situation in East Pakistan which had paved the way for Indian intervention and resulted in the creation of Bangladesh.

In intervening in Sri Lankan affairs as a self-appointed mediator in a major ethnic conflict Mrs. Gandhi was underlining India's right, as a regional power, to say in the settlement of a potentially (and actually) destabilizing domestic conflict in a neighboring state. Because one of the parties to the conflict — the Tamil minority — had linguistic, cultural and religious ties with a neighboring state of the Indian union, the conflict itself was seen in India as a regional rather than a purely local one. Tamil Nadu opinion was inflamed by the anti-Tamil riots in Sri Lanka and Indira Gandhi could hardly ignore this in devising her policies on the Sri Lankan situation. But there was a personal factor as well. With general elections due in late 1984 and her electoral base eroding in many parts of India, including some of her strongholds in southern India, Indira Gandhi was very anxious to mollify Tamil Nadu opinion in order to retain if not consolidate her, and the Congress party's, electoral base there. This explains to a large extent the speed with which she intervened when the riots of July 1983 broke out, the choice of G. Parathasarathy as a mediator, and the very significant change in the basis of India's declared interest in the affairs of Sri Lanka.

G. Parathasarathy was an experienced diplomat and administrator as well as being a trusted confidant of Mrs. Gandhi with the advantage of easy access to her. He had, in addition, the advantage of being a South Indian Tamil which meant that Tamil Nadu opinion as well as the TULF were happy with him. To them it was a reassuring choice.

On previous occasions of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, India's main concern had been about the safety of the "stateless" Indians resident in the island, and with Indian citizens generally, both categories being largely plantation workers. This was quite clearly a legitimate Indian interest, although the presence on the island of

plantation workers with Indian citizenship was due to a concession made to the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) the main political party *cum* trade union of the plantation workers — with the knowledge and approval of the Indian government — by the UNP governments (of 1965-1970 and 1977 onwards) whereby they were permitted to remain in the island for the duration of their working lives. (Under Mrs. Bandaranaike's government such persons were required to leave the island once their status changed from "stateless" to Indian citizen.) With Mrs. Gandhi, in power, in the 1980s, Indian interest in the affairs of Sri Lanka was extended to cover the Tamils, in general, and not merely Indian citizens or "stateless" persons of Indian extraction most, if not all, of whom were also Tamils.

In the last five months of 1983, Parathasarathy travelled frequently between Delhi and Colombo seeking to devise a set of proposals that would be acceptable to the three parties involved — the Tamils of Sri Lanka primarily, the Sri Lanka government, and to the Indian government. As Mrs. Gandhi's special representative he negotiated directly with the Sri Lankan president. In addition he established close links with the TULF, with objective of winning their support for a scheme of devolution of power, and other safeguards, that would be an acceptable alternative to a separate state in the north and east of the island for the Tamils of Sri Lanka which many of the Tamil groups, including the TULF, were not advocating. In time Parathasarathy's closeness to the TULF eroded the confidence that President Jayewardene and the Sri Lanka government had in him originally, and he came to be regarded as an advocate of TULF policies.

Apart from the close links they had established with G. Parathasarathy, the TULF leadership were in constant touch with senior Indian officials Delhi dealing with Sri Lankan affairs, and on occasion they met Mrs. Gandhi herself. Thus the TULF was able to re-open the devolution of power in Sri Lanka with the assurance of a sympathetic understanding and support of their views at the highest levels of the Indian government. With Parathasarathy's approval they formally withdrew their support for the District Development Councils established in 1981, claiming that these were inadequate in meeting the needs of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka as they perceived it in the context of the changed situation. They staked a claim

for a system of provincial councils, as the second tier of the governmental structure in Sri Lanka. Their main aim was to secure the establishment of a large regional council, encompassing the northern and eastern provinces where the Tamils would be a dominant if not overwhelming majority, which they had advocated since the 1950s (through the Federal Party, which formed the core of the TULF established in the late 1970s).

When President Jayewardene visited Delhi in November 1983, on fence-mending trip for which the opportunity was provided by the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, he met Mrs. Gandhi for the first time after the riots of 1983. He found that she had absorbed Parathasarathy's views on Sri Lankan affairs, especially the proposition that the unit of devolution should be a province rather than a district, and that the powers of such units should be much wider than under the District Development Councils. The meeting with Mrs. Gandhi served to underline the weakness of his position in negotiating with the Indian government on the resolution of the political crisis in Sri Lanka stemming from its ethnic conflict. He tentatively accepted a set of proposals embodied in a document which came to be known as "Annexure C" where the framework of a settlement with the TULF and other Tamil groups was outlined. A key feature of this document was the merger of the northern and eastern provinces into a single Tamil ethno-region. As a result, something which Sinhalese opinion had steadfastly refused to accept as a politically viable proposition was elevated to the position of a cardinal principle of a political settlement with the Tamils.

On his return to the island President Jayewardene set about the business of gaining the support of as wide a range of political opinion in the country as possible for the terms of the settlement incorporated in "Annexure C". He called a conference — the All Party Conference (ACP) — to discuss this among other proposals. The discussions began in January 1984. The UNP's election manifesto for the general election of 1977 had made reference to such a conference to seek a resolution of the island's ethnic conflicts, but once in office there was marked preference for bilateral negotiations with the TULF. Now the scope of participation was widened to include not merely political parties but also representatives of religious groups as well, including representatives of the *Sangha* (the Buddhist order). The *Sangha*

were generally hardline opponents of all schemes of devolution. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) the principal opposition party could not be persuaded to participate in the discussions of the conference.

While the absence of the SLFP deprived the APC of some of its political credibility, the fact that all other parties, including the TULF and the Marxist parties were participants encouraged hopes of a compromise settlement being reached. Parathasarathy was in the island during some of these discussions and was able to meet some of the delegates informally. He was encouraged to talk to the *sanga* representatives and did so but was unable to dispel the suspicions they had of him and the proposals with which he was associated. The discussions at the APC continued over most of 1984. Eventually a consensus was reached on the crucially important issue of the range of powers to be devolved to regional bodies. The *sanga* representatives accepted the need for a second tier of government something they had been unwilling to do up to that time. Nevertheless they were still reluctant to commit themselves to a system of provincial councils. Much progress was achieved in regard to other controversial issues such as language policy. The government published an elaborate legislative framework based on the consensus reached at the APC — this included a scheme for a second chamber — as the basis of a settlement.

In the meantime that hardy perennial in Indo Sri-Lankan discord over the last five decades — the political status of Indians resident and working in Sri Lanka — was well on the way to amicable settlement in the post-1977 period through the operation of the democratic political process in Sri Lanka. One of the more fruitful results of the APC of 1984 was the decision that 94,000 stateless persons — Indian plantation workers — be granted Sri Lankan citizenship. This recommendation was accepted in principle by the government. Legislation for this purpose was ready in 1986/7 and approved by Parliament (through the **Grant the Citizenship to Stateless Persons Act of No. 39 of 1988**). With its adoption, plantation workers of Indian extraction fell into two clear categories: Sri Lankan citizens, and those with Indian citizenship but resident in the island for the duration of their working lives.

These discussions on the mechanics of

devolution took place against the backdrop of an increasing frequency of guerrilla attacks and terrorist incidents in the north of the island, and the extension of these into the eastern seaboard. The guerrilla forces were now much larger, much better trained (the training was largely in India), and much better equipped than they were before. The training and equipping of guerrilla forces in India and with the active support of Tamil Nadu had begun in the early 1980s, well before the riots of July 1993, but there is no mistaking the intensification of these processes as a result of the violence inflicted on the Tamils in July 1993. Tamil Nadu had always been a ready haven for these guerrilla forces, but now the support they received was strengthened immeasurably, as was the extent of the protection they enjoyed. Their morale was stronger, and their motivation keener after these riots than before, and by end of 1993 they demonstrated a greater willingness to take risks, and greater resourcefulness and daring in their attacks on the security forces and on carefully chosen targets. Until about the end of 1985 they were in many ways better equipped than the small security services units stationed in the north of the island.

The first reports on these training-camps and "bases" located in India appeared in Western newspapers in April 1984, at much the same time that comprehensive coverage of the camps and bases appeared in a prestigious Indian journal, *India Today*. And if more solid evidence was required of the use of Indian soil by Sri Lankan guerrillas and terrorists, this was forthcoming when a section of the Madras International Airport was accidentally blown up on 2 August 1984 by bombs due for transfer to Sri Lanka for the destruction of aircraft of the Sri Lankan national airline at Colombo's International Airport: the explosion killed over two dozen Sri Lankan passengers in the transit lounge of the Madras airport on this occasion. The Indian government generally refused to acknowledge the existence of training-camps and facilities for Sri Lankan Tamil guerrillas and terrorist groups on Indian soil. Instead it sought to divert attention from Sri Lankan charges and protests about these with countercharges of human rights violations in Sri Lanka, attributing these quite explicitly to the lack of discipline among the Sri Lankan security forces. In so doing they met an embarrassing fact with a half truth.

The fact is that Sri Lankan Tamil guerri-

illas and terrorists operated in Tamil Nadu with a freedom and publicity for which the only parallel is the PLO and its various factions in the Arab world. Quite apart from the public support they enjoyed in such large measure in Tamil Nadu, they engaged in fund-raising drives at public meetings in other parts of India as well, in particular Bombay city. This double standard on separatism and terrorism — to crush separatism ruthlessly when it is seen to pose a palpable threat to the Indian polity as was done in 1984 in the Punjab through Operation Blue Star, to protest vigorously at the tolerance accorded to Indian extremists and terrorist groups operating in the Western world (the Sikhs in Britain, Canada and the United States for instance), and yet to feign ignorance of the existence of training-camps and “bases” for Tamil guerrillas and terrorist groups on Indian soil was one of the great stumbling-blocks to cordial relations between Indian and Sri Lanka during this period and on to 1987 or later.

India's policy in regard to the internationalization of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict was a two-pronged affair. While discussions and negotiations with the Sri Lankan government on a settlement of differences between the government and the Tamil minority were proceeding, with India in her role of mediator, India was using its formidable diplomatic resources through its High Commissions and embassies in the West — in Ottawa, London and Washington, in particular — to accuse the Sri Lankan government and its armed forces of violations of human rights in attacks on Tamil civilians, in the course of or in the wake of security operations in the north and east of the island. At the United Nations Organization Indian delegates — generally a Tamil Nadu politician (a Tamil Nadu minister in 1983) — would raise the Sri Lankan issue in the course of debates there. The situation was even more favorable to this diplomatic offensive at the United Nations Office in Geneva, and the sessions of the Human Rights Commission where the Indian representative would either raise the Sri Lankan issue on his own, or more often back countries such as Argentina (smarting under Sri Lanka's support of Britain in the Falklands war) and Norway in raising the issue officially. Since some of the Western nations — the United States and Great Britain — were represented on the Commission by non-governmental organizations, and there was in addition the conspicuous presence of Human Rights groups, Sri

Lanka was under much greater pressure in Geneva than in New York.

In the meantime the TULF leadership was living in self-imposed exile in Madras as guests of the Tamil Nadu government. This was quite from more radical Tamil activists who also lived in Madras and conducted their clandestine operations and political campaigns through Madras and India, linking up with well-funded diaspora groups living in the West. These latter groups sought and received political support from Indian embassies and High Commissions, in Washington for instance, and Ottawa, not to mention London.

Then again, while persistently ignoring the provision of training facilities to Tamil activists in Tamil Nadu (and elsewhere in India) and the transfer of weapons from India to Jaffna, the Indian government under Indira Gandhi used pressure on Western powers to prevent the sale of sophisticated weaponry to the Sri Lankan forces. Sri Lanka purchased weapons from Pakistan and the People's Republic of China; Pakistan also provided much of the training, and in addition Sri Lanka turned to Israel for assistance in training its forces.

#### **4. From Mediation to Intervention: India in Sri Lanka, 1985-1989**

The TULF's sudden decision in late December 1984 to announce a rejection of the proposals placed before the APC has been the subject of much speculation. And so for that matter was the government's decision to react so quickly by withdrawing its support for a set of proposals that had been so carefully developed over two months of hard bargaining. The explanations suggested for this latter decision have focussed on the exigencies of local politics. But one explanation, and a more plausible one, is that it was a response to Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, and a calculated move based on the assumption that a fresh start was possible under a new Indian Prime Minister who would be less committed to supporting the TULF.

The impressions of Rajiv Gandhi that Sri Lankan politicians and diplomats who met him in the early months of his prime-ministership had been positively encouraging. Among his first decisions on Sri Lankan affairs was to replace G. Parathasarathy as the principal mediator with Romesh Bhandari, India's Foreign Secretary, a move that was clearly intended to

signal a search for new policies in a more cordial atmosphere.

At the time Romesh Bhandari took over as India's principal negotiator on Sri Lankan affairs, relations between the two countries had been soured by misunderstandings and misapprehensions on both sides. On the Indian side there was the feeling that President Jayewardene had not tried hard enough to win support in Sri Lanka for the agreements between him and the Indian government negotiated through G. Parathasarathy, over the last months of 1983. As for Sri Lanka Mrs. Gandhi was seen — and known — to be encouraging and manipulating Tamil separatist activists living in India to further India's strategic advantage in its quest for regional dominance. In particular, her (and the Indian government's) failure to acknowledge the existence of “bases” and training facilities for Sri Lankan Tamil separatists in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere — indeed she expressly denied the existence of such “bases” and facilities — was viewed as a cynical exploitation of separatist agitation in a neighboring country when a diametrically opposite policy of harsh measures was being pursued in the Punjab against Sikh separatists. Suspicion of her objectives in her mediation in the Sri Lankan conflict was compounded by Parathasarathy's patent failure to distance himself significantly from the importunate TULF to give greater credibility to his role as mediator.

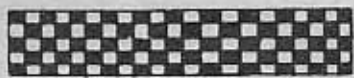
When President Jayawardene met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi in June 1985, for the first time, their discussion took place in a greatly improved atmosphere. This was followed by the despatch of Bhandari to Colombo for talks with the Sri Lankan President. These resulted in a major breakthrough when the latter was persuaded to let his government begin talks with the several Tamil separatist groups, who were engaged in violent confrontation with Sri Lankan security forces, in addition to the TULF, the mainstream Tamil party, with whom the government had negotiated hitherto. Up to this time the government had refused to talk to the other separatist activists on the grounds that doing so would give them a legitimacy they were not entitled to have. The fact is that the TULF was rapidly losing ground to their younger rivals, and the decision to engage in discussions with them was a belated recognition of political realities.

**NEXT: WAR AND PEACE TALKS**

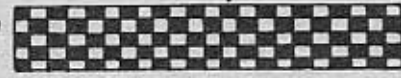
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# Ethnic conflict and development

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## Introduction

This paper asks how economic development in Global South nations can be better managed, so as to reduce the potential for violent ethnic conflict? To answer this, we must first ask why is economic development so often accompanied by violent ethnic conflict?

Viewing economic development and ethnic conflict as interlinked problems requires a reassessment of two widely accepted views about the relationship between these two phenomena. The first view, prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s during the decolonization of Africa and Asia, was that economic development would inevitably reduce the potential for violent conflict, since growth would be rapid and the resulting benefits diffused through all levels of society.<sup>3</sup> The first decade or so of post colonial independence seemed to bear out this theory. Beginning in the late 1960s, however rising ethnic tensions in many new nations, and full-blown ethnic civil wars in some, most notably Nigeria, cast doubts on this optimistic scenario. Moreover regionalist movements in Spain, Scotland and Wales, linguistic conflict in Belgium, a resurgent Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland and an ethnic terrorist movement in Canada<sup>4</sup> made it clear that even modern industrialized nations were not immune to potentially violent ethnic cleavages.<sup>5</sup>

The second view held mostly by regional and economic policy-makers, was that economic development policies and those relevant to "maintaining political stability" could be formulated in separate compartments. In particular this view was prevalent among World Bank staff members, mostly economists, whose views reflected a charter specifying governments as the Bank's clients and proscribing "political" involvement. It was not until the 1980s that senior Bank officials began to take an increased interest in public administration — an area they attempted to depoliticize by labeling it "governance."<sup>6</sup>

Political changes from the late 1960s through the mid-1990s have proved both theories wrong. Even in developing nations that did well economically, economic benefits did not diffuse to all segments of society or all regions. As a result, some ethnically diverse states such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka implemented preferential policies intended to benefit some groups or regions disproportiona-

tely. Preferential policies tended to benefit the dominant ethnic group, treating minorities harshly.<sup>7</sup> Despite preferential policies, the beneficiaries continued to feel that they were losing out to better-educated groups or more prosperous regions while those discriminated against felt that they were being deprived of the fruits of economic development by an ethnically partisan government.

While government officials, international lenders, and development scholars are becoming increasingly concerned with how economic development strategies may intensify social cleavages, economists such as Jeffrey Sachs still insist that economic policy can be separated from domestic politics, and that regional differences are unimportant.<sup>8</sup> The Polish and Bolivian cases of economic reform provide useful examples of this failure to take ethnic and regional diversity into account. Poland is almost ethnically homogeneous, but distrust of the few remaining Jews and exiled German settlers continues to be part of political and popular culture. Bolivia, with its large Indian population, has been a success story, in that it has remained in good standing with its lenders. However, Bolivia's income equalities between ethnic groups and regions have been ignored by international lenders and the government. Interestingly, Sachs tried to use Bolivia as a model for Poland, arguing that both countries shared the common burden of huge foreign debt. While Poland's economy is now stronger (partly due to generous forgiveness from lenders), Bolivia's success in jump-starting growth has been more limited.

The Czech republic and Brazil, which have conducted their own economic and political reforms, led by administrators who were economists, provide interesting comparisons with Bolivia and Poland. Vaclav Klaus and Fernando Cardoso, both economists who have vaulted into the position of chief executive, have implemented harsh economic reforms, which have, however, won support from the public.<sup>9</sup> Popular support for economic reform will be particularly crucial in Brazil because of racial divisions and the wide gap between rich and poor.

Many policy-makers, most recently top Mexican government officials facing the Chiapas conflict, have now acknowledged that economic development and conflict management policies cannot be

separated. Moreover, the realization that development is inherently conflictual is now manifested indirectly in the World Bank's increasing concern with poverty alleviation schemes and governance. This has led to increased emphasis on consultation with non-governmental organizations from both donor and recipient countries. A small but growing body of policy-oriented literature also focuses on the social problems of implementing development policies.<sup>10</sup> However conflict management, especially in ethnically diverse societies, has not yet assumed its proper role in development planning. For the scope of development planning to be broadened in this way, the causes of ethnic conflict and how some development strategies can exacerbate ethnic tensions leading to conflict must be better understood.

## What causes ethnic conflict?

Violent conflict between rival ethnic groups sometimes breaks out spontaneously, but "ethnic conflict" is mostly a struggle between rival organizations seeking to maintain or gain control of state power. To understand ethnic conflict, we must understand the role ethnicity plays in mobilizing, structuring, and managing such organizations.<sup>11</sup> Further, we must understand how leaders use ethnically divisive strategies to mobilize the support necessary for them to seek and exercise political power.

The proximate causes of most ethnic conflicts are not difficult to grasp.<sup>12</sup> In typical scenarios, leaders of a superordinate ethnic group gain political office and then use institutions of state power to distribute economic and political benefits preferentially to their ethnic "brothers" and "sisters". This is accompanied by discrimination against subordinate group members who are portrayed as inferior and therefore, less deserving human beings. To the degree that force or the threat of force is required to impose discriminatory practices and quell subordinate group resistance, it is exercised by police and army cadres recruited almost exclusively from superordinate group members, who view themselves as "ethnic soldiers".<sup>11</sup> In democratic societies, the majority voting power of a superordinate group may be used to entrench discriminatory practices by legal or quasi legal means. When a superordinate group is in the minority, it simply imposes discriminatory policies by force although, as in South Africa (and the

former Nazi Germany) discrimination may be legitimized by cosmetic democratic institutions.

Subordinate group members will often endure discrimination for an extended period of time; however a sense of shared deprivation strengthens group bounds and provides a basis for political mobilization along ethnic lines. Before intergroup relations polarize, "moderate" subordinate group leaders may seek a *modus vivendi* with their counterparts in the majority group. In some nations, notably Malaysia, leaders have been able to work out a relatively stable accommodation, involving trade offs between political and economic power. More typically the pleas of subordinate group leaders for some accommodation are ignored or judged to be "politically infeasible" by superordinate leaders. The more severe and inflexible the discrimination, the more probable that subordinate group members will become radicalized. As radicalization proceeds, subordinate group members shift support to militant leaders. These leaders form disciplined paramilitary cadres committed to violent force as the only feasible strategy for ending discrimination.

The most common outcome of this scenario is an escalating spiral of violent political conflict, ethnic polarization, social disintegration and economic decline. This scenario has been in all too prevalent in developing nations and, now, in former Communist nations. Ethnic conflicts, once they flash into violence, become exceedingly difficult to resolve.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, some observers argue that physical separation of the protagonists is the only practicable solution.<sup>13</sup> Since members of superordinate and subordinate groups are most often economically interdependent and physically intermingled, this draconian "solution" seems only a slight improvement on protracted conflict.

It is not difficult to understand why members of a subordinate group that experiences discrimination would use ethnicity as a basis for political mobilization and eventually turn to militant leaders who argue that "we have no choice" but violence. However, protracted ethnic conflict is, more often than not, a negative sum game in which both superordinate and subordinate groups lose. Lebanon, Sri Lanka, the former Yugoslavia, Sudan, Rwanda, Ethiopia and the Punjab provide just a few examples of conflicts where the long-term costs of discriminatory policies to almost all concerned far outweighed any conceivable benefits.<sup>14</sup> The more interesting question, then, is not why subordinate respond to discrimination with violence, but why superordinate group leaders choose to implement discriminatory practices in the first place. Also, we need to know why such leaders typically

underestimate the probability of a violent subordinate group response, and their capacity to deal with it. This paper contends that development policies and the process of development, as they unfold in many developing nations, contribute to such miscalculations.

Social and cultural attitudes, held by many ethnic groups in multi-ethnic nations provide a supportive climate for the cycle of discrimination and militant response described above. Most important among them are historical legacies of mistrust, a mentality of victimization, and feelings of shared deprivation. These attitudes make ethnic group members receptive to the simplistic appeals of extremist leaders and encourage leaders to make such appeals. A myopic view of subordinate groups and overoptimism about the efficacy of state power create a social trap where, particularly in times of economic stress, leaders may commit irrevocably to discriminatory policies without fully assessing the consequences.<sup>15</sup>

#### (To be Continued)

#### Notes

1. Prepared for a workshop in Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 27-29, 1995, in connection with an international research project on *Ethnic Conflict, Ethnic Conflict Management and Resolution: International Experience and Lessons for Central Europe*.
2. John M. Richardson Jr. is Professor of International Affairs and Applied Systems Analysis and Director of Doctoral Studies at the School of International Service, The American University, Washington, D.C., U.S.A. Shinjinee Sen is a Doctoral Candidate at the School of International Service.
3. The view that ethnicity and other sub-national identities would become irrelevant in the march towards industrialization was based on a fundamental distinction made in Western social science between traditional and modern societies. Both Western mainstream and Marxist scholars believed that ethnic, religious, and all other traditional identities such as tribes and casts, which were part of traditional society, would not survive in modern industrial society. Karl Marx argued that religion was a false consciousness and that the only true consciousness was one based on economics — class. Sociologist Emile Durkheim, no Marxist, also agreed that the religious and other traditional identities were incompatible with modern society (1964, 1984). Durkheim and his ideas influences Parsons and Smelser (1965), and through them, economic policy-makers such as W.W. Rostow (1971) and Simon Kuznets (1971). See also note 3, below.
4. The *Front de Liberation Quebecois*, which surfaced in the 1960s, never had a membership of more than 100, however its activities precipitated a major re-examination of relations by Canada's French and English speaking populations.
5. Economic policy-makers and theorists such Rostow and Kuznets assumed that as societies modernized, traditional social cleavages would be replaced by cleavages more typical of industrialized societies. They were generalizing from the Western experience, in which nationalism had been important in state-building, but ethnic conflict had been repressed by states, or if it existed, had been ignored by scholars.
6. See The World Bank (1991) and Brautigam (1991 & 1992). A landmark example of this new concern

is found in the Bank's 1989 report, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*. However as late as 1990, the linkage between conflict and development was a "non issue." Papers and memoranda written by World Bank officials reflect this blindness to internal politics, as Klitgard (1990) observes in writing about World Bank and AID loans to Bolivia. In that country, even domestic policy papers failed to mention that the economic inequalities coincided with ethnic inequalities, and neither the government nor international lenders speculated about the effect of stabilization and adjustment programs on different ethnic groups.

7. In Sri Lanka, the fact that ethnic Tamils had called the island of Lanka home for more than a millennium did not prevent them from being labeled "outsiders" by ethnic nationalists in the majority Sinhalese community.
8. In particular, see his *Developing Country Debt and the World Economy* (1989).
9. The lesson from these cases might be that given the same free-market orientation, nativeborn economists can do the job better than the imported variety, provided that they are willing and able to explain their program and its consequences to the public, and if they are supported by state institutions.
10. For example, see Klitgard (1991) and Joan Nelson's recent work on the politics of structural adjustment (1989, 1990). An early contribution to this thinking was made by one of the authors of this paper (Richardson, 1987).
11. Readers will see here the influence of "resource mobilization" theories of conflict that trace their roots to theories of collective action proposed by Karl Marx. Perhaps the most important contemporary scholar writing in this genre is Charles Tilly (1978). Kerbo (1982), provides a useful comparative critique of resource mobilization theory and an alternative that places greater emphasis on conflict as a mass phenomenon, relative deprivation theory.
12. Among general works on ethnic conflict, by far the most comprehensive is Donald Horowitz's massive survey, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (1985). Gurr (1993) and Gurr and Harf (1994) are more recent general contributions to a growing body of literature. This discussion also owes much to Richardson's participation in numerous workshops and seminars on ethnic conflict sponsored by the International Center for Ethnic Studies, as well as his research on Sri Lanka and the former Yugoslavia. The discussion also reflects Sen's personal experiences and research on India and nations of the former Soviet Union.
13. This term was coined by Cynthia Enloe in an older, but useful work on the role of security forces in ethnic conflict (1980).
14. This point is emphasized in works of the late Edward Azar (1987, 1990) who labeled the phenomenon, *Protracted social conflict*.
15. This is sometimes termed "the green line solution" after the line that divides Greek and Turkish factions in Cyprus. A more extreme version of this approach has motivated "ethnic cleansing" policies, most visibly in nations of the former Yugoslavia. Edward Azar's *The Management of Protracted Ethnic Conflict* (1990) and K.M. de Silva and S.W.F.D. Samarasinghe's edited volume, *Peace Accords and Ethnic Conflict* (1993) are among a number of works that discuss the difficulties of resolving ethnic conflicts.
16. Several of the essays in Samarasinghe and Coughlin, eds., *Economic Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict* (1991), document this.
17. This latter point is developed in Richardson and Samarasinghe (1991) and in Joyce Francis' unpublished doctoral dissertation, *War as a Social Trap: The Case of Tanzania*.

# Appeal

*(Issued by the Russian Embassy)*

**Appeal to the peoples of the member-states of the Commonwealth of Independent States and to international community on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Victory over Fascism. (Adopted on February 10, 1995 at the meeting of the Heads of the CIS member-states).**

The heads of the member-states of the Commonwealth of Independent States address the peoples of their countries and the international community on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Victory over Fascism.

The 9th of May, 1995 remains in the history of mankind as the most memorable and the most important date of the XX century — the day of triumph of the good, the day of the final liberation of peoples from the threat of fascist enslavement.

The heroism of the Soviet Army, partisans and members of underground organizations, persistent and selfless labour of our people on the domestic front, utter

courage, staunchness and fraternity — was the basis of this great Victory.

An important contribution to the struggle against fascism was made by the Allied Forces, anti-Fascist movement, by all the countries of the anti-Fascist coalition.

The Victory has become the most striking manifestation of almighty force of the combined spirit, selflessness of peoples and heroism of individuals, who defended and safeguarded their right for freedom and human dignity, the manifestation of the capability of peoples of the world to unite in the face of a deadly danger.

The victory has shown the possibility and necessity of cooperation of the world community members to ensure international security and to prevent a new world war.

We will never forget that enormous sacrifices have been made for the sake of peace, freedom and democracy. On behalf of our compatriots we appeal to peoples of the CIS member-states, to the world community to honour the memory

of those who perished to carefully preserve everything it enshrined in duly honouring the victory creators.

Striving for strengthening peace we solemnly confirm the will of our people to widen comprehensive cooperation in the Commonwealth of Independent States as well as with other countries in the name of peace and prosperity.

We appeal to everyone to multiply their efforts in order to prevent new threats for peaceful life on Earth, to eliminate existing and prevent the possibility of new conflicts, whose tragic development can endanger the ideals of humanity and progress, fraught with the risk of new disasters, destruction and bloodshed.

Realizing our sacred duty to the heroes of the Great Victory both perished and alive, we appeal to the people of the Commonwealth of Independent States and to the community to unite their efforts and will in order to save future generations from the horrors of new wars.

**S.A. Artemiev**

## **FILM REVIEW**

# Nomiyena Minisun

In the multi-lingual "Nomiyena Minisun" — four languages are spoken in the film, which is unique — one sees 'Mr. Gamini Fonseka' best qualities as an actor cum director. With deftness and uncanniness, the war in the North/East is brought to our door-steps. The scenes depicting roaring war planes strafing, palmyrah trees snapping into two, explosions on the ground, soldiers and civilians running helter, skelter, are realistic and inspire awe. They make some of us to say: "Thank God, we are not placed there". These scenes can challenge comparison with the best in war films from U.S., Russia and Great Britain.

In her book "Three came home" — an authentic story of the Japanese occupation of South East Asian Countries during the Second World war — Agnes Keith writes: "In war time, we are trained by

national propaganda to hate the enemy, as otherwise, we are unwilling to kill or be killed. After the war, we might meet as human beings again". It is apparent that Mr. Gamini Fonseka, does not subscribe to this philosophy.

He has expressed in "Nomiyena Minisun", the deepest thoughts of his heart, frankly and sincerely, on the flare up in a part of the country. The resulting slaughter, ruin and uprooting of people from their hearts and homes, are things repugnant to him. He agonizes over these unfortunate happenings and has shown that he is a dauntless and pure spirit.

Mr. Gamini Fonseka's thinking on War and Peace is closer to the Japanese pacifist and peace apostle, Toyohiko Kagawa, a contemporary of Leo Tolstoy and

Mahatma Gandhi. On the futility of brute force, Kagawa in his "Meditations" has said: "There are those who argue that brute force will solve all problems. If force is such an important factor, it would be well always to employ earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. They ought to make a greater contribution to the evolution of human society than Newton and Edison. The evolution of the social order is not governed by militarists, militaristic dictators or anarchists who rely on force.

"Social evolution is impelled upward by means of selection, ideals, exertion, invention and motives, which produce the highest good. World built by force will be destroyed by force. Ask me not to live in so precarious a world. I place no whatever in force, no matter what form it takes".

**S. Sivagurunathan**

## Sri Lanka's India Policy 1948-77

Humayun Kabir

India, therefore, looms very large on Sri Lanka's security horizon. There are two sets of opinion regarding this 'India factor': first, there are opinions that India has never been a threat to Sri Lanka; and second, some tend to argue that under the SLFP-led government of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike there was no fear of India as security threat to Sri Lanka. Mendis, Nissanka and Manor, who hold the first set of opinion, are of the view that Sri Lanka had no enemy to be afraid of and, therefore, there was no basis for perceiving a security threat from India.<sup>25</sup> Kodikara maintains that Mr. Bandaranaike considered India a friendly power and did not envisage a threat from her. He strongly repudiated any suggestions of Indian aggression against the island-state,<sup>26</sup> while Prasad writes that "Bandaranaike regarded India as a very friendly country..."<sup>27</sup> This section argues, as stated above, that India has been the prime concern to Sri Lankan governments, regardless of their political complexion, in formulating the country's foreign and security policy. It will also be argued below that there is no evidence to sustain the position of Kodikara and Prasad, which is, in reality, based upon the surface appearance of Indo-Lanka relations after Bandaranaike came to power and a misjudgment of his tactical position vis-a-vis India. And that applies to all other SLFP-led governments too.

Although Communism, occasional domestic violence and great power rivalry in the Indian Ocean area were other sources of threat, the proximate giant in India was perceived by Sri Lankan policy and opinion makers to a greater threat to their small island-state. It was immaterial to them whether an actual Indian attack was imminent; historical memories of recurrent Indian invasions of Sri Lanka, the attitudes and pronouncements of the Indian policy making elite that Sri Lanka is integral to India's security, and the Tamil Nadu connection of Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority appeared real enough to generate threat perceptions in the Sri Lankan mind.

While both the UNP and SLFP gov-

ernments had perceived security threats from India, they adopted different strategies to offset these overarching concerns. While the UNP governments of the period 1948-56 had adopted the non-conformist policy, the succeeding SLFP-led administrations followed the 'pilot fish' policy vis-a-vis India. The essence of the UNP policy was not to be accommodative to the wishes and concerns of India and pursue a divergent but not confrontationalist or deliberately troublesome policy. The pilot fish policy, which essentially means keeping close to the shark to avoid being eaten,<sup>28</sup> was aimed at redressing the imbalance of power without provoking India. This policy contained elements of accommodation without being conformist.

Sri Lanka had adopted three strategies in relation to India, operating simultaneously or independently depending on the administration in power in Colombo and the regional and international settings: first, the balance of power strategy; second, the strategy of non-alignment; and third, the strategy of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.

### The Balance of Power Strategy

In this exercise Sri Lanka has sought extra-regional as well as regional counterpoise vis-a-vis India. Sri Lanka's extra-regional props were her close relationship with Britain, while its regional ones were intended to be obtained through regional organizations as well as closer bilateral ties with India's adversaries, such as China and Pakistan.

**Sri Lanka's Defence Agreement with Britain.** On the eve of her independence, Sri Lanka signed, on 11 November 1947, a set of agreements with the United Kingdom — the External Affairs Agreement, the Public Officers' Agreement, and the Defence Agreement.<sup>29</sup> Now, the question arises as to why the Senanayake government signed a defence agreement with an outgoing colonial power. Some authors argue that it was a quid pro quo arrangement between the two countries, that is, the military bases for independence. Jennings, for example, holds the view that

the Defence Agreement was negotiated by Senanayake rather as an inducement to Britain to hasten Sri Lanka's independence.<sup>30</sup> Mendis maintains that it was "on the basis of the offer of defence and logistical facilities for Britain in this island that it was possible to clinch the deal for the immediate grant of full independence much earlier than intended before",<sup>31</sup> while Nissanka stated that in signing the agreements D.S. Senanayake and Sir Oliver Goonetilleke were following a policy of appeasement with the British.<sup>32</sup> In my understanding, such views appear to be not exactly accurate owing to the fact that various British concerns and compulsions in Sri Lanka gave Senanayake enough manoeuvring space while negotiating with Whitehall for his country's independence. The unflinching loyalty of Senanayake and many of his party colleagues to the British crown,<sup>33</sup> Sri Lanka's strategic significance in terms of defence and other interests of Britain and her allies in the Indian Ocean, East and South-east Asia, and Australia and New Zealand,<sup>34</sup> and Britain's economic<sup>35</sup> and political<sup>36</sup> interests in Sri Lanka gave the UNP leadership enough leeway in driving a hard bargain for their country's independence from British colonialism.

In fact, it was mainly the fear of India that spawned the signing of the Defence Agreement with Britain, thereby enlisting a countervailing power against the northern neighbour. The threat that was perceived in Colombo was dual in nature — one from government in New Delhi, the other being a parallel or alternative fear of a conjectural sovereign Dravidistan in South India and its consequences for the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Jennings stated that it was for this reason, inter alia, that Senanayake concluded the Defence Agreement with the British government.<sup>37</sup> Krishna Shetty, an Indian scholar, also wrote that it was because of a lurking suspicion about India's intention in the Indian Ocean area that the UNP leadership desired to have the protective wing of Britain.<sup>38</sup>

Senanayake himself, conscious of hi-



historical invasions from the Indian continent because of Sri Lanka's vulnerability arising out of its strategic situation, warned that his administration should look ahead despite Indian denials that such a situation existed then. He referred to "an undercurrent of apprehension regarding the long-term possibility of Indian expansion involving Ceylon",<sup>39</sup> and thus Britain was Sri Lanka's greatest security.<sup>40</sup> He also made it clear that "we consider India to be one of the greatest nations in the world but we do not expect India to play the role of trying to establish rights where they have no rights, or privileges where they have no privileges, or trying to deprive other countries of their rights."<sup>41</sup>

Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka's Home Minister who later became the country's Governor General, expressed apprehension about Indian designs on Sri Lanka in terms of the island's vulnerability from within. Addressing the representatives of the Indian Tamils in the Sri Lankan parliament, he sarcastically remarked that "they think that they are right, that Jawaharlal Nehru is raging because little Ceylon had dared to make a Defence Agreement with England without waiting for the day when at any rate one section of the people of Ceylon could deliver the Trincomalee base to him on very favourable terms."<sup>42</sup> Although Nehru attempted to reassure Sri Lanka by saying that "...there is no possibility of our trying to make Ceylon...a part of India,"<sup>43</sup> he subtly expressed concern about Sri Lanka's extra-regional counter-balance against India by stating that "...neither India nor Ceylon should take step which goes in the way of impairing cordial and friendly relations"<sup>44</sup> between the two neighbouring countries.

Unlike D.S. Senanayake, Sir John Kotelawala, Sri Lanka's third Prime Minister, was rather explicit. Questioned by the Parliamentary Opposition about the country's defence connection with the West, he replied: "what I am worried about is that Mr. Panikkar has made several statements in one of his books that India must have Trincomalee for her safety. I have also heard that Mr. Panikkar is supposed to speak for Pandit Nehru. He is supposed to know Pandit Nehru's thoughts and has said that India, Ceylon and Burma must have a Monroe Doctrine, that India will be the father of two children — Burma and Ceylon. We do not want that fatherly advice nor their protection".<sup>45</sup> Sir John feared that Indian 'peace area'

policy would place Sri Lanka on an uneasy position vis-a-vis India and, therefore publicly stated that although he "loved peace as much as Mr. Nehru", he could not agree with the Indian leader's 'suggestion regarding a Monroe Doctrine for the countries of Asia'.<sup>46</sup> Wiggins wrote that "even if India should fly apart a South India independent of Delhi could be a threat to Ceylon, for she has been an area of South Indian expansion in centuries past".<sup>47</sup>

The statements of the Sri Lankan leaders amply show how India figured in their security perceptions. The Defence Agreement with the United Kingdom that was in operation until 1957 was, therefore, deemed to have been Sri Lanka's insurance policy vis-a-vis India.

**Sri Lanka's Commonwealth Links with Britain, 1948-56.** Similarly, the firm support which the UNP Prime Ministers consistently gave to the Commonwealth, that is to say the connection with Britain, must be partially explained by the above considerations. The Commonwealth assumed an added significance as a possible counterpoise to India. Senanayake laid down a principle that friendship with Great Britain was Sri Lanka's greatest security,<sup>48</sup> a principle that became in his time and in that of his UNP successors the base of Sri Lanka's foreign relations. Sir John was, however, more specific about India as a source of threat when he remarked about the Commonwealth "as her (Sri Lanka's) first insurance against any possibility of aggression from quarters closer home".<sup>49</sup> He put it quite explicitly when, in a public speech in 1955, he declared that "the day Ceylon dispensed with Englishmen completely, the island would go under India".<sup>50</sup>

Sir Oliver also treated Sri Lanka's Commonwealth connection with the UK as a counterpoise to India.<sup>51</sup> Sri Lanka was economically, politically, militarily and even attitudinally tied to the UK and the Commonwealth. India, on the other hand, renounced the formal jurisdiction of the Crown and constitutionally became a Republic in 1950, though remained a member of the Commonwealth of Nations apparently for political leverage and economic advantages.

The above mentioned perceptions of Sri Lankan leaders about India and the island's defence and Commonwealth links with the United Kingdom demonstrated a divergence of understanding and

response on many important issues of the time between Sri Lanka and India. Views of the two countries on international Communism and the Soviet Union, and their views and roles in the Korean and Indo-China conflicts visibly struck discordant notes. Sri Lanka's relations with the United States of America were generally close and cordial because of this ideological affinity while those of India were at times rather strained.

**Sri Lanka's Commonwealth links with UK after 1956.** S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was against Sri Lanka's Defence Agreement with Britain. On his request, the British government withdrew its forces from Trincomalee on 15 October 1957 and from Katunayake on 1 November the same year. But Britain's military withdrawal from Sri Lanka did not mean severance of relations between London and Colombo. Sri Lanka's British connection continued to be significant to the island's security as well as its economic interests. The Agreement was not formally abrogated by Bandaranaike and has not been to date. Even after British withdrawal from the island, he welcomed Britain's continuing to assist Sri Lanka in the development and training of its armed forces.

Bandaranaike was always conscious of the fact that India was the most abiding factor in his country's foreign and security policy. Long before he became Prime Minister, he was acutely aware of the implication of his country's strategic location and its asymmetric power balance with India. Even before Sri Lanka's independence, at the Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in 1947, the Sri Lankan delegation headed by Bandaranaike drew attention to the fear of small countries that domination could emanate from Asian big powers like India and China.<sup>52</sup> Two years later in 1949, he was more specific about his attitude towards India when he remarked that "although Ceylon is a small country, its people have always been jealous of their sovereign rights for which they have always fought and striven. Having once again regained our freedom and sovereignty, it is not at all likely that the majority of the people of this country will submit to the type of subordination which obviously Dr. Sitaramayya (of India) has in mind."<sup>53</sup> Bandaranaike was averse to the idea of being a camp follower or trailing behind any individual country's foreign policy. He stated in 1954 that the foreign policy of Sri Lanka should neither be "anti-West" nor "anti-

Communist" but it should be "pro-Ceylon", that "...there is only one 'pro' that we have, to be pro-Ceylon."<sup>54</sup>

Nehru and Bandaranaike had similar worldviews and common approaches to important international issues like the Suez crisis and the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. But commonality of outlook in international affairs alone was not good enough for tangible improvement in bilateral relationship between the two countries. Their perceptions vis-a-vis each other remained the same; bilateral problems such as the 'Indo-Ceylon' question, the demarcation of maritime boundary, and the ownership of the Kachchativu island in the Gulf of Mannar had remained unresolved as before.

Unlike his UNP predecessors, Prime Minister Bandaranaike was subtle and diplomatic in his country's relationship with India. His India policy was to seek redress of the power balance against India without causing provocation. This was one of the greatest legacies that he left to the SLFP foreign policy orientation and security perspective. In pursuance of his such policy, Bandaranaike professed friendship with India and occasionally spoke of "no fear of attack from India". To redress the balance against India, he continued to maintain the Commonwealth connection with the UK and at the same time attempted to forge a regional balance through any regional groupings.

#### Notes

25. See Vernon L.B. Mendis, *Foreign Relations of Sri Lanka: From Earliest Times to 1965*, Tissera Prakasakayo Ltd, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka, 1983, p. 388; H. Sri Nissanka, *Hansard H.R.* (House of Representatives), 1 December 1947, Vol. 1, Col. 503; James Manor, *The Expedient Utopian: Bandaranaike and Ceylon* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, P. 176.
26. S.U. Kodikara, *Indo-Ceylon Relations Since Independence*, The Ceylon Institute of World Affairs, Colombo, 1965, pp.46-47.
27. Dharendra Mohan Prasad, *Ceylon's Foreign Policy Under that Banaranaikae: A Political Analysis*, A. Chand & Co. (Pvt) Ltd, New Delhi, 1973, p. 325.
28. Erling Bjøl, "The Small States in International Politics" in August Scholu and Arne Olav (eds.), *Small States in International Relations*, Almqvist and Wiksell, Stockholm, 1971 p.33.
29. For the provision of the three agreements see Ceylon: *Sessional Paper XII-1947, The Independence of Ceylon, November 1947, Document 2, Appendices I, II & III*; Ivor Jennings, *The Constitution of Ceylon*, Oxford University Press, London, 3rd Edn., 1953, pp. 137-140; Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, Minister of Home Affairs, *Ceylon: Senate Debates*, Vol. 1, 2 December 1947, Cols. 187-190.

30. Ivor Jennings, *The Approach to Self-Government*, Cambridge, 1956, pp. 50-51.
31. Vernon L.B. Mendis, *op. cit.*, p. 363.
32. H.S.S. Nissanka, *Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy: A Study in Nonalignment*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 1984, p. 9.
33. J.L. Fernando, *Three Prime Ministers of Ceylon*, M.D. Gunasena, Colombo, 1963, p. 90.
34. Sir Charles Jeffries, *Ceylon — the Path to Independence*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1962, p. 115; D.S. Senanayake, *Hansard H.R.* 1 December 1947, Vol. 1, Col 461.
35. See *Ceylon Year Book 1949*, Colombo, p. 41 and *Ceylon Year Book 1959*, Colombo, pp. 96-97; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 24 May 1962, p. 405.
36. See for Sir Lankan as well as British interests in parliamentary institutions and on their apprehensions for potential domestic Communist threat in Sri Lanka, *H.R. Debates*, Vol. 6, Cols. 198-99 and Vol. 10, Cols. 154-55; Krishna P. Mukherji, "Indo-Ceylon Relations", *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Bombay, January-March 1957, p. 43. Britain also had many Officers in Sri Lankan Army and bureaucracy. See Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, *Ceylon: Senate Debates*, Vol. 1, 2 December 1947, Col. 190; Sir Ivor Jennings, *Nationalism and Political Development in Ceylon*, New York, 1956, p. 27.
37. Sir Ivor Jennings, *The Constitution of Ceylon*, 3rd edn., Bombay, 1953, 252-4.
38. K.P. Krishna Shetty, "Ceylon's Foreign Policy: Emerging Pattern of Non-Alignment", *South Asian Studies*, Jaipur, India, April 1966, p. 5.
39. *Ceylon H.R. Debates*, Vol. 1, 1947, Col. 444; *The Hindu*, Madras, 18 April 1949.
40. *Ceylon H.R. Debates*, Vol. 10, 1 August 1951, Col. 1852.
41. *Ceylon H.R. Debates*, Vol. 4, 9 December, Col. 429.
42. *Ceylon: Senate Debates*, Vol. 1, 2 December 1947, Col. 192.
43. *Ceylon Daily News*, 16 May 1949.
44. *Ibid.*, 16 January 1950.
45. *Ceylon: H.R. Debates*, Vol. 20, 7 September 1954, Cols. 51-52.
46. *The Hindu*, Madras, 7 September 1954.
47. W. Howard Wiggins, *Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1960, p. 378.
48. *Ceylon: H.R. Debates*, Vol. 10, 1 August 1951, Col. 1852.
49. Sir John Kotelawala, "Ceylon as Switzerland in Asia", *The New Commonwealth*, 4 April 1955, pp. 315-16.
50. *The Times*, 26 May 1955.
51. *Ceylon: Senate Debates*, Vol. 1, 2 December 1947, Cols. 178-194.
53. See for details, *Asian Relations: Report of Proceedings and Documentation of the First Asian Relations Conference*, New Delhi, 1948, pp. 78-79.
53. *CDN*, Colombo, 23 April 1949.
54. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, *Ceylon: H.R. Debates*, Vol. 19, 4 August 1954, Col. 434.

### Waiting — 5

## Bambalapitiya Remembered

*They came out of the evening  
To the gaslit waiting room  
The rain drops glistened in their hair  
Their eyes were full of moon*

*Lightning lit the edge of things  
The sea was restless in the gloom  
but the boundares of the pain  
Ended where eye met eye again*

*She dusted sea earth from her feet  
Her full excited lissom feet  
While he knelt and laced her shoes  
And the drizzle deepened into rain  
While they waited for the train*

**U. Karuntilake**

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## The need for culturally homogenous electorates

Dayalal Abeysekera

Of paramount import we feel is the *modus operandi* to be adopted when re-demarcating the electorates. It should never degenerate into a haphazard lumping of 15,000 voters in a contiguous area. One must at all times not lose sight of the fact that this entire exercise is aimed at providing a realistic opportunity to the people to fashion their own destiny. A common focus of destiny for a group of people approaches reality when commonality rather than critically relevant diversity runs through the grouping. Commonality could have multi-dimensional axes but what is perhaps, most important to answer the question of "where do I and my family want to be 10, 15 or 25 years time"? is the commonality of the principal source of income of the people. This is, perhaps, why caste was an all-important principle of order during the hay-day of feudalism since caste denoted the principal occupation (source of sustenance/income). If the above question was posed to a fisherman, a farmer, a civil servant or a bus conductor, the assemblage of answers are bound to be diverse in terms of specific aspirations but 'general betterment' would undoubtedly be the common denominator. The critical point we want to emphasize herein is that this diversity of "I would like to be...." cries have largely been inaudible (since adequately powerful megaphones were not provided), not listened to and driven rough shod over by the powers that be. Thus, this belabouring of the creation of electorates with some homogeneity of purpose.

If we take an example, during the re-demarcation, electorates on the coastal belt should be stretching lengthwise rather than spreading into the interior of the land. This is because with the intrusion inland, the propensity for a family to derive its income principally from fishing begins to diminish. So, if the intent, as it should be, is to encourage the interest of the fishermen to be reflected in the PC, there should then be adequate safeguards taken to ensure the representation of the will of the fishing community. In addition to the commonality of the principal source of income other culturally homogenizing factors such as ethnicity, language and religion may be given adequate weightage in the re-demarcation process.

It is possible that some readers may object to undertaking this kind of fact finding before the re-demarcation is to be done on account of impracticability. We must hasten to remind such readers that there is a ten yearly exercise known as the census of population which generally is meant to yield this type of data. Unfortunately, the census which should have been taken in 1991 was not conducted, probably due to the violence in the Northeast of the country. The lowest level of census data is obtainable (on magnetic tape) for a unit called a 'census block' which consists of a contiguous area of no more than 100-150 households. Such data would be invaluable in re-demarcating the electorates according to the aforementioned factors. The conducting of a national census is well overdue and should, in our opinion be conducted at the earliest, at least outside the Northeast of the country.

### Eligibility Criteria for Representatives of People

If we are to ensure the audible articulation of the aspirations of the diversity of interests within a province, we also need to enunciate new ground rules to establish the eligibility of potential candidates who wish to be elected as RPs. The first heretical principle we like to propose is that all potential candidates wishing to be elected as a RP needs to be a *de facto* and *de jure* resident within the electorate s/he wishes to represent for at least 5 years. This is in essence to ensure that the aspiring RP is actually an integral part of the community, having a legitimate claim to representing the aspirations of the community. If s/he is a *de facto* resident outside the electorate (but has a *de jure* claim by virtue of having one's ancestral property within), it is patently clear that his/her claim to represent is rather tenuous since s/he has already taken flight of the electorate (obviously defining it as unsuitable for self-habitation). Even if the aspiring RP is a resident of the electorate if s/he has by other obvious acts demonstrated that his/her orientation is already towards a reference set outside the electorate, such prospective candidates should not be given nomination by a political party. Sending one's own primary school child to a school outside one's

electorate for schooling, for example, or sending one's child who is a non-recipient of an year 5 scholarship to a school outside the electorate should be adequate evidence to suggest that such a person has already begun to abandon the electorate and has begun to find his/her salvation elsewhere. Such a person would have no real stake in improving the quality of primary or secondary schools within the electorate, very much the aspiration of the large majority of the voters within the electorate.

(It will not be too difficult to come up with a nationally acceptable scale of 'relative integration into the constituency' that can be used by all political parties at a practically functional level which will assist them in picking the most 'electorate oriented' candidate and eliminate the subjectivity and favoritism that now goes on which is, in fact, the beginning of the ascendancy of the party dictate over the will of the people).

In effect, the potential candidate must literally be a prisoner of his constituency, primarily accountable to the voters and only secondarily to the party. In fact, we envisage a situation in the not-too-distant future, when the political parties having aspirations to regional/national representation will actually compete with each other to gain the allegiance of candidates of high credibility in the eyes of the voters (gained primarily through competence of performance) in order to improve on their vote-garnering capacity and not give nominations to candidate due to their 'seniority' or hereditary/conjugal clout within the party. In other words, a party nomination should be granted to a potential candidate exclusively on his/her achievements and definitely not on a person's ascribed statuses (seniority, though a quasi achieved status should be given lower priority vis-à-vis competence of current performance).

Declaration of assets will be a must for any potential candidate entering the fray in the hustings. It must be the right of every voter to contest any such declaration and such contestations must be facilitated and legitimized by the rule of law. If the RP (after election) is showing signs of self-aggrandizement of an illegitimate calibre, voters should be provided with oppor-

tunities to confront the RP either in a civil forum or in a suitable court of law. In other words, the true leadership qualities and the efficacy of the RP's performance will be judged maximally if only the improvement of the quality of life of the latter closely approximates the average qualitative improvement of his 15-20 thousand electors. This will demonstrate that s/he is leading the battle for common prosperity from the front and is not appropriating an unduly disproportionate share of the wealth created within (or without) the community.

### Age Structure of Candidates

Yet another criterion that needs to be given due weightage is that of the candidate's age. Needless to say, this factor assumes important dimensions when one witnesses the general over-representation of middle aged (40-60 year olds) in the legislature and raises valid questions of inequitable representation of the younger citizenry (18-39 year olds). The higher concentration of problems within the latter age group further accentuates the 'unfairness' of the currently prevalent pattern of representation. Furthermore, the witnessing of three rebellions (two in the south and one in the north) choreographed mainly by the younger citizenry in this country underscores the need for higher representation by the young. The implicit assumption being, of course, the higher the representation of the critical age bracket, the higher will be the attention provided to address their issues.

As such, we propose that one out of every three candidates nominated by any recognized political party must be one within the age range of 18-35 years. (Since we propose a maximum tenure of four years for the elected representatives, the cutting off at 35 years will ensure that they are still below the critical 40 years at the end of that particular period of election.) Since the 18-39 age bracket at the last Census of 1981 stood at 36.4 percent of the population of Sri Lanka, the nomination of one third of the candidates within this subset is quite justified.

### Gender Preferences of Candidates

A similar, perhaps, even more conspicuous 'discrimination' exists against the equitable presence of female RPs in the House. It is possible that the powers that be may shrug their shoulders and say, 'what can we do? there are no takes. We have not prevented any women from seeking nomination.' While this may be partially true and the cultural biases also combine to accentuate the lack of female presence, it is also true that we have not taken any concrete steps to rectify this imbalance. This lack of will can only be explained through a unwitting tendency on the part

of my male brethren to foster their dominance of this hallowed institution. More than a decade of work within the NGO sector has convinced this writer that females are perhaps much better organisers and managers of their (very often, meagre) resources and are willing to put in that extra effort (than males) to extricate themselves from the dumps. So, in this era of burgeoning women's liberation ideologies, why not constitutionally provide an adequate space for women to perform their historic role. After all, the past record of achievements of the male dominated legislatures of Sri Lanka is quite dismal, if not pathetic.

Thus, our proposal is that all recognized political parties should nominate at least one female candidate out of every three candidates nominated for an election. If a political party is so desirous, they may very well grant nominations in such a manner that more than one third the list of its candidates are women. (However, we might hasten to add that in order not to entrench 'reverse discrimination', the principle should read as 'a minimum of one third the candidates should be males and one third females'.) It is also perceived that this ideal may not be reachable overnight, that surfacing of candidates with potential may need time. It is very likely that the mental set up and the attitudinal changes that percolate in the female mind to make this the political reality may take some time. As such, our proposal is that this be done gradually. At the time of adoption of these proposals, the cut off should be 'one out of every five candidates to be female' which would be 'one out of every four, at the next hustings and raised further to 'one out of every three' at the subsequent election.

Needless to say, these age and gender criteria to be adopted by recognized political parties at an election are not mutually exclusive but intersecting. This means that the nomination of a female candidate of 30 years will satisfy the minimum quota requirements of both criteria.

### A Bottom-up Electorate Development Plan

The drawing up of a party manifesto before a national election should start well in advance of such an event and should originate at the level of each electorate. Each potential candidate is expected to carry out a baseline survey (in fact, a census since information pertaining to each household within the electorate is to be sought) so that the socioeconomic and demographic profile of the electorate is highlighted along with its critical problematic areas. Once this picture is revealed, the potential candidate will undertake extensive discussions with informed electors on devising the most practicable

measures that can be taken to ameliorate and if possible to eliminate each critical problem. (The five Pradeshia Sabha members who have their constituents within the same electorate should, along with the potential candidate, form an integral part of these discussions — see pp. 27-28) These measures should always start with the default option, viz., 'how do we tackle this problem if there are no funds forthcoming from the government'. There could be two other hypothetical projections on what the electorate could do on a particular problem with 'modest' and 'substantial' governmental support. A well defined goal (and as measurable as possible) is to be set up in respect of identified problem area earmarked for intervention with some demarcation of time targets that need to be surpassed during the four year period if the particular electorate is to be effective in tackling that particular problem. (Methods such as the logical Framework Approach or the Participatory Rural Appraisal or any other such appropriate method could be utilized in developing a thorough plan of intervention within each electorate). Thus, each electorate will have a composite of its defined areas of intervention emanating out of the baseline survey and ensuing discussions along with time targets which can be built up into a provincial (regional) plan of action as well as a national plan of action. This will provide the basis for each political party to draw up its manifesto.

### Activation of sanctions by the People — The Recall Option

Well thought out consensual plans of intervention are meaningless in the absence of continuous monitoring which are backed up by positive/negative sanctions that can be activated by the participating majority, viz., the electors. Our next heretical proposal is to institutionalize a bi-annual (annual, if the people want to provide more space for the RPs) appraisal mechanism which has enough teeth to activate a 'recall' of the RP, if in case one third of the electors feel that their chosen leader is floundering on their common mission. This appraisal should be made on a voluntary basis with those so desirous making their way to the appropriate Divisional Secretary's Office, Proving one's legitimacy (National Identity Card) to partake in the appraisal and casting one's vote of confidence or no-confidence, as the case may be. (Needless to say, each DS Office should be equipped with modern technology to facilitate this operation). If the balance of these votes ends up with no-confidence votes tallying more than one third the total number of cast valid votes at the last election, then the Divisional Secretary as the nominee of the Elections Commissioner will recommend to the latter that the incumbent RP

be relieved of his/her position and elections be held within 2 weeks of such declaration.

(For example, if in a particular electorate there were 12,300 valid votes cast at the last election, the critical one third cut-off will be 4,100 votes. If at the bi-annual appraisal a total of 8,000 voters cast their appraisal, 5,900 cast no-confidence appraisals and 2,100 cast appraisals of confidence in the incumbent RP, the balance would be 3,800 no-confidence appraisals, insufficient for a recall of the RP. However, this should be construed by the incumbent RP as a close call and respond by increased energies to achieve the targets of the consensually accepted plan of action of the electorate. If in case 6,051 voters cast their no-confidence appraisal, there would be sufficient grounds for recall of the incumbent RP.)

Bi-annual appraisals should perhaps be conducted at a fixed time of the year and we propose that the end of June and December are as good as any other. The casting of appraisals could occur during the working hours of the last two weeks of June and December and the counting begun at 4.30 p.m. at each venue on 30th and 31st June and December, respectively and the results proclaimed nationally on the same night over the national radio and TV. The public should be reminded of their civic duty of casting these appraisals during the last three weeks of June/December with appropriate messages over the radio and TV at one hour intervals. This should be complemented with similar notices appearing in the print medium over national dailies in all three languages. (Printing and) Pasting of posters will be prohibited by law and prohibitive punishments legislated on grounds of unconscionable wastage of public resources. This should be applicable at all elections as well. Only hand written banners (no mechanical process such as silk-screen printing etc. will be accepted) will be displayable with these needing to be put up during daylight hours with the public being given a chance to witness who is putting them up. Those who put them up are bound by law to dismantle such expressions as soon as the occasion has passed with no damage to public or private property.

The first appraisal by the voters should be held next June or December after giving the RPs a full six months since they began their new tenure (first day of Council sessions). Thus, if the first sessions were held on 30 June or 31st December, the new RPs will be given a maximal time of one year before their performance will be appraised by the voters for the first time. Thereafter the appraisal will be bi-annually. In case an incumbent RP is

relieved of his/her position and a new RP is elected, the same procedure will apply in terms of the first and subsequent appraisals. The tenure of such a new RP will end when the Council is dissolved, irrespective of how long s/he has served the electorate.

### **Engineering Attitudinal Changes among the Representatives of People**

The proposed strategy of evolving an electorate-based four-year development plan backed up by a recall option exercised by the collective body of voters should suggest that the aspiring RP is slowly but surely being programmed to be both the catalytic leader and the prisoner of his/her constituency, answerable not to the party but to his brethren. This should serve the dual purpose of gradually weakening the corrosive effect the party system in Sri Lanka has exerted on dividing the habitat for its own purpose and not for the good of the habitat itself. On the other hand, the electorate as the collection of habitats lend weightage to evolve its own identity of purpose, goals and aspirations into a coherent whole and not be subjected to a diffused mass of crumbs that fall off an incomprehensible thing called a national development plan.

The aforementioned 'default option' in the electorate's development plan is predicated on the assumption that even if there is zero resources coming to the electorate from the government (national parliament), it will still have a programme of activity that will literally strive to lift itself from its boot strings. Attitudinally, this is the crucial resource that is being attempted at augmentation since we feel that currently the RPs assert that development is only possible through the largesse of the government. Employment as a vital ingredient of the general strategy of improving the quality of life of the electorate is only possible to be obtained if there are jobs to be had from the public sector given to his/her voters or their children. Hence, the assumption of the role of Robin Hood by the RP, literally plundering the state coffers by demanding, creating and offering non-productive job opportunities to his henchmen. This further exacerbates the accumulation of frustration among the rest of his electors who are somehow incapable of penetrating the restricted coterie of privileged henchmen. The promised common development goal becomes an unrealisable illusion to the large majority while a restricted subset derive some individual solace but at great expense to the country by deriving an income from mostly unproductive employment. (Henceforth, the RP/MP will only be eligible to issue a character certificate on behalf of one's voters and s/he will have no right to issue an 'ultimatum' to any officer of the public or private sector dema-

nding the allocation of a job to any individual.)

With the delineation of the socioeconomic profile of the electorate and the mapping of the human and physical resources, both available and potential, it is more than possible to work out a strategic modus operandi to mobilize these resources within a mass-participatory framework. The whole realm of micro-enterprises (which should unequivocally encompass all agricultural initiatives) is available for imaginative recharting and integrating into the national grid of development planning, not as hitherto pursued on an ad hoc basis but on a decisively planned manner. The literally untapped vast absorptive capacities of rural and urban low income communities needs to be studied in-depth and linked up both in terms of production and consumption.

Lest the reader begins to entertain worries of our letting the government off the hook with no resources being pumped into the electorate, we must hasten to assure that no such absolving is envisaged and that we would briefly discuss the principles under which we propose the government should disburse its resources to speed up the development initiatives of the electorates guided by the RPs. This will be attempted when we evolve the proposals for setting up the new parliament. The 'default option' of the electoral development plan was meant to rekindle the faltering spirit of self-reliance and latent potential of the communities within an electorate and not to eliminate the government from pursuing an actively collaborationist role in the development march of all electorates. The envisaged interaction between the government and electorates is supremely complementary and inextricably symbiotic.

If a party manifesto is built up on the action plans developed in respect of ground conditions at the electorate level, there should be very minimal deviations in the substance of the manifestos of all parties. At the level of the electorate, there should hardly be any deviation in the definition of the problem but possibly some variations in the methods proposed for the amelioration of same. In fact, it might be a more cost efficient way to conduct the base-line survey jointly by pooling the resources of all candidates affiliated to the several parties that may contest a particular electorate. From the point of view of the electors, all candidates aim is to improve the quality of life within the electorate and as such, the base point of departure is the same for all candidates in terms of generating proposals and modus operandi. This activity, it is hoped, will further attenuate the unhealthy party rivalry that has hitherto been perpetrated on the electorate.

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# PEOPLE'S BANK

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